



Forefront of Change

By Commodore Charles Montgomery - DNPS

The Royal Navy has always been at the forefront of change and retains a legendary and unparalleled reputation for achievement. This reflects our historical ability to react to contemporary situations with 'out of the box' thought under challenging conditions. Within the historic dockyard in Portsmouth is HMS WARRIOR - truly innovative and prime evidence of the ability of the RN to react to change. She was the first ocean-going ironclad armoured warship and was built to be a counter to the French ship GLOIRE. WARRIOR was commissioned in 1861 and at 9100 tons was capable of 14 knots.

If we move forward to the inter-war period and briefly examine the evolution of sonar. Although 7 ships were modified to receive the first transducers in 1918, during 1930-32 the advent of an efficient transducer and dome and gyrocompass plus recorders produced a British-born system. This innovation continued into an automated attack system, which could find, provide pointers to the bridge and attack the target by 1943 - ground breaking inventions.

And finally, to carriers and the immense amount of progression in the 40's through to the 60's. By 1955, we had produced HMS ARK ROYAL which was the first carrier to combine the angled flight deck, a mirror landing system, steam catapults and side lifts. These were all driven by the post-war era of heavier and faster aircraft. Drawing on earlier developments during the Second World War moving to a system of systems of carrier aviation in this vessel - the Royal Navy was at the forefront and continues today in a variety of areas.

The past attitude in leading change translated easily to contemporary life and the procurement of our new carriers to reflect the way war fighting is changing. The first of our larger carriers is scheduled to enter service in 2012. This improved capability we are seeking to reduce the 'flash to bang' time by procuring Air Power with reach, a true carrier strike capability - this will be provided by the Joint Combat Aircraft. However, to fully exploit this future improved capability we need to change towards smarter war fighting and in particular ensure that we shorten the time between sensor to shooter. This will be assisted by a Network Enabled Capability that will join us together and assist to manage mountainous information more effectively and efficiently. The same is true for non-war fighting roles. In the important area of Personnel Administration, the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) System will provide the single authoritative source of all military personnel information. It will be on-line and accessible from all over the planet, providing personal data and information on demand.

Where are we with this innovative project? A nother major and

important milestone has been passed, this is the endorsement of its Business Case by the Centre. JPA really is an ambitious programme. It is set to pull together the separate services' Terms and Conditions Of Service (TCOS) and lay the path for truly harmonised administration of service personnel in the future.

To get this far has required an enormous effort from all corners of the Ministry of Defence. In particular the RN, recognising the many unique needs of our people, took the lead in developing the new harmonised and simplified allowances and associated policies to ensure that personnel are rewarded for their efforts. Currently the RN is taking the lead in developing the future Management Information System processes that JPA will deliver and assisting to ensure the achievement of robust and effective deployed administration.

The true worth of JPA will only be realised when all its benefits are combined. Benefits will accrue from extensive harmonisation of administrative processes, from the integration of individual tri-Service personnel administration and data, and from the application of highly flexible commercial HR software. The consequences of JPA on the Armed Forces will be dramatic. Service personnel administration will be transformed. Whereas previous personnel initiatives have involved incremental change, JPA represents a strategic shift.

Moving to the Top Level Budget merger (combining of FLEET and 2SL headquarters staffs), is another area where the RN is leading the other 2 services. Although rationalisation can be difficult to market - in this case the scoping studies have clearly demonstrated some key benefits - which are worth pursuing and implementing. The team is aiming for a merger achievement target of April 2006. It will create a more agile organisation, fully attuned to the requirements of our Front Line, while continuing to provide support to those employed in other areas. From a manpower planning perspective it will see tighter control of the tactical management of manpower - improving the path from concept to implementation of manpower solutions. Obviously, with more to do in this important area, the next year will be crucial in laying solid foundations to meet the challenge in 2006.

The final point is the Navy Board's Personnel Change Programme (PCP), this represents real opportunity to really grasp total change in the personnel area by 'wrapping' the initiatives together in one vehicle, allowing effect to be measured and understood. To assist the targeting of the PCP vehicle, 2SL has recently published his Strategic Intent for Personnel, this will ensure that complex change agenda is achieved alongside other initiatives and routine business. Two key areas where the PCP has progressed are the development of the Engineering and Warfare specialisations, the establishment of the two-stage and flexible career structures. The strategic aim is to deliver the benefits of the PCP in time for the first Type 45 in 2009. This is an all-embracing change programme that will move the personnel in RN towards what will be required in the Future Navy of the next decade and beyond.

So you see, the RN continues in the same vein of being at the forefront of change with strong leadership and a vision of where it needs to be in 2015 and beyond.

We lead by example and it remains the key to progress.