

ENGINEERING BRANCH, R.N.V.R.

by

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The aims, procedure, and organisation of the pre-war Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve are given in full in "R.N.V.R. Regulations" (B.R. 65/37). The R.N.V.R. is at present being reconstituted to approximately pre-war establishment on an interim post-war basis, which differs, principally, from the pre-war in that it now includes specialist branches in its divisional training organisation, and prominent among these is the new, fully representative, Engineering Branch.

Interim Post-War R.N.V.R.

The primary object of the interim post-war R.N.V.R. is to attract those officers and ratings who have seen naval service, have subsequently been demobilised with no reserve liability, and whose valuable services and experience the Admiralty desire to keep up to date to have them readily available in the event of a general mobilisation. Recently, the field of enrolment into the interim R.N.V.R. has been extended to suitable civilian volunteers, as in pre-war days. Men, however, who have been deferred from their national service call-up cannot be accepted for the R.N.V.R. unless they have at least twelve months deferment to run.

Final Post-War R.N.V.R.

The object of the final post-war R.N.V.R. is to form part of a balanced reserve, sufficient to meet the Royal Navy's requirements of specialised manpower in all respects on mobilisation. The precise organisation and constitution of, and contributions from, the various Naval Reserves in general, and the final post-war R.N.V.R. in particular, are being closely studied by the Admiralty. There are many complex factors involved which include the training of National Servicemen, who from January, 1949, are liable for 12 months' active service followed by six years in the reserves, and the need for a balanced Naval Aviation Reserve.

This article is confined to the formation of the Engineering Branch of the interim R.N.V.R., as it is too early, yet, to forecast the organisation of the final R.N.V.R. Engineering Branch with which it must eventually be merged.

Attractions

The primary advantage of joining the R.N.V.R. is that in the event of another emergency the volunteer is assured of his place in the Royal Navy, as opposed to service in one of the other Armed Forces, or in a reserved occupation. An exception, however, applies to the volunteer who enrolls into the R.N.V.R. from civilian life during his deferred period of call-up. At present there is no guaranteed entry into the Royal Navy, but everything practicable is done to secure the services of such a volunteer. Recruiting Officers have been instructed to give such candidates preferential consideration for entry into the Royal Navy, provided they have a certificate from the Commanding Officer of their R.N.V.R. Division that they are efficient. A national service man enters the particular branch to which he, as a reservist, belongs.

Moreover, as R.N.V.R. training enables the volunteer to take charge of the type of men who will be enrolled into the Royal Navy in an emergency, the R.N.V.R.-trained man has a distinct advantage over those who in peacetime take no interest to prepare themselves for such an emergency.

Time spent in the R.N.V.R. is well worth while and every endeavour is made to make instruction and service as interesting and attractive as possible. Boat sailing and pulling, swimming, rifle shooting, physical training and exercises, Association and Rugby football, week-end camps in connection with boat sailing, dances and other social events, are organised by the R.N.V.R. Divisions. The *camaraderie* and club atmosphere of the R.N.V.R. needs no further stressing.

A sea tender, either a motor minesweeper or motor launch, is now attached to each Division to enable practical sea training to be given to all branches, instead of, as hitherto, divisional training being confined solely to R.N.V.R. Headquarters.

In addition, there is service afloat in His Majesty's ships and this training is one of the chief attractions. It gives a complete change from life on shore and provides a healthy and interesting occupation of a type which is unobtainable by anyone outside the Naval Reserves. Men who go to sea are able to enjoy the spirit of comradeship of the Royal Navy and revive old friendships. R.N.V.R. personnel receive naval rates of pay and allowances during their period of afloat training, and travelling and expense allowances are granted for attending instruction at their Divisional Headquarters, particulars of which are given later.

Organisation of the Interim Post-War R.N.V.R.

The total strength of the interim R.N.V.R. is at present about 10,000 officers and men. There are twelve Divisions—London, Sussex, Solent, Severn, Cardiff, Mersey, Clyde, Tay, Forth, Tyne, Humber, and Ulster. It is hoped that it will be possible to set up Divisions in other ports, and it is planned to add a number of inland Divisions in the near future.

To form the nucleus of an R.N. Air Reserve, four reserve Air Squadrons, Nos. 1830-1833, are being based on R.N. Air Stations, Culham, Abbotsinch, Stretton and Bramcote. At present, these squadrons comprise reserve air-crews backed by active service maintenance ratings, but it is intended to recruit naval air reserve maintenance ratings of almost all categories into the R.N.V.R. in the not too distant future.

ENTRY AND TRAINING OF R.N.V.R. OFFICERS

There are two lists of R.N.V.R. officers—List I comprises those officers who carry out drills and regular duties with their Division, in addition to their training afloat. List II comprises those officers who carry out training afloat, but are not required for the training duties in their Division, or who cannot attend owing to such circumstances as living a long way from the Headquarters of their Division, etc., but who are, nevertheless, required for the Navy on mobilisation.

The personnel of List II are in every way an integral part of the Division and entirely under the orders of the Commanding Officer of the Division. They are encouraged to attend at their Headquarters for important ceremonial parades, lectures, and other special events, and to take part in divisional competitions.

Entry

The entry of officers of all branches is, at present, confined to officers who have held temporary commissions in the Royal Navy, Royal Naval Reserve, or Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, since 1939, and who have been dispersed. These officers do not enrol for any definite period and will be permitted to resign under the regulations laid down. The conditions of entry of Engineer Officers direct from civilian life is under active consideration.

Promotion

Generally, promotion of Engineer Officers R.N.V.R. follows the procedure for Engineer Officers R.N., except that the highest reserve rank at present attainable is Commander (E) R.N.V.R., and the retiring age is normally three years earlier than in the Royal Navy. Details can be obtained through the Commanding Officer of each R.N.V.R. Division.

Establishment of Engineer Officers R.N.V.R. and How to Join

The interim establishment for Engineer Officers in the R.N.V.R. is 60 of whom it is intended that 48 should be List I, and 12 should be List II. This interim establishment of Engineer Officers R.N.V.R. is being filled rapidly, and there are few vacancies left. However, those who apply for membership of the R.N.V.R. and cannot be accepted can join the Royal Naval Volunteer Supplementary Reserve instead (*see* page 19). Vacancies arising in the establishment of the R.N.V.R. will normally be filled from volunteers from the R.N.V.S.R.

To join the R.N.V.R. an applicant should write a letter to the Commanding Officer of the R.N.V.R. Division in whose area he resides permanently, stating age, address, rank held in the Navy, and present employment. (*See* pages 21-22 for details of Divisions.)

List I (Divisional) Training Duties for Engineer Officers R.N.V.R.

Training Duties for Engineer Officers R.N.V.R. in List I consist of :—

- (i) Supervision of propulsion and maintenance organisation of the sea-going tender(s) attached to R.N.V.R. Headquarters.
- (ii) Supervision of training arrangements of Engineering Branch Ratings R.N.V.R. enrolled for List I instruction.
- (iii) Professional duties in the R.N.V.R. Headquarters (Ship or Establishment).

Obligatory Training for Engineer Officers R.N.V.R.

The obligatory training for Engineer Officers enrolled on List I or List II is 14 days annually afloat for a Sub Lieutenant (E) R.N.V.R., and 14 days biennially at sea for Lieutenants (E), Lieutenant-Commanders (E), and Commanders (E). Training syllabi arranged in phases have been prepared so that these brief sea periods are spent to the best advantage.

Allowances

Travelling.—When travelling to and from Headquarters for evening drills, officers who live more than one mile from their headquarters are paid at the flat rate of 1½d. a mile whatever means of transport they employ to reach their Training Headquarters. In addition, full travelling expenses will be paid to officers proceeding to join ships or naval establishments to undergo their obligatory or voluntary training.

Training.—When officers attend their drill ships they have to provide themselves with an evening meal and may also incur sundry out-of-pocket expenses. To reimburse them, all officers who attend drills are paid at a flat rate of 1s. 6d. per hour for each hour spent at the drill ship, up to six hours on any one day. No allowance is paid for attendance under two hours.

Uniform

Officers undergoing courses at Naval Establishments and when embarked in H.M. Ships will be required to have the following uniform :—

No. 5 undress coat (monkey jacket), trousers (plain blue), Burberry, cap and cap covers.

A suitable kit upkeep allowance is under Admiralty consideration.

ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER SUPPLEMENTARY RESERVE

The R.N.V.S.R. is, at present, a list of officers of all branches who have held temporary commissions in the R.N., R.N.R., or R.N.V.R. during the war, and who are willing to be called up for service with the Navy on the issue of a Royal Proclamation calling out the Reserves. It also serves as an overflow to the officer establishment of the R.N.V.R.

Enrolment into the R.N.V.S.R. is by selection, based on war service records, and all officers must be medically fit and under the age of 50. No training commitment is undertaken, and no bounty or retaining fee is paid. Officers are not required to provide themselves with uniform.

All officers are affiliated to the R.N.V.R. Division of the Area in which they reside, and are encouraged to take part in the activities of the Division.

All officers undertake to report their address on the 1st January each year, and on each occasion of a change of address, to the Commanding Officer of the Division to which they are attached, and to the Admiral Commanding Reserves.

Members of the R.N.V.S.R. are listed in the substantive rank which they held on dispersal (*e.g.* Temporary Lieutenant (E) R.N.V.R.). In cases where this rank differs from the War Service rank, a notation to this effect will be made against their names.

To enrol into the R.N.V.S.R. a letter should be written to the Admiral Commanding Reserves, Naval Reserves, Admiralty, Queen Anne's Mansions, St. James's Park, London, S.W.1, giving full name and permanent address, date of birth, nature of business or employment, and war service rank held in the R.N. or R.N.V.R.

R.N.V.R. RATINGS

Entry

There is no restriction on recruitment of ratings into the R.N.V.R. Enrolment in the Reserve prior to the commencement of full-time national service does not affect liability for full-time or reserve service under the National Service Acts.

Conditions of Service

Conditions of service are simple and easy to carry out. The principal undertaking of a man enrolling in the R.N.V.R. is that he shall serve for five years, making himself "efficient" each year. Men may join up to forty-five years of age, so that no man will be enrolled who cannot complete one period of engagement before reaching the age of fifty. In each year he must attend 20 drills per quarter at Headquarters, each drill being of one hour's duration. Two drills normally take place during one evening's instruction.

In addition to these drills, 56 days' training in a seagoing ship or naval establishment must be performed during the first term of enrolment only. More may be carried out if a man chooses. In each period of five years he may volunteer for two cruises of three months, and many men have availed themselves of this privilege in the past. During this training afloat or at Naval Establishments, ratings are paid naval pay and allowances according to their rate.

For the period 1947-1952, obligatory training for ratings who have served for two years in the Royal Navy, is being reduced as follows :—

1947	...	...	...	Nil
1948-1952	...	...	...	A total of 28 days.

A man can go for his training at practically any time convenient to himself. If, owing to business or reasons of ill-health a man is unable to complete his training, the Commanding Officer has authority to excuse him.

A bounty of £5 is paid at the end of each year to a man who satisfies his Commanding Officer that he is efficient and has carried out his training obligations. An additional sum of up to 10s. is paid annually for attendance at extra drills over and above those which are obligatory. An efficiency grant, which varies according to the rate held, up to a maximum of £2 10s., is also paid.

Obligations of R.N.V.R. Ratings

Every naval volunteer, on enrolment or re-enrolment, binds himself to serve for five years in the R.N.V.R. and to meet the following obligations during those years :—

- (i) To report to his Headquarters immediately should he receive a calling-up notice or should he see a Proclamation calling out the R.N.V.R. in a national emergency.
- (ii) To keep his Headquarters advised of any change of address.
- (iii) To keep his kit in good order and bring it to Headquarters when required.
- (iv) Not to leave the United Kingdom without first obtaining written leave of absence.

Travelling and Training Expense Allowances for R.N.V.R. Ratings

Travelling expense allowance is similar to that for R.N.V.R. officers, except that the scale varies from 9d. to 1s. 3d. per hour, depending on the rate of the rating concerned, and payment is made for attendances of two hours' duration, or more, up to six hours on any one day.

Enrolment of Engineering Branch Ratings R.N.V.R.

Ratings will normally be enrolled in the R.N.V.R., if considered suitable, in the rating they held on dispersal from the Royal Navy, provided it was a general service rate, *i.e.* Chief E.R.A., E.R.A. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and Acting 4th Class ; Chief Mechanician, Mechanician 1st and 2nd Class ; Chief Petty Officer Stoker Mechanic, Petty Officer Stoker Mechanic, Leading Stoker Mechanic, Stoker Mechanic, Stoker (*see* A.F.O. 1612/47).

The Engineering Branch "Hostility Only" rates such as Engine Room Mechanics, Engine Room Mechanics (M/V), Motor Mechanics, Enginemen, Stokers (F.F.) are not being perpetuated in the R.N.V.R., but all men in these rates are eligible and welcome to join in the appropriate rating in the Stoker Mechanic Branch R.N.V.R.

Direct entry, without prior naval service, is allowed into the following rates—Stoker R.N.V.R., E.R.A. 5th Class R.N.V.R., and E.R.A. Acting 4th Class R.N.V.R., provided the entry requirements for the rate are satisfied. The appropriate conditions of entry can be obtained on application to the Commanding Officer of the R.N.V.R. Division concerned (*see* pages 21-22). All volunteers on entry must be more than 18 years and less than 26 years for the Stoker Mechanic Branch or less than 28 years for the Engine Room Artificer Branch.

All members of the Stoker Mechanic Branch, whether ex-R.N. or direct entry, who acquire skill at their civilian occupation, or in the R.N.V.R. divisional engineering workshops, are encouraged to pass the standard naval trade test for advancement to Acting Mechanician 2nd Class R.N.V.R.

Interim Establishment

The interim establishment of Ratings for the Engineering Branch R.N.V.R. is 300 E.R.A.'s, and 500 ratings of the Stoker Mechanic Branch. Mechanics may be borne up to 40% of the E.R.A. establishment. Allowance is also made for 50 Ordnance Artificers in the interim R.N.V.R. establishment. The permanent establishment of the R.N.V.R. which will be decided in due course is likely to show a considerable increase on these numbers.

Training

The object of training Engineering Branch ratings in the R.N.V.R. is advancement in rating, *i.e.* the creation of a pool of competent skilled and semi-skilled Engine Room ratings of Chief Petty Officer, Petty Officer, and Leading Hand status available to take charge of untrained recruits on mobilisation.

Due, however, to the limited overall time available for training Engine Room ratings in the R.N.V.R., they will be trained for advancement either in steam machinery or internal combustion engines, but not both.

To implement this aim, each R.N.V.R. Division is being furnished with a well equipped workshop, a number of instructional engines for stripping and fault finding, and various sectional models, wall diagrams, damage control equipment, instructional films, etc., to cover progress in both the marine steam machinery, and internal combustion engine fields.

At least one continuous service E.R.A. Instructor, R.N., will be available at each R.N.V.R. Division to take the reservists' classes.

JOINING THE PERMANENT R.N.V.R.

To join the permanent R.N.V.R. application should be made by the volunteer by letter, to the Commanding Officer of the R.N.V.R. Headquarters nearest to his home, giving full name and permanent address, date of birth, nature of business or employment, and rank or rating held in the R.N., R.N.R., or R.N.V.R. The Commanding Officer in his acknowledgment will indicate any further details he requires and will arrange for an interview and medical examination.

The following are the Headquarters of the Divisions and the areas from which they draw their recruits :—

LONDON	...	...	H.M.S. <i>President</i> H.M.S. <i>Chrysanthemum</i> Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire, Oxford, Hertford, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Northampton, Bedford, Cambridge, Buckingham, Huntingdon.
SUSSEX	...	...	R.N.V.R. Battery, Hove. R.N.V.R. Drill Hall, Newhaven. Sussex.
SEVERN	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Flying Fox</i> (Bristol) Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Warwick, Worcester, Scilly, and that part of Wiltshire north of the River Wylye.
MERSEY	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Eaglet</i> (Liverpool) H.M.S. <i>Erwell</i> (Birkenhead) Shropshire, Montgomery, Isle of Anglesey, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Caernarvon, Merioneth, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Lancashire, Isle of Man, and Derbyshire.

CLYDE	...	...	R.N.V.R. Headquarters, Whitfield Road, Govan H.M.S. <i>Carrick</i> (Greenock) All territory in Scotland to the west of a line drawn from Inverness to Carlisle passing through Stirling.
FORTH	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Claverhouse</i> (Leith) All territory on the East Coast of Scotland south of the Tay and inland to a dividing line from Inverness to Stirling and Carlisle
TAY	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Cressey</i> (Dundee) All territory on East Coast of Scotland north of the Tay and inland to a dividing line drawn from Inverness to Stirling.
TYNE	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Calliope</i> (Newcastle-on-Tyne) H.M.S. <i>Satellite</i> (South Shields) Roxburgh, Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham Westmorland
ULSTER	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Caroline</i> (Belfast). Northern Ireland.
HUMBER	...	...	R.N.V.R. Headquarters, Hedon Road, Hull Yorkshire, Lincoln, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland
SOLENT	...	...	H.M.S. <i>Derg</i> (Southampton) Hampshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight, Channel Islands, together with that part of Wiltshire, South of the River Wylde.
CARDIFF	...	...	245 East Dock (West Side) Monmouth, Glamorgan, Carmarthen, Pembroke, Cardigan, Radnor, Brecknock, and Hereford.

The location of the various Inland Divisions and which of them are to include Engineering Branch instruction has not yet been finally decided.

The Importance of the R.N.V.R.

The Navy depends on its Reserves to provide the additional officers and men required to man and maintain the ships and aircraft in Reserve, and the large number of Shore Stations which are required to be set up on the outbreak of war.

A well-trained and efficient reserve is a vital factor in maintaining the security of the Empire and the peace of the World. The need of the Engineering Branch for a strong reserve team is still fresh in the memory of those who served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War. A competent second string, which is available for only part-time training, will, however, only thrive if it receives the utmost encouragement from its parent Department.

References : A.F.O. 1370/47, 1371/47, 2109/47, 3092/47—Formation of R.N.V.R. Air Squadron. A.F.O. 3145/47—Distribution of R.N.V.R. Recruitment Booklet.