

246.—Rangetaker—Establishment of Non-substantive Ratings.

(N. 16337.—19.2.1915.)

1. M.O. 255/1914 is cancelled, and this Order is substituted for it, taking effect from December 1st, 1914.

2. The new non-substantive ratings of Rangetaker, First and Second Class, are to be established and paid at the rate of 4*d.* and 2*d.* a day respectively; Second Class Rangetakers to be eligible for promotion to First Class after a minimum of three years' service as Rangetaker, if reported on as thoroughly efficient. The higher rate is intended rather as an inducement to stay in the rating than as a reward for superior skill.

3. These ratings are to be open to all Seaman Ratings holding the rating of Ordinary Seaman or above and to Royal Marines, but the pay as Rangetaker is not to be received with that of any gunnery rating other than Seaman Gunner.

4. In all complements one Rangetaker is to be included for each 4 ft. 6 ins. or larger rangefinder (non-navigational). The numbers will be as shown in the attached table.

5. Commanding Officers may at once rate as Rangetaker First Class men who have been carrying out the duty of Rangetaker for three years previous to the date of this order, provided they are reliable and efficient Rangetakers. Written evidence of the three years' service is, at the Commanding Officer's discretion, not required.

6. Gunlayers Third Class employed as Rangetakers may, if they have the qualifications stated in paragraph 4, be rated and paid as Rangetaker First Class, but they will not then receive the pay of Rangetaker in addition to that of Gunlayer, but in lieu thereof.

7. Gunlayers Second Class drafted as Rangetakers to Light Cruisers, &c. are not to receive additional pay for these duties.

8. Gunlayers, Second or Third Class, who have been employed as Rangetakers may qualify for the higher Gunnery rates in the ordinary way. The fact of a man being qualified as Rangetaker is not to stand in the way of his advancement to any of the higher Gunnery rates.

9. Subject to these conditions, Commanding Officers are authorised to give the rating of Rangetaker, First or Second Class, up to the numbers allowed in complement, to any man who has been or is being trained for these duties, if they are satisfied that he is a thoroughly reliable Rangetaker.

10. A report is to be forwarded from each ship of the number of men rated Rangetakers, First and Second Class.

11. It is the intention eventually that candidates for these ratings should be selected by the Gunnery Schools, primarily but not solely, on recommendations from afloat, such recommendations to be noted on Gunnery History Sheets when men are discharged from a ship. Those selected will undergo a course at the Gunnery School not exceeding 10 days, at the end of which they will be rated if found satisfactory.

12. It is understood that in some cases it has been found necessary to employ Gunlayers as both Gunlayer of a gun and as Rangetaker, responsible in both capacities. In such cases Gunlayers may be paid as Rangetaker, Second Class, as well as Gunlayer; but in future Gunlayers are not to be so employed.