

Flag Officer Carriers and Amphibious Ships

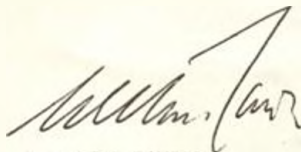
5 Sep 72

DUTIES OF FLEET CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS

- Reference: A. FOCAS' P.731/9 of 23 June 72  
B. CINCFLEET's 764/13.Q of 8 May 72  
C. FOCAS' P.731/9 of 19 June 72

1. Reference B has been read with interest and coincides with some activity and thought going on onboard. This letter sums up on the present situation. It is a bit of a "so what" letter, but is intended to serve as background against which proposals for change can be viewed.
2. It has always been understood that the introduction of the new rate would be an evolutionary process. The Fleet CPO's themselves are well aware of this, and are keenly interested in the developing role they are playing in the Fleet. In the early months they were very concerned with the incidental trappings of their new status, (uniform, marks of respect, privileges etc.); many of these problems still trouble them and need to be resolved, but they are now recognised as subsidiary to the real requirement to establish themselves properly as Warrant Officers. They are now over the initial hurdle, having firmly established their specialist positions within their departments, and their rank is now understood and accepted by the Lower Deck generally. However, they still feel they lack overall status in the hierarchy, such as they see enjoyed by their contemporaries in the Royal Marines and the Warrant Officers of the other Services, but as a relatively recent departure. They now clearly appreciate that achievement of such status can only be realised by greater acceptance of responsibility, which they are without exception eager to do.
3. It is appropriate to these comments to enclose a submission by one of my FCPO's onboard. Many of the points raised were subsequently covered in References B and C but I have no hesitation in forwarding it as an expression of their current views. Although considerable play is made of "No duties for FCPO's", in fact I do not believe that this is a general reflection of their views, as many FCPO's realise that they cannot hope to enjoy 'across the board' status in the ship unless they carry out some general duties onboard. This aspect of their employment is currently under review to see if a satisfactory solution can be found.

4. The Fleet Chief Petty Officers in BULWARK are all showing up well in the new rank and have carved their niche in their departments. They are conscious that they are not generally known around the ship outside their departments, and are keen to improve their image with the Ship's Company as a whole. Finding extra mural duties for FCPO's in a ship already overcomplemented with young (GL), (SL) and (SD) officers under training is no easy task: these officers also need experience which is provided by the "odd jobs", as well as outlets for their energy and enthusiasm. More particularly I believe it is important that the status of FCPO's should not be enhanced at the expense of the officers, especially those on the (SD) list. Herein I consider lies the root of the whole problem, because the evolution of the FCPO should properly be co-ordinated with an overhaul of the whole officer structure - the 2 problems cannot be considered in isolation, and at the moment there has been no significant change to the latter.



L R BELL DAVIES  
Captain, Royal Navy  
Commanding Officer

Copy to:

Commander-in-Chief Fleet