

# R 1's NEWSLETTER

Despite the Sputniks, quite a few developments are taking place in the field of Electronic Warfare ratings' training—even my title is changing to E.W.I.

After a life of several years hidden in the shadows, the Telegraphists (S) Linguists have now been openly recognised. With the National Serviceman Coders (Sp) disappearing, the need for about one third of the Telegraphists (S) to be trained as Russian linguists has become urgent.

Telegraphists (S) Linguists are given the same conversion and advancement training as normal Telegraphists (S), but they are also given additional training for a year at the Naval unit, R.A.F. Pucklechurch, near Bristol. The Captain, H.M.S. *Mercury*, is responsible for their training and to all intents and purposes this unit is an offshoot of *Mercury*. Of course, the atmosphere is more academic and less naval than it is here. Linguists trained at Pucklechurch should have little difficulty in passing G.C.E. in Russian at "O level" and this would certainly be an asset in civilian life.

Linguists are paid a Special Language Allowance. At present this is 1/- a day.

Special drafting arrangements have to be taken with Linguists to ensure that they keep up their language knowledge. For instance, Linguists only spend 9 months in a ship on a G.S.C. before returning to Pucklechurch for a thorough brush-up. Many of them will be based there during their period of Home Port Service.

R.A.F. married quarters and/or naval hirings are fairly easy to get at Pucklechurch.

All this Term we have had two and sometimes three National Service Ordinary Telegraphists (S) conversion courses running simultaneously. At the same time a considerable number of long service Telegraphists have volunteered to change over to Telegraphist (S). At this rate, the chronic shortage of E.W. ratings at sea should be less acute by next Easter.

Up to now the many calls on the long service Telegraphists (S) have frequently prevented them from being released for advancement courses. When at last they have been able to take a course they have had to qualify in the same subjects as General Telegraphists. This has meant qualifying in Morse Typing, A.T. and Crypto which are of no value to them as the Navy's only E.W. operators. While keyboard bashing gradually replaces morse as the general service Telegraphists primary skill, the ability to take down really fast morse by hand remains a vital skill for the Telegraphists (S).

In future we shall run one special advancement course a Term, for budding Leading and Petty Officer Telegraphists (S). In these courses E.W. subjects will replace those not really essential to an E.W. operator. I hope that about eight would-be Leading and Petty Officer Telegraphists (S) will start on the first of these courses in March.

We are also running special two week refresher courses including provisional examinations, for Leading and Petty Officer Telegraphists (S) three times a year. These coincide with the Home Fleet leave periods.

### Drafting

Because of the small size of the Branch, the number of strange jobs that we have to do, and the present state of fitting E.W. equipment in ships, all drafts for Telegraphist (S) ratings have to be nominated by *Mercury*. Now that the shortage is easing and dates for advancement courses and linguist refresher courses have been settled, personal letters have been sent to all long service Telegraphists (S) giving them a forecast of what we propose to do with them during the next six to nine months. We plan to do this every Term and although the bachelors may not care one way of another, it should make life more secure for married men.

Despite the past shortages at sea, we have in nearly all cases, stuck to our approved drafting cycle which is:—

	<i>Home Port Service months</i>	<i>Home Sea Service months</i>	<i>GSC/ Foreign months</i>
Chief Tel. (S)	24	12	18
P.O. Tel. (S)	25	13	18
Ldg. Tel. (S)	22	12	18
Tel. (S)	21	8½	18

Unlike general service Telegraphists and V/S ratings who only come to *Mercury* for advancement courses or as instructors, Telegraphists (S) spend their Home Port Service at *Mercury* or at Pucklechurch. In fact we are really in direct touch with all our long service ratings throughout their career.

### Volunteers to join

Although we still cannot accept any general service Petty Officer Telegraphists, or ratings passed for

Petty Officer, we do need Leading Telegraphists and below. We need them both for normal Telegraphists (S) and also for Telegraphist (S) Linguists.

We want ratings who can be relied on to get on with a job themselves. For linguists, a good educational background is a help.

A.F.O. 2507/57 tells you how to volunteer for Telegraphist (S) Linguist and B.R. 1066, Part III, Art. 25, how to volunteer for a normal Telegraphist