

**\*S184. RATINGS—IMPLEMENTATION OF AN AIRCREWMAN BRANCH (U)**

[N/NP2/817/4/73/B(NP2)]

1. The Admiralty Board's decision to introduce a separate rating Aircrewman Branch was announced on 23 July 1973. This will make more effective use of the services of volunteers by providing a complete career with an established advancement structure for aircrew ratings.

**Categories**

2. The Branch will consist of the following six categories:

- a. SAR Winchman
- b. Sonar Operator
- c. Commando Aircrewman
- d. SAR Diver
- e. AS 12 Missile Aimer
- f. Communications Aircraft Aircrewman

**RESTRICTED**



### Training and Employment

3. Members of the Aircrewman Branch will perform all flying duties undertaken currently by rating aircrew. Ratings will be trained initially in one of the Aircrewman roles, but will be required in due course to cross-train in other duties. This will broaden their experience for later employment in the higher Aircrewman rates and afford equal opportunities for shore employment. Training details are given in ANNEX A to this DCI.

### Recruitment

4. Ratings in any branch of the Royal Navy, other than Artificers, Mechanics and Medical Technicians, are invited to volunteer to transfer to the Aircrewman Branch. The required qualifications are shown in paragraph 5. The normal recruiting of future entrants will take place at least one year after completion of Part II training, but applications will be permitted at any time after six months. Applications should be forwarded to the Commodore, HMS CENTURION, copy to Flag Officer Naval Air Command, with the documents specified in BR 1066 Article 1522(11a).

5. The following qualifications will be required of volunteers:

- a. Ordinary, Able or Leading rate.
- b. Age 19 to 26 (although exceptionally, ratings may be accepted up to the age of 31)
- c. NAMET grade 4/4 or equivalent (at the moment however, volunteers with NAMET 5/5 or equivalent will be considered).
- d. Medical category B1
- e. Passed Naval Swimming Test
- f. Recommended by Commanding Officer

Ordinary rates who volunteer and are selected for transfer to the Aircrewman Branch will not begin aircrew training until they have been advanced to the Able rate.

6. SAR Divers will continue to be recruited exclusively from qualified Ship's Divers with six months experience. In view of the specialist experience of Seaman (UC) ratings, preference will be given to these ratings when selecting the required quota for initial employment in sonar fitted ASW helicopters.

7. Existing rating aircrew, including Artificers and Mechanics, are invited to apply for transfer to the Aircrewman Branch under the terms set out in ANNEX B. They will serve on the same footing as future entrants, except where transitional arrangements apply as detailed in paragraphs 3 to 8 and 12 of the ANNEX. The procedure for existing Rating Aircrew who do not transfer to the Aircrewman Branch is laid down in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the ANNEX.

### Structure

8. An outline of the structure and an advancement diagram is shown at ANNEX C.

### Pay

9. Pay aspects are covered in paragraphs 11 and 12 of ANNEX B.



**Rates**

10. Aircrewman Branch rates and their abbreviations are as follows:

Aircrewman .. .. .	(Able Rate)	ACMN
Leading Aircrewman .. .. .	(Leading Rate)	LACMN
Petty Officer Aircrewman .. .. .	(Petty Officer Rate)	POACMN
Chief Petty Officer Aircrewman .. .. .	(CPO Rate)	CPOACMN
Fleet Chief Aircrewman .. .. .	(FCPO Rate)	FCACMN

**Badges**

11. Aircrewman will wear flying badges in accordance with existing regulations and will remove other branch badges. Flying badges will not be worn on No 8 shirts or overalls. Rating aircrew who do not transfer to the new branch will continue as at present while serving as aircrew. A decision on the introduction of any further range of badges will not be made before the review of general RN badge policy shortly to be undertaken.

**SD Promotion**

12. Qualified Aircrewmen will be eligible to be considered for SD(AV) officer candidates under the terms of QRRN, Article 0518. The possibility of further opportunities for SD Officer promotion is being investigated.

**Effective Date**

13. The date for the establishment of the Aircrewman Branch is 1 April 1974.

**ANNEX A****TRAINING**

1. **Pre-Flying Training (PFT).** Ratings provisionally accepted for transfer to the Aircrew Branch will be drafted to HMS DAEDALUS for PFT. This combines the pre-entry and selection procedure and lasts six weeks. It includes:

- Aircrew medical
- AS 12 aimer aptitude test
- Audio tests (to seaman UC rating standard at HMS VERNON)
- Air experience flight
- SMAC 2B(H) (aviation medicine and helicopter escape trainer)
- SMAC 22(F) (survival course in the New Forest)
- Academic refresher training
- Education tests
- Selection interviews (Naval Aircrew Advisory Board)



2. Flying Training. Ratings who successfully complete PFT will be drafted to 771 Squadron, HMS OSPREY for a seven-week Basic Flying Training (BFT) course in the Wessex 1. Seaman UC ratings and qualified Ship's divers will continue to enter specifically for UC(Air) and SAR Diver duties as at present. UC Aircrew will be required to carry out an Advanced Flying Training Course (AFT) between the BFT and Operational Flying Training (OFT). Ship's divers will be required to undergo a five-week Helicopter Diver's Course at HMS OSPREY between PFT and BFT. All other ratings, on successful completion of BFT, will be streamed to either SAR, Commando or AS12 Aimer OFT Courses depending on their aptitude, their preference and the current drafting requirements. Subsequently, it is expected that there will be significant cross-training between sub-specializations. Further details of OFTs are as follows:

- a. SAR: 771 Squadron, HMS OSPREY (4 weeks) – Wessex 1
- b. AS12 Aimer: 703 Squadron, HMS OSPREY (5 weeks) – Wasp
- c. Commando: 707 Squadron, HMS HERON (10 weeks) – Wessex V
- d. UC: 737 Squadron, HMS OSPREY (11 weeks) – Wessex 3  
and Sea King.

3. Communications Aircraft Aircrewmen. A limited number of experienced aircrewmen will be selected for training as Communications Aircraft Aircrewmen. Their course takes place at the Observer School, RNAS Culdrose (Part I) and in 781 Squadron, HMS DAEDALUS (Part II).

## ANNEX B

### TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INSTITUTION OF RATING AIRCREWMAN BRANCH

1. Ratings who have been awarded the Flying Badge and those who have already volunteered for aircrew duties, are invited to make application to transfer to the Aircrewman Branch. These ratings will, on transfer, serve under the transitional arrangements detailed in paragraphs 3 to 8 and 12 below. Applications are to be forwarded to the Commodore, HMS CENTURION copies to Flag Officer Naval Air Command, with a copy of the current NAC Form 89 for qualified Aircrew, the Commanding Officer's recommendation and a full report on Form S264c, where applicable.

2. Ratings in the group defined in paragraph 1 above must make application to transfer to the Aircrewman Branch *before 1 October 1974*, otherwise they will remain in their parent branch. Those who do not apply, or are not accepted for transfer, will, if currently serving as aircrew, continue to serve under the terms detailed in paragraphs 9, 10 and 12 below.