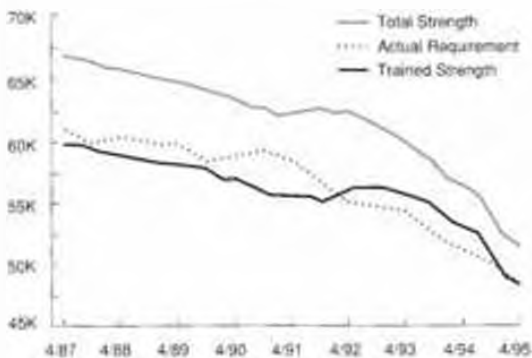


PERSONNEL

The numbers game

The need for reductions in manpower numbers continues. Options for Change and the never ending drive for efficiencies in all areas of our business are inexorably reducing the manpower requirement still further. At the same time, civilian employment prospects as a whole have resulted in an all time low figure for personnel applying to leave the Service voluntarily; in short we need fewer people at a time when retention is at its best for years! The graph below shows the scale of the situation.

RN & RM Strength Versus Requirement



Manpower Planning v Budgetary Pressures

The New Management Strategy (NMS) is hardly new any more and as Commanders in Chief and their subordinate Budget holders have become more familiar with the operation of their Budgets they quickly realised two things. First manpower (especially uniformed manpower) is expensive second manpower is one of the very few areas where Budget Holders are able to make savings in the short term. There is thus a strong urge from the Budget holders to shed manpower on cost and efficiency grounds. However the MOD still needs to exert a degree of central control (howls of protest from NMS pundits) to prevent structural incoherence and turmoil. This is not an easy balancing act but the liaison between the Planners and the Budget holders is working well (at least they are still talking to each other!) and we are all learning fast!

Redundancy

Last year Broadsheet reported that normal regulations (controlling numbers of recruits, re engagements, plus extensions of service and/or promotion advancement) were

not succeeding in bringing manpower numbers down fast enough if had been necessary to have recourse to 2 stages of Redundancy and a forecast was made that a third Phase of Redundancy was highly likely. This has proved to be correct. Redundancy Boards, convened in October and November, were instructed to select 76 Officers and some 2,300 Ratings. We were able to meet the RN targets with only a small number of non-applicants although, regrettably, as many as 20% of the redundancies amongst the RM Band Service other ranks were non-applicants. Phase 3 will bring the total numbers selected for redundancy to nearly 4,000. This may seem a lot but needs to be viewed in perspective. The sum of all redundees under Phases 1 to 3 equates to about 7% of the total RN and RM strength and of these more than three quarters were applicants - ie less than 2% have been forced to leave.

Nonetheless, the continued threat of compulsory redundancy is an unwelcome and unsettling atmosphere in which to live and work and the Navy Board is very keen to call a halt to the present redundancy programme just as soon as it can. Currently much is being done to see if we can manage the next few years without recourse to further redundancy but it is too early to be optimistic. It is possible, however that careful application of the more traditional measures especially control of recruiting may be sufficient to manage our numbers in the future. However, if further significant reductions are needed it may be necessary to resort to redundancy again but hopefully, this would be restricted to smaller, specifically targeted groups.

Recruiting

At a steady manpower state, we would try to recruit between 4,000 and 5,000 Officers and Ratings RN RM QARNNS male and female. However, we have had to restrict ourselves to the minimum number to keep the training machinery ticking over and to refresh the junior ends of the Officer and Rating plots. This means that in 1993/94 we are looking at a target of 386 Officers and 1,362 Ratings. Other Ranks (of whom 56 and 562 respectively are RMs) - less than half of the lower steady state figure.

We expect to be able to meet the numbers without too much difficulty. However, the continuing redundancy programme, besides affecting the morale of those already in the Service is presenting a less than favourable image to prospective recruits. It is a major concern that the perception of the Service amongst Parents and Teachers as a worthwhile career is being eroded. To counter this, DNR's limited publicity funds are being spent on longer term 'seed sowing' against the day when we will again want to turn up the recruiting tap. This strategy is so far proving successful in attracting interest from 14 - 16 year olds of both sexes but we must work hard to keep the RN and RM in the public eye and

prominent in the job market place if we are to turn interest into good quality recruits.

Amongst Officer candidates there is a clear trend towards more of them being graduates with a rise from 49% of last year's intake to 65% this year. We expect this trend to continue as a result of the growing pressure on young people to go on to higher education. Most encouragingly the quality of officer candidates is currently very high indeed, both Dartmouth (RN) and Lymington (RAM) see their latest entries as the best for many years.

Training

The trend towards greater use of higher education led to a decision this year to change the way we recruit and train our Engineer Officers, as you will note from the Manadon article on page 28. From Autumn 1994, Engineer Officer candidates will read for a degree at Southampton University instead of at the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon. It has proved increasingly non cost effective to maintain an in-house facility to provide first degree standard training for a declining number of students when the tertiary education sector is expanding fast, is attracting unprecedented numbers of applicants and is prepared to be flexible in tailoring first degree subject matter to meet the Navy's needs. Undergraduates will be formally sponsored throughout their time and be supported by an enhanced RN Unit at the University with its own sea training craft. On graduating, young officers will join BRNC Dartmouth for common Naval Training along with their Seaman and Supply officer colleagues. This scheme will also apply to suitable candidates from the Lower Deck (Upper Yardmen).

Elsewhere in the Training environment the quest for efficiency is fierce. The Training Strategy of 'just enough, just in time' reported in last year's Broadsheet is still valid. However, the training machine is currently under utilised because fewer recruits are entering. With a smaller Navy predicted work is progressing to define a new optimum capacity for our training infrastructure which should allow substantial savings to be made but still build in sufficient surge capacity to take account of the need to regenerate larger forces at some stage in the future. Speculation on more establishment closures is idle and it is true to say that no stone is being left unturned; however, no decisions are expected until the early part of 1994. It is worth noting that since 1982, the RN has closed 7 out of 22 of its Training Establishments, with a view to rationalising the defence estate.

WRNS

The WRNS was formally integrated with the RN on 1 November and this is covered more fully in the article on

page 13. Regrettably some details of the proposal found their way into the media before we would have wished but the Navy Board sees the move as a natural conclusion to years of increasing opportunities for women in virtually all areas of the Service. What sad to see the loss of the separate WRNS, it has become increasingly anachronistic to maintain a separate service for women who, in everyday life and work operate on an equal footing with their male counterparts. Despite scaremongering reports in some parts of the media we are sure that this move is completely in the best interests of both men and women in the Service.

Merger of Second Sea Lord and CINCPACVHOME

Broadsheet 92 reported the planned merger of these two Headquarters which is designed to place the responsibility for all aspects of training under one Navy Board member. Progress has been swift and to plan, and a new Headquarters building - the VICTORY building - has been constructed by Warrings in Portsmouth Dockyard and is currently being fitted out with computer networks and other up to date facilities to accept the first occupants in January 1994. Vice Admiral Sir Michael Layard, the current Second Sea Lord, will receive Admiral Sir John Kerr as CINCPACVHOME in April 94 in the rank of Admiral, and will become the first combined Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command. The new CINC will continue to fly his flag in HMS VICTORY.

The Bottom Line

In all this work the Navy Board's priority is unquestionably to preserve the high quality training and the Service Conditions environment which makes our people the potent force they are. Time and again the Board receive unsolicited testimonials reporting the outstanding quality of our people. Even in the most unusual of circumstances - and a read of the article elsewhere in this issue on RN involvement in Cambodia will demonstrate how unusual circumstances can get! - our people at all levels come up trumps. This is partly due to our ability to attract good material in the first place but it is equally due to the training they receive at all stages of their careers and to the conditions of service they can expect to enjoy. These contribute to the sense of 'value' which an individual needs to perform with the confidence and skill we need in our very demanding business. With declining numbers of ships and personnel, it has never been more important to resist the temptation to save money by compromising our standards of training or conditions of service. Our people are today - as they have always been - the greatest single factor in any success we may enjoy. We expect them to go knowingly in harm's way and we must ensure that they are best prepared to acquit themselves well in that unforgiving environment. We owe it to them to see that they are well led, well trained and well motivated and this is our challenge for the year ahead.

WRNS - THE LAST OF THE LINE

by Commandant Annie Spencer WRNS Director WRNS



The Last of the Line - this was engraved on a beautiful glass goblet I was given recently by ex Directors WRNS when they were given a briefing on integration of the WRNS into the Royal Navy. Being 'The Last of the Line' makes one very conscious of the history of the WRNS and how much the Directors all did within their time to work towards integration a

gradual process that in reality has been happening for some years

gradual process that in reality has been happening for some years

The First of the Line' was Dame Katherine Furse she formed the Service in November 1917 to take over jobs ashore thus releasing a man for sea service'. They thought that no more than 10,000 women would be required and that these would be mainly cooks, clerks, writers and painters for trawlers! Having little guidance, except being given a Navy List, she went to the bookshop which produced King's Regulations for the Royal Navy. This solved her difficulty and KRRN became the Bible for the WRNS. As well as recruiting and producing the Regulations there was uniform. 'The choice was important to women. Certainly Dame Katherine chose well as the basic officers uniform is unchanged to this day. I have been amused to see the reason why we had blue lace; the Treasury forbade the WRNS to wear gold lace because of the wasting of gold. This was accepted because gold lace is definitely the prerogative of the man. Despite the Admiralty Board's appreciation of the WRNS and the rapidity in which the Corps was organised and brought to a high state of efficiency, the WRNS ceased to exist by order of their Lordships, on 1 October 1919. It had reached a peak of 5,054 Ratings and 438 officers.

In 1939, the WRNS was reformed. Mrs (later Dame) Vera Laughton Mathews was appointed as Director. The WRNS was initially part of the Civil Establishment but became part of the Naval Personal Services in April 1941. The scope of the work done by WRNS personnel continued to widen and the peak number was reached in September 1944 when there were 74,635 officers and ratings serving in 90 Categories and 50 Branches. As well as in this country, they also served overseas in many locations including Singapore, Australia, India, Ceylon, Hong Kong, South and East Africa and North West Europe.

Between 1945 and 1946 work went ahead on the peace time role of the WRNS with Dame Vera Laughton Mathews she retired in November 1946 and was succeeded by Dame Jocelyn Woolcombe. On 1 February 1949, the WRNS became a permanent service and an integral part of the Royal Navy although not subject to the Naval Discipline Act.

I joined the Service in October 1962. I suspect it was very much as organised by Dame Jocelyn and numbered some 3000 ratings and 230 officers.

I was initially at Duchess of Kent Barracks which housed most of the WRNS Officers and Ratings for the Portsmouth Area, who were bused daily to the Establishments. We all had to live in but the rules 'relaxed' in 1963 when Second Officers of 8 years seniority were allowed to live ashore! In addition to Duchess of Kent Barracks, I also served in the exclusive WRNS establishments at HMS DAUNTLESS, HMS TERROR (Singapore), and Furse House, London and went back in 1968 to close Duchess of Kent Barracks and supervise our move into HMS NELSON. By then the rules had relaxed further, we could live ashore and, of course, did so.

The 1970's were a great time of change, Commandant Mary Talbot, Director WRNS from 1973 to 1976, said "The WRNS was over administered. WRNS officers were looking outwards towards more Naval appointments and similar training to the Naval Officers, the WRNS Ratings too wanted to have equal responsibility with the sailor". During the 1970's WRNS officers appointing was transferred to DNOA(SW), WRNS Ratings drafting moved from HMS DAUNTLESS to HMS CENTURION, WRNS Officers Training moved from RNC Greenwich to BRNC Dartmouth, we came under the Naval Discipline Act in 1977 and in 1981 HMS DAUNTLESS closed and WRNS New Entry Training transferred to HMS RALEIGH.

Studies into the WRNS and the RN continued but perhaps the study that was to have the most radical effect on our employment was HEADMARK 2000. This looked at the medium to long term future of the Royal Navy and stressed that unless we took special action, we would be running into manpower difficulties in the 1990's. Another initiative was that the Navy should look into the widening of opportunities for women.

This led to another study team in 1989 which recommended that women should serve at sea, but not in ships liable to be involved in direct combat. As a result it was recognised by the Navy Board that because of the indiscriminate nature of modern war at sea that in the

maritime context, there could be no distinction between combatant and non combatant ships. The decision that WRNS personnel should be allowed to serve at sea followed and was announced in February 1990. As CSO(A) to Flag Officer Plymouth at that time, I was asked to read out the signal to all WRNS and WRNA personnel. I think perhaps with as much surprise, if not shock, as my audience.

As well as Director WRNS, Commandant Anthea Larken and her team, there was also a WRNS Sea Service Implementation Team (WSSIT) initially headed by Captain (now Rear Admiral) Tim England and then Captain John Marshall. The joint teams initially had an enormous PR load as well as arranging for a selected number of suitable ships to be mixed manned by the end of 1990. The number of Officers and Ratings could not be defined as it depended on 'in service volunteers.' Some 300 opted for sea service but with no defined roles at this stage, or even what sea service meant. The main phases that the Implementation Team took forward were:

- a. Establishing the conditions of service for sea going WRNS Officers and Ratings; pay and allowances (and in April 1991 the abolition of the X factor)
- b. Integrating WRNS Officers and Ratings training with the RN
- c. Identifying ships for conversion and putting work in hand to prepare them for mixed manning
- d. Arranging manning, appointing and drafting. For serving WRNS officers, giving them the opportunity to volunteer for sea service and specialise as X, E, S or I in full competition with RN officers, or to elect to be 'parented' by the specialisations or remain a non specialist 'W'.
- e. On 1 December 1990 WRNS officers adopted RN Rank titles
- f. In January 1991 the General and SD lists were opened to women
- g. Also in 1991, employment as aircrew in ASW and



Nostalgic uniforms

AEW helicopters and Sea Harrier aircraft was opened to female officers and ratings.

I took over as Director in March 1991, soon after Captain Marshall left, and I became the Head of WSSIT without engineering expertise until September 1991. Commander (now Captain) Bill Harris had to almost renegotiate the reft programme, as various departments considered it was still a 'trial'. Another area to receive attention was feedback from the ships on the need for more defined rules, regulations and uniform. We were also inundated with media interest - and this continues.

In April 1992, gold lace, gold and red badges were adopted as approved by Her Majesty The Queen. This was followed by the approval to wear swords on specific occasions.

a. BRNC passing out parade - the only time when skirts are worn when carrying a sword

b. On board ships for ceremonial occasions

c. When Officer of the Guard in shore Establishments

Other changes followed:

a. From Dec 1992 examinations became common for RN and WRNS Ratings

b. Gender Free Schemes of Complements were introduced from Jan 1993. Within the constraints of accommodation, the most suitable person, branch/category is appointed to a ship, a manual exercise dependent on bunks available which needs careful management

d. Uniforms, after comment we have now had designed uniforms for women at sea, some are on trial and some await trial. They are intended to be practical, smart, feminine and complement the RN uniform

Other stages of integration outstanding were a requirement to look into:

a. **The Submarine Service.** Despite recent press reports the FOSM study had concluded that whilst in principle there is no objection, there are current accommodation constraints to employing women in submarines. This subject will be revisited in 5 years time

b. **Commando Forces.** The Royal Marines are studying, jointly with the Army, the potential for gender free physical testing and training with a view to opening further areas of employment to women wherever possible. Female musicians have joined the Royal Marine Band Service since 1991

The Way Ahead

Royal approval has been given for the WRNS formal integration into the Royal Navy. WRNS officers and Warrant officers will have a 'W' suffix for practical purposes, and the Wren title for WRNS ratings from Chief Petty Officer Wren to Junior Wren will be retained, in view of our history. HRH The Princess Royal will continue her association with the Service in the rank of Rear Admiral

With no Director WRNS, the senior serving female officer in the United Kingdom will become the Tribal Chief and have a title in line with the RN specialists, although not entirely the same in professional terms. She will be supported by a

female Commander on Director Naval Service Conditions staff who will have an input to all matters concerning women in the Royal Navy, her title initially will be Staff Officer (Female Focus).

As I write the following will be as described:

a. **Association of Wrens.** No change, membership is open to all female officers and ratings.

b. **WRNS Benevolent Trust.** This will continue as a Trust for Officers and Ratings for at least 50 if not 70 years. The legal implications once the WRNS is integrated with the RN has still to be addressed

c. **The WRNS Church St Mary le Strand.** This will be The Wrens Church St Mary le Strand. It will continue to hold the WRNS Book of Remembrance for all WRNS Officers and Ratings who have died in service

The above looks easy with clear cut decisions, it has not been easy, there have been casualties. WRNS only branches with no sea liability are being phased out with the Defence cuts despite their expertise, and many WRNS officers who were keen to serve at sea realised that with their seniority they could not catch up with their male peers. We have also had changing EC rules on pregnancy and single parents

There are difficulties with total integration but the majority of WRNS personnel feel it is the right way to go, and have accepted the changes and continue with their work, at sea and ashore in an exemplary way

Women see their time in the Royal Navy today very much as a career, just as the men do, however, although not totally appropriate in this context, I would like to leave you with this lovely quote from part of Dame Vera Loughton Mathews favourite speech which she made when visiting departing WRNS personnel during the Second World War.

"Our lives are going to be wider and deeper because of all we have learnt in the Service. And when peace comes you will take your place in civilian life to such good purpose that people will say **Well, you see, she was a Wren**".

