

# ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY

Your career guide



YOUR ROLE | THE PEOPLE YOU'LL MEET | THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

# WELCOME

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) allows the Royal Navy and the forces of NATO to operate across the world. Thanks to our fleet of specialist ships and sophisticated techniques for replenishment (stocking up on supplies) at sea, Royal Navy warships can get everything they need, when they need it, wherever they are in the world.

We work alongside Royal Navy personnel and go into many of the same situations. Our ships belong to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and are painted grey just like warships. However, there's one crucial difference between the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Royal Navy. We're a civilian service, made up of over 2000 ratings and officers trained to Merchant Navy standards, with other skills that allow us to work on military operations.

A career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary offers all the opportunities for travel, adventure and responsibility that go with a life at sea. What makes it unique, though, is that it also puts you at the heart of Britain's activities at sea both in terms of defence and humanitarian relief. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is what makes the Royal Navy's work possible. We hope this publication will give you some insights into who we are, what we do and how you could fit into our team.

We wish you every success in your choice of career with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk) or call 08456 04 05 20

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“In the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, we have the best of both worlds. We are Ministry of Defence civil servants and we use Royal Navy training, courses and establishments.”

Matt, Deck Officer



## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

**With our specialist ships and unique skills, we are responsible for keeping Royal Navy ships and personnel supplied with everything they need to stay operational. Join us, and Britain's maritime defence will be largely in your hands.**

### Really?

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary came into existence on 3 August 1905. Before then, the Admiralty used to pay privately owned merchant ships to re-supply the Fleet.

### Supplying the fleet

We supply Royal Navy warships with the fuel, food, stores and ammunition they need to stay fully operational while at sea. You'll join a team of over 2000 officers and ratings, all civilians, trained to Merchant Navy standards but with the specialist skills you'll need when your ship goes into action.

You'll be trained to take part in our unique replenishment at sea (RAS) operations, which allow warships to take on fuel and supplies far from their home ports. You'll be away for four months at a time, earning generous amounts of shore leave in between voyages.

Because the Royal Navy operates right around the world, your Royal Fleet Auxiliary career could take you everywhere from Hong Kong to Kuwait and the Caribbean to Sydney. You may find yourself supplying warships in the middle of the ocean, taking troops into a war zone, or bringing humanitarian relief to some of the most troubled regions on Earth.

The changing demands on Britain's armed forces means our work is always changing and developing. So if you have the determination and ambition to become a qualified Merchant Navy seafarer, we can promise you a life full of interest, variety and challenge.

### Bringing relief

Like the Royal Navy, we increasingly work as part of NATO and United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. In 2003, during the war in Iraq, the first ship into the port of Um Qasr was one of ours, loaded with 650 tonnes of humanitarian aid for the Iraqi people. A year later, we joined the rescue effort when Hurricane Ivan struck the Caribbean. Then in 2006, we were first on the scene following the devastating tsunami in South East Asia.



### A SENSE OF HISTORY

In Naval Service terms, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is relatively young, having been formed in 1905. In those days, warships still ran on coal, so that was what we carried until the First World War. At that point warships converted to oil-fired power. However, it was during the Second World War that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary really came of age. We saw service in major naval operations from the Arctic to the Pacific.

More recently, our ships have played a vital role in the Falklands and the Gulf.

## Really?

Our early RAS operations involved passing sacks of coal from supply ships to warships using ropes and pulleys.

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

## Your place in the team

Although you'll be working alongside the Royal Navy, you won't actually be joining them. In fact, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is part of the UK Merchant Navy, which means you will stay a civilian.

Of course, serving with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a bit different from serving on a cruise ship or an oil tanker. By keeping the Royal Navy supplied and operational, you'll have a vital role in Britain's defence and humanitarian activities around the world. This could mean serving in hostile waters, or regions that have suffered a major natural or man-made disaster. To prepare you for this, you'll begin your career with us in Royal Navy training bases, learning specialist technical and military skills you wouldn't develop in other Merchant Navy jobs. You'll also earn qualifications accredited by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA), which will be recognised throughout the UK shipping industry.

On many Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships, your crewmates will include Royal Navy or Royal Marines personnel, such as Air Engineering Technicians looking after your ship's helicopters. As a civilian, though, you'll have to keep to Royal Fleet Auxiliary codes of conduct, rather than military ones.

## A unique purpose...

In the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you'll be working with two main groups of people. The Royal Navy will look to you to supply and repair their warships away from home ports and provide training facilities for ratings and officers. Meanwhile, the Royal Marines Commandos and the Army will rely on you to provide them with a floating base for their operations on shore.

Our ships are all specially designed and equipped to carry out these crucial tasks. You'll serve on one of the ships in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary fleet, which currently has six fleet and support tankers, two dry-cargo fleet replenishment ships, two combined fuel and stores replenishment ships, four landing ships, one aviation training ship and one forward repair ship.

Almost all our ships have large flight decks and hangars, so they can land and carry helicopters. We use helicopters to carry loads out to warships as part of our supply work. Sometimes, though, you'll have Royal Navy anti-submarine helicopters on board with you, or detachments of Royal Marines Commandos or Army troops being airlifted into action.

## ...and identity

You can tell Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships from Royal Navy warships by their grey paint and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary flag, the blue ensign. This is a blue flag with the Union Jack in the top-left corner and an upright gold anchor in the centre. Royal Navy ships fly the white ensign, while other British Merchant Navy ships fly the red ensign.



## Replenishment at sea (RAS)

When Royal Navy ships are on patrol in the middle of the ocean, taking humanitarian aid to a stricken region, or racing into action, they can't simply stop off in port to take on vital supplies. Thanks to us, they don't have to.

You've probably seen pictures of fast-jet fighters being refuelled in mid-air from large tanker aircraft. A RAS is basically the same operation, allowing warships to take on fuel and stores while at sea from one of our tankers or other supply ships, without having to stop. It sounds simple in theory; in practice, it's often anything but.

Throughout this operation, your Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship and the warship have to 'keep station'. This means sailing alongside each other, just 30 to 40 metres apart. To achieve this, you'll both be making constant speed and course corrections, often by as little as a single degree or one-tenth of a knot.

When you remember that a Type 45 Destroyer is 154 metres long and weighs over 7000 tonnes, while a Royal Fleet Auxiliary support tanker like RFA Bayleaf is 20 metres longer and almost six times heavier, you'll see that keeping station involves skill, nerve and concentration from both ships' crews.

You will send the gun-line across to the warship's crew. This is a lightweight line attached to a small projectile that's literally shot (hence the name) from your ship to the warship. Your team will then attach the gun-line to a hefty steel cable, called a jackstay, which is then hauled back to the warship. Once the jackstay is fixed in position, you'll run hoses for fuel and water across, with solid stores like food or ammunition going across on a pulley called a traveller block.

While all this is going on, you'll have to keep station at 12 to 13 knots (about 15 mph). You'll perform a RAS in all kinds of weather and sea conditions, by day and at night, with Royal Navy ships on patrol, exercise or operations. What's more, you'll often be supplying two warships at once, with one either side of your ship. With experience, you'll come to see it as a routine operation. No matter how many times you do it, though, a RAS will always be a real test of seamanship and crucial to keeping the Royal Navy supplied and ready for action, right around the world.



## POWER SUPPLY

Keeping warships supplied while they're away from their home ports is a challenge almost as old as the Royal Navy itself. When sailing ships like HMS Victory were at the cutting edge of technology, they needed gunpowder, cannonballs and shot, timber, canvas, food and, of course, rum. One thing that didn't need to be replenished when ships were powered by the wind was, of course, fuel. Today, fuel, in the form of diesel and aviation fuel, makes up the bulk of what we deliver to warships. A fleet support tanker like RFA Bayleaf, for example, can carry up to 40,000 cubic metres (over 8.7 million gallons) of fuel.



## ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY LIFE

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a team. From the moment you join, you're part of it, with your own contribution to make. We live, work and relax together, forming friendships that can last a lifetime. There aren't many other jobs that can promise that.

### In this section:

- **What we can offer you** - Page 10
- **Travel and recreation** - Page 12
- **Understanding the ranks** - Page 14

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# WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU

As well as all its incredible opportunities for travel, adventure, training and teamwork, a career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary has plenty of practical benefits too. Throughout your time with us, we're going to ask a lot of you. So in return, you can expect a great deal from us.

## Pay

Pay in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary compares well with equivalent Merchant Navy jobs. As well as your basic pay, you'll qualify for extra money for having special skills.

## Job security

There will always be a Royal Navy and it will always need supplying. So the future role of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is secure. As a result, we can offer you much greater long-term job security and career prospects than you'll find elsewhere in the Merchant Navy. Unlike the Royal Navy, you don't have to join for a fixed period of time and you can stay with us right up until you retire.

## Training and lifelong learning

As a rating or as an officer, much of your training in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is 'on the job', but you'll also carry out fully-funded training to gain Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) certificates in certain jobs. These will both help you develop your career with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and be recognised by other Merchant Navy employers.

As a rating, you'll earn a relevant NVQ to at least Level 2. This, again, will boost your career prospects both within and beyond the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Like all seafarers, you'll be trained in firefighting, sea-survival and first aid, as this is required by the MCA. As an officer, you may have opportunities to gain higher degrees and management qualifications.



## Life at sea

Your ship isn't just your workplace, it's your home. Accommodation on board Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships is usually generous, offering more space and privacy than you'd find on Royal Navy warships. In fact, on board most Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships, you'll have your own room (or cabin), most of which have en-suite facilities. Plus, you'll find a colour TV in every cabin.

## Holiday

Each time you complete a four-month deployment, you'll go off on earned voyage leave (a combination of holiday entitlement, worked weekends and bank holidays). As a rating, you'll have 74 days' paid leave before you go to sea again, while as an officer, you'll be entitled to 84 days.

## Maternity and paternity leave

We offer 26 weeks' maternity leave on full pay and an extra 26 weeks on reduced pay. Men are offered two weeks' paternity leave on full pay.

## Pensions

Like other civil servants, you'll have a choice of pension arrangements when you join the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Under the contracted-out scheme, you pay lower National Insurance contributions (NICs), but won't receive any State Pension for your period of service. With the Partnership scheme, you'll pay more in NICs, but receive a State Pension on top of your Partnership benefits. For more details, please visit [civilservice-pensions.gov.uk](http://civilservice-pensions.gov.uk)



## Really?

Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships are never referred to as Her Majesty's Ship (HMS): this applies only to Royal Navy ships and submarines.

"My friends are quite jealous that when I'm home on leave playing golf, they are at work and also that I get to play in some far-flung places."

Kenny, Communications Officer

# TRAVEL AND RECREATION

A career with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary can literally take you around the world, with plenty of opportunities to see the sights and experience the culture of the places you'll visit on your travels.



## See the world

The opportunity to see the world and visit places you might otherwise never get to go to is still one of the main attractions of a career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The Royal Navy operates in literally every part of the world and wherever they go, we go. Your typical four-month voyage could take you from UK home waters to the Far East, the South Atlantic, the Gulf, the Mediterranean or even Antarctica. Every trip will bring you sights and experiences you won't find in any guidebook or holiday brochure. Plus, once you have completed your duties in port, you'll have a chance to explore the country, which could be anywhere from Hong Kong to Hawaii.

## Sport and recreation

We encourage everyone to take part in sport, both for the fitness benefits and the fantastic social life that goes with it. Whenever you're in a Royal Navy port, you're entitled to use the excellent indoor and outdoor sports facilities that will always be on offer.

## Time to relax

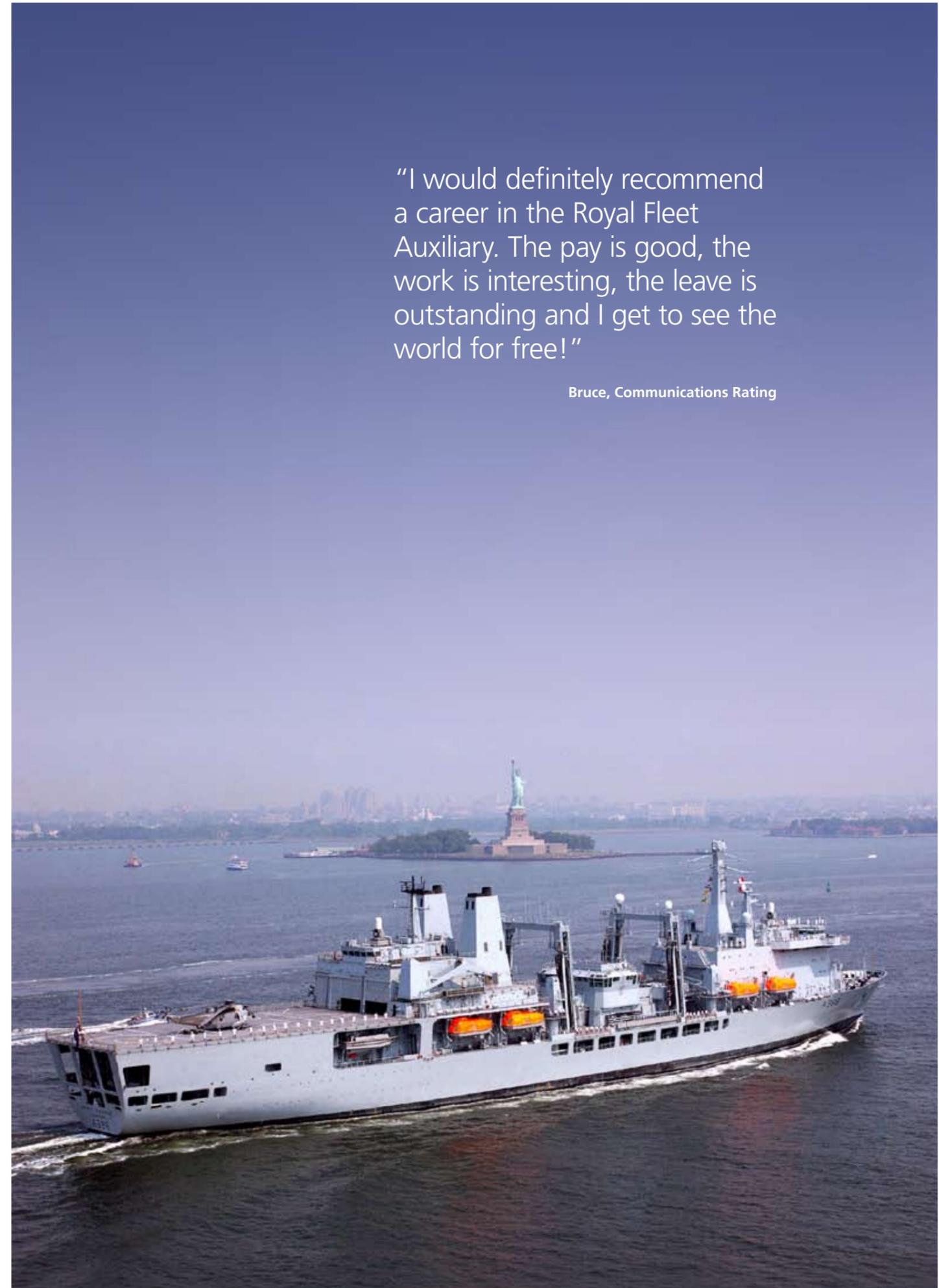
We all need time to relax and wind down. The accommodation areas on board Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships have TVs and you can always use your own laptop, MP3 player, DVD or CD player to watch films and listen to music in the privacy of your own cabin. We also provide quiet places where you can study for qualifications.

## Really?

Like all organisations, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary uses a lot of acronyms and abbreviations, from the familiar FYI (for your information) to more obscure gems like ALARP (as low as reasonably practical) and PIAWPO (proceed in accordance with previous orders).

"I would definitely recommend a career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. The pay is good, the work is interesting, the leave is outstanding and I get to see the world for free!"

Bruce, Communications Rating



# UNDERSTANDING THE RANKS

On board a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship, you'll have a vital role within a team of ratings and officers. Here's an overview of where you could fit into the structure and how you can progress through the ranks during your career.

## Your career as a rating

Ratings are the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's specially trained personnel, prepared for vital operational jobs anywhere in the world.

Whatever your job, you'll start your career as a trainee.



When you have finished your training and have the sea time and reports you need, you'll progress to a qualified rating.



With some experience and further training, you could be promoted to Leading Hand often managing a small team within your branch.



As a Petty Officer, you'll have responsibility for certain sections within your department.



The rank of Chief Petty Officer gives you more responsibility within the team, with the officers relying heavily on your skills and experience.



If you show the right commitment, skills and academic ability, you may also have the chance to become an officer at any time during your career as a rating. To qualify for promotion, you have to be selected at a promotion board. You'll be selected on merit, so if you work hard and show potential, you can quickly rise through the ranks.

You'll begin your career as a Third Officer.



As you gain experience and qualifications you could progress to Second Officer.



As a First Officer you'll be in charge of an entire department on a ship or shore base.



With the rank of Chief Officer, you'll oversee most of the ship's functions.



By now a very senior officer, you'll be in command of a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship.



When you're appointed Commodore, you'll have achieved the highest officer rank in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.



## Your career as an officer

Officers are the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's management team, providing the leadership and taking the decisions needed to fulfil our many and varied jobs. You'll also be responsible for the training and development, welfare, morale and ultimately the lives of the people under your command.

Your career progression is very much in your hands and depends on your choices and achievements.



## Sponsored reservist

If your ship enters a conflict zone or area, your 'sponsored reserve' status will become activated by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. This means you will have the same level of protection as your Royal Navy colleagues. You'll be told all about the terms and conditions of your sponsored reserve agreement during the recruitment process.

# JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout your career, we will offer you a whole range of possibilities for further training and promotion. Whatever your ambitions, we'll help you get as far as you want to go.



## Your place in the team

Like any large, complex organisation, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is divided into a number of different areas, each responsible for a particular aspect of our operations. We refer to these as branches.

All the branches work closely together as part of one big team. Everyone respects each other's skills, talents and experience, knowing that ultimately, we all depend on one another.

So when you join the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you'll also be part of a branch, according to which job you've chosen to do. Over the next few pages, we explain what each branch does, the jobs open to you within them, what you'll be doing and how you'll be contributing to the work of the team.



## DECK

Working hands-on to keep the Royal Navy constantly ready for action. See page 18.



## ENGINEERING

Operating and maintaining the sophisticated kit on board Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships. See page 22.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Keeping us in touch with other ships, the shore and home, wherever we are in the world. See page 26.



## LOGISTICS

Making sure your own ship and crewmates have whatever they need, whenever they need it. See page 30.



**DECK** As a rating or officer in the Deck branch, you'll be responsible for your ship's day-to-day running and safety, both on the bridge and outside in all weathers.

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# DECK OPERATIONS

In the Deck branch, you'll be at the sharp end of Royal Fleet Auxiliary life, with responsibility for replenishment at sea (RAS) and other tasks involving teamwork and seamanship.

## What you'll be doing

Join the Deck branch and you'll have one of the most varied jobs on board a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship. You'll be responsible for managing and carrying out RAS operations and all your ship's other complex operations and manoeuvres. It's a wide-ranging job, which needs a cool head, teamwork, decision-making skills and the ability to think on your feet. You'll also be expected to keep the ship, and yourself, looking smart at all times.

Your job will involve working above and below decks, using heavy equipment and making sure everything on board runs smoothly and safely. Sometimes you'll be on the bridge keeping watch and steering the ship. When you're carrying out a RAS though, you'll be very much hands-on and out in all weathers. If you're looking for a real life at sea, the Deck branch is where you'll find it.

OFFICER	
DECK OFFICER	
You'll be in overall charge of everything from making sure your ship keeps station with a warship during a RAS, to supervising helicopter operations on the flight deck. Working with both your civilian crewmates and military personnel, you'll need to be flexible, decisive and able to gain the respect and trust of people from diverse backgrounds.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	For direct entry, you'll need your MCA medical certificate (ENG1) and MCA Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch Certificate of Competency (STCW95).
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£25,316 to £27,292 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.
This job is also available through our Cadetship Scheme. For Officer Cadet (Deck) eligibility criteria and salary, see page 41.	

RATING	
DECK RATING	
Your main job will be replenishing other ships, working either on deck or at the helm. You'll work on the flight deck, operate cranes and winches and crew small boats. On operations, you'll join the firefighting, first-aid or damage-control team and help to defend your ship using various light weapons.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	No specific qualifications are needed for this job.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£16,100 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk) to download the full details and latest rates of pay for each job.

Salary and pay details correct (1 March 2010).



"I had to make a decision between the MOD police or the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Choosing between standing on a gate for 12 hours a day or travelling the world wasn't a hard decision."

Matt, Deck Officer



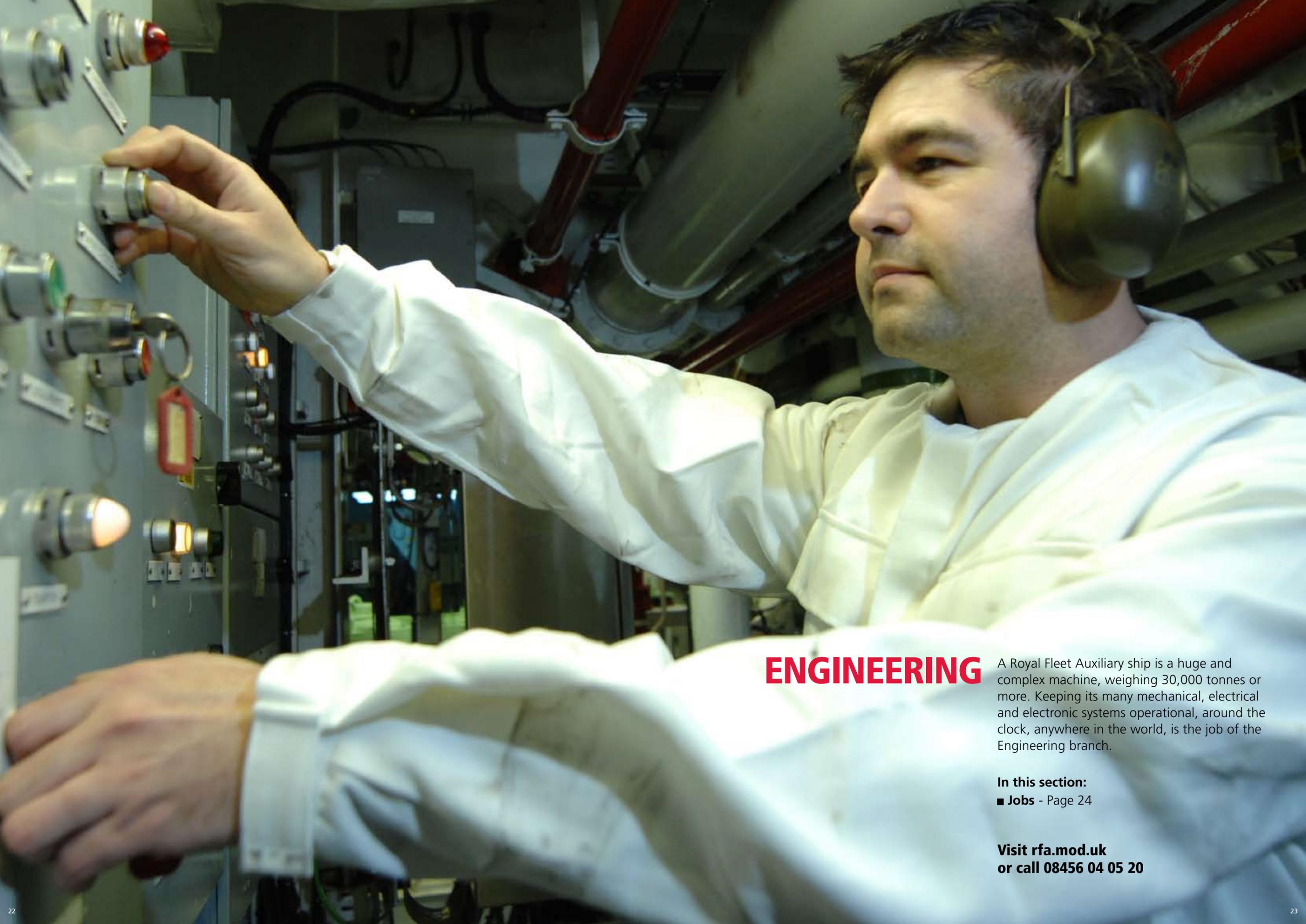
## EXTENDING OUR RANGE

The latest additions to our fleet are the four bay class landing ship docks (Auxiliary) or LSD(A). These ships are designed for amphibious assault (landing from the sea), and are 16,100-tonne vessels which can carry over 350 troops, plus vehicles. They can deploy two landing craft through the stern and the flight deck can take a Chinook helicopter, so troops and equipment can be offloaded quickly, even in rough weather.



### Really?

Even in peacetime, Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships can sometimes find themselves in the thick of the action. In April 2009, RFA Wave Knight helped to prevent two attacks by pirates on merchant ships in the Gulf, where she was serving as part of a NATO task group.



## ENGINEERING

A Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship is a huge and complex machine, weighing 30,000 tonnes or more. Keeping its many mechanical, electrical and electronic systems operational, around the clock, anywhere in the world, is the job of the Engineering branch.

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# ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

In Engineering, you'll operate and maintain the many complex mechanical, electrical and electronic systems that your ship and crewmates depend on.

## Really?

The largest ships we have are the support tankers RFA Bayleaf and RFA Orangeleaf. At over 40,000 tonnes, each weighs almost twice as much as an Invincible class aircraft carrier.



## What you'll be doing

Working in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Engineering branch is your chance to be part of a team looking after some serious kit. For example, on a fast fleet tanker, you'll be maintaining a diesel propulsion system which can push your 31,500-tonne ship along at over 20 mph. As well as the engines, you could also be responsible for the ship's pumps, compressors, boilers, power generation and refrigeration equipment.

The Royal Navy expects us to be where we should be, when we should be there, with everything working perfectly. Meeting that commitment 24 hours a day, anywhere in the world, is the challenge you'll take on if you choose to work in this branch.



OFFICER	
ENGINEERING OFFICER	
As Engineering Officer, you'll be in charge of the compressors, pumps, boilers and water-treatment plant, as well as working closely with fire and damage-control teams when your ship goes into action. As your career progresses, you could complete specialist training in areas like weapons maintenance.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	For direct entry, you'll need your MCA medical certificate (ENG1) and MCA Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch Certificate of Competency (STCW95).
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£25,316 to £26,246 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.
This job is also available through our Cadetship Scheme. For details on Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) Cadet eligibility criteria and salary, see page 41.	

OFFICER	
SYSTEMS ENGINEER OFFICER (SE)	
It'll be your job to keep everything running smoothly around the clock. Working everywhere from the bridge to the engine room, you'll look after navigation, communications and propulsion systems. This is the same as on any merchant ship.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	For direct entry, you'll need a HND or equivalent in either Electronic and Communication Engineering or Electrical and Electronic Engineering.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£27,292 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

RATING	
MOTORMAN	
As an Engineering rating, you'll work on everything from the engines and cranes to the lifts and other deck gear. On operations, you'll also be a member of the ship's firefighting, first-aid or damage-control teams.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	No specific qualifications are needed for this job.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£16,100 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

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## What job were you doing before you joined up?

"I was an apprentice for Paxman Diesels in Colchester, Essex. I was only there for six months, as the advice from my colleagues was to go to sea. Getting that ticket has been my proudest moment so far."

## Have you been on any operations?

"I was on Operation Telic in Iraq in 2003, then Operation Taurus in the Med in February 2009."

## ENGINEERING OFFICER





## COMMUNICATIONS

Every operational decision, whether it's a simple change of course or taking troops into battle, is based on huge amounts of information. In this branch, you'll use cutting-edge technology to gather, process and interpret it, then get it to the right people.

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# COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS

In the Communications branch, you'll be responsible for making sure your ship and its crew stay in touch with other ships, the shore and home. You will become an expert in sophisticated technology.



## What you'll be doing

Operating all around the world as we do, it's vital that our ships can keep in touch with the shore, each other and the Royal Navy ships we're here to support. The technology we use is incredibly sophisticated, but there's still a place for traditional skills like Morse code, using signal lamps to send messages, especially during a RAS.

You'll become an expert in all our various technologies and methods, sending and receiving the vital information that makes our work possible. You'll also have an important role in maintaining your ship's email system. This not only makes our routine communications much quicker, it also provides a vital link with home for everyone on board. Making sure your crewmates can reach friends and family throughout a four-month voyage is vital to everyone's effectiveness, well-being and morale.



## What's the best part of your job?

"The people. You will never have exactly the same crew on a ship – which means that no two trips are ever the same."

## Do you tell people about your job in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary?

"I do, all the time! I wear my hat with its Royal Fleet Auxiliary logo on the golf course – I tell people to join the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, but in the Communications branch, of course!"

## COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



RATING	
COMMUNICATIONS RATING	
During a RAS, you'll send and receive crucial messages using a signal lamp or by radio communication. You'll work with high-speed data and satellite links and other advanced systems. You'll also be overseeing your ship's computer networks and the email system. On operations, you'll possibly join a firefighting, first-aid or damage-control team.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	You'll need to be good with IT with an ECDL qualification or equivalent.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£16,100 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

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Salary and pay details correct (1 March 2010).



## **LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY**

As well as taking on the daunting task of supplying the entire Royal Navy, we also have to make sure our own people are fed and looked after. That's the responsibility of the Logistics and Supply branch. If you have a methodical mind and an eye for detail, this is the right place for you.

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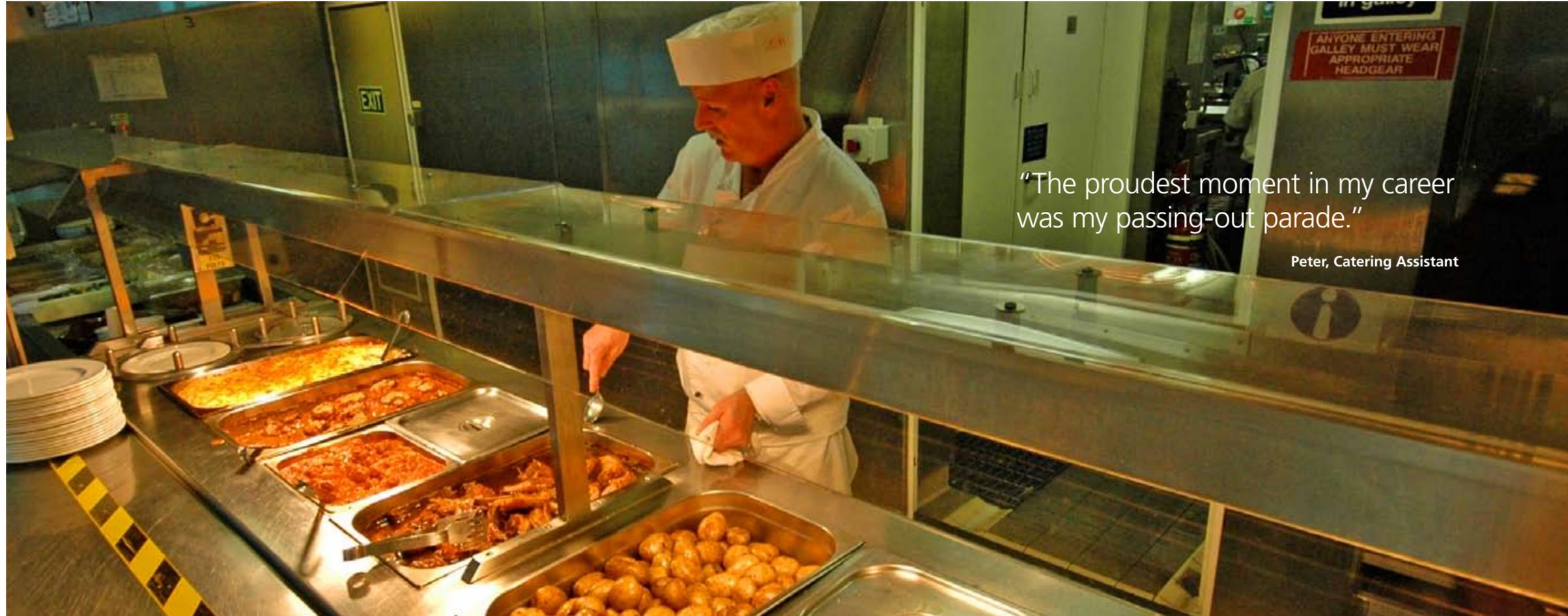
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# LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY OPERATIONS

In Logistics and Supply, you'll be responsible for making sure everyone on board your own ship is well fed, equipped and ready for action around the clock.

## Really?

After 103 years, in July 2008, we received the Queen's Colour (the official flag recognising our history and achievements and so held in high honour) from the Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Earl of Wessex.



"The proudest moment in my career was my passing-out parade."

Peter, Catering Assistant

### What you'll be doing

Managing our own supply situation is almost as important as our work in supplying the Royal Navy. Unless we have everything we need, whenever we need it, we can't do our job properly. As a result, the Royal Navy's vital defence and humanitarian missions could be put at risk.

Keeping your crewmates fed and equipped is one of the most basic and vital jobs on board a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship. It can be a challenge, too, on a voyage lasting four months that could take you just about anywhere in the world.

You'll be responsible for managing and getting the most from an inventory worth millions of pounds. You'll also have a direct effect on how effective your crewmates can act as well as their well-being and morale. The Royal Navy is depending on us. We'll be depending on you.

OFFICER	
<b>LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY OFFICER (LSO)</b>	
As the LSO, you'll make sure your crewmates all get fed, paid and equipped and manage their employment and legal issues. You'll also be in overall charge of the catering on board, which puts you right at the heart of the team. Flexible and conscientious, you'll need exceptional planning, organisational and leadership skills for this varied job.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	For direct entry, you'll need a HND or equivalent in Business, Hospitality and Catering or Logistics.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£25,955 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

RATING	
<b>CATERING ASSISTANT (STEWARD OR COOK)</b>	
As a Cook, you'll be preparing three meals a day for your crewmates, plus any troops on board. As a Steward, you'll look after accommodation areas, mess rooms and the saloon, help to prepare food and get involved in RAS operations on deck. In either job, you'll join a firefighting, first-aid or damage-control team and help defend the ship using various weapons if under threat.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	No specific qualifications are needed for this job.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£16,100 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk) to download the full details and latest rates of pay for each job.

Salary and pay details correct (1 March 2010).



## **JOINING, TRAINING AND CADETSHIP**

Our joining, training and cadetship programmes are designed to help you make the move from life on shore or in another part of the Merchant Navy to an effective member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It's a big change, but we're here to help you at every stage.

### **In this section:**

- **How to join us** - Page 36
- **Your training and development** - Page 38
- **Cadetship** - Page 40

**Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)  
or call 08456 04 05 20**

# HOW TO JOIN

Once you've decided that you're interested in a career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, it's time to begin the formal recruitment process.

## Don't forget

We're here to help. If you have questions or concerns at any stage in the process, please call 08456 04 05 20. It's what we're here for.



### Helping you succeed

The recruitment process might seem a bit involved, but that's because we want you to be absolutely sure it's the right decision for you. We also have a duty to choose people with the right attitudes and personal qualities to take on the responsibilities of life in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. During the process, you'll have plenty of opportunities to show us what you're made of and we'll help you make the most of your potential.

### Get in touch

Fill in an application form which you can ask for by calling **08456 04 05 20** or by visiting **rfa.mod.uk**

### Your application

Once we've received and considered your application, we'll let you know whether we have vacancies in the specialist area you're interested in. Assuming we do, or we can offer you a suitable alternative, we'll invite you to the next stage of the process.

### Show us what you've got

We'll arrange for you to take the recruit test (RT), which covers basic English and maths, problem solving and understanding of mechanics. We'd recommend you work through the examples at **royalnavy.mod.uk/careers** before you sit the real thing. Potential officers will not be required to take the recruit test at this stage.

### Your way ahead

Based on a combination of your application form and RT results, if you've applied for a rating job, we'll invite you to come to a formal interview at HMNB Portsmouth. If you've chosen an officer job or we feel you have the potential to train as an officer, we'll invite you to come to the Admiralty Interview Board (AIB) at HMS Sultan in Hampshire. Over two challenging days, we will put your potential as a leader and team player to the test and assess your academic abilities. This will give you a chance to show us that you have the skills and personal qualities we're looking for in a potential Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer.

### Fit to join

To serve in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you will need to pass and receive the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) medical fitness certificate. You'll usually hear this referred to as an ENG1. You will also need to meet our own medical standards, including colour vision (the way you see and interpret colours).

### Welcome aboard

When you've passed the various tests and checks, we'll make you a formal job offer for our next available training course.

## JOINING FROM THE ROYAL NAVY

If you've previously served with the Royal Navy, your skills and experience can certainly be valuable to us. However, because the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a civilian service, you need to have the relevant MCA-accredited certificates to join us. This means you can't simply transfer from the Royal Navy to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary on the basis of your 'time served'. When you apply, you may have to write to the MCA for a letter of assessment.

Visit: **rfa.mod.uk** or call **08456 04 05 20**



# YOUR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

There's a lot to learn on the way to becoming a qualified member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. It starts with your initial training and continues right through your time with us. There'll be plenty of challenges, but plenty of rewards, too.

### Training

As a member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you will be a merchant seaman on civil service terms. This means you won't go through the same basic training as Royal Navy recruits but you will train at the same establishments.

### Ratings

As a Royal Fleet Auxiliary rating, your training begins at one of three places, HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, HMS Sultan or HMS Collingwood in Hampshire. Wherever you're based initially, the training you'll receive will give you the basics you need to do your job.

### Officers

Your training as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer begins at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) at Dartmouth. Here, you'll spend seven weeks learning about us and our role and developing your leadership and management skills.

### Further training

Throughout your training, you'll learn the specialist skills you'll need to do your job through a combination of time at sea and in the classroom. It's the start of a training process that will last right through your career. The exact length, location and content of your training depends on your job. For some jobs, such as Deck Officer for instance, you'll go straight to sea from BRNC. To download current training details on individual jobs, please visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)

### Promotion

Promotion in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is strictly on merit. As you progress through the ranks, more courses and training options become open to you. Turn to pages 14 and 15 to see how you can move through the ranks.

### Transferring your skills

All the qualifications you gain with us, including NVQs and MCA-accredited certificates, are recognised throughout the Merchant Navy.

"The most surprising aspect of the job is the very large amount of confidence and freedom of action that you are given by your superiors in carrying out the tasks assigned to you."

William, Captain





# CADETSHIP

By joining us on one of our Cadetship Schemes, you don't have to choose between gaining higher qualifications and earning decent money on your way to a career as a Royal Fleet Auxiliary Deck or Engineering Officer.

## University of life

For most people, the choice when they finish school at 16 is between carrying on with their studies, or earning some decent money. As an Officer Cadet in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you can do both.

As an Officer Cadet, you get the best of both worlds. You're doing the job of a Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer, seeing the world and getting paid for it, while studying for a recognised higher qualification as though you were at university.

You can join as either an Officer Cadet (Deck) or Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) Cadet on one of two different programmes.

## Training

As well as gaining a qualification, you're aiming to become a fully-fledged Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer. So, before you begin your studies, you'll spend seven weeks at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in Dartmouth, just like any other trainee officer in the Naval Service. Here, you'll start to develop the leadership, communication and teamwork skills that will form the basis of your Royal Fleet Auxiliary career.

From BRNC, you'll join cadets from other parts of the Merchant Navy at one of the MCA-accredited training establishments to begin your three-year course.

## HND programme

This is the route to take if you have at least five GCSEs, including English, maths and physics or dual science at grade B or higher. By the end of your course you'll have earned a Higher National Diploma (HND) and your MCA Certificate of Competency. If you join as an Officer Cadet (Deck), you'll study Nautical Science, while as an Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) Cadet, your HND will be in Marine Engineering.

## Foundation degree programme

If you have higher qualifications giving you at least 150 UCAS points (ideally to include maths and physics A-levels), you can join our foundation degree programme. On the Deck route, you'll get an FDSc in Marine Operations, while as an ETO, you'll earn your FDEng in Marine Engineering.

## Continuing professional development

Once you've completed your Cadetship, you'll go to sea as a Third Officer, keeping watch on the bridge or in the engine room. From here, your training opportunities and promotion prospects really open up.

Whether you've got a HND or foundation degree, you'll be able to top it up to a full BSc or BEng honours degree later in your career. You'll also be able to train for a wide range of MCA-accredited certificates, with any costs and earned voyage leave paid for by us.

OFFICER	
RFA OFFICER CADET	
As an Officer Cadet (Deck) you'll be at the sharp end of our replenishment at sea (RAS) operations, working with the team above and below decks, and on the bridge. Or, as an Electro-Technical Officer (ETO) Cadet, you'll develop the skills and knowledge you'll need as an Engineering Officer, responsible for all the mechanical, electrical and electronic systems on board your ship.	
<b>Age:</b>	16 upwards.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British.
<b>Qualifications:</b>	For the HND route, you'll need GCSEs or Scottish Standard grades or equivalent in maths, English physics or dual science to grade B or higher, plus at least two other GCSEs or Scottish Standard grades or equivalent at grade C or above. If you have qualifications equivalent to at least 150 UCAS points (ideally including physics or maths (or both)), we may offer you direct entry onto the foundation degree programme.
<b>Sex:</b>	This job is open to both men and women.
<b>Starting salary:</b>	£11,085 to £12,078 a year. Plus RFA allowance: £3072 a year.

Salary and pay details correct (1 March 2010).

Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk) to download the full details and latest rates of pay for each job.

## Really?

Each year, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary awards its prestigious Wedgwood Bowl to the ship that has made the greatest contribution to humanitarian relief or international relations.



## **AND FINALLY...**

Joining the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a big step. We want you to be happy, successful and sure you've made the right choice. In this section, you'll find the answers, advice and reassurance you need to make your application.

### **In this section:**

- **Your questions answered** - Page 44
- **Equal opportunities** - Page 46
- **The Naval Service** - Page 48

**Visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)  
or call 08456 04 05 20**

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Joining the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a big step. We want you to be happy, successful and sure you've made the right choice. These are some of the questions we get asked most often by people thinking of becoming recruits, and their families. You can find other questions on the website or just call 08456 04 05 20.



## Q: What qualifications do I need?

**A:** As a trainee rating, you'll need to have completed your secondary education. A lot of your training will be 'on the job'. To join the Officer Cadet programme, you'll need at least five GCSEs or Scottish Standard grades or equivalent at grade C or above, including maths, English and physics or dual science at grade B or above. If you have good A-level passes in these subjects, you could enter our foundation degree Officer Cadet programme.

We'll also consider you if you're already an experienced seafarer and have the MCA certification needed for your chosen Royal Fleet Auxiliary specialisation.

## Q: Are there any age limits?

**A:** You can join as a trainee rating or Officer Cadet from the age of 16.

## Q: How long do I have to sign up for?

**A:** If you join us as an Officer Cadet, we'll ask you to serve for three years when you complete your training. As a rating, you'll need to put in two years after training. Because you're a civilian merchant seafarer, not a Royal Navy rating or officer, you can leave whenever you want by giving three months' notice in writing after this initial period of service.

## Q: Is the Royal Fleet Auxiliary part of the Royal Navy?

**A:** No. As a member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you will stay a civilian. However, your ship belongs to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and you'll be working to support Royal Navy ships.

## Q: I'm from overseas; can I still apply?

**A:** When you join, you must have British Citizenship and have been living in the UK for at least four of the past five years. We can't accept applications from asylum seekers or those with dual nationality of non-NATO countries.

## Q: Will my Royal Navy qualifications count in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary?

**A:** If you're joining us from the Royal Navy, you'll need to have your qualifications and experience assessed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). They'll then advise you on what, if any, extra training you'll have to do to get certification for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

## Q: What are the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's medical standards?

**A:** You'll need to pass the MCA's ENG1 medical examination which includes eyesight and colour vision requirements (the way you see and interpret colours). You must also meet the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's medical standards which may be above those of the ENG1.

## Q: How long will I be away for?

**A:** A normal tour of duty lasts four months.

## Q: How much leave will I earn?

**A:** As a rating, you'll get 74 days' earned voyage leave after each four-month period. As an officer, you'll get 84 days. All earned voyage leave is at full pay.

## Q: Where can I expect to serve?

**A:** The short answer is, just about anywhere. The Royal Navy operates in all the oceans around the world, which means we do too.

## Q: What are my career prospects?

**A:** Very good. Promotion in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is on merit, so if you work hard and take up the training opportunities on offer, you can quickly move up through the ranks.

## Q: What happens if I find myself in a war zone?

**A:** As a member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, you're also a special member of the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR). In a combat situation, this special status is activated, so you gain reservist status and are protected by the Geneva Convention.

## Q: IF I HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, WHERE SHOULD I LOOK?

**A:** You'll find the answers to your questions at [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk) or by calling 08456 04 05 20.

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, we need people with commitment, enthusiasm and high standards. Show us you've got them and we'll find a place for you, whatever your background.



"My mum thinks I'm the hero of Birkenhead!"

Mark, Deck rating

We believe in equal opportunities. This means we'll consider your application no matter what your sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, sexuality or social background.

We'll make every effort to take specific religious and cultural requirements, such as diet, into account where possible.

Please remember though, that we have to consider factors such as operational needs, health and safety and our duty of care to all our personnel.

We offer everyone employment and promotion in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary on the basis of their ability and merit, nothing else.

We do not accept bullying or harassment of any kind within the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. We encourage anyone suffering any form of abuse to report it. We always treat any complaints seriously, sensitively and in absolute confidence.

Those found guilty of bullying, harassment or other unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. If you have any other questions on our equal opportunities policy, visit [rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)

## Really?

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is responsible for setting the standard for replenishments at sea for all European NATO forces.

# THE NAVAL SERVICE

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is a civilian service, yet our ships are owned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). So where exactly do we fit into the Naval Service team?

The Naval Service is a fighting force operating on land and in the air, as well as at sea. It's made up of various parts, all equipped for a specific role, and working together as a single team to get the job done.



## Royal Navy (RN)

The Royal Navy you're probably most familiar with is made up of the Surface Fleet – aircraft carriers, frigates, destroyers and other vessels – and the Submarine Service. All of which, except ballistic submarines, are armed with conventional weapons. The Fleet Air Arm delivers air power and air support, operating fast jets and helicopters from warships and bases on land.

[royalnavy.mod.uk/careers](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/careers)



## Royal Naval Reserve (RNR)

The Royal Naval Reserve are an important part of the Naval Service, and are made up of more than 2000 men and women (about a quarter of them are former Royal Navy personnel), who combine military and civilian life. As fully-trained members of the team, they help the Royal Navy meet its operational needs in times of crisis, tension and war. And although they're volunteers, reservists get paid for any training and work they do.

[royalnavy.mod.uk/rnr](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/rnr)



## Royal Marines (RM)

The Royal Marines are an elite unit – they have to be physically tough, mentally strong and totally dedicated to wear the coveted green beret. They work in harsh environments, including mountains, jungles and deserts, and show "courage, determination, unselfishness and cheerfulness in the face of adversity."

[royalmarines.mod.uk](http://royalmarines.mod.uk)



## Royal Marines Reserve (RMR)

The Royal Marines also has a Reserve Force, who all go through the same training as their full-time colleagues. Some have previously served with the Royal Marines or other armed forces – many have no previous military experience, but have what it takes to earn the green beret. This could be an ideal first step to a career in the Royal Marines.

[royalmarines.mod.uk/rmr](http://royalmarines.mod.uk/rmr)



## Royal Marines Band Service (RMBS)

Historically, drums and bands have been central to the Naval Service. Today, the Royal Marines Band Service are thought of as some of the world's most talented and versatile military musicians. But as well as making music, they're also Royal Marines, trained for medical support and other operational roles.

[royalmarines.mod.uk/rmbs](http://royalmarines.mod.uk/rmbs)

# CONTACTING US

We hope this publication has given you an insight into what life in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is like and what career opportunities are open to you.

## VISIT

[rfa.mod.uk](http://rfa.mod.uk)

- Download full job descriptions.
- Discover other useful links.

**CAREERS AND JOBS**  
**LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## CALL

**08456 04 05 20**

- Check you're eligible to apply and ask us for an application form.

We want you to succeed and will do all we can to help. If you have any questions, or would like any more information or advice, please get in touch today.

This publication is for guidance only. The facts in it may change without notice and it is no form of legal contract. We explain details of length of service at your interview and it will be shown in the contract. You may need to repay training costs if you withdraw from training.

We can change salaries, cadetships and training schemes and job specifications, with or without notice. Major as well as minor changes may be involved. However, we make every effort to make sure the details in this publication are correct. This publication is not an offer by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary to any person. Publications are prepared and printed several months before being distributed so cannot always immediately reflect changes in details or in some cases a particular offer.



**08456 04 05 20**  
**SEARCH 'RFA JOBS' ONLINE**

