

MERCURY'S FIRST FLEET CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS



Standing—left to right: FCRS A. D. Shuker, FCRS(W) D. Blackwell, FCRS D. L. Alderson, FCCEL F. J. Wright

Seated—left to right: FCRS M. J. Matthews, FCCY P. W. Kitchin, FCRS W. G. Bernard, FCCY D. Counihan

have served for at least three years as Chief Petty Officers, or, in the case of the technical branches, Chief Technicians. Candidates will be considered by selection boards, which will take account of their Service records and look for the very best men. The accent will be on ability, not seniority.

Fleet Chiefs will be addressed as 'Mr' by their superiors and 'Sir' by their subordinates or in the case of WRNS 'Miss' or 'Mrs' and 'Ma'am' as appropriate. They will mess with Chief Petty Officers.

The first holders of the new rate in the Communications Branch are shown in the photo above.



INTRODUCTION OF NEW HIGHER RANK FOR NAVAL RATINGS

THE WARRANT OFFICER

by The Editor

The Navy Department announced the intention to introduce a new higher level for ratings: the Warrant Officer. This new rate will be the highest in the rating structure. It will be available to both male ratings and Wrens. The ratings, who will be the equivalent of the Warrant Officer Grade I in the Army and the Warrant Officer in the Royal Air Force, will be known as Fleet Chief Petty Officers; *eg*, Fleet Chief Radio Supervisor/Fleet Chief Communications Yeoman.

The new rate differs from the former rank of Warrant Officer, which ceased to exist in the Navy in 1949, in that its members will continue to be ratings rather than officers. They will be employed principally on managerial tasks in billets that are now held by Chief Petty Officers where the duties are of a particular high standard. They are likely to have to accept yet higher and wider responsibilities as the Navy's management systems continue to be developed.

Warrant Officers will serve for five years longer than the 22 years from age 18 which is the normal maximum for ratings. Apart from appropriately higher rates of pay and pension they may be given various privileges consistent with their status, such as more relaxed control of their shore leave. They will wear the same uniform as Chief Petty Officers but with special cap, collar and arm badges (see photos in next column).

To qualify for the new rate men will have had to