

DefenceFocus



ROYAL NAVY

ROYAL MARINES

ARMY

ROYAL AIR FORCE

★★★★

ADMIRAL



GENERAL



GENERAL



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL



★★★

VICE ADMIRAL



LIEUTENANT GENERAL



LIEUTENANT GENERAL



AIR MARSHAL



★★

REAR ADMIRAL



MAJOR GENERAL



MAJOR GENERAL



AIR VICE-MARSHAL



★

COMMODORE



BRIGADIER



BRIGADIER



AIR COMMODORE



(Stars are allocated to the most senior ranks across defence)

CAPTAIN



COLONEL



COLONEL



GROUP CAPTAIN



COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT COLONEL



LIEUTENANT COLONEL



WING COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER



MAJOR



MAJOR



SQUADRON LEADER



LIEUTENANT



CAPTAIN



CAPTAIN



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT



SUB LIEUTENANT



LIEUTENANT



LIEUTENANT



FLYING OFFICER



MIDSHIPMAN



SECOND LIEUTENANT



SECOND LIEUTENANT



PILOT OFFICER



WARRANT OFFICER 1



WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1



WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1



WARRANT OFFICER



WARRANT OFFICER 2



WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2



WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2



CHIEF PETTY OFFICER



COLOUR SERGEANT



STAFF SERGEANT



FLIGHT SERGEANT



PETTY OFFICER



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



LEADING HAND



CORPORAL



CORPORAL



CORPORAL



ABLE RATE



MARINE



PRIVATE



SENIOR AIRCRAFTMAN



ABLE RATE



MARINE



PRIVATE



AIRCRAFTMAN



Design: David Barlow

THE PECKING ORDER

AS EVERYONE in defence knows, the system works largely because there is a defined rank structure (writes Roy Bacon). In one's own Service, the pecking order will be pretty well understood – after all, it is drummed into you from day one of basic training. But when it comes to relating to people in the other Services, protocol may not be quite so obvious. For example, should a major in the Army "sir" an RAF squadron leader? How should a Lieutenant Colonel in the Marines address a Captain in the Navy? Who – if anyone – can safely be called "mate"?

As joint operations become ever more common, such questions are important. MOD civilians also need to understand the military pecking order. A large number of service and MOD

establishments are populated by a mix of uniforms and suits, and in operational theatres the mix is truly homogenised.

We hope our guide to ranks will be useful. But beware! It is a broad-brush guide only. We have not attempted to include the special ranks that are peculiar to some regiments, corps and other units (apologies to every corporal of horse and bombardier). Neither have we included RAF specialist aircrew and technical ranks for both the RAF and the Navy.

That's all. At ease... Unless, of course, you are an admiral, general or air chief marshal. In which case you can, with respect, do what you like. Sir. DF