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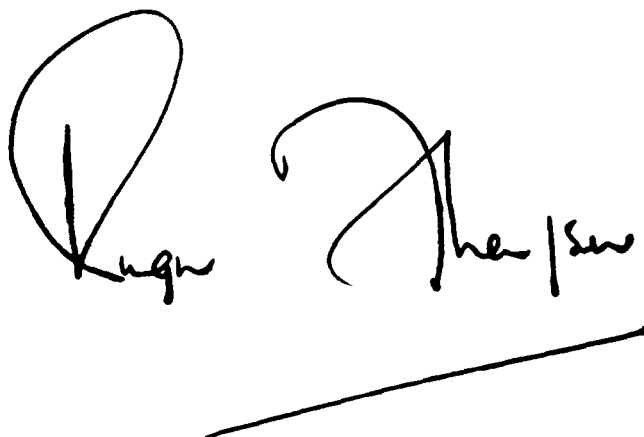
FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF NAVAL ENGINEER OFFICER

. . . What I ha' seen since ocean-steam began
Leaves me na doot for the machine: but what about the man?
The man that counts . . .

Rudyard Kipling

Over the past few years and indeed ever since the Engineering Branch was formed, the Navy has seen a continuing and increasing rise in the complexity of equipment coming into service. This has demanded a step-change in the ability and skills of everyone, from the most junior mechanic upwards, because the ability of the Navy to do its job effectively depends to a very great extent upon ships and their equipment being available, at the right performance standard, whenever needed. That the Navy has maintained such high levels of availability, despite considerable stretch and shortage of resources, reflects great credit on the sense of duty, responsibility and pride of every mechanic, artificer and officer, not only in the Fleet, but also in Maintenance bases, the Procurement and Support fields.

The future too shows no slackening in the pace of change in our Service. Ever more complex technology will demand even higher degrees of skill at a time when the pressures on our budgets will require more forbearance from us all. Thus our greatest priority must be our people—all of them. Every one of us must give our first care to developing the skills and experience of young officers and ratings alike—and to consider carefully the impact of all our decisions on them and their future. As manpower reduces, we must remember that it is upon our people that the safety, honour and welfare of the Navy do chiefly attend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. A. Theiser". The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal line extending from the bottom of the "s".