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## Service Story of Lt Cdr Michael Rose RN

Following in the footsteps of both my parents, I joined the Royal Navy as an Instructor Officer in September 1981, straight after graduating from the University of York, and gained the rank of (acting) Lieutenant on entry. I had been thinking of entering the teaching profession anyway, so what the Navy was offering seemed like an excellent option to me - and it was! Initial training at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) Dartmouth lasted for six months, including nine weeks sea training in HMS *Fearless*. *Fearless* was an amphibious assault ship and took the Officers Under Training (OUTs) from BRNC to the Caribbean.



Sea Training aboard HMS *Fearless* in 1981.  
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Lieutenant Michael Rose opposite Princess Alexandra, passing out parade at BRNC Dartmouth in 1982.  
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BRNC Dartmouth's parade ground in 1982. Source: Michael Rose – all rights reserved

On completion of training, I joined HMS *Fisgard* in Torpoint, Cornwall, as an instructor to artificer apprentices, teaching them mathematics. I was also a Divisional Officer (D.O.) to a class of artificers. It was during this time that war was declared with Argentina over ownership of the Falkland Islands, and many of my colleagues were sent south to join the conflict in active RN ships. I remained on shore and took on more classes and more divisional duties. HMS *Fisgard* was eventually (and sadly for many) closed in 1983.

During my time at HMS *Fisgard* it felt very much like being a school teacher, but without having to instill discipline in my students, who had a good general education and were highly motivated. I had tried school teaching before joining the Navy, but found it extremely frustrating since I had to spend more time and planning on class control issues than actually teaching maths (the best part for me). Therefore, with no discipline to worry about, it was 100% teaching - marvellous! While there, I created a game that lasted 5 minutes and which I did at the end of most classes. The challenge encouraged my students to obtain a score of 100%. The game involved giving the class a calculation verbally (for example, "the square root of 121", or "a quarter of 12 squared"), waiting five seconds and moving on to the next one (without repeating). The artificers had to write the answers down pretty quickly - it was a game of speed. After about 10 or 20 of these, I would give the answers verbally and ask who achieved 100%. Rarely was this achieved, but when it was, loud expressions of joy were emitted by those achievers. Everyone seemed to have fun and it was a light-hearted method that was effective in improving mental arithmetic skills.

I only had about 10 classes a week to teach, so there was plenty of time to plan lessons and organise the week's work - and also plenty of time to chat and get to know my fellow officers! One who I remember well was Lt. Steve Sidebotham, a naturalised Canadian. He always had a sporty car, and I'll never forget once when he was late for work. His excuse was that a wheel had fallen off his BMW, which he was very embarrassed about as he took great pride in his vehicles! One particular thing that I enjoyed about the teaching life at *Fisgard* was the end of term assessments. We (the instructors) had, at our disposal, a list of numbered comments, such as "1. Has worked hard this term but has achieved only satisfactory marks" or "2. Excellent student - has attained very high marks". All we had to do was to write down the number of the comment on the report sheet, and an administrative person would type up the full comment on the final version!

In September 1983 I joined HMS *Collingwood* in Fareham, Hampshire, as a Maths & Digital Logic Instructor to junior ratings. It was during this time that I extended my commission from five years to eight. After four years, I moved to HMS *Sultan* in Gosport and worked as a Digital Logic Instructor, alongside Lt John Nixon.

In 1989 I married (guard of honour with fellow Schoolies outside the church shown in the following page) and my reception was held in the wardroom of HMS *Sultan* with John Nixon being my best man. In 1990, I was given the opportunity to study for a full-time Masters course at RMCS (Royal Military College of Science) in Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, in exchange for committing to a further eight years of service, thus extending my commission to 16 years.



Lieutenant Michael Rose and bride Julie in 1989. Source: Michael Rose – all rights reserved

I studied "Design of Information Systems", which eventually laid the grounding for a civilian career in computers eight years later. After the course, in January 1991, I joined HMS *Dryad* in Southwick, Hampshire, as the IT Manager/Computer Security Officer. Later, in 2004, HMS *Dryad* was moved to HMS *Collingwood*. For my final appointment I was sent to CNOCS (Captain Naval Operational Combat Systems) on Portsdown Hill, Hampshire, in March 1993 as IT Manager. I remained there until my discharge in September 1997. I requested an extension of service, until the age of 55, but it was not granted, possibly due to an overall reduction in personnel across all three services that were being experienced at the time.

I really enjoyed my service life as, apart from complete job satisfaction, the feeling of comradeship was second to none. I have missed that dearly ever since. Teaching the junior ratings and artificers was particularly rewarding as they showed a great keenness to learn, and it was encouraging to know that we (IOs) were helping them to advance in their careers. The opportunities presented to me as an IO were tremendous and set up me in very good stead for my subsequent civilian career.

Occasionally I had my leg pulled for being a 'Schoolie' and not a 'real' naval officer, but it was always done light-heartedly and I never took offence. After all, I felt that I was making a valuable contribution to the service. Also, the services' motto about "working hard and playing hard" is true, and IOs were always welcomed into the social lives of wardrooms both at sea and ashore.

I have pursued a career in IT since leaving the Royal Navy, which has resulted in me working and living in the United States and then Brazil.