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(Courtesy of Hay Wrightson)

FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF NAVAL ENGINEER OFFICER

I retire from the Navy 38 years after I entered as a rather apprehensive cadet and embarked at Mutton Cove, Devonport, in a coal-fired, brass-funnelled steam picket boat to join H.M.S. *Erebus*. I shovelled coal in the minesweeper H.M.S. *Carstairs*. The *Iron Duke* was still at sea; the *Repulse* and *Renown* with their 42 boilers each were only about half-way through their service. Electricity was generated at 110V or 220V DC and electric services were under the Torpedo Officer. There was no radar, and asdic had not yet become sonar. So I have seen a good many changes in the engineering matériel of the Royal Navy as well as the evolution of better organizations of both officers and ratings to control it. I have seen the steady rise of the influence and authority—and the effectiveness—of the engineer officers and senior ratings of the Navy.

Nothing has done so much to extend the influence of engineer officers as the advent of the General List eleven years ago. Progress has been rapid and the voices of engineer officers are now heard—and listened to—at the highest levels in the Navy. In this technological age I am sure that this is to the great benefit of the Service.

The development which I have watched carefully during my four years as Chief Naval Engineer Officer is what was known as the E/L merger. The consolidation of the electrical and mechanical elements of our specialization into one body of naval engineer officers has gone steadily forward. Indeed, it could not fail to go forward, because of the common entry to Manadon and natural growth from the bottom, but the natural growth has been helped by the wisdom of senior officers, both mechanical and electrical, who have had the vision to see beyond the ends of their noses without seeing bogies lurking in the shadows. We have had one DNOA(E) for the whole specialization for some time and the moment is now right for the disappearance of the Deputy Chief Naval Engineer Officer. Soon promotions will be made from common lists. The potential influence for the good of a united engineering specialization is immense.

I leave the Navy with confidence in its future. I could not have this confidence if I were not equally confident of the future of the Engineering Specialization and the Engineering Branch. My best wishes go to Rear-Admiral Hughes, the first electrical engineer to become Chief Naval Engineer Officer, and to all engineer officers and ratings.

Peter Walker.