

# The Admiralty

Admiralty. The Lord High Admiral for the time being and when there shall be no such Lord High Admiral in office, any two or more of the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral.

*Q.R. and A.I.*—Explanation of Terms

## The Function of the Admiralty

1. The Admiralty is the department of State responsible for the Naval Service, which includes everyone and everything controlled by the Admiralty, paid for out of the Navy's share of Government expenditure and concerned with the planning, making and running of the Royal Navy. It formulates the advice given to Her Majesty's Government on all defence matters which involve the employment of maritime forces, and takes executive action when necessary in defence matters, consulting the Air Ministry on any question which involves the employment of R.A.F. aircraft.

In war, the Admiralty is also responsible for the safety of all British merchant ships at sea, and takes over control of their movements between their ports of departure and their destinations. It also co-ordinates and supervises the arrangements for merchant ship-building and repair. Planning for these wartime responsibilities is carried on in peace.

## The Structure of the Admiralty\*

2. The Admiralty can be divided broadly into four parts:—

THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY, which directs and controls the whole machine.

THE NAVAL STAFF, which advises and assists the Board in strategic and operational planning, in disposing the Fleet and in formulating broad policy on tactical doctrine and requirements of men and material. Sections of the Naval Staff are known as Divisions.

THE DEPARTMENTS, which provide the men, ships, aircraft and supplies to carry out the approved policy.

THE SECRETARIAT, which is the general co-ordinating agency, regulates finance, provides advice on policy, conducts all correspondence on behalf of the Board and maintains records. Sections of the Secretariat (other than those which provide Common Services) are known as Branches.

## The Board of Admiralty

3. The first sustained attempt to develop English sea power was made in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and the foundations of the Navy and the Admiralty were then laid. Henry VIII appointed a "High" or "Lord" Admiral to command the Fleet at sea, with a deputy entitled the "Vice-Admiral of England and Lieutenant of the Admiralty" (the office survives today in honorary form). The deputy, assisted by four officers, was made responsible for administration.

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\* The details of the text as illustrated by *Diagram 10* at the end of the book are those current in June 1960. They may be taken as typical but are liable to amendment in detail from time to time.

Thereafter, this arrangement experienced many changes, often reflecting the struggle between Crown and Parliament for control of the Navy.

In the early 18th Century, the office of Lord High Admiral was finally (apart from one brief resuscitation later) put "in commission", and as such it remains today. Lords Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral are appointed by name by Admiralty Patent. A new Admiralty Patent is issued on each change of a Lord Commissioner. Legally, the Queen could, if so advised, still revoke the Admiralty Patent and issue New Letters Patent to one person as Lord High Admiral, instead of to a number of Lords Commissioners.

4. "That mysterious and awful body, the Board of Admiralty", as Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone once described it, took on its present form in the 1870s. The size and actual composition of the Board varies from time to time. In 1914, there were nine Lords Commissioners, four naval and five civilian. There are now (1960) six naval and three civilian Lords Commissioners. Additional members may be appointed to deal with specific problems or to superintend new fields of activity; for example, during the Second World War, an eminent ship-builder was appointed to the Board to deal with merchant shipbuilding and repairs. The post lapsed after the war. The composition of the Board at present (1960) is as follows:—

2 Ministerial Members	..	The First Lord The Civil Lord
6 Naval Officers	.. ..	First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff Vice-Chief of Naval Staff Deputy Chief of Naval Staff and Fifth Sea Lord Second Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Personnel Third Sea Lord and Controller of the Navy Fourth Sea Lord and Vice-Controller
1 Civil Servant	.. ..	Permanent Secretary

5. The number and titles of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the broad division of business between them, are authorised by an Order in Council. The Admiralty Patent gives the impression that all members of the Board have equal standing and responsibility; the Order in Council, however, makes clear that the First Lord is supreme and that the other Board members are responsible to him for the separate duties he may assign to them.

The Order in Council also limits the collective responsibility of the Board for operational matters. The First Sea Lord, in his capacity as Chief of Naval Staff, is responsible to the First Lord for "the issue of orders to the Fleet affecting war operations and the movement of ships, which orders may be issued in his own name in his capacity as Chief of Naval Staff".

6. Subject to the personal responsibility of the First Lord to Her Majesty and to Parliament for all the business of the Admiralty, responsibility for "Board decisions" is shared by all members. In practice, the full Board meets only to discuss major questions of policy; most business is conducted on paper, decisions being given by the responsible Board members after divisions, departments and branches concerned have minuted their advice. The Second, Third and Fourth Sea Lords, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff and Fifth Sea Lord, and the Permanent Secretary, each have one or more deputies or assistants who are not members of the Board, but who have authority to give "decisions" on certain matters on behalf of their superintending Board member.

## Duties of Members of the Board

7. Briefly, the duties of the members of the Board are as follows:—

THE FIRST LORD is responsible to the Queen and to Parliament for the general direction of all business relating to the Navy. He is assisted in his parliamentary duties by the other ministerial members of the Board. In the exercise of his overall responsibility, he assigns to the other members of the Board such duties as he thinks fit.

He decides the appointments of officers of the rank of Captain and above.

THE CIVIL LORD superintends the Navy Works Department and the Greenwich Hospital Department in addition to assisting the First Lord in his Parliamentary duties. He also acts as Chairman of the Admiralty Finance Committee, and Chairman of the Admiralty Industrial Council.

THE FIRST SEA LORD is the chief naval professional adviser to the First Lord and to H.M. Government. He is also the Chief of Naval Staff (C.N.S.) and, in this capacity, he is assisted by the Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (V.C.N.S.) and the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff and Fifth Sea Lord (D.C.N.S.)\*

As Chief of Naval Staff, the First Sea Lord is responsible to the First Lord for the issue of orders to the Fleet affecting war operations and the movements of ships; these orders may be issued in his own name.

The special position of the First Sea Lord is recognised by a rule that in any matter of great importance he is always to be consulted by other members of the Board.

The First Sea Lord has, therefore, a threefold responsibility:—

- (a) joint, as a member of the Board;
- (b) individual, as Chief of Naval Staff;
- (c) individual, as the chief naval professional adviser to H.M. Government, which includes membership of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

THE SECOND SEA LORD is the Chief of Naval Personnel. He is responsible for the manning of the Fleet, i.e., for obtaining the personnel required for the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Women's Royal Naval Service, including the reserve forces; for matters affecting their conditions of service, including training, discipline, promotion, advancement, pay, allowances and pensions; for ceremonial questions and for the provision of welfare, education and medical services.

He is also responsible for the appointment of officers below the rank of Captain.

THE THIRD SEA LORD is the Controller of the Navy. He superintends all business relating to naval material. He is responsible for the design, construction, maintenance and repair of ships, armaments and equipment, and for the associated research and development; for the provision and repair of naval aircraft and air equipment; and for the general administration of the Royal Dockyards and Aircraft Repair Yards.

THE FOURTH SEA LORD AND VICE CONTROLLER superintends all business relating to supplies and transport. In addition, he is responsible, on behalf of

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\* The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff and the Fifth Sea Lord were formerly two separate appointments. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff was one of the First Sea Lord's principal assistants, the Vice-Chief of Naval Staff being the other. The Fifth Sea Lord was responsible for all naval air matters. The posts of Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff and Fifth Sea Lord were amalgamated in April 1957, in recognition of the fact that the Fleet Air Arm is now a fully-integrated part of the Royal Navy.

the Controller, for the superintendence of such business relating to the materiel of the Fleet as the Controller, with the approval of the First Lord, assigns to him from time to time. At present (1960), he is responsible on behalf of the Controller for the general administration of the Royal Dockyards and for maintenance in the Fleet.

His responsibilities for supplies and transport include:—

- (a) The provision of naval, armament, victualling and medical stores, and of all types of fuel, for the Fleet.
- (b) The general administration of all store depots and torpedo and cordite factories.
- (c) The production and repair of armament stores.
- (d) The transport of personnel and materiel.

**THE VICE-CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF** assists the Chief of Naval Staff in the execution of his responsibilities for naval policy, strategy and operations. He superintends the Naval Staff Divisions which deal with plans, intelligence, operations, shipping protection, and communications; and also the Hydrographic Department and the Naval Weather Service.

**THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF AND FIFTH SEA LORD** assists the Chief of Naval Staff on all questions of tactics, technical policy and fighting efficiency. His responsibilities include the study of maritime warfare; the staff requirements for new ships and naval aircraft; the development and use of weapons; the operational training of ships and units; training in strategy, tactics and staff duties;

**THE PERMANENT SECRETARY** is responsible for the general co-ordination of Admiralty business; for giving advice on policy in relation to previous experience and to Government policy as a whole; for the procedure for the conduct of Admiralty business; for the preparation and issue of all official communications of the Board; for naval information; for navy contracts; for the internal economy of the Admiralty Office, and the provision and administration of the civil staff. As "Accounting Officer for Navy Votes", he is responsible to Parliament, through the Public Accounts Committee, for controlling and accounting for, all moneys administered by the Admiralty. He is also responsible for the day to day business in the field of conditions of service of industrial employees and related matters.

### **The Naval Staff**

8. The term "Naval Staff" does not mean all Naval officers serving in the Admiralty. It means the Divisions responsible, under the Chief of Naval Staff and his two assistants (V.C.N.S. and D.C.N.S.) for the formulation of maritime strategy, including strategic planning, and of tactical doctrines; and for stating the broad requirements, both quantities and specifications, of ships, naval aircraft, armament and equipment.

The Naval Staff, which includes some civilians, forms only about one-twentieth of the whole Admiralty.

9. The work of the Naval Staff is divided into two sections, each controlled by one of the Chief of Naval Staff's assistants, as follows:—

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|------------------------|---|
| Under V.C.N.S. . . . . | ..Operational policy and plans, shipping protection, communications and intelligence.                           |
| Under D.C.N.S. . . . . | ..Tactical and weapon policy; staff requirements for material; fighting efficiency of ships and naval aircraft. |

## **The Departments**

10. The task of the Departments is to execute approved policy, i.e., to provide and administer the men, ships, aircraft, bases and supplies needed to make up the Navy, except in operational matters which are dealt with by the Naval Staff.

The Departments also have a share in the formulation of policy, since availability of personnel and materiel, industrial capacity and technical resources are vital factors in implementing policy. Thus, the Naval Staff advises on broad aims, and the Departments advise on the practical considerations involved in these aims; the final policy is determined in the light of both points of view.

The Departments form the greater part of the Admiralty Staff. Their personnel include naval officers of all specialisations, naval constructors, civilian engineers, scientists, drawing office and technical staff and many others.

## **The Secretariat**

11. The Secretariat, which is staffed entirely by civilians, assists the Secretary in the execution of his responsibilities and functions.

Its tasks are, briefly, to co-ordinate Admiralty business in the non-technical sphere; to provide advice on the handling of business and on precedents; to examine proposed expenditure and to obtain Treasury sanction where necessary; to prepare the annual Navy Estimates and the Appropriation Account; to receive, pay and account for all money administered by the Admiralty; to undertake routine secretarial work; and to provide common services (e.g., typing) throughout the Admiralty.

Whenever possible, the Secretariat undertakes work which will leave Naval Officers and professional civilians (e.g., scientists) free to concentrate on their specialised duties, and every effort is made to ensure that it does not duplicate the work of the Staff Divisions and Departments.

## **The Working of the Admiralty**

12. The Admiralty Organisation Chart must not be interpreted as indicating that Divisions, Departments and Branches work in watertight compartments under their own Superintending Lords. All Directors of Divisions or Departments are responsible to the whole Board for carrying out their duties.

13. Most problems involve more than one Division or Department. It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to obtain the views of all concerned and then to submit the collective advice to the Board for decision. The Secretariat is subsequently responsible for promulgating the final decisions to those required to take action.

FIRST LORD of  
the ADMIRALTY  
A Ministerial  
Politician

