

HISTORY OF THE ROYAL NAVAL AUXILIARY SERVICE (RNXS)

The RNXS was established by an announcement in the House of Commons on the 5th November 1962, from what was previously known as the Royal Naval Minewatching Service (RNMS). It was named RNXS rather than RNAS to avoid confusion with the existing abbreviation for Royal Naval Air Stations. Its Patron was Prince Michael of Kent and it was a uniformed, unarmed civilian volunteer service administered and financed by the Admiralty. At that time, there was an urgent need to respond to the Russian nuclear threat to UK ports, and the remit of the RNXS was to provide expertise in the tasks of evacuating major ports, setting up assembly anchorages for convoys and Naval escorts and everything necessary for the Naval Control of Shipping (NCS).

Volunteers were recruited from all walks of life, many of whom were former RNMS members and ex-servicemen.

Units were formed at coastal locations all around the UK under Commanders-in-Chief and the Flag Officers of Scotland and Northern Ireland. There were 37 Units in the Portsmouth and Medway Area, 43 in the Plymouth Area and 45 in the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area.

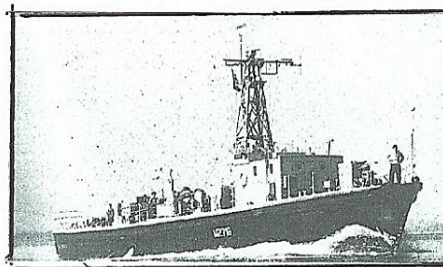
Each Area was managed by Area Naval Auxiliary Officers, Administrative Officers, Engineer Officers, Training and Group Naval Auxiliary Officers, Port Naval Auxiliary Officers and Staff Port Naval Auxiliary Officers.

Units comprised of an Afloat Section (Seamen, Engineers and Afloat Communicators), or a Shore Section (Shore Communicators within the Operations Section) or both.

The Afloat Sections manned the training vessels, which over the 32 years of existence, the RNXS initially operated 13 Motor Fishing Vessels (MFVs); replaced by 10 Inshore Minesweepers (HAM Class); which were again replaced by 10 new build Fleet Tenders (Volunteer Class). Finally, 4 out of 12 new build Coastal Training Craft for the RN (P.2000 Class) were allocated to the RNXS by 1988. Note: After disbandment in 1994 these were allocated to Universities for training.



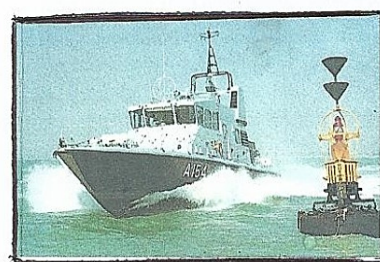
13 MFV's



10 HAM CLASS IMS's

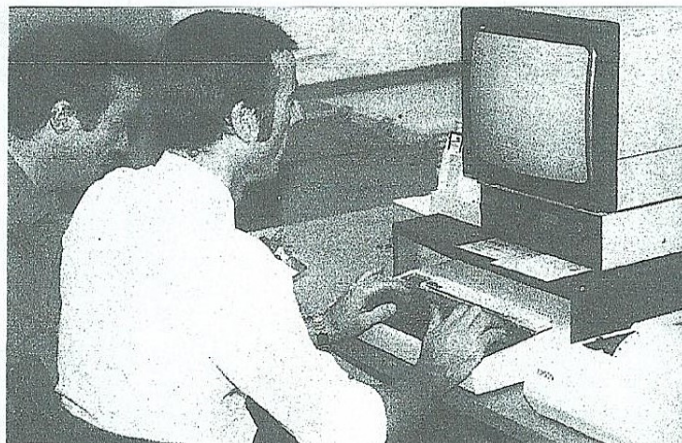


10 VOLUNTEER CLASS

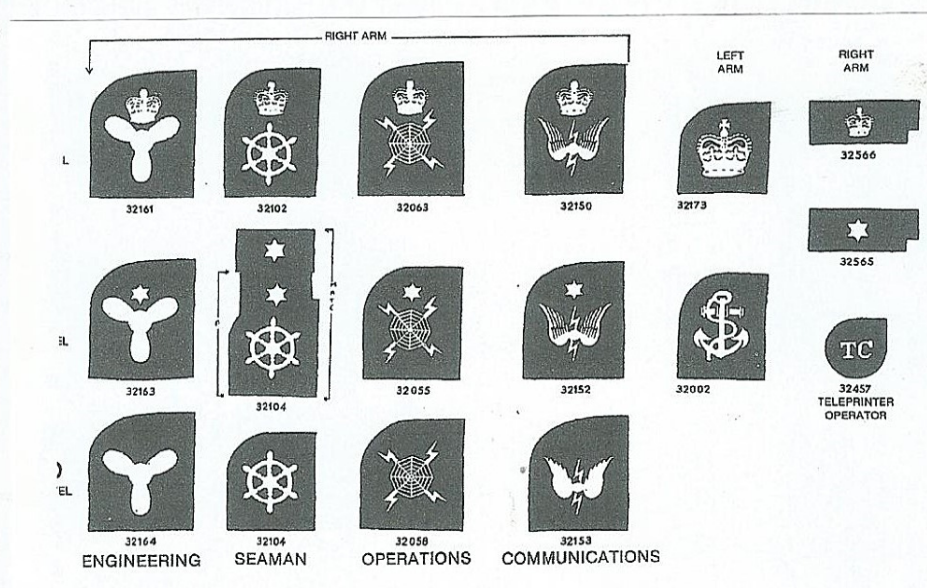


4 P2000 COASTAL TRG. CRAFT

The Shore Sections staff in Port Headquarters (PHQs) were responsible for the planning and sailing of convoys and working with dedicated RNR control personnel within the Operations Centre.. They were connected by computer to all UK MOD modes, and unassisted, performed solely within the RNXS structure on behalf of the overall PHQ Command and Naval Officer in Command (NOIC). RNXS Auxiliary Officers trained with RNR Officers to qualify as Naval Control of Shipping Officers (NCSOs)



A TYPICAL RNXS COMPUTER ROOM IN A PHQ



RNXS BRANCH BADGES AND GRADES

With the end of the Cold War and the advancement of maritime technology, not least in future submarine development, the role of the RNXS diminished. Thus, on the 31st March 1994 the service was disbanded along with the Royal Observer Corps. To prevent the loss of the expertise and training gained over 32 years disappearing forever, many Units formed associations, clubs and charities to put it to good use and to retain the camaraderie.