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The Commodore
Royal Naval Barracks
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29 Mar 72

MEETING OF FLEET CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS

1. At 1400 on the 16 March 1972 a meeting of the Fleet Chief Petty Officers borne on the books of the Royal Naval Barracks was held in the Conference Room. The meeting was chaired by Mr TEBB, Deputy Regulating Staff Officer. A total of 31 Fleet Chief Petty Officers were present.
2. The meeting was held in order to obtain the comments of those present on the recently introduced Fleet Chief Petty Officer rate and its effect on the Fleet Chief Petty Officers from their point of view. Commander GRATTON from the Staff of the Commodore Naval Drafting accepted an invitation to address the meeting. Commander GRATTON spoke of the introduction of the new rate; the problems that face the selection board and subsequent appointing. Commander GRATTON stressed the importance of including all relevant detail in submitted draft preference forms, in particular regard to the personal information, the lack of this information is a consistent thorn in the side of the drafting sections.
3. Questions from the floor to Commander GRATTON were as follows:-
 - a. Extension of Service Six Fives

Question: In the light of the recent signal regarding six fives for Fleet Chief Petty Officer, was there any reason why a man in category 'C' should not apply?

Answer: Certainly not. Final decision rests with the selection board and not the Ship's Office.
 - b. Promotion to SD Officer Rank

Question: Is it for consideration that there should be an avenue of entry to Officer Rank from Fleet Chief Petty Officer as in the other two services?

Answer: No. Not as far as I know.

4. Summaries of the discussion with the members of GRANTON are shown under the following sub-headings:-

- a. Job Satisfaction Several present said that they found that they were still employed in jobs that they did as a Chief Petty Officer and in some cases Petty Officer. It was represented that job satisfaction, especially at sea, was very difficult to achieve. A consensus of those present revealed that nine felt that they had achieved job satisfaction in their first appointment. Nine out of thirty-one is considered a low figure indeed.
- b. Status A general consensus of the opinion showed that twenty-six of those present felt that far from being increased in their status, they had remained static and some went as far as to say that they knew Chief Petty Officers who felt that their rate had been downgraded by one step.
- c. Responsibilities The members present agreed that as Fleet Chief Petty Officers they should accept greater responsibilities, particularly in the management field. However the majority felt that as well as shouldering greater responsibilities in their own departments and working longer hours, some were being given extra administrative tasks which meant little time was left for anything else other than to cope with the work in hand. It seemed to some of the Fleet Chief Petty Officers present that the new rate provided an excuse to increase the Officer of the Day's duty roster and similar tasks.
- d. Privileges One of the technical Fleet Chief Petty Officers present said that technical staffs were used to working hard when there was a job to be done (at sea or in harbour) and getting leave when the job was done. However they now found that additional Officer of the Day and Duty Departmental Officer duties on top of the extra work time was in fact restricting their leave.
- e. Title The majority of the floor felt that the title Fleet Chief Petty Officer should not have been used because, together with the lack of distinction of the present uniform this had added greatly to the difficulties experienced by the Fleet Chief Petty Officers first promoted and the introduction of what is a Warrant Rank. It was pointed out that the majority of Warrant Officers in the other two were referred to as Warrant Officer. It was also thought that the custom now evolved around junior and subordinate ratings using Mr BLOGGS Sir, as an introductory opening when addressing or reporting to Fleet Chief Petty Officers. A better system was thought to be that the Fleet Chief Petty Officer should be addressed as "Mister" by both seniors and subordinates alike, Sir being used by subordinates in conversation. The use of this title would ease the present problem in signing official documents as, if this system were introduced, the Fleet Chief Petty Officer would sign "Mister H J BLOGGS, FCPO".

Really!

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Nonsense

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f. Management Course The floor agreed unanimously that Management Courses, similar to that for Junior Officers, should be made a priority item for all Fleet Chief Petty Officers.

g. Accommodation It was observed that some ships and establishments had separate accommodation for their Fleet Chief Petty Officers, HMS EAGLE being an example. It is a fact that the other two services integrated thearrant Officer and Senior NCOs to one mess however separate lounge and recreation facilities existed for ararrant Officers. It is appreciated that the Navy lives in a different element and has different problems to the other services in respect of messing and any improvement in the accommodation of Fleet Chief Petty Officers must necessarily take time to implement.

5. It was at this point that Commander GRATTON left the meeting after having been thanked by the Chairman for his attendance and for the most useful and constructive information which he had imparted.

6. Items then discussed are shown under the following sub-headings:-

a. Uniform There was some dissatisfaction and discontent among all present with regard to the uniform for Fleet Chief Petty Officers in the initial introduction of the rating. The secretary informed the meeting that the Admiralty Board were actively progressing this item and were aware of the discontent with regard to it. Although no decision had been made public it was thought highly probable that the Chief Petty Officers buttons would be removed and other minor changes should be promulgated fairly soon. Several present asked if any additional grant would be made to replace uniforms spoiled by darned buttonholes etc. The Chairman pointed out that it could well be necessary for Fleet Chief Petty Officers to spend a little to maintain his own appearance, which was vitally necessary to keep up the appearance of the new rate.

b. Board Bulletin The Chairman drew the attention to all present to the latest Board Bulletin regarding the new services Discipline Act and the changes to be made when it was implemented in July. Only twelve present had seen or knew of the existence of this bulletin. The Chairman informed the meeting that the minutes of this meeting would be forwarded to the Commander of the Barracks and could well be used in the feedback to the Admiralty Board.

7. Reports and Assessments

It was felt by some present that a form of "flimsy" should be made on each Fleet Chief Petty Officer on termination of his appointment. This flimsy could then be presented to a Civil Employer and become a reference. It was considered that such a flimsy would give a prospective employer a better knowledge of the applicant than the History Sheet in its present form. Members

at the meeting pointed out that the recent directive from the Ministry of Defence, re Fleet Chief Petty Officer assessments had caused some to drop down two efficiency assessments, eg EXCEPTIONAL to SATISFACTORY.

8. Before closing the meeting, the Chairman asked those present if the meeting had served a useful purpose and if it had, should another meeting be considered for a later date. It was unanimously agreed that the meeting had been of benefit and another meeting was proposed in about 3 months time.

H TEBB
Fleet Master at Arms
Deputy Staff Regulating Officer

Copy to:
Commander GRATTON
HM CENTURION