

*†3224. Officers of Non-Military Branches—Changes in Titles and Uniform.

(C.W. 34315.—3.10.1918.)

The Board of Admiralty have had under their consideration the question of the present titles and uniform of the commissioned and subordinate Officers of the non-military branches of the Royal Navy, viz., the Medical, Accountant, and Naval Instructor Branches.

2. Engineer Officers of the old system of entry have since the 1st January 1915 been classified as part of the Military Branch, and have worn uniform exactly similar to that of other Officers of the Military Branch of corresponding ranks except for the retention of the distinctive colour between the lace on the sleeve. Since a considerably earlier date (1st April 1903) they have been given titles similar to those of the other Officers of the Military Branch, but with the prefix "Engineer" to denote their special duties.

3. Although it would not be consistent with the duties of the Medical, Accountant and Naval Instructor Branches to classify them similarly as part of the Military Branch, the Board have arrived at the decision that corresponding changes should now be made in their uniform and designation of rank.

4. The Army has for some years past abandoned the practice of distinguishing the duties of different branches, all of which are equally essential to the efficiency of a fighting service, by different sets of titles and marked differences in uniform. The Royal Air Force, which has now come into existence, has followed the practice of the Army in this respect. The consequence is that the Royal Navy is the only fighting service in which distinctions of this kind remain.

5. The Board have come to the conclusion that, although the existing titles and uniforms of the Medical, Accountant, and Naval Instructor Branches have a long and honourable history, and their significance is well understood in the Navy itself, the retention of such distinctive titles and differences in uniform is calculated to give rise, and is actually giving rise, to misunderstanding on the part of the public at large. The great expansion of the Army on the basis of national service during the war has accustomed the public to the military practice in these respects, and the general wearing of uniform throughout the country has tended to make people regard the naval uniform with which they are most familiar, *i.e.*, the distinctive uniform of the Military Branch, as being the only uniform denoting an Officer of the Royal Navy. Sufficient evidence has come under the notice of the Board to prove that misconceptions are prevalent which are not only embarrassing to existing Officers, but are likely to be a deterrent to the entry of future Officers in these important Branches of the Naval Service.

6. The Board feel, therefore, that it is both necessary in order to provide for the continued efficiency of these Branches, and also due to the existing Officers, who, equally with their brother Officers of the Military Branch, have shared in all the achievements and hazards of the war by sea, that the cause of these misconceptions should be removed before they develop any further.

TITLES.

7. The following changes in the titles of Officers of the non-Military Branches have accordingly been approved:

They will be applicable to Officers of corresponding ranks in the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

In the case of Officers on the retired or emergency lists, the alterations in title will apply only to those Officers who have served during the present war, or may serve hereafter.

Medical Officers.

The Medical Director-General to have the rank and style of Surgeon Vice-Admiral or Surgeon Rear-Admiral, according to whether he holds the relative rank of Vice-Admiral or Rear-Admiral under existing Regulations.

Surgeons-General	to be styled	Surgeon Rear-Admirals.
Deputy Surgeons-General	„ „	Surgeon Captains.
Fleet Surgeons	„ „	Surgeon Commanders.
Staff Surgeons	„ „	Surgeon Lieutenant-Commanders.
Surgeons	„ „	Surgeon Lieutenants.
Surgeon Probationers, R.N.V.R.	„ „	Surgeon Sub-Lieutenants, R.N.V.R.

Accountant Officers.

The Paymaster Director-General to have the rank and style of Paymaster Rear-Admiral.

Paymasters-in-Chief	to be styled	Paymaster Captains.
Fleet Paymasters	„ „	Paymaster Commanders.
Staff Paymasters	„ „	Paymaster Lieutenant-Commanders.
Paymasters	„ „	Paymaster Lieutenants.
Assistant Paymasters	„ „	Paymaster Sub-Lieutenants.
Clerks	„ „	Paymaster Midshipmen.
Assistant Clerks	„ „	Paymaster Cadets.

Accountant Officers serving as Secretaries to Flag Officers and Commodores who under existing regulations wear the uniform of a rank higher than that actually held by them, will be granted the title corresponding to the uniform worn while holding such appointments.

Naval Instructor Branch.

Chief Naval Instructors	to be styled	Instructor Captains.
Naval Instructors of 15 years' seniority	„ „	Instructor Commanders.
Naval Instructors of 8 years' seniority, but less than 15 years' seniority	„ „	Instructor Lieutenant-Commanders.
Naval Instructors of less than 8 years' seniority	„ „	Instructor Lieutenants.

UNIFORM.

8. Officers of the non-Military Branches (R.N., R.N.R., and R.N.V.R.), will, with the King's approval, wear the same uniform as Officers of the Military Branch (R.N., R.N.R., and R.N.V.R.), according to rank, but in order to indicate their particular branch will wear in addition a narrow stripe of distinction cloth according to branch, in conjunction with the stripes on cuff and shoulder strap.

The above will apply to Assistant Constructors of the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors when serving afloat.

The distinction cloth worn by Commissioned and Warrant Armourers will be dark blue.

The pattern of undress coat and mess jacket at present worn by Clerks and Assistant Clerks will not be changed.

Officers will be allowed a period of three years to wear out articles of uniform of the old pattern.

The necessary amendments to the uniform regulations will be made in due course.

The changes in uniform of Warrant Officers and Officers promoted from Warrant rank referred to in W.O. 2945/18 may now be made.

In the case of Officers on the retired or emergency lists, the alterations in uniform will apply only to those Officers who have served during the present war or who may serve hereafter.

(W.O. 2945/18.)

(This Order will be included in the November M.O.'s.)