

YOUR SHIP



CHAPTER ONE

YOURSELF

AIM

The assumption of your first command is the greatest step you will ever take. It carries with it not only the responsibility of one of Her Majesty's Ships but the power to mould or mar the characters of a large body of men. It carries with it an historic tradition of dignity and privilege, and in return it makes demands on your skill and endurance, which have never before been asked, and which brook no failure.

This book takes for granted that you have the necessary attributes of leadership and knowledge to assume that command. It tries to make your first six months easier by giving you a mould into which to pour those attributes - a mould fashioned from the experience of many distinguished Commanding Officers.

COMMAND OUTLOOK

Your previous experience as a First Lieutenant, a specialist or a ship's officer will have been a valuable step to command. You may have mastered certainly one method of organising a ship; be competent in some aspects of tactics and warfare and have a great pride in the appearance of your ship. But whatever your background, your work will have been to a certain extent departmental. What do you as a Commanding Officer require over and above this outlook?

YOUR SHIP

First of all, you require to realise that, once appointed in command, no matter what rank you hold, you are the Captain; which means that you are the ship - that when a fender is left over the side it is your fender left over by your Officer of the Day; that when a Confidential document is mislaid by a Sub-Lieutenant, it is still your document; that when a seaman from your crew is seen wearing his cap flat-aback ashore, that seaman is reflecting a lack of pride in your ship; it is your bilge that is oily and your radar that is not tuned to peak performance, and that when you hit the tug and not the target with your first salvo it is your gunnery system that is wrong.

PERSONAL EXAMPLE

Next you require an increased awareness of your Personal Example. Few officers on assuming command realise to what extent their personality is mirrored in the ship. Every word that you say on the bridge, ops room or on rounds is noted by the ship's company. Every word you say in the wardroom is marked by the officers. A display of unwarranted temper, an unjust or over-hasty reprimand, a careless piece of shiphandling, an uncloaked show of anxiety, all these incidents will be reflected by your officers and men. Similarly, a disregard of danger carries courage to every corner of the ship.

Everything will not always go right for you and your ship. You will receive rebuffs and rebukes. It is at these times particularly that you must resist any tendency to become despondent; it is an essential part of your job to maintain a good ship spirit and this in large measure will be a reflection of your own attitudes.

Your example in the wardroom will be equally followed. A Captain who by his presence holds up meals for a considerable time and thereby wastes his officers' and his stewards' time, must expect an equal lack of consideration elsewhere. A Captain who is a consistently heavy drinker automatically encourages high wine bills. The competence of those officers whose heads are not as strong as his will accordingly be reduced.

AUTHORITY

As Commanding Officer, you should exercise a different type of authority to that used by a Head of Department. It might best be called a "directorial" authority. Whereas a First Lieutenant or Specialist manages and administers, a Captain supervises and directs. It is of course obvious that a few definite Standing Orders concerning the administration of a ship must be issued, but too many of these orders fetter the flexibility of good administration, and, worse still, a percentage of them slip into abeyance and often come to be disregarded, with a consequent bad effect on discipline. Similarly, if you are constantly sending for your officers and ordering them to take this or that precaution, or to carry out this or that improvement, and if you issue voluminous night orders, your officers come to depend upon you to think out all eventualities rather than doing so themselves.

SQUADRON

A Captain's outlook must embrace the ships with which he is in Company as well as his own particular ship. As a First Lieutenant or ship's officer your attitude to the rest of the Squadron or Fleet was naturally competitive. It was your pride to have the cleanest ship. You wished to carry off every trophy at sports and to win any weapon training competition going. Once again, as Captain you will have the same sense of pride, probably enhanced, but it is necessary to temper it with a broader view.

The Squadron or Division must act completely as a unit. Your loyalty to your ship should work in unison with your squadron loyalty, and never in antipathy. Some Commanding Officers, forgetful of this maxim, will unilaterally allow a number of leave privileges or engineer a mail speed-up for their own ship, quite regardless of the considerable damage it will do in the other ships, whose crews soon hear of it and will think that their own officers are letting them down.

By all means have the smartest ship in the squadron, but when it comes to benefits bestowed, see that they are bestowed on all the squadron and not only on your own ship. If you happen to be the Senior Officer present, it is essential that any "wangles" you arrange are dealt out in equal portions.

THE STAFF

Another new relationship will be that with the division, squadron, flotilla and Headquarters staffs. There is sometimes a tendency in the wardroom to make light of the staff, to treat them as inspectors and snoopers, denizens of "Sleepy Hollow". This is immature. The best ship is in harmony with the staff, and the best Captain is one who enjoys mutual confidence with the staff and readily seeks their advice. Without this attitude, there will be no squadron or fleet team-work or spirit and the efficiency of your ship will suffer.

FORESIGHT

You should develop the ability to look ahead and anticipate your senior officers' requirements. In war you should be geared up to catch out the enemy, and alert to prevent the reverse.

"MY PEOPLE"

The final essential outlook can best be summed up by referring to an old expression which has been nearly submerged in the hum of modern machinery. It was not so long ago that Captains referred to their ship's company as "My People". Whether you use that expression or not is immaterial; it is the feeling behind it that matters.

As Captain you have definite moral and paternal obligations to your ship's company. They look to you for absolute justice on board, they seek your advice and help in their family difficulties ashore.

As Captain, too, you have definite religious obligations, which are carefully laid down in the Queen's Regulations. It is your responsibility to encourage religious observance by those under your command and to see that all denominations have every chance to attend their separate churches.

Thus it can be seen that a broad outlook in every respect is required of an officer who assumes command.

TAKING OVER COMMAND

Before taking up your first appointment in command, you will normally do a number of short courses to acquaint you with the latest data, techniques and information concerning current tactics, your ship, machinery, weapons and crew. It is advisable to use this time also for some refresher reading on the more general aspects of command. (eg, "Fleet Classified Memoranda", Flag Officer Sea Training's "Notes for Commanding Officers", The Green Guide, and your predecessor's Standing Orders). In the early days of taking over command, it is unlikely that time for such reading will be readily available.

Traditionally, the turn over from one Commanding Officer to another is brief, and providing the regulations on supersession contained in QR(RN) are strictly applied, it is well that it should remain so. However, one chore that cannot be abbreviated is the supersession muster of Confidential Books. For your own good, this must be done thoroughly.

Once you have taken over, there are many points which will require your scrutiny and personal checking. Because you have taken over a happy ship with a good reputation, it is rash to assume that all is perfect. Your first days in command must be concerned with establishing where any weaknesses may lie, be they in management, material, organisation or individuals.

If you are fortunate, you will go to work-up shortly after taking command. You will have then the benefit of experts to probe each department and every aspect of the ship's life. However, it may well be that because you have taken over after the ship has been running for some months you may have to wait some time for a work-up or not do one at all. In this event, your own scrutiny is particularly important. Some of the more important items which should receive your early personal attention include :

- Machinery, weapons and equipment states
- Standing Orders
- Chart corrections
- Spirits and beer accounts and regulations
- Custody of Dangerous Drugs and valuable and attractive stores
- Handling of correspondence (including its Security)
- Security
- Training and advancement of Officers and Ratings
- Non-Public Funds
- Financial barometer of victauling account
- Fire Prevention and Damage Control

This list is by no means exhaustive, but is an indication of the wide variety to be covered. In none are you expected to be the expert : therefore do not hesitate to call in specialist advice or assistance from the staff. That is what they are there to provide, but often are not asked to do so due to a misguided belief that this would amount to "letting down" ship's officers.

Your scrutiny may be done on a "Spot Check" basis, but whatever way you may decide, you will learn much about your ship and ship's company by sending for people and documents and better still by getting about and seeing for yourself.

Remember that it is your duty to report to your Senior Officer any significant unsatisfactory aspects in your new command.

Avoid becoming overwhelmed by the secretarial side of your duties to the detriment of personal contact and operational efficiency. In order to maintain and correct some hundreds of secret and confidential books and documents whose loss might seriously affect your career, and to conduct the correspondence of your ship, you must rely on young officers with no secretarial training, who have many other duties and who work in offices which no business man would tolerate. The resultant anxiety will naturally be great, and you must needs give much initial supervision to your amateur secretariat. At the same time your first and foremost duty is to attend to the ship and you should keep a balanced

sense of proportion in this respect. There will be a great deal among your files of text books, orders, memoranda and tactical data to absorb before you can give full attention to the details of correspondence. And even these books should not keep you from acquiring an immediate knowledge of your ship and ship's company. In the hectic first weeks do not remain shut in your cabin surrounded by order books. You should always be accessible.

SOME PITFALLS

Having shown, then, that a change to a broader outlook is necessary on assuming command, it is worthwhile mentioning the pitfalls, which some of your predecessors have fallen into, so that you will be able to avoid them.

A ship which starts on a slack rein has soon to be pulled up and the process is disturbing and uncomfortable. A ship which is started on a taut rein can continue to give of its best and will appreciate some easing of the rein later on. Firm and fair treatment earns respect; a weak and "laissez faire" attitude may at first seem popular but it spells disaster.

Assuming command of a ship which is in Continuous Commission may be a bigger challenge than that of commissioning one from scratch. The technique is different whether or not your predecessor was well loved and efficient or in your view not as good as he might have been.

Beware of changing too much too quickly and without proper explanation. If you find that in your new ship there are regulations which have been ignored or malpractices tolerated you must re-introduce the correct procedures, but do so with care and imagination. You should explain to the ship's company with utmost clarity anything which seems to impose restriction of any sort and see that they understand the reasons. You should ensure particularly that officers and senior rates understand the reasons for each change. Make certain though that you are not making unnecessary changes merely to suit your own habits or alternatively shirking the duty of ordering an unpopular but important change.

One pitfall is an early tendency to burst into print at the slightest provocation. It may result from an excess of self-assertiveness, but it can be very aggravating to staff and senior officers. A number of Commanding Officers imagine that the high road to promotion is paved with daily letters commencing "The following suggestion is submitted". In nine cases out of ten all the ideas that you think of in your first six months have been tried before you joined. If therefore, you have any inspiration for the better prosecution of war, or the increased efficiency of your ship, it is worthwhile finding out verbally from the staff whether the idea is acceptable, or merely a discarded 'annual' before you send it in as your contribution to the prize for unnecessary paper.

Experience in the Fleet has shown that a large number of serious offences could have been avoided if the Captain's Standing Orders, particularly those concerning beer and spirits and the inspection of libertymen returning from leave, had been concisely written, and then strictly applied.

The supply, issue, security and accounting of beer and spirits need your keenest attention. Although the regulations for Senior Rates' bars are firmly established, opportunities for "fiddling" are enormous. This can only be prevented by the good sense of Senior Rates; and you should make the point clear. Although dishonest practices will eventually be bowled out, the consequences could be unfortunate not only to the individuals concerned (at least disrating), but frequently to their shipmates, and the Fleet. For these reasons, it is all the more important that you should approve the selection of Presidents of Messes and firmly reject unsuitable men. Supervising officers must check the accounts most carefully to prevent significant errors developing.

The prevention of serious cases due to libertymen under the influence of drink being allowed to commit themselves further needs not only concise orders but definite instruction to your duty officers. Cases occur when libertymen return onboard under the influence of drink, and either because they are not inspected at all, or because of a misapplied leniency on the part of the OOD they are allowed to go to their messes, where having lost the mastery of their respect and reason due to drink, they commit some crime such as striking or insubordination, which they would not have done under normal circumstances. For this reason your orders should lay down that either the OOD or Duty PO are to be on the upper deck during the main period of return of libertymen. Impress on all duty officers that a man returning onboard under the influence of drink should be put under a sentry's charge primarily in his own interests, and the interest of his messmates. (Protective custody is not a punishment).

Before leaving the subject of orders remember that it is not enough to ensure that your orders are correct. You must insist that they are carried out.

The availability of a 'spirit bar' in a Senior Rates Mess will increase the risk that some may run of being found drunk onboard after returning from ashore. A combination of strict control of bar hours and keys, the OOD's awareness of this risk, and the sense of responsibility of the great majority of the Senior Rates in not continuing a good run after returning onboard, are all important factors in avoiding such excesses.

If a man is brought before the OOD when in a highly excited condition, consideration must be given to putting him below in preventive custody. If he is placed in the First Lieutenant's Report and told to carry on, he may well aggravate his offence due to a sense of aggrievement and to his state of excitement.

Another pitfall of your early days in command is to live in the

past and not in the present. If you have been a First Lieutenant there is an inclination to "revert to type" and interfere in your own First Lieutenant's job. He will appreciate your advice on matters of internal administration, and if he is inexperienced certainly at first you must "monitor" his activities, but he will resent a stream of detailed instruction. If you have specialised, there is a temptation to range over the ground familiar to you rather than to cover your whole demesne with a balanced eye. It may enhance your confidence, but it will destroy the confidence of others.

Not all pitfalls occur in the first lap. Although ship handling may cause you anxiety for the first few months, the most dangerous period for the new Captain is when "confidence" first sets in. Before this you have been improving steadily, until you have finally become in your own mind the traditionally brilliant and dashing small-ship Captain. Your ship responds to your "aids" like a polo pony. The forethought you originally put into going alongside somehow no longer appears necessary. A touch astern will remedy an early misjudgement. Then the crash comes. The ship's company may appreciate your period in dock, but the Commander-in-Chief will not. Learn quickly to make the best use of wind and tide, and don't forget to adjust your plan if any factor should change before it is executed.

The final and most important temptation which confronts every Commanding Officer is the same as that which has brought so many dictators to a sticky end. "Power corrupts" is a dictum which does not only apply to politics and government. As a Commanding Officer you are an autocrat, and you are subject to the same temptations as an autocrat. No one in your ship is in a strong position to check your excesses, or object to your eccentricities; no one is very likely to disagree with your more downright assertions; everyone must endure your temper and tolerate any other foible you may develop. You are treated with deference and ceremony. You may even find that your small jokes appear more successful than they have been in the past.

This has the effect of accentuating your weaknesses, unless you watch yourself most carefully. Only some candid and regular self-examination will keep you in balance. The forces which converted BLIGH into a tyrant, though perhaps less evident, are still extant. BLIGH was in many ways a good officer; he was efficient and a competent seaman; he possessed great courage and powers of endurance; but he had insufficient strength of will to repress two instincts, which are normally cured in youth - unbridled temper and sadism. The modern laws of the Navy rightly do not tolerate a practical application of the latter, but do not forget that it is within your power to cause considerable mental anguish to your younger officers by sarcasm or contempt. After the strain and fatigue of command in war, emergency operations or long exercises, it is quite as easy for some to submit to malicious teasing as it is for others to give way to undignified temper and intolerance over trivial irritations. Nobody is going

to point this out to you. In all officers, but above all in Commanding Officers, the word Officer and Gentleman should be synonymous.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown you how your outlook must broaden on assuming command ; it has also shown you some of the pitfalls. It has made no attempt to define the perfect Captain, for such an attempt would entail a long catalogue of abstract qualities, which have never yet been invested in one man. Just as there is no one stereotype of Captain ; happily there are many different styles of Command.

In conclusion, however, and in introduction to the next chapters, here is an extract from a letter written by John Paul Jones to the Naval Committee of Congress in 1775, on which every Commanding Officer today could well base his conduct.

"Coming now to view the naval officer aboard the ship and in relation to those under his command, he should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention or be left to pass without its reward, if even the reward be only one word of approval. Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate though at the same time he should be quick and unfailing to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetency, and well-meaning shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder. As he should be universal and impartial in his rewards and approval of merits, so should he be judicial and unbending in his punishment or reproof of misconduct."

CHAPTER TWO

YOUR OFFICERS

RELATIONSHIP

A Captain's relationship with his officers has been by tradition formal. When on duty this relationship is obviously the correct one. If on the other hand you adopt a stiff attitude on all occasions, you are sacrificing one of your chief duties in your ship.

Each one of your young officers is in his formative stage. He requires advice on almost every subject. The old system of a punctilious rebuke every month, and a punctilious commendation every "flimsy" does not satisfy his needs. He has often nowhere else to look for advice and inspiration except to you. You cannot give the best advice to a man standing to attention in your cabin, but you can often give it in the wardroom in general conversation, or when dispensing hospitality in your cabin, and often without his consciously knowing it.

In a frigate the Captain does not live in the wardroom and usually only eats there where separate messing cannot be provided in the smallest ships. He has a comfortable day cabin of his own in which to sit and eat, but is customarily invited to be an honorary member of the wardroom. How often the Captain visits the wardroom is a matter of personal choice, but it should be remembered that his continued presence is bound to have a somewhat restricting influence, as is exemplified by the custom that the officers stand when the Captain comes into the mess. A Captain should therefore be careful not to outstay his welcome, but equally he must keep in touch with his officers and visits to the wardroom will help to achieve this. Particularly in small ships the ability to preserve the dignity of command without pomposity is an art which some may have as a natural gift, but the wise officer will note that this aspect is one to which the most successful have paid the most attention.

Whether or not you call only your more senior officers by their Christian names, and this is a matter of personal relationships, be consistent, or officers addressed only by their surnames will be quick to notice the difference even though it is not intended.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Your relationship with your First Lieutenant is of paramount importance to the successful running of your ship. He is your Second-in-Command, and must be employed as such and prepared for command. Ideally, it should be possible for him to take on where you left off, suddenly and without a turn-over. From the outset, therefore, he must be kept informed by reading ship's correspondence and by frequent exchanges of news and views with you. You should take care to explain the reasons for your decisions at the Defaulters Table in case he is in any doubt. Equally, it is important that he keeps you informed of what is

going on ; of the feelings that are being generated in the wardroom or on the messdeck ; of anything that will give you a better feel for your ship and the ship's company. He must remember that he is not just the head of the seaman department but the second in command with a broad across the board outlook.

Similarly, you must allow your First Lieutenant opportunities to handle the ship, to refresh his bridge and Operations Room experience, and see that he is involved in tactical situations.

Although your First Lieutenant may be an experienced Naval Officer he may still be feeling his way as the executive officer. In the early stages, he must learn his own job before he can start learning yours ; he may require your advice frequently and he will always require your complete support - nowhere more completely than in his capacity as President of the Wardroom Mess, particularly if he has the potential embarrassment of having officers some years senior as mess members. (It is wise for you to keep an eye on mess bills as well as wine bills ; expenditure can soon get out of hand and it is difficult to get it back to normal again).

ENGINEER OFFICERS - MEO and WEEO

Apart from the 'operator' duties which they and their departments undertake, the whole aim of your Engineers is to maintain your ship in the highest possible state of material efficiency. The environment of a ship at sea is basically hostile to this aim which therefore requires unremitting effort - and time. This latter requirement may occasionally pose a conflict between your wish to press on (and theirs, for they are no less jealous of your ship's reputation for being on station than you are) and their professional advice.

The decision in such cases is yours. While your interest in the problem must be manifest, your decision must be based, not on any attempt on your part to match their judgement of the technical pros and cons, but on your judgement of the officers themselves - of their experience, their professional and managerial skill, and of any tendency they may have towards over-cautiousness or the reverse, and on your judgement of the priorities at the time. It may sometimes be necessary to overrule technical advice. Of course if your decision proves to be wrong the responsibility is again yours. You will need time to reach these judgements. Until you have done so - and even afterwards - you will do well to ensure that your Engineers make full use of all the external advice that is available - from Captains Fleet Maintenance, from your Squadron Commander's staff, from Fleet Staff or even from other private ships in company. Do not overlook the fact that their attention is inevitably focussed more than most *within* the ship (particularly the MEO's). On detached duty, problems can thereby tend to be magnified, and opportunities to make contact with other ships and authorities should not be missed.

There is one other point that you should remember about your Engineers. Like the rest of your officers they are required to make a major professional, as well as a managerial input, to the work of their departments. More than most, however, they are required to maintain this input without pause whether your ship is at sea, in harbour or in refit. Indeed the pressures that build up on your Engineering Departments towards the end of refit and in the subsequent trials period can be excessive; at this time they will need your fullest support and you must be wary lest they allow themselves to be run ragged by their zeal to hold an Operational Date in the face of cumulative refit delays.

SUPPLY OFFICER

In a frigate probably one of your youngest Heads of Department will be the Supply Officer who will have come directly to you from his Charge Course. He has a great deal of personal responsibility for accounts, especially the Cash, and must be given adequate time to attend to this detailed duty before being given tasks outside his Department. In many ships his normal 'outside' task is that of Flight Deck Officer, and subject to his 'S' work load he can also be OOD and take charge of a Non Public Fund (not the Wardroom Accounts). An overworked Supply Officer means that he has to place more reliance on his subheads of department and this has been known to lead to a 'crumbles'. In addition to watching his work load, you can help to avert this by not signing certificates blindly. When you sign the ledger certificate read what it entails and ask to see the actual ledgers. A casual look at all accounts often reveals something, even to the untrained eye. The very fact of sending for the account supporting a particular statement, eg, the S82, helps him and of course the staff lower down the scale to keep abreast of their work.

Do not forget that another of the Supply Officer's important duties, the catering, is a major factor contributing to well-being onboard. Nowadays food standards in ships are usually maintained at a high level, but these standards are only achieved by hard work and constant attention. The catering department should be flexible and able to provide meals or snacks at unusual times as dictated by the operational programme. You yourself should take an active and lively interest in this aspect of the Supply Officer's duties, and it is as well to sample the food occasionally yourself.

FLIGHT COMMANDER

Your Flight Commander will probably be the last officer to join the ship. By the time he arrives the other officers will have already begun to behave as a team. He will also be ashore with the flight for periods during dockings and maintenance and for training. Thus it is easy for everyone, including himself, to regard him as a part time but separate attachment. However, you should ensure that he is fully integrated into the ships organisation and that he plays a full part in duties both at sea and in harbour within the limits of his flying programme and level of general training. This equally applies to the whole of the flight. If you

are not an aviator the Flight Commander may be the only source of advice on a department or field of activity in which you have least experience and you may have to lean heavily on this advice.

OFFICER COMMANDING ROYAL MARINES

Your OCRM will have had little naval training and may never have been to sea before other than in an amphibious ship. Nevertheless you should accept him as any other General List Officer and he should be given the opportunity to get a watch keeping ticket. His training and interests make him a candidate for diving, sports, and flight deck officer, but it is wise to remember the conflict with these duties when the detachment lands. He is your military adviser. Many of the NCO's and marines will be volunteers for frigates and some will have served at sea before, but there will be several who may not relish service out of a commando and will also know little to start with. Experience shows that marines learn quickly and become good seamen. The detachment Sergeant Major, who will probably be a sergeant but with considerable seniority and experience, is a special individual who will be proud of his position and rightly so.

The detachment must be fully integrated into the ships company, but it should be given as much opportunity as possible for military training, both onboard and ashore, otherwise efficiency and morale will deteriorate. Marines are essentially soldiers with a knowledge of the sea.

DELEGATION OF DUTIES

As has been previously stressed, the Commanding Officer of a ship should direct and supervise. You will be judged as a Captain, (with the exception of ship-handling), not on what you do yourself, but on what you inspire others to do. Your ultimate aim should not be indispensability, but the very opposite - to know that your officers will automatically reflect your will without any verbal direction from you. Such a state of affairs, however, can obviously not be attained in a short time. Everything you delegate must naturally be supervised by you, until you reach the great day when supervision is unnecessary. Until then you should not be content until every officer can achieve whatever task is set him as well as you could in similar circumstances yourself. Thus an untidy official letter, a large 'cocked hat', a boat's engine that doesn't start first time, a PPI not correctly set up, the ship out of station, these things must obviously not be tolerated. It must be made quite clear that when you delegate, you delegate perfection. When an officer realises that you have got to the stage where you can trust him without having to "check his fixes", then he himself has got half-way to command.

You must have a clearly laid down drill to cover the possibility of your absence, unexpected or otherwise. Whether this is for a short time and the First Lieutenant or Officer of the Day takes over temporarily or whether a permanent relief is appointed, your "successor" must be able if necessary to get at the dangerous drugs, safe combinations, charge documents and personal records,

and all the other things that a Commanding Officer keeps in his personal care.

CO-ORDINATION

There is often friction in small ships between departments. Parochialism is a very human failing. You should aim to smooth out difficulties between departments. You should give equal consideration to all departments, whether upper deck, air, engine room, Supply or Weapons Electrical; when praise is due, ensure that it is awarded in the right proportions to departments that have deserved it. When orders are suddenly changed and you inform your First Lieutenant do not forget that he should be trained to inform all other heads of departments immediately. In any case where this is appropriate, and it usually is, you should also do so personally. The relationship between you, your First Lieutenant and your Heads of Departments is a nice one. Your First Lieutenant is second-in-command and as such is chairman of the Heads of Departments. They are responsible directly to you for their departments but in some matters their responsibility is through the First Lieutenant. You must see that these relationships remain harmonious.

OFFICERS OFFENCES

Earlier in your career you may have had to deal with the misdeeds of ratings; it may now be your lot to have a ship's officer fail in his duty or behaviour.

A study of court martial returns and a catalogue of loggings in the past, showed that the great majority of offences committed by officers were caused directly or indirectly by drink; today the chief offences appear to be connected with money or loss of CBs. Nevertheless, there are today many cases of offences such as neglect of duty or misbehaviour caused by drinking too much.

For this reason it is best to dwell first on this subject. As mentioned before, it is your personal example as Commanding Officer that "calls the tune". That you yourself may be able to drink without apparent effect is unfortunately not enough, for in all things your officers will try to copy you. Officers have been ruined for life by getting into a habit of drinking when young, often due to the bad example set by their seniors. Assuming, however, that your own particular example is good, you may still find yourself in a position where one or two of your officers continue to drink too much. You must therefore be clear about the law.

QR(RN) directs the Commanding Officer "to limit or stop any wine bills which he may consider excessive or extravagant, having regard to the description of liquor consumed and the amount of hospitality exercised". This is the only regulation which may govern the degree of drinking in wardrooms. However, there are two excellent customs which are worth perpetuating. The first is that little is drunk at sea, and the second that no officer should stand another officer of his own ship a drink. It is a good practice

to include the rule and customs in your Standing Orders so that all officers may be aware of your views. You must not hesitate to warn individuals who are drinking to excess.

A few officers regrettably have a tendency to be free with Government property for their own purposes, without apparently any feeling of guilt. You must set an example and not show by word or action that you would condone any misapplication of Government stores for private use, however small or apparently valueless the item may be. If officers firmly eschew such conduct their attitude will have a good effect on ratings who may be tempted to petty theft.

Another offence by officers which can be prevalent is deliberate smuggling, or a blatant though sometimes ignorant disregard of the Customs Regulations. Again, you can do much by meticulously observing the rules yourself, and being seen to do so.

Junior officers sometimes go absent without leave and have been known to desert. In many cases this can be equated with "running away from school". At least the causes and symptoms may be similar. You may be able to nip this in the bud by having a fatherly chat with a young officer who appears unhappy. It may be enough to let him unburden his problems, but if he indicates that he wants to leave the service you should explain the official way of doing so. Such an interview is not likely to be easy, so you should choose your moment and prepare yourself with care.

Other offences which your officers may commit are almost invariably due to inexperience or youthful carelessness. In such cases, an exact and concise representation of their errors to them in private, showing the causes and derogatory effect on the ship, is enough to prevent repetition in all but the most thick-skinned. Assist the inexperienced, but be ruthless with the incompetent.

Some young officers will be influenced by the laxness of the "permissive society". Although the Navy is moving with the times and dispensing with some of the trivial trappings of discipline, there is no room for any permissive society in a warship. Loose moral behaviour is anti-social in the close quarters of a ship, and anything less than firm discipline, obedience to orders and respect for superiors can endanger the ship or render her unfit for her task.

THE TRAINING and INSPIRATION of OFFICERS

Every officer in a ship is continually undergoing initiation - in the case of seamen officers preparation for command. Therefore the inspiration of young officers to the high standard of loyalty, leadership and consideration, which you already possess, and the developments of his general naval knowledge are one of your most important duties.

To take the attribute of loyalty first; so many young officers misconstrue the full meaning of this word that you should

understand it's true significance. Loyalty is "two-way". Loyalty to the Captain is not enough. It should be bestowed equally on seniors and juniors. Similarly, a Commanding Officer who is disloyal to his men - who "passes the baby" instead of "taking the weight" - should in justice expect an equal lack of loyalty from his junior officers. The fact that he generally gets back a good deal more than he deserves is due to the inherent loyalty of officers and ratings and should not blind him to the real meaning of loyalty.

On the subject of loyalty to seniors, it will well pay you early in your command to impress on officers the danger of indiscreet and idle chatter in the wardroom concerning their seniors. "I dread not the men", wrote St. Vincent in a letter to Nelson. "It is the indiscreet, licentious conversation of the officers which produces all our ills". Similarly you should appreciate the effect of critical or cynical remarks if made publicly by yourself. Many experienced captains use their second-in-command as a confidante to discuss privately their doubts, should these arise, and thus clear their minds on policies and orders received from their seniors.

Leadership, requires no introduction. Your officers will improve theirs by following your personal example, and because you will, it is hoped, give them every chance to exercise it. But remember that this is a subject about which no one can be complacent. There is always so much to learn.

Consideration, however, is a quality which it is most necessary to stress. Officers must be continuously reminded of their duty towards their men. Consideration must become a habit - a way of living. There are some young officers who are so seriously concerned with their dignity that they mistake good manners for weakness and consideration for excessive humility. There are other officers who - nurtured in their technical or specialist schools - imagine that "nuts and bolts" must absorb their entire attention. Both types must be carefully guided back to the right track. Once again it is, of course, your own example which will set the high standard of consideration to the ship's company. To take one instance, as Captain you are fully entitled to order a boat at any time of the day or night, but as Captain you will not keep it waiting.

The ever improving standard of national education demands higher not lower standards in officers. Two hundred and fifty years ago it was possible for a Captain to starve his men, insult his Chaplain in public, desert his ship for months on end, and still rise to be an Admiral and a peer, as one little known 18th century Naval officer did. Today we should rest content to devote our thoughts to our ship's company, to our ship, and to serve as a junior officer and a commoner. At the same time, consideration should not be confused with wet nursing or avoidance of orders that entail unpopular tasks or instructions. The higher standard of education also requires a different form of discipline than used

to be the case : a discipline based more on the understanding of the reasons for certain orders and instructions than on blind obedience and drill. These facts are not immediately apparent to some young officers, and it is the Captain's duty to impress them most earnestly on all.

You are likely to have a number of midshipmen and other junior officers onboard, borne for training. Although they have a formal syllabus to complete, the greatest benefit they can gain is from their experience as young officers in leading, in getting to know their men, in doing responsible jobs, in finding out what makes a ship tick, why some officers are so successful and others less so. Close attention to their training and employment is a vital part of your duty. You should remember that Midshipmen are the Royal Navy's next generation and how important it is to their sense of purpose that they are received onboard warmly and that their treatment is related sensibly to their experience and background.

NOTES on TRAINING

The best training is not given formally but in the everyday running of the ship. There are often moments on the bridge and in the Ops Room at sea when an officer on watch is not fully occupied. On these occasions you can carry out or delegate a programme of personal training without his consciously knowing that he is learning. Often an innocently sprung question about, say, the action he should take in a given emergency will provide food for thought and effective instruction.

At the defaulters table it may be unnecessary to hear an OOW's evidence, but it is of value to him if you make a point of hearing it. To send for an officer at any time, and ask him his opinion of a rating, or his ideas on some suggested improvement, enhances his confidence and makes him realise that you depend genuinely on him. The same applies to Senior Ratings.

The officers should have access to Confidential Books and advice on which ones to read. There is no reason why a Commanding Officer should not extend his advice beyond the CB chest. Biographies and classics help an officer towards an understanding of his fellow men, and therefore towards command. In a lecture Lord Wavell said : "When you study military history don't read outlines on strategy or the principles of war. Read biographies, memoirs or historical novels."

REPORTING on OFFICERS

Accurate reporting on officers is very important. Confidential reports are required for two main reasons ; to consider suitability for promotion and to provide information on which officers are selected for appointments. Detailed information on how and when to report is provided in Queen's Regulations and on the cover of the S.206 form : suffice it here to say that reports must be complete, accurate and unambiguous : avoid clever or elegant phraseology unless you are certain that it is apt, and make sure

that your comments support your marking. It is sensible to obtain the opinion of the appropriate officer on the staffs of the Commander-in-Chief, Flag Officer or Squadron Commander/Captain (D) on the performance of your non-seaman Heads of Department, particularly on their professional ability.

UNSATISFACTORY OFFICERS

You may find that you have an officer who is inadequate professionally. All too frequently, officers are not told by their Captain of those faults which lie within their power to remedy, or alternatively they are not informed "during the commission" at a stage which would have given them an opportunity to make a correction. Whether or not these failures stem from lack of courage or misplaced kindness, the correct procedure must be followed and the officer clearly and unambiguously informed.

An officer may prove to be so unsatisfactory that you have to render a report out of turn recommending quarterly report, or, in drastic cases where an officer is performing a key appointment, removal from the ship and reappointment. If possible, you should consult the staff of Commander-in-Chief, Flag Officer or your Squadron Commander/Captain (D) beforehand.

Dealing with unsatisfactory officers and pointing out faults requires a high degree of moral courage and is perhaps one of the greater challenges which the Captain has to face. If ever you succumb to the temptation to duck this responsibility, you have failed as a Captain.

CHAPTER 3

YOUR MEN

RELATIONSHIP

There are some Captains, who, through lack of confidence, are so bent on maintaining their detached position that they dissociate their own personality entirely from that of their ships company. In doing so they are committing a psychological blunder.

Men who live together in the close company of a small ship need a corporate source of inspiration, some directive symbol to look to. The abstract symbol of Ship or Service does not fulfil this instinctive need. This feeling of trust and dedication must be vested in a person, and naturally that person should be the Captain. If, however, the Captain dissociates himself entirely from the minds of his men, each man will subconsciously seek some other source of inspiration. If he's lucky it will be a good leading hand. If he is unlucky it will be some disappointed cynic. In either case the ship stops being a community.

There are other Captains who feel that they must stoop to conquer, who are "one of the boys" in the wardroom, and imagine that they can lead their men with a constant display of brotherly and well-meaning familiarity; but even Paul Jones, who fought many battles in the name of democracy, was wise enough to state that naval captaincy was essentially aristocratic. Captains who stoop are disregarding the same psychological fact as those who completely dissociate themselves. A man wants to give his trust and service to a figure right above him, and not one on his own level. He prefers his Captain to hold a lofty position. If a Captain comes off this perch the men will be the first to try and put him back there.

The art of command is therefore to be the complete master, and yet the complete friend of every man on board; the temporal lord and yet the spiritual brother of every rating; to be detached and yet not dissociated. The basis of this art is to know your men and be known by your men. It may not always be possible to know each man personally, but as soon as a man realises that you know his name he begins to feel a member of the team you captain. You should certainly know your senior ratings.

As well as the acquaintance of your men, as individuals, you must know the "atmosphere" of the ship. You must be close enough in touch with your ship's company to know of any feeling or rumour in the ship which may be a bad influence; for it is your duty to dispel such impressions. While every effort is made by the Board of Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief to ensure that the Commanding Officer is the first to hear of any new regulations, changes of programme or conditions of Service, it does sometimes happen that a rumour of such a change reaches the ship's company first. Such cases should be dealt

with by clearing lower deck and giving the truth as far as it is known, or saying that enquiries will be made to find out the truth.

Some men are shy about putting in requests to see officers, and particularly the Captain. You must make it clear to the men that not only their Divisional Officers and Senior Ratings but you yourself will do all you can for their welfare. An instinctive desire in every man's mind is for security. If the sailors know that you are concerned about their well being both on board and at home you will have gone a long way towards getting a happy ship.

Good as the Divisional system is or can be, its success depends largely on the Commanding Officer's personal interest. A useful spur to Divisional Officers is for you to see a proportion of forms S.264 with the monthly books, and to see that they are up-to-date. Once or twice a year you should go through each man's papers with his Divisional Officer and discuss his progress. But beware of giving your Officers the feeling that you are trying to be a better Divisional Officer than they are. You must insist on the correct channels being used for requests and complaints to reach you via Divisional Senior Rates and Officers.

The men will also know you personally as the dispenser of justice. Although at Defaulters you are officially judging the other fellow, it is suprising how much judgement of yourself is going on at the same time. For this reason you must give infinite patience to your magisterial duties. It is often harder than you think to secure fair justice, because an innocent sailor may put his case so badly that he will appear culpable. Only your patience will enable him to clear himself.

The men will also know you indirectly in the way you handle the ship and exert your influence to bring the ship to a high standard - on the bridge, in the Ops Room or doing rounds. But it is during your talks to the ship's company that each and every man will come to know you best.

GETTING the IDEA ACROSS

A major failing in the country today is a lack of lines of communication between management and the "shop floor". This difficulty can exist no less in the Navy. There is no single way of "getting the idea across", but without doubt the most telling is to clear lower deck and talk to the ship's company face to face. Therefore you must look upon these talks as one of your most important actions.

The first point to realise on these occasions is that you are talking to a body of men, some of whom are more intelligent or more informed than others, and that it is the intelligent ones and not the dull ones who are going to criticise your speech afterwards. Therefore while talking in simple and un pompous language, you must never talk down. Neither imagine that you will get the best out of a ship's company which you never address at

all. Sincerity is vital. (Remember that it is valueless to perfect communications between yourself and your ship's company if your own line of communications between yourself, your senior officer and your C in C is not tuned to perfection).

An intelligent man wants both information and inspiration. The "Silent Skipper" of last century fiction, who in some way gained the devotion of his men by never uttering a word, will not be a success today. At the same time, a sailor does not want to be mustered to hear a succession of vague and longwinded discourses on nothing in particular. Neither does he enjoy false heroics or "flannel". When you talk, therefore, do it at a convenient time and place where everybody will hear. Make certain, also, that you have something quite definite to say, and work out exactly how to say it beforehand. If Winston Churchill had to rehearse all his speeches, there is no reason why you should not.

In your talks always speak of "we" instead of "you". That is the best way to avoid the "us-forward-them-aft" complex. Bring in all you can about ship's movements without compromising security and always keep your officers and men informed of programme changes as far in advance as possible. Beware of making rash promises about the programme. It may be better to say "we should be back in time for Christmas barring operational commitments/mishaps" rather than "we will be home for Christmas leave". Your programme can be broken down to a definite period, a probable period and one that is aimed for but liable to change. If you have been or are about to go into any operation or major exercise, explain all you can, thus engendering a wider outlook, greater interest and a feeling of trust in your senior officers.

There is, of course, no reason to restrict information to your immediate surroundings. Items of news of national or world-wide interest, naval news and developments, historical topics, a wide range of subjects can be covered, particularly if the ship is on isolated detached duty. Tell the ship's company as much as it is possible to do, so that they feel in your confidence. If anything err on the side of over doing it.

Use your talks to dispel any false rumours and to straighten out any distorted impression which the ship's company may have gathered. Napoleon saw the importance of this need, for he wrote: "If discourses are useful, it is during the campaign to do away with unfavourable impressions, to correct false reports, to keep alive a proper spirit in the camp, and to furnish the materials and amusements for the bivouac."

Finally, when addressing a ship's company, be yourself. You cannot consistently go on being someone else for the whole commission. The sailors want to be commanded by a character, not a character sketch.

After your talk, it is valuable to sample the response. You can do this through your First Lieutenant or Master-at-Arms

or Coxswain, and also by getting about yourself to ask questions and discuss topics with a wide cross-section of your ship's company, without of course making it obvious what you are doing. This may incidently provide you with useful clues on how you can improve your next talk. Another source of "feedback" is the Divisional Meeting which should be held at intervals of about a month, and provides a forum in which men can voice their views and queries. Such meetings are another valuable method of getting information to the ship's company and of ensuring that Divisional Officers and their Senior Ratings maintain regular contact with all the men in their Divisions.

RELIGION

On Sundays, if no church services are available ashore or in other ships, a short ecumenical service should be held onboard. If this is intelligently conducted, it can undoubtedly have a good effect, for it enhances the communal spirit of the ship. But just like your ship's company talks, your services must be carefully thought out. They must mean something to the ship's company, not all of whom necessarily know the meaning of religion. If it can be arranged, invite a Chaplain onboard to take your services. But in any case, if you select good hymns, apposite prayers and a lesson with some understandable moral or meaning, you should soon be running popular services. Some captains conclude with a few words on the coming weeks programme.

You should ensure that the First Lieutenant pays attention to the administrative details. The locale of the service must be private, otherwise people will feel embarrassed and not wish to come. Clearing out a mess deck to form into a church may be unavoidable in some ships, but can cause resentment particularly if it is always the same one.

TRAINING and INSPIRATION of RATINGS

A Captain may well feel that the training of a ship's company for their manifold duties is the responsibility of his Officers. This is so, but you as Captain are the man to weld the crew into a co-ordinated fighting whole. Successful action is the result of superior team work faultlessly controlled, and this means months of practice and training.

A celebrated General, on criticising the smartness of a Guards regiment was met with a number of excuses and complaints from the Colonel about his men, to which the General replied: "There are no bad regiments in the Brigade of Guards, Sir. Only bad Colonels". This disconcerting remark can equally well apply to HM Ships. A Captain may handle a ship beautifully, know more about accounting than his Supply Officer or be a better mathematician than his Engineer Officer, but these go for little unless he has the humanity and creativeness to weld his men into a team. He should also possess humility. There are not many men in a ship's company from whom a Captain cannot learn something to his advantage.

A fighting ship should be composed of a number of fighting teams joined together as a club. You are Captain of each team and president of the club. Avoid becoming a one man band. The art of captaincy of these many teams is to give every man the subconscious incentive to do his job to his utmost. This can only be brought about by personal supervision of each team and personal understanding and encouragement to each member. You must be aware of how much good you can do by a personal commendation to a Sonar, EW or radar rating who makes an especially good contact, or a mechanic who is particularly quick at spotting a defect, but don't make the mistake of dwelling constantly on the obviously spectacular and thus disregard those behind the scenes who perhaps need your encouragement more than operators whose results are manifest. Once all your teams feel that they are enjoying your personal interest they will improve a hundredfold and so will your club.

Potential officer candidates are often overlooked by Divisional Officers particularly during a busy commissioning period or work up. You should see that the spotlight is put on each man in turn to ensure that potential is recognised as early as possible. It is not a bad idea at the beginning of a commission or period of deployment to encourage each man to have his own personal aim to improve his position. It may be passing a PPE, taking an HET or an 'O' level, or preparing for a civilian job near the end of an engagement. (This equally applies to officers *e.g.* in taking parts of the Ship Command exam.)

SENIOR RATINGS

The gap between pay and privileges accorded to Senior Ratings and to Officers has closed considerably. It is right that responsibilities should conform with this trend. Equally, the proportion of Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers has increased markedly in every ship's company. A high proportion are borne principally for their technical skill and many will be young, and inexperienced in the ways of the Service. It is an excellent introduction, particularly for these younger ones, personally to read out to them from (QRRN) their "Duties and Privileges", and wherever possible to ensure that they have done a leadership course.

The differentials in privilege and responsibility between Fleet Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers must be maintained, but all must realise the responsibility they carry, not only in terms of technical proficiency. They are the connecting link between the officers and men. It is your duty as Captain to maintain suitable levels of responsibility and privilege; equally, you must regard misconduct by a Senior Rating with the severity appropriate to his rate. Make it clear to your Senior Ratings that they have your whole-hearted support and uphold their word and actions whenever possible.

If a Petty Officer brings up a case before the OOD, who too lightly dismisses it, his action is bound to lower the prestige of that Petty Officer. This point must be most seriously impressed

on young officers, who should almost invariably pass such cases on to the First Lieutenant. You must be sure that you are informed every time that such cases are dismissed before reaching your table.

In an honest endeavour to uphold the prestige and privileges of Chief Petty Officers or Petty Officers, it sometimes happens that the proper gap between some officers and senior ratings disappears and over-familiarity results. It is an important function of the Captain to maintain a sensible balance and not to allow combined "runs-ashore" or parties to become too frequent or get out of hand.

You should certainly be clear about your personal relationship with your Senior Rates on informal or semi-official occasions. You will be asked to various forms of entertainment in the Senior Rates messes. Some Senior Rates Mess Presidents feel they have "got" to ask the Captain (and other officers) down, particularly to the more formal functions. You must learn to judge the reasons for the invitation and the desirability of accepting, remembering that your would-be hosts may well feel slighted if you refuse. Bear in mind that opportunities for you and your officers to return hospitality are very limited.

The value of Senior Ratings is often seriously neglected in Divisional work. They are an essential link in the Divisional Chain which you must ensure is not by-passed. They can provide most useful support to the Divisional Officer, and they themselves will normally welcome such employment. For example, when a man's DO is not available to represent him at the First Lieutenant's or Captain's table, it is preferable for his Divisional Senior Rate to stand in rather than an officer from another division.

The Master-At-Arms or Coxswain should hold a special and unique position in the ship's company. He should be a constant link between the Captain and the messdeck, a prime source for "keeping your finger on the pulse". He should know of any bad feeling in any mess; of any President or Leading Hand who is running his mess badly. If he can have an office of his own, his position is greatly enhanced. He must have the respect, but also the confidence of the ratings. He must be capable of reproving any of the Chief Petty Officers or Petty Officers and this includes if necessary Fleet Chief Petty Officers. He must have the welfare as well as the discipline of the ship's company constantly at heart. He should see that the Fleet Chief Petty Officers, the Chief Petty Officers, and Petty Officers are addressed in a manner befitting their rate.

LEADING HANDS

The Leading Hand has his foot on the bottom rung of your ship's management ladder. He is the only person in your team who actually lives with the bulk of your men. See that in his own department he is kept well informed and seen to be trusted. He will give you more support than you

will ever know, in after hours discussions, and the like, if he feels that he enjoys your confidence and trust. He must appreciate his great responsibility in the lines of communication within your command. Whenever possible ensure that he has done a Leadership Course.

RATINGS OFFENCES

A new Commanding Officer may have difficulty over the intricate system of discipline in the Service. It is only possible here to cover the broader issue of justice. We have already seen how essential it is for you to give fair judgement in every case. It need hardly be added that the enforcement of discipline must never be shirked. Little upsets the ships company more than an obvious malefactor apparently "getting away with it". Indeed such a failure can be a prelude to further or more serious cases of indiscipline. Nevertheless, the principles of justice must not be disregarded in an effort to secure conviction at all costs for the sake of example. Below are a few points of advice which may help you. More detailed advice will be found in the Green Guide issued by the Commander-in-Chief.

Make a point of knowing the broad details of cases before they come up to you. This gives you a chance to study the legal aspect in advance ; but, of course, it must not be allowed to tempt you to draw conclusions before hearing the case.

Remember that it is a cardinal principle of justice that an accused starts Not Guilty and remains Not Guilty throughout, unless having heard all the evidence, and weighed it to determine where the truth lies, you are satisfied *so that you feel sure* that the "prosecution" has established the guilt of the accused. Any doubts over the evidence must be resolved in favour of the accused.

Make a point of instructing your Junior Officers most carefully in the initial handling of serious cases. If they are in any doubt when confronted with such a case, it should be made quite clear to them that they must stand the case over until they have received advice on the matter from a more experienced officer. Once a case has been mishandled at the outset it is often impossible to bring it back onto the rails again, which means either that an offender escapes punishment, or comes up for a different offence from that which he actually committed.

It is essential to go into the effect of a punishment on a man's career before awarding that punishment, and to consider whether the scale recommended for the offence is appropriate in each particular case. You must ensure that the First Lieutenant's levels of punishment are consistent with your own.

Finally, when in doubt over a case, consult your Supply Officer, Squadron Supply Officer, Secretary, Captain D or Flag

Officer. It usually pays to seek advice early.

You must be alive to the possibility of misuse of and trafficking in drugs, and to unnatural sexual offences being committed on board. It has been known for some Commanding Officers to say "It couldn't happen in my ship". But statistically there is a good chance that it does, and most likely by libertymen on a run ashore. It is therefore safe to assume that it does, and be alert to the probability rather than allow it to develop like a cancer through the ship unchecked. Instruction and advice on these topics is readily available and all Commanding Officers should be aware of the types of offences, the drugs available, the methods of detection and the necessary preliminaries to any legal proceedings. The appropriate In Confidence DCI's should be kept in the OOD's safe and you should also include regular briefings on the action to take with such cases at your officers meetings.

Make certain that any reports, hints or gossip about serious offences including malicious damage which are passed on by Leading Hands or Senior Rates are thoroughly investigated. Remember that it is the Leading Hands of Messes who will almost invariably be the first to spot such things. They should be encouraged to keep their eyes open and be aware of the need for immediate reports. In the past such reports have often been dismissed as illusions or possibly conveniently forgotten because they were unpleasant. Trouble will inevitably follow such neglect. Irregular but fairly frequent rounds are a useful deterrent.

COMPLAINTS

You should be certain that you are kept informed of any complaints stated by any member of the Ship's Company. There is a tendency for complaints to be stifled in the lower levels of management. A thorough and early investigation by you yourself can ensure that all is running smoothly, but the Service procedure of forwarding complaints through the regulation channels should not be by-passed.

WARRANTS

Finally, when you apply for warrant punishments, make sure you put in all the relevant facts and circumstances. Only you know them, and the approving officer will find it difficult to make up his mind unless he has a good picture of the case, the man and any special circumstances. However much you admire your Senior Officer's capabilities clairvoyance is unlikely to be among them. (This equally applies to other subjects for report such as navigational incidents and losses of stores).

RECREATION

"The Captain is to encourage the promotion and organisation of sports competitions on a broad and balanced basis to allow all officers and men the opportunity for full participation in games, sports and other forms of recreation". (QR(RN)).

The recreation of a ship requires as much thought as the administration. By this we do not mean recreation in the narrow sense. Nietzsche wrote; "Women are the recreation of warriors". The conscientious officer thinks more in terms of landing the Football Team. Neither is exactly comprehensive. Recreation should cover the whole aspect of a man's leisure hours. It should be as much an intellectual pursuit as a physical one.

The officers to whom you allot the duties of Sports and Entertainment must receive full backing and support from you and the First Lieutenant. For instance, your active support in the running of SRE programmes can make a significant contribution to the contentment of the ship's company in the quieter moments of the day. Live broadcasts, current affairs programmes, quizzes, brains trusts, discussion groups and so on can be most entertaining if well run. Another class which should enjoy your encouragement are the "Arts and Craftsmen". Competing for prizes for the best ship model, the best rug, can keep dozens of ratings creatively happy.

Recreation ashore covers the whole aspect of leave as well as games. Leave in itself deserves a few words based on experience. Firstly, give all you legally can; make clear your aim of equal fun (rather than equal pain) for all. Your Engineering Departments and the stewards, for instance, invariably face their heaviest burdens of work when the ship is in harbour. Make sure that their lost runs ashore are compensated effectively as soon as possible. Secondly, if prevented from granting leave see that the ship's company knows why. Thirdly, grant all night leave, if you can, for leave until midnight is often leave broken. Fourthly, never promise leave, or even hope of leave, until you are 100 per cent certain that it can be granted. Fifthly, do all you can to make leave ashore enjoyable by arranging trips, expeditions, dances, or games whenever possible. Sixthly, make getting ashore and returning onboard as simple and the boat routine as punctual as possible.

Some ships are apt to be nonplussed by local conditions; but even a desert island is not without its possibilities for recreation. The Field Games of schooldays, which entail the holding and the attempted capture of bases; sailing and fishing expeditions; swimming galas; barbecues; all these keep a ship's company active and thinking instead of stagnating in a thick messdeck atmosphere.

The actual organisation of games such as football and cricket needs less dissertation, as in most ships they continue automatically with no great stretch of imagination to guide them provided attention is paid to obtaining pitches, transport, and providing time for games to take place. But do give particular attention to encouraging sport at the inter part level. It is the less regular players and those with less sporting ability who

need most encouragement to get out and "make one". For yourself, the only advice to proffer here, is not to join eagerly in games at which you are hopeless, under the impression that you are setting a good example. This may be good for a laugh but not so satisfactory for your status as Captain. Stick to the game at which you play with at least average skill. You should certainly be present as often as possible to give encouragement and help in the organisation of all types of games, minor as well as major. The modern sailor is taking part in an ever increasing range of sports and this excellent trend should be encouraged. In addition to games a much larger cross-section of the ship's company will be keen on other forms of recreation: such as Golf, Fishing, Expeditions, Water-Skiing, and Winter sports. The Captain's interest is needed to ensure that a ship's organisation exists to foster these activities and that they are properly organised with due regard to both fun and safety.

SWIMMING

Swimming is in a special category. Not only is it a sport, it is an essential accomplishment which the Service requires you to foster. Your non-swimmers are a liability to themselves and their messmates. There are many cases of non-swimmers drowning when they would have been saved if they had been capable of swimming for a few moments.

HABITABILITY

Although advances have been made in recent years to improve habitability in ships, a small ship sailor's existence, compared with civilian life, or life in the other Services is cramped and uncomfortable. Such discomfort becomes more bearable if he knows that his superior officers are doing all they can to get him his mails punctually, his food well cooked, his leave and shore recreation as often as practicable and to make his leisure on board as enjoyable as possible.

MAIL

Mail is so important for the well being of the ship's company that you should take a personal interest in its prompt despatch and receipt.

NEWS SERVICE

Most ratings read a newspaper if they can get one and are interested in current events as well as sport. A news summary is normally put out daily on the naval broadcast and with a little effort this can be distributed around the mess-decks. The BBC World Service can usually be read and this can be taped for subsequent editing and issue as a newsheet.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

You have a responsibility to do all you can to see that the Royal Navy has a good public image. Ensure that your ship's PR organisation is efficient and that your Naval Information officer has received up to date instruction in his duties. Care is required in selection of this officer to ensure that he is suitable for the job. Neither "Buggins turn" nor lurking the able all-rounder with everything

else on his slop chit can produce satisfactory results. Your ship's company and their families like to see the ship's name or photograph in print. Local boy stories in provincial papers are good for the morale of your ship's company and their families as well as being good for recruiting. But they require a great deal of informed spadework by your ship's organisation. Such appearances help to promote the feeling that "our ship" is doing well. A regular Family News Letter produced in your ship is an effective way of keeping families "in touch" particularly if they also subscribe to Navy News.

POSTSCRIPT

You should enjoy your time in command in the same way as your ship's company should have enjoyed serving under your command.

CONCLUSION

"The Commander must know how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed for war. He must have imagination to originate plans, practical sense and energy to carry them through. He must be observant, untiring, shrewd, kindly and cruel; simple and crafty; a watchman and a robber; lavish and miserly; generous and stingy; rash and conservative; All these and many other qualities natural and acquired, he must have. He should also, as a matter of course, know his tactics, for a disorderly mob is no more of a fighting force than a heap of building material is a house."

Socrates

