
The Admiralty Interview Board

**A short introduction for
those about to appear for selection**

TO A LARGE EXTENT the Navy is, in Nelson's phrase, a band of brothers but it is not separate from the rest of society; it is a community within the community and, like any community, it is the richer for variety in the personalities that comprise it.

As a community it is hierarchical but classless; it recruits its officers from the whole of the society which it serves and it trains those whom it accepts to proficiency and to high standards of leadership.

For you to be accepted it must appear probable to the Board before whom you appear that after training you will make a satisfactory officer, competent in your specialisation and able to lead others.

The Royal Navy offers you a life that is a challenge to your intelligence and to your strength of character; it rewards you with a sense of participation in critical tasks—the preservation of peace by deterring would-be aggressors and the expression of international friendship on the high seas and along the coastlines of the world. It rewards you with a good income, with opportunities for advancement dependent only on your ability and the use you make of it; with travel, with excellent facilities for sport, with good periods of leave and, at the end of your career, with a good pension.

The Navy is not looking for any particular type of individual; it offers scope and interest for graduates of the most advanced technologies, as it does equally for those whose main interests and academic achievements have been in the arts and humanities.

TO BECOME a satisfactory naval officer you must have a certain minimum intellectual ability. The Board's judgement on whether or not you have this ability will depend partly on your academic achievements and the forecasts of your schoolmasters, partly on intelligence tests and partly on your responses to the problems and questions that are posed.

But intelligence won't achieve much without the energy to use it, the curiosity to feed it and the ability to express it. The Admiralty Interview Board seeks to discover whether you have these qualities in adequate measure to be trained to be an officer. The measure of your energy and determination will depend in part on what you have attempted and achieved in the past, and in part on the impression you give to the Board. Interviews will give the best indication of whether or not you have a natural curiosity about the world around you and your essay and your answers at interview will give some insight into how well you can express yourself. The Board will also want to know what steps you have taken to find out about the Navy in which you want to make your career and what ideas you have about the sort of life you will live within it. The Board well appreciates, however, that some boys have only recently thought of the Navy as a career, whereas others have never thought of anything else; that some have friends or relatives to tell them about it, whereas others have to rely largely on what they can read.

The Interview Board

Finally, the Board will be trying to assess how well you are likely to get on with all who make up a ship's company and who, at sea, live a close and mutually dependent life. You don't have to be extrovert, but a sense of humour and an interest in people will be necessary if you are to enjoy the life.

Interview procedures

When you arrive, which should be by 1800, you will be shown to your accommodation and will be free to relax until turning in around 2230. The following day is taken up mainly by briefing, various written exercises and tests. You will be photographed, given a personal history questionnaire to fill in and be briefed on the programme that lies ahead. After this you will do the first session of the written tests which are designed to throw light on some areas of your intellectual ability. Then follows the break for lunch, after which the written tests are completed. Then comes tea. Having had a short break you will change into the overalls provided and then go down to the gym where next day practical tasks will be done with



the Board watching; this afternoon, however, you will be shown the equipment and given the opportunity of doing a practice task to give you some idea of what to expect next day. This lasts about half an hour; then, back in the main building, you have an essay to write.

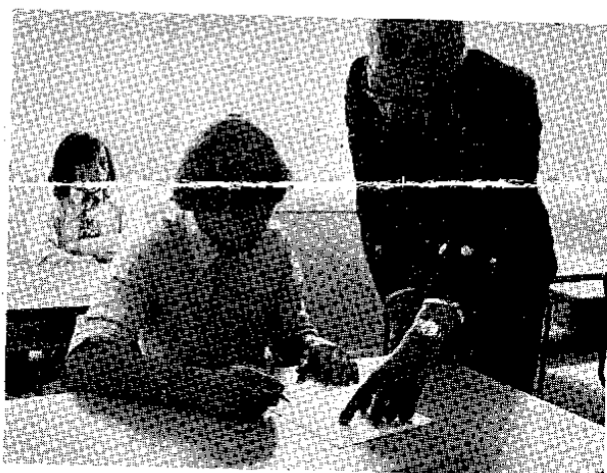
Next morning you will be roused at 0630. After breakfast you will be briefed on the first part of the day's procedure which could be either the practical tasks in the gym or a discussion exercise; some do one first and some the other. Let's suppose that the gym comes first. Before the Board arrives to watch, you will be told about the task through which you will have to lead your team. Everyone is leader for one task and before it begins you have a bit of time to plan how you will tackle it. The Board doesn't mind too much whether your objective is reached within the time allowed, but they do want to see you making all the effort you can. The Board knows that some may well have had similar experience before, while others have never seen anything like it in their lives. If everything falls to pieces in your hands, don't despair, just keep on trying. In spite of your earlier fears you will almost certainly find yourself enjoying the whole business.

When all the tasks are over you return for a quick wash, change and a cup of tea. Then the next exercise starts. This is in two parts, the first being when you make a plan to solve a problem situation described in a written brief, the second being a discussion that you then hold among yourselves (but with the Board listening) about the problem you have tried to sort out



*Top: Discussion exercise
Right: Interview with Personnel Selection Officer*





individually. The planning part takes half an hour and the discussion, which includes a question session at the end, can take up to three-quarters of an hour. The problems can all be solved but there is not necessarily a single 'right' answer to them, nor do they contain any tricks. What you have to do is try to imagine yourself in the situation in the brief, put your views across clearly, listen to what the others say, learn what you can and then be prepared to answer some questions about your plan.

When the discussion is over, there are two interviews: one in front of three or four members of the Board and one with the Personnel Selection Officer alone. In both interviews all that is asked of you is that you listen to the questions and then answer them honestly and as well as you can. Always give your own views, not those you think the Board wants to hear, for if you try to do the latter you are bound to get it wrong. The Board doesn't expect you to know everything but it does hope that you can talk about something that interests you, even if this is only yourself! Finally, if you have any questions, be prepared to ask them when invited to do so.

You will have had lunch, probably between interviews, and as soon as your second interview is over you are free to go unless your medical examination has been arranged for the following day. In this case you stay overnight. The procedure is likely to be finished so far as you are concerned by 1600 at the latest. Within a few days you will hear from the President of your Board whether or not you have been recommended for the award of a commission. This recommendation does not mean you will be selected automatically; sometimes further selection is necessary. In any case the Ministry of Defence will inform you as soon as possible of the outcome.

Unfortunately many who come to the Admiralty Interview Board are not recommended for an award, but this should not deter you. If the Navy is the career you want you can find out whether we think you good enough only if you apply and come to the Board.

Those who assess you have all at some time undergone the same sort of thing. Some of you will think it is an ordeal, others simply an experience. The inhibiting and unsettling effects of nervousness and being in alien surroundings are taken into account. Nobody expects you to appear as though ready for your commission tomorrow. It is your suitability for training that we are looking for. And remember, as you may be appearing at a time in your life when your personality is rapidly developing, you can always try again at a later date, if qualified, to reverse an adverse decision by the Board.

*Top: A written test
Left: Practical task*



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