

APPRENTICE TRAINING

MOVE FROM 'FISGARD' TO 'RALEIGH'

BY

COMMANDER R. C. SHARP, M.A., C.ENG., M.I.E.E., R.N.
(*H.M.S. Raleigh*)

Introduction

H.M.S. *Raleigh* has for some years been the New Entry Training Establishment for all male rating entries except for artificer apprentices. Two years ago H.M.S. *Dauntless* closed and WRNS training moved to H.M.S. *Raleigh* forming the Dauntless Squadron. H.M.S. *Fisgard* will shortly close and on 2nd May 1983 150 apprentices joined H.M.S. *Raleigh* to become the first entry into the newly formed Fisgard Squadron. Thus all ratings joining the Navy now enter through the gates of H.M.S. *Raleigh*.

Seamen, mechanics and Supply Branch ratings carry out 6-week Part I training (Revenge Squadron) in H.M.S. *Raleigh*, and WRNS a similar 5-week Part I training (Dauntless Squadron). Most of these ratings' classes join every week, thus providing a steady stream to the Part II establishments, H.M.S. *Raleigh* itself being the Part II training establishment for seamen (Warspite Squadron). For reasons which will be explained later the apprentice entry pattern and duration is somewhat different and apprentices join at the beginning of each term for a 14-week Apprentice Basic Training Course.

TERMS		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
MEA	OLD	Fisgard			HTS	Caledonia			STS	Caledonia	Caledonia			Collingwood		
	NEW	Raleigh	Sultan craft, technical & academic				HTS	STS	Sultan common operator & specialist							
WEA	OLD	Fisgard			Collingwood basic technical			Sea training			Collingwood specialist & deep specialist					
	NEW	Raleigh	Collingwood initial technical (includes common technical)				Sea training			Collingwood specialist & deep specialist			*			
AEA	OLD	Fisgard			Daedalus	Air station training			Daedalus artificer qualifying course			*				
	NEW	Raleigh	Daedalus	*	Air station training		*	Daedalus artificer qualifying course				*				

FIG. 1—OLD AND NEW COURSES OF APPRENTICE TRAINING

Key: MEA—ME apprentices
 WEA—WE apprentices
 HTS—harbour training ship
 STS—sea training ship
 *—length of course depends on sub-specialization

This article aims to describe the changes introduced in wake of the 1981 Defence Review, as far as the first phase of apprentice training is concerned—the term in H.M.S. *Raleigh*. It does not go into detail of the changes in the Artificer Training Establishments (formerly known as Part III) though an overall chart (FIG. 1) of the new apprentice time scale is included, for which assistance from H.M.S. *Collingwood*, *Daedalus* and *Sultan* is gratefully acknowledged. It should be noted that the new Marine Engineering Artificer apprentices will be trained in H.M.S. *Sultan* not H.M.S. *Caledonia*. A separate article in this issue¹ explains and describes this move.

The Old Scheme

The present H.M.S. *Fisgard* was built in 1940 as the R.N. Artificer Training Establishment (RNATE), providing a permanent home after a number of moves over the years. Initially the whole apprenticeship was carried out there with a parallel scheme in H.M.S. *Caledonia*. In 1946 the RNATE was commissioned as H.M.S. *Fisgard*, although the name had been used unofficially from the outset. In 1947 the parallel schemes of training were abandoned and H.M.S. *Fisgard* undertook the initial phases of training (Parts I and II) for all apprentices before they moved on to H.M.S. *Caledonia*, *Collingwood*, *Condor* or *Ariel* (the latter two replaced by *Daedalus* later) for their Part III training. The *Fisgard* phase became 4 terms long and in more recent years has reduced to 1 year with ‘accelerators’ passing out after only 2 terms. Part I was 4 weeks of purely Naval General Training culminating in the Passing In Parade which some readers will remember. Part II was a combined course including technical education, craftwork and further Naval General Training. At the end of their time in H.M.S. *Fisgard*, apprentices moved on to the Part III establishments, having passed the Navy Department Part II exam. The last apprentices will pass out of H.M.S. *Fisgard* on 21st December 1983, the MEA apprentices among them being the last intake to H.M.S. *Caledonia*.

Development of the New Scheme

The ‘Slimtrain’ remit, resulting from the 1981 Defence Review, was to propose a restructured apprentice training scheme to meet the closure of H.M.S. *Fisgard* and to achieve a saving of half its complement from the task of apprentice training as a whole. H.M.S. *Fisgard*’s buildings are old single-skin brick huts of 1940 vintage and plans had already been put forward for a rebuild. Over the road H.M.S. *Raleigh* was rebuilt during the period 1974–1977, with a planned throughput designed to serve a Navy much larger than now exists. There was therefore obvious scope for artificer apprentices to undergo initial training in H.M.S. *Raleigh* like all other rating entrants to the Navy.

One of the important parts of the *Fisgard* task has been to categorize apprentices into the three engineering sub-specialisations. This selection process requires a thorough review of the apprentices’ capabilities. After guiding some who are obviously aiming in a direction beyond their capabilities, well over 80% of apprentices have normally been placed in their final preferred category. In H.M.S. *Fisgard* the academic progress tests, Phase Tests A, B and C, and the Navy Department Part I exam all contributed to the assessment and categorization.

It was therefore concluded that the standard H.M.S. *Raleigh* 6-week Part I Course, which is virtually all Naval General Training, would not be adequate to enable successful categorization of apprentices, as assessment of academic ability would have had to rely heavily on qualifications at entry. Furthermore H.M.S. *Fisgard*’s experience is that despite a theoretical com-

mon minimum standard of three 'O' Levels there is a very diverse degree of knowledge—particularly of maths. SMP or 'Modern Maths' is not of much use to an engineer and in some cases quite an amount of new basic teaching has been necessary.

Therefore the course devised combines a large proportion of the Naval General Training from the *Fisgard* 1-year course with a foundation course in technical education. The latter is based on a Technician Education Council (TEC) Level One syllabus in maths, mechanical engineering science, electrical engineering science, and general and communication studies. This equates to the Navy Department Part I exam which, for *Fisgard* apprentices, was taken towards the end of the second term. Thus all apprentices will leave H.M.S. *Raleigh* at a known common academic standard.

One of the more up-to-date facilities in H.M.S. *Fisgard* is the large workshops. It would not be practicable to relocate the machinery in H.M.S. *Raleigh* nor could the facilities be kept going on the *Fisgard* site. Additionally there would not be time to give any craft training in the one term course. This part of the *Fisgard* task has therefore been passed on *in toto* to the Artificer establishments. This might be considered a weakness of the new course, but it has been rarely found in H.M.S. *Fisgard* that lack of skill of hand has been a cause for withdrawal from training. Furthermore, some duplication in craft training between H.M.S. *Fisgard* and the specialist establishments has occurred in the past. Craft training in these establishments can now be geared from the outset to the objective requirements of each sub-specialization. Not only should this produce savings in training time but the craft syllabuses should be more easily modifiable in the light of feedback from the Fleet.

H.M.S. 'Raleigh'—The Fisgard Squadron

Apprentices therefore now join H.M.S. *Raleigh* for the 14-week Apprentice Basic Training Course which is broadly 50% technical education and 50% Naval General Training. They spend the first week in the purpose-built New Entry block before moving on to the Fisgard Squadron for the rest of their time in H.M.S. *Raleigh*. *Raleigh's* trainee accommodation blocks are grouped in fours and one group has been allocated to the Squadron (FIG. 2). One of the four blocks has been converted to classrooms and laboratories and one part at least of H.M.S. *Fisgard* will live on, as the solid hardwood laboratory benchtops have been refurbished and fitted in the new laboratories. The Fisgard Squadron is run by the Apprentices Training Officer—a lieutenant-commander of the Engineering Specialization—with an administrative team of a fleet chief artificer for overall administration and a charge chief or chief petty officer artificer to run each accommodation block.

A retired lieutenant-commander with many years of training design experience in H.M.S. *Fisgard* runs the course design and also carries out the personnel selection task of categorization. In this task and the overall personnel selection problems and records he is assisted by a WRNS Officer seconded from H.M.S. *Raleigh's* personnel selection department.

The organization in the Squadron is based on the Class/Division concept, each Division being 25 strong and having its own Divisional Officer/Instructor and Divisional Petty Officer. When at full strength from September 1983 there will be staff and space for 10 divisions—all named after apprentices who have reached the rank of admiral. Of the Divisional Officers 3 will be engineers—one each ME, WE and AE—and the remaining 7 instructor officers. Every officer teaches his class maths, English, and one engineering science (classes being programmed in pairs to allow some specialization and change of face for the classes), in addition to being the Divisional Officer. The Divisional Petty Officers, who are all petty officer mechanics with a

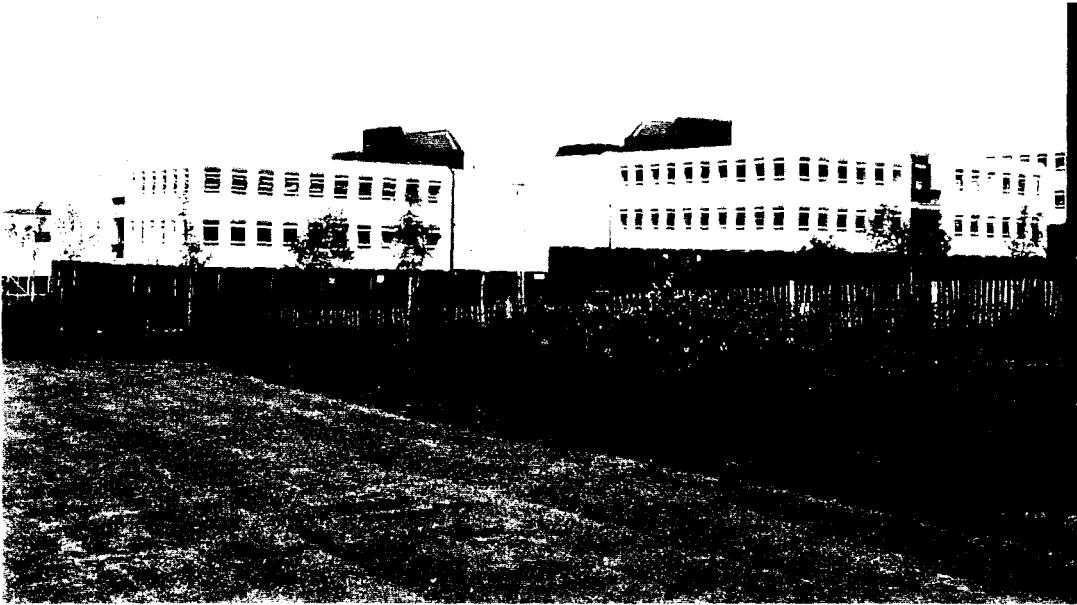


FIG. 2—FISGARD SQUADRON BLOCKS IN H.M.S. 'RALEIGH'

variety of specializations, carry out a large part of the Naval General Training tasks and also act as the apprentices' 'sea-daddies'.

H.M.S. *Raleigh* is an integrated organization and although each squadron's programme is tailored to the specific task, all make use of the specialist groups/facilities (e.g. PT, Parade Training, Sea Sense Training, Resource & Initiative Training) provided for all trainees. Overall course programming is carried out by a central training centre to ensure the facilities are used effectively and the specialists provide the nucleus for the various Naval General Training activities. With the exception of PT, however, the squadron staff will either assist or, where qualified, run the activities when required, and the aim will be to ensure that a proportion are always qualified in some activities. POMEM's may for example find themselves on the Ceremonial Parade Training Course in H.M.S. *Excellent!*

Downstream Effect

The change from H.M.S. *Fisgard* to H.M.S. *Raleigh* has moved the technical training virtually wholly to the specialist establishments. The courses can now be tailored completely to the requirements of the appropriate engineering specializations and this has enabled all of these to cut the overall apprenticeship by one term. The new apprentices will be younger, 'greener', and at a much earlier stage on the learning curve than the *ex-Fisgard* apprentice. Some will also still be able to exercise their Discharge by Option, a new experience as far as apprentices are concerned for these establishments. On the credit side, they will be able to identify with a major training establishment of their engineering specialization from an earlier stage and will at least be able to see boilers, gas turbines, or weapon systems much earlier. This should help with motivation and the earlier integration with their mechanic contemporaries can only help the team spirit and efficiency of the Navy.

Reference

1. Bird, R.N.: Marine engineering artificer apprenticeship is moving south; *Journal of Naval Engineering*, vol. 28, no. 1, Dec. 1983, pp. 124-127.