

\*472.—Ratings—Seamen Branch—Training in Basic Specialist Qualification Immediately after New Entry Training  
(N.C.W. 713/56.—24 Feb. 1956.)

This Order tells of arrangements which are being made to give regular New Entry Seamen training for a basic specialist qualification immediately after their New Entry training.

#### General

2. It has been the general practice until now for seamen to qualify in a 3rd Class S.Q. at an average of 2½ years after entry. This system is too haphazard for present-day requirements, results in a man's specialist career being too short and has failed to produce the numbers of S.Qs. needed. It is intended therefore that all regular seamen shall in future specialise in one of the main branches—gunnery, T.A.S. or R.P.—immediately after New Entry training and before first draft.

3. The objects of this change are :

- (a) To impress upon the young seaman at the New Entry stage that his purpose, for which he has joined the Navy, is to be an expert weapon user. His fighting role requires emphasis.
- (b) To provide more men with S.Qs. The seaman's task of handling ships' fighting equipment is yearly demanding more men trained in more skills, as it becomes more complex and more of it is installed. The present system has failed to provide enough men with S.Qs. and some of this valuable equipment has thus had to go undermanned.
- (c) To enable greater advantage to be taken of the training opportunities provided by the General Service Commission, by indicating the particular branch of weapon user training required by each young seaman, whose basic shore training will be completed on the job at sea.
- (d) To save time in shore training by integrating some of the basic specialist course with boys' New Entry training.
- (e) To avoid the drafting disturbance and loss of time at present caused in collecting men in and classing them up for 3rd class courses.
- (f) To enable aptitude to play a greater part in selection for S.Q.

4. Under revised rules for advancement, satisfactory efficiency in his S.Q. will be a qualification for advancement to A.B., Leading Seaman and P.O. The position of seamen now with the fleet, without an S.Q., will be safeguarded provided they qualify in an S.Q. at the first available opportunity.

#### Specialisation on Entry

5. Arrangements will be introduced, over the course of the coming year, whereby all regular seamen, on completing their New Entry training, are given training similar to that for the existing 3rd Class S.Q. in gunnery, torpedo, anti-submarine or radar plotting before they are drafted to sea.

6. Boys will be given training equivalent to two weeks of their specialist course while they are still at the boys' training establishments. Apart from this, all specialist training will take place at the appropriate specialist school (and, where applicable, in the associated ships).

#### Selection

7. Selection of men for training in their S.Q. will be done in stages. The first stage will be a selection for Gunnery, Torpedo, Anti-Submarine or Radar Plotting in the rough proportions of 7 : 3 : 2 respectively. Ratings selected for Gunnery will be selected, in the second stage, for either Quarters or Control S.Qs., and T.A.S. ratings for Underwater Weapons or Underwater Control, after they have begun Specialist Training.

8. The first stage of selection (i.e., between Gunnery, T.A.S. and R.P.) will be carried out as follows :—

- (a) *Adult and Junior entries* : by the Flag Officer Training Squadron, on the advice of the men's Divisional Officers and an officer trained in personnel selection, three weeks or so before the end of the men's New Entry Training.
- (b) *Boys* : by the Captain of the Boys' Training Establishment, on the advice of Divisional Officers and a Personnel Selection Officer, normally six months after the Boy's entry at the B.T.E.

9. The factors which will be considered in making this selection will be :—

(a) The Boy's or Man's own preference.

Arrangements will be made to give trainees an opportunity of seeing the sort of equipment handled by men with the various S.Qs., and they can go to their Divisional or Personnel Selection Officer for advice to help them to choose well.

As far as possible trainees will be selected according to their preference; but this will not always be possible, because of the following.

(b) The proportions of men and boys needed in the various specialisations (see paragraph 7 above).

(c) The Trainee's aptitudes.

Special aptitudes are needed by various S.Qs., e.g. aptitude at aiming, listening-in, etc. Many of these aptitudes are largely inborn and have to be reckoned with accordingly.

(d) Ability.

Each specialisation needs its share of really able men.

10. Great importance is attached to the above principles of selection being thoroughly understood by all New Entry trainees and by those concerned in their training, and to every New Entry trainee being given every practicable opportunity to co-operate in his own selection of a specialisation.

#### *Starring*

11. On successfully completing the Basic S.Q. Course at the Specialist School the New Entry trainee will be awarded the appropriate S.Q. badge consisting of the basic emblem of the Branch only, and will then be drafted to the Fleet.

12. It will be clear that such seamen will at that stage have had little if any experience of their S.Q. duties at sea, and will be usually less skilled than the present rating with a 3rd Class S.Q. (This is why the course at the Specialist School has just been called a "Basic" S.Q. Course). Accordingly, nine months after completing the Basic S.Q. Course, of which six months must have been spent at sea, the basic-trained Seaman will be examined by his ship's or squadron's Officers in his specialist proficiency and, if his Commanding Officer is then satisfied that he is competent to carry out the duties of his S.Q., he will award him a star to his basic S.Q. badge. This event will be known as "starring", and will be a normal qualification for advancement to Able Seaman (see paragraph 17 below).

13. The standards to be attained by men starring will be promulgated separately, but in general will correspond to the present standards.

14. Commanding Officers of ships bearing unstarred Seamen will be responsible for ensuring that they have every possible opportunity to obtain the practice and experience necessary in order to star.

15. Seamen who fail to star at their first attempt should be allowed further attempts at intervals of not less than three months. If a Seaman leaves his ship before starring, either by reason of failure or because he did not stay on board for the qualifying period his Commanding Officer should note on his History Sheet his progress in his S.Q.

#### *Seamen now without an S.Q.*

16. Seamen who join or have joined the Fleet without taking a Basic or 3rd Class S.Q. Course will be expected to qualify in an S.Q. and for this purpose will be drafted to a course as soon as opportunity offers. Selection for S.Q. will follow basically the same principles as those stated in paragraph 9 above, but the Commanding Officer's recommendation will normally take the place of the report of a Personnel Selection Officer. Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers will not, however, be required to qualify for a Basic S.Q. unless they wish to do so as a step towards a 2nd Class S.Q. Seamen who have served at sea before taking the Basic Course will star automatically at the end of the course, if successful.

#### *Rules for advancement*

17. From the date of this Order an Ordinary Seaman must possess a basic S.Q. star or a 3rd Class S.Q. as a qualification for advancement to A.B. *unless* he was drafted from New Entry training without a basic S.Q. Course (i.e. under the system prevailing generally hitherto).