

MINUTE SHEET—

Page No.

Subject:— Fleet Chief Petty Officers.

Referred to:—

(Officers are requested to make their remarks in the form of a suggested letter or outline)

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I understand that reports are being called for to collate the various comments and observations regarding Fleet Chief Petty Officers. It was my intention to produce my observations after a period of 6 months following promotion. However, since the discussion is taking place today, the following comments may be of interest.

1st. Terms of Reference

1. Terms of Reference

After some initial hiccups, the use of 'Sir' and 'Mister' in the correct manner is improving. It is understandable that it will take some time before we get it right, but there is still room for improvement from both Officers and ratings. The difficulties arose because 1-

- (i) Junior ratings were generally not aware of the new rank and the terms of reference.
- (ii) Fleet Chief Petty Officers were in most cases retained in the same ship/establishment and the majority were employed in the same jobs. They were simply 'promoted' as Sirs and Misters on one day and back in the files the next day.
- (iii) Officers and ratings have become used to the term 'Chief' and it naturally takes time to become familiar with the new terms of reference.

After Action

2. Uniform

Various comments have already been made and I understand that FONE Barrard is aware of most of them. My own view is that we still look like Chief Petty Officers. Whilst it is appreciated that there is to be no return to the old style Warrant Officer uniform we must surely prepare ourselves for the term 'Warrant Officer' to replace that of 'Fleet Chief Petty Officer'. In order to accomplish this I should like to see 1-

- (i) A four button jacket.
- (ii) Cuff buttons taken off.
- (iii) The royal Coat of arms worn on both sleeves in the case of Officers.

Disposal

3. Titles

The desire to replace the term Fleet Chief Petty Officer with 'Warrant Officer' is better. I am distressed at finding numerous official documents mixing together the titles 'Fleet Chief Petty Officers/Chief Petty Officers/Petty Officers'. I have seen the gradual erosion of the status and privileges of Chief petty officers over that of the petty officers, partly because of the continued use of the term Fleet Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers.

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4. Rank in Uniform

Whilst appreciating the difficulties in retaining privileges to Fleet Chief Petty Officers without adversely affecting those of Chief Petty Officers, there must be some serious thought given towards

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extending privileges to Fleet Chief Petty Officers in order to widen the gap between them and Chief Petty Officers. Suggested improvements in this area are contained in Annex Alfa.

5. Job Definitions

The introduction of the new rank brought its own problems as to the tasks and extra responsibilities that would be undertaken. It is clearly undesirable to build a job around the Fleet Chief Petty Officer but he has to fit in somewhere. His status is enhanced and can be measured by the amount of extra responsibility he undertakes. Furthermore, this improved status brings its own reward in terms of 'job satisfaction'.

The problem however stems from the fact the Fleet Chief Petty Officer is neither a Commissioned Officer nor a Chief Petty Officer, and yet, by the very nature of his job he carries out functions of both.

This precarious situation should be resolved once the functions and terms of reference are clearly defined. I have no doubt that in due course the Fleet Chief Petty Officer will fulfil a worthwhile role as the senior and expert of the middle management class and will become an established member of society in exactly the same way as his counterpart, the WO I in the Army and the Warrant Officer in the R.A.F.

6. Final Chief Petty Officer appointments

There are some minor problems to be clarified when a Fleet Chief Petty Officer is filling a complement billet in an appointment previously held by an officer. The irony of it all is that I as Divisional Officer for some 30 ratings and innumerable sign various documents from travelling expense claims to requests for separation arrears and yet technically my own expense claims could be signed by an Officer.

By intent I dispatched my voting form to be signed on the electors' request — without having it signed by an "attesting Officer". It has only occurred as being incompletely filled in.

Some of the minor problems are:—

- (1) signing for Confidential publications and equipment loan from the WO Office. Under the present rules, only an 'Officer' can do this.
- (2) participation in an audit as part of the Officers team.

7. Accommodation

Separate housing and accommodation for Fleet Chief Petty Officers is desirable but not essential. No doubt the cost would be prohibitive to provide it in existing buildings in shore establishments and in ships. However, there is no reason why this cannot be met in as a requirement for new construction ships and modernisation of shore establishments. They should certainly have their own day room/common room in shore establishments, where they can discuss the affairs of their ship and entertain their guests. Consideration should also be given to their having their own bar facilities in their own rooms.

8. Commissioned Officers' Mess

It is noted that during Divisions the Fleet Chief Petty Officer carries his sword. This is an old world custom that is retained in order to show his unique position of Military Coxswain.

After Action

Disposal

B.M.

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However, now that we are in an era of First Chief Petty Officers and will soon be in an era of Warrant Officers, I consider that the status of this new rank would be considerably enhanced if we were allowed to have the 18th style sword, particularly as we are being deployed on divisions as Officers in charge of platoons.

Alter Action

Disposal

B.U.

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(CONTINUE OVERLEAF)

ALFA Alfa

1. PCPO's should not appear on general muster lists (Sickbay requirements etc.). All such requirements should be dealt with directly between the sponsor and the CPO's Mess President.
2. PCPO's should be given every opportunity of having separate files for general administrative requirements (pay Office queries, Clothing Store etc.)
3. General documentation (e.g. Requests, Travelling Expenses etc.) should be modified for PCPO's in order to reduce the requirement for an Officers counter signature.
4. PCPO's on divisions and not being employed as Officers in charge of Platoons, should be fell in separately next to the un-attached Officer.
5. PCPO leave documentation (Leave requests, Car mileage claims, Leave passes etc.) should be overhauled drastically. Suggest that PCPO's should be allowed to deal direct with the Regulating Staff in order to have leave dates recorded on the Leave Entitlement Record card. This would also apply on return from leave, thus doing away with the Leave Request form and the return of the leave pass.
6. Uniforms.

In addition to paragraph 2 of the general comments, the following improvements are suggested.

The insignia of the Fleet Chief Petty Officer when dressed in Action working rig (No. 8's) or in 2B's or 2E's is not distinctive enough.

DCI 459/71 stated that the small metal Royal coat of Arms (vocab No. 35017) would be worn "in the same manner and with the same dress as for CPO's and PO's" i.e. that is, on the tie in 2E and 2B dress and on the collar of No. 8 and No. 10 dress. Because of the small size of this particular badge (similar in size to the CPO and PO collar/tie badge) it is impossible to identify a Fleet Chief Petty Officer at 20 paces and in particular when not wearing a cap.

The proposal is that the Royal Arms be worn on the shoulder with dress No. 2B, 2E, 8's and No. 10's :-

- (i) Using the metal badge on the shoulder of 2B, 2E and No. 10's.
- (ii) Using the Blue printed shoulder badges (vocab. No. 25826) with No. 8's.

These proposals will clearly require that Fleet Chief Petty Officers must have the Officers type white and No. 8 style shirts in order to make use of the shoulder straps.

The immediate advantages of using shoulder markings is that the PCPO/Warrant Officer is instantly recognised at distances or when in Offices in 2B or 2E dress without head-gear, because :-

- (i) Officers are still easily identified by their gold woven shoulder straps.
- (ii) Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers are easily identified by their metal badges on their tie or collars.

Therefore,

- (iii) Fleet Chief Petty Officers/Warrant Officers will be easily identified as the only ones who wear shoulder devices other than the Officers gold woven rings.

*D. X. Anderson.*

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