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# Uniforms of the United States Navy

1776-1898



# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY 1776-1783

**A**T THE OUTBREAK of the American Revolution in 1775, there were no warships available for use by the revolting colonists, but Americans had had long experience in maritime affairs. Much of the British trade had been carried in American bottoms, and North Americans had made up a large portion of the seamen in the Royal Navy. Although no ship larger than a frigate had ever been built in the colonies, it was not long before commerce raiders, flying the flag of the new country, were on the high seas. Various states created navies, primarily small vessels in an attempt to protect their shores and shipping from the British, and issued letters of marque to privateers.

The first attempt to place a Continental naval force afloat was instituted by George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of American forces at Boston in 1775. Small rented vessels, manned by New England seamen from Washington's army, made some important captures of badly needed military supplies. Congress, realizing the need for a naval force, appointed a Naval Committee on 5 October 1775, to manage all seaborne military activities and in the same month, authorized the procurement of four ships to be used against the British. By a Resolution of 13 December 1775, Congress authorized the construction of thirteen frigates, ranging from 24 to 32 guns. Although the naval strength of the new republic was never great, the combination of the Continental Navy, the State forces and the privateers caused great injury to the British war effort and shipping, not only in North American waters, but also near the British Isles. The loss to British trade has been estimated at \$90,000,000 and many valuable cargoes were diverted to American use.

The Naval Committee, known generally as the Marine Committee, was responsible not only for the procurement of ships, but also for all other functions relative to forces afloat. A uniform instruction was issued on 5 September 1776, making the following uniform provision:

*Captains*—Blue cloth, with red lappels, slash cuff, stand-up collar, flat yellow buttons, blue breeches, red waistcoat, with narrow lace.

*Lieutenants*—Blue with red lappels, round cuff, faced with red, stand-up collar, yellow buttons, blue breeches and red waistcoat, plain.

*Masters*—Blue with lappels, round cuff, blue breeches, and red waistcoats.

*Midshipmen*—Blue lappelled coat, round cuff faced with red, stand-up collar, red at the button and buttonhole, breeches and red waistcoat."

It is to be noted that no provision was made for epaulets although the same order directed that Marine Corps officers wear a silver epaulet on the right shoulder of their white faced, green coats. No instructions were issued for the dress of petty officers or seamen. While a uniform was prescribed for the Navy, in this period of material shortages many officers wore whatever they could procure and did not always conform to official instructions. This of course was also true of the dress of the Continental Army, for both officers and the rank and file.

Evidently the blue and red uniform prescribed by Congress was not to the liking of all officers, for a group of captains, including John Paul Jones, met in Boston in 1777 and agreed upon a new dress. The uniform selected

bore a close resemblance to that of the Royal Navy and the reports of British captains of contacts with Continental men-of-war commented that it was difficult at times to distinguish between friend and foe insofar as the dress of American officers was concerned. Under the unofficial agreement, captains' coats were to be blue, lined and faced with white, and trimmed with gold lace or embroidery. The upper part of the lapel was to button on the shoulder, a British touch. A captain was to wear an epaulet on the right shoulder. The blue coat was to be worn with a white waistcoat and breeches. Lieutenants wore the dress of a captain, without lace or embroidery, and without the epaulet. Masters and midshipmen had the same uniform as lieutenants without the white lapel facings and with turndown instead of stand-up collars.

The captain and lieutenant in the painting on the left are shown in the uniform authorized by Congress—blue coats, faced red, with blue breeches and red vests. The captain shows a modification of the Congressional order for he has the red patch at the button and buttonhole of the collar as specified for midshipmen. There are contemporary portraits of officers of the Continental Navy which show how the official instructions were interpreted by various officers. A painting of Commodore Abraham Whipple by Edward Savage shows the official coat with the red collar patches. C. W. Peale's portrait of Captain Joshua Barney also shows the collar patches and a single epaulet. Peale's portraits of Nicholas Biddle and William Stone show them in the uniform as prescribed by the official order. Paintings of John Paul Jones show him in a variety of uniforms—the red and blue official dress, the unofficial blue and white, without an epaulet and with one or two epaulets.

The officers shown in the blue and white uniform "adopted" in 1777 represent Captain John Paul Jones and one of his midshipmen. It is to be noted that Jones is displaying two epaulets as he was depicted in contemporary paintings and busts done in France. As a "commodore" in command of a squadron of ships, Jones probably added the second epaulet to indicate his rank as that above a captain. John Adams, in an entry in his diary of 13 May 1779, wrote, after having dinner with Jones in Lorient, ". . . You see the Character of the Man in his uniform, and that of his officers and Marines—variant from the Uniforms established by Congress. Golden Button holes for himself—two Epaulets—Marines in red and white, instead of Green. . . ." Since the marines were French, they naturally wore their prescribed uniform, red coat, white waistcoat and breeches. Actually the Americans serving under Jones at this time were in the minority for the crews included men from many other countries, some being British and East Indian.

Although it would be many years before the dress of enlisted men would be covered by uniform instructions in either the American or British Navies, there was a degree of uniformity in the men's dress. In the navies and merchant services, a typical costume had developed—a short jacket, waistcoat, shirt, long full trousers or petticoat breeches, neckerchiefs and brimmed, flat topped hats. This dress is shown on the seaman behind Captain Jones.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

## 1797

THE FIRST UNIFORM INSTRUCTION for the United States Navy was issued by Secretary of War, James McHenry, on 24 August 1797 in order to provide a distinctive dress for the officers who would command the first ships of the Federal Navy. When the Federal Government was organized in 1789, there were no warships of the Revolution still in service. The immediate problems were internal, and the protection of the western frontiers. When the War Department was created in August 1789, the Secretary was directed to perform all functions relative to both the land and naval forces.

Conditions soon changed, for shortly after the close of the Revolution American ships were again sailing the high seas, as they had before 1775 when they carried a large portion of British trade. Now one thing was lacking, the protection of the British flag, backed up by the Royal Navy! The Barbary Powers, long held in check by the British Navy, considered American shipping fair game, capturing ships and enslaving their crews. While the need for some force afloat to protect American commerce was recognized, the new Government considered it would be impossible to finance a navy and support an army for the protection of the frontiers and to maintain internal order. The situation worsened, and in March 1794, Congress took the first step to provide ". . . a Naval Armament." The Act contained a proviso that if peace were secured with Algiers, the most aggressive of the Barbary Powers, no ships were to be built. The Act made provision for six frigates and established the rank, pay and allowances of officers. Provision was made for three classes of non-combatant or civil officers (today's staff officers)—surgeons, chaplains and pursers (Supply Officers).

Before any real progress had been made in the construction of the frigates, peace was concluded with Algiers. Congress did permit the completion of three ships whose construction was well along. Trouble with the other Barbary States, who resented the tribute paid Algiers, and attacks by privateers of the new French Republic, made it mandatory that the United States have some force afloat. Congress in 1797 authorized the manning of the three frigates nearing completion, the *Constitution*, *United States* and *Constellation*.

Although Secretary McHenry's letter of 24 August 1797, forwarding the uniform instructions to Captain John Barry, the Senior Captain of the Navy, stated the purpose of the order was to secure ". . . a perfect uniformity of dress . . .", the instruction did not provide a uniform as we understand the term today, that is clothing of one basic pattern with devices to indicate rank and specialties. Instead the cut of the coat, or the color, indicated rank and corps. The uniform was not the blue and red specified by the Continental Congress in 1776, or the more elaborate blue and white uniform adopted by certain officers in 1777, but blue and buff, similar to that worn by the Army in 1797, and reminiscent of the American Revolution. As is to be noted from the painting, a captain's coat had long buff lapels with nine buttons on

each lapel, while a lieutenant's coat had short lapels with six buttons on them and three buttons below the right lapel with three buttonholes on the left. A captain wore two epaulets and a lieutenant, the only other commissioned combatant officer, wore an epaulet on the right shoulder only. Another indication of a captain's rank was the use of four buttons on the cuffs, at the pocket flaps and at the vest pockets. A lieutenant had but three buttons at the pockets and at the cuffs and none on the vest at the pockets. This method of indicating rank by button lasted many years in the United States Navy.

The other seagoing officers who could command at sea in emergency were the sailing masters and midshipmen, both warrant officers. A master's coat was similar to that of a captain, but with blue lapels, edged with buff. The coat for midshipmen was of a different cut from that of their superiors, "Plain frock coat of blue, lined and edged with buff, without lapels, a standing collar of buff, and plain buff cuffs. . . ." All combatant officers wore buff vests and breeches, except sailing masters who wore blue.

In 1797, the only commissioned non-combatant officers were surgeons, surgeon's mates and chaplains. No uniform was prescribed for a chaplain, so he was clothed in the usual civilian attire of his faith. It would be years before chaplains would be able to wear a uniform which would indicate that they were part of the Naval Establishment. In prescribing the clothing of surgeons, the order made it plain that they were not Line officers. While a surgeon's coat was cut like that of a captain, it was of green cloth with black velvet collar, lapels and cuffs. The double-breasted vest was red and the breeches, green. However, a surgeon did have two rows of nine buttons on the lapels, a practice which, with some exceptions, would indicate for many years, commissioned status. On the cuffs there were three buttons but none at the pocket flaps. Surgeon's mates were ordered to wear a coat like that of lieutenants but green with black facings. Pursers, warrant officers in 1797, wore the blue and buff of the combatant officers, but their coats were of the plain frock variety without lapels. Although the purser's coat was of civilian cut, the blue and buff indicated military status.

The order did not specify an undress uniform except that all officers were to wear cocked hats, those of captains and lieutenants to be lace trimmed in full dress. Midshipmen wore cocked hats in full dress, and the round hat of the period in undress, as shown.

The 1797 order did not mention clothing for petty officers or seamen and it would not be until 1841 that an official uniform instruction would cover enlisted personnel. There was a degree of uniformity, however, for the usual dress of seamen was made up of a short jacket, shirt, vest, long trousers and a black low crowned hat. Soon after the organization of the United States Navy, clothing for the men was bought on contract, stored at the navy yards, and carried aboard ship under the control of the purser. When men made their own clothing, they were directed to follow the pattern of the clothing in "slop stores," that is, "small stores" aboard ship.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

## 1802

**A**LTHOUGH THE Navy Department had been created by Congress in 1798, it was not until 1802 that a uniform order was issued over the signature of a Secretary of the Navy. On 27 August 1802, Robert Smith signed an instruction which set a pattern for the dress of the United States Navy which is still in effect today—"blue and gold." Although the first blue uniform coat was worn with white vests and breeches, the current dark blue uniform with rank stripes and devices in gold, is a direct descendant of the coat of 1802. The 1802 uniform reflected the unofficial blue and white dress of the American Revolution.

All combatant officers wore coats of the same basic pattern, and rank was indicated by the presence or absence of gold lace, the number and location of gilt buttons. As under the previous order, only two officers were permitted to wear epaulets, two for a captain and one for a lieutenant. When second in command, a lieutenant's epaulet was on the left shoulder, but when in command, the epaulet was shifted to the right. For full dress, a captain's coat was trimmed with gold lace on the upper edge of the standing collar, down the edges of the lapels, around the pocket flaps, and down the skirts of the coat. While the order directed that a captain's buttonholes be "worked with gold thread," many contemporary paintings show lace instead of embroidery. A Navy button, described as "the fowl anchor and American eagle, surrounded by fifteen stars" reflects the growth of the United States from the original thirteen. A button was worn on either side of the collar, with laced buttonholes. As in 1797, a captain had four buttons on the cuffs and at his coat and vest pocket flaps.

A lieutenant in full dress showed much less lace than his superior officer for only the buttonholes were "laced with such lace as is directed for the captain's." From the official wording and use of the word "lace," it is understandable that portraits usually show lace instead of embroidery. As before, a lieutenant had three buttons on the cuffs, and now three at the pockets. A sailing master's coat was like that of a lieutenant, but with slash sleeves with three small buttons in the openings and a single button on either side of the collar, with a slip of lace. Midshipmen were again identified by coats of a different cut from that of other combatant officers—a coat with short lapels, six buttons on each breast, and with a diamond formed of gold lace on either side of the collar. The jacket cuffs were slashed with three small buttons in the openings. The coat buttonholes were to be ". . . worked with gold thread. . . ."

The style of uniforms worn by non-combatant officers was very much like that of the sea officers but with modifications which clearly indicated their status. A surgeon's full dress coat was quite elaborately trimmed with gold lace frogs at the nine buttons on the lapels, the three at the pockets and on the cuffs and the two on either side of the collar. The surgeon's mate's coat was like that of a lieutenant with gold trim at the buttonholes and at the two buttons on the collar. The least elaborate uniform was that for pursers. Although the coat was cut like that of surgeons, the cuffs were slashed, with small buttons in the openings. The gold frogging was omitted, but pursers were directed to wear a band of gold lace not to exceed three-quarters of an inch wide around the top of the standing collar. As usual, no mention was made of a distinctive dress for chaplains.

For undress, the order stated that a captain's coat would be without lace or embroidery; a lieutenant would omit the lace; and midshipmen would wear a short jacket with a standing collar. On either side of the collar was to be a button and a slip of lace. No mention was made of undress for sailing masters, surgeons or pursers. It must be assumed that they too omitted any gold lace or embroidery. Only captains, lieutenants and midshipmen could wear gold laced cocked hats in full dress, those of other officers being untrimmed. In undress, the round, or high hat of the period was also worn and continued to be an article of attire for some years to come.

The order did not specify a uniform for the forward warrant officers—boatswains, gunners, carpenters and sailmakers—but it is safe to assume that these warrant officers wore a blue jacket and vest, long trousers, topped off by a round hat. Although there was no provision for a standard dress for enlisted personnel, the provision of clothing under contract did make for uniformity. "Internal Rules and Regulations for U.S. Frigate Constitution, 1803-1804," issued by Captain Edward Preble, Commodore of the Mediterranean Squadron, directed every seaman to have in his possession two blue jackets, waistcoats, pairs of trousers, both blue and white, black neckerchiefs and either a hat, or a hat and cap. For warm weather, each man was to possess a white jacket and vest. This is the clothing of seamen of the earlier periods and would continue to be so for years to come with slight changes in style.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY 1812-1815

OFFICERS OF THE United States Navy during the War of 1812 were governed by two distinct uniform instructions, those of 1802 and a new order issued in 1813. The early 19th century was a period of changing military dress, for most European countries were involved in a series of wars growing out of the French Revolution and the establishment of the French Empire under Napoleon. The change in military costume was a partial reflection of the changes in civilian costume of the period. The cocked hat was generally replaced by the *chapeau de bras*, and long trousers took the place of breeches, stockings and shoes. Contemporary portraits indicate that the modifications of military costume in Europe brought about changes in the dress of the United States Navy even before the 1813 order was released. Military costume tends to have a similarity in all countries at any one period.

That there were changes in the uniform of the Navy is indicated by the preamble to the "Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Navy of the United States" approved by Secretary of the Navy William Jones on 23 November 1813. This forwarding note reads as follows:

"A NUMBER of senior officers of the Navy of the United States, having suggested certain alterations in the established 'Uniform Dress', which in their opinion, would greatly conduce to the convenience and comfort of the officers, and still retain an appearance equally elegant and consistent; the following description of the Uniform Dress for officers of the Navy of the United States is substituted for that hitherto established; and is to take effect on the first day of January 1814, to which, all officers therein designated, are ordered to conform."

The description of the full dress coat for the senior officers in the 1813 order, "The COAT of blue cloth; with broad lapels and lining of the same; a standing collar . . ." is very similar to the description of the 1802 order, except in 1802 the lapels were to be long. Instead of the breeches of 1802, all officers were directed to wear pantaloons. In a period of transition one finds men dressed in both the old uniform, the new one, or in combinations of both. This is reflected in the illustration.

For the full dress coats of the combatant officers, the lace trim on the collar, around the lapels and cuffs, and, in the case of a captain, on the pocket flaps, was carried over from the 1802 order. No mention was made of gold lace or embroidery at the buttonholes in 1813, however. Officers wore nine buttons on each lapel and a captain had four buttons at the pockets and on the cuffs. The lieutenants, as in 1802, had but three buttons at pockets and on the cuffs. In this period there was a rank between captain and lieutenant, that of master commandant, today's commander. The rank of master commandant had been established by Congress in 1799 to fill the need for more than two officers who could command at sea. The expansion of the Navy during the Quasi-War with

France permitted operations by squadrons and a rank lower than captain was required. At the end of the French affair, in 1801, the peace establishment act made no provision for master commandant, so the uniform instructions of 1802 naturally made no provision for their dress. To meet the need for protecting the growing American commerce in a world generally at war, Congress in 1806 re-established the rank. No change has been located to the 1802 order so we are at a loss to determine how this class of officer was uniformed, but the dress as prescribed in 1813 was undoubtedly that worn prior to the order. A master commandant was instructed in 1813 to wear the same uniform as a captain, with no lace on the pocket flaps, no button on the standing collar, but with the four buttons at the pockets and cuffs. The master commandant wore but one epaulet, on the right shoulder, while lieutenants wore theirs on the left.

While the 1813 instructions made no reference to gold laced buttonholes, many contemporary portraits show the lace at the lapels, pocket flaps and cuffs. Portraits of officers wearing medals struck by order of Congress in appreciation of their service during the War of 1812 show them in coats of the 1813 period, some with laced buttonholes and others without this decoration.

The captain on the right in the painting is shown in the uniform depicted in Thomas Sully's painting of Captain Charles Stewart done in 1811-1812. The other officer shows the uniform in paintings by Jarvis of Hull, Macdonough and others, painted at the end of the war, and Gilbert Stuart's painting of Commodore Bainbridge.

While there are many portraits of officers in the early 19th century, there are few illustrations of the dress of seamen, and the instructions did not cover the men. Jarvis in his painting of Oliver Hazard Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie, painted in 1816, shows the men in blue jackets, scarlet waistcoats, white trousers, and glazed hats. A drawing of the launching of the *Demologos*, the Navy's first steam ship, designed by Robert Fulton, shows seamen in short jackets, vests, trousers and round or tarpaulin hats. Another excellent source of information on the men's dress in this period is the large number of drawings and paintings of men of the British Navy in 1812-1815. As in earlier periods, the American sailor wore the same basic dress as his British counterpart. A British seaman, taken prisoner when his ship, the *Macedonian*, was captured by the United States frigate *United States*, wrote that he was able to attend a public dinner in New York with his new American friends, merely by having his landlady cover the British anchor buttons of his jacket with blue cloth. For the dinner, American seamen had been issued new uniforms, blue jackets, scarlet waistcoats, blue trousers, neckerchiefs and glazed hats. It is evident, that while the clothing for enlisted personnel was not spelled out in official regulations, a high degree of uniformity did exist.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

## 1830-1841

THE CURRENT PRACTICE of prescribing one uniform for all officers of the United States Navy with a standard system of rank insignia and the use of devices to show the specialties of the staff officers was introduced in 1830 by a uniform order of 1 May. While it would take years for the present system to develop, a start had been made. The full and undress coats of the combatant officers from captain to master, and of the older staff corps, medical and purser, were identical in cut. As under earlier orders, the amount and location of gold embroidery was used in full dress to determine rank, but the introduction of corps devices made it easier to identify the non-combatant officers. The uniforms for chaplains, midshipmen, the forward warrant officers, schoolmasters and clerks were of a different cut, but easily recognizable as a uniform of the Navy.

The full dress uniform as worn by the captain and the purser in the illustration was cut with a swell and the lapels buttoned back, not across as they had been under the earlier order. The collar was decorated with an oak leaf and acorn pattern and in the case of staff officers, a corps device was employed. As one might expect, the full dress coat of a captain had the greatest amount of embroidery—collar, cuffs, and pocket flaps. A master commandant had decoration on the collar and cuffs only, while a lieutenant showed gold on the collar only. The junior sea officer, a master, had no embroidery, but did show a button on either side of the standing collar and laced buttonholes.

The band of collar embroidery was narrowed on the collars of surgeons and pursers to provide room for the specialty device. The two staff corps devices had a definite relationship to the officers' specialties. Medical officers displayed the "club of Esculapius," the Greek god of medicine, and pursers, the cornucopia, the horn of plenty. After all a purser was responsible for the rations, pay and operated the "slops store" which provided clothing for the men. Both pursers and surgeons had a row of live-oak leaves and acorns around their full dress cuffs. Assistant surgeons showed only three buttons on the cuffs. A uniform was ordered for chaplains, a "plain black coat, vest, and pantaloons . . . or black breeches. . . ."

The uniforms for midshipmen were of a different cut from that of other officers. The full dress coat was single breasted, lined with white. The standing collars were edged with a narrow band of oak leaf and acorn embroidery with a gold fowl anchor on either side of the collar. Passed midshipmen, those in line for promotion, wore the same coat as lieutenants with a fowl anchor and star on the collar. Boatswains, gunners, carpenters and sailmakers wore coats like those of the senior officers but lined with blue

and with but eight buttons on each breast. The plain collar had a button on either side, and the sleeves were slashed, not cuffed.

In full dress, the senior sea officers, midshipmen, medical officers and pursers could wear either white knee breeches or white trousers. The forward warrant officers were directed to wear blue trousers. Officers, except the warrant officers, chaplains, schoolmasters, and clerks wore cocked hats in full dress. For captains and master commandants, the hats were gold laced with a loop of six bullions over the cockade. The other hats were bound with black and had a loop of lace over the cockade. Those not permitted to wear cocked hats wore either the round hat or a blue cap with a blue band.

For the first time a distinctive undress coat was prescribed—"dark blue cloth, lined with the same, rolling collar, and made according to the prevailing fashion of civilians of the time." These coats had the same button arrangement as the full dress coats. The undress coats for midshipmen did not follow the same pattern as that of their seniors. Passed midshipmen wore a single-breasted, standing collared coat with a white cloth anchor and star on the plain collar. Other midshipmen wore a short, single-breasted jacket with the white anchor on the collar. Medical officers' undress coats had black velvet collars and cuffs—surgeons had a strip of half inch gold lace on the cuffs while the cuffs of assistant surgeons were plain. Pursers wore the same undress coat as lieutenants, the only difference being that they did not wear epaulets.

The forward warrant officers' undress coat was short with eight buttons on the breasts; schoolmasters and clerks wore a single breasted frock coat with six buttons. In undress an officer could wear a round hat or blue cap. The cap bands were blue for all but the three senior line officers who had gold lace cap bands.

Although it would be years before the Navy would officially introduce a series of rating badges for petty officers, it is to be noted that the boatswain's mate shown has crossed anchors on his jacket sleeve. A woodcut in the *Naval Magazine* of November 1836, shows a petty officer of the period with the device. It had long been the practice for men to add embroidery to their uniforms and in many cases the unofficial devices later became official.

Changes to the 1830 uniform instructions made further small steps toward uniformity. In 1832 the device of the Medical Department was changed to a branch of live-oak, and the black velvet facings were removed from the undress coats. In 1835 medical officers were permitted to wear gold lace bands on their blue caps. The same concession was made to midshipmen in 1838. While it would be many years before there would be a basic uniform with standard systems of rank and corps devices, the pattern was being set in the 1830's.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

1841

THE UNIFORM REGULATIONS of 19 February 1841 were the first to include a section on the dress of enlisted personnel. The section on the men was short and most general without a description of the clothing, so the previous uniforms, made up from physical samples to be seen at the navy yards, remained in use with only slight style modifications. The style of the officers' full dress coat was changed and now buttoned across the chest, the buttons being in parallel rows. The undress coat was still the "frock" coat of a civilian pattern. Officers were permitted to wear either blue or white trousers, depending on the weather, and at the discretion of the commanding officer. The 1841 uniform was that of the campaign in California and the Mexican War, so there are many contemporary paintings of both officers and men.

The two senior officers, captains and commanders (the rank of master commandant had been changed to commander in March 1837) lost the elaborate collar embroidery of the 1830 instruction, while lieutenants retained it. Medical officers, who had had a corps device since 1830, showed no specialty mark on the collars of the full dress coat. Pursers did have a new device, a four inch long strip of embroidered oak leaves and acorns. To indicate the various classes of surgeons, the senior surgeon had three wide strips of gold lace on his cuffs in full dress, and quarter inch lace in undress. Passed assistant surgeons showed two strips of lace, and assistant surgeons, a single lace on the dress and undress cuffs. Since no other officers of the United States Navy had gold lace on their cuffs, in foreign ports, surgeons were often mistaken for the senior officers. In 1847 the lace was removed from surgeons' cuffs and three sprigs of live oak were shown on both the collar and cuffs in full dress, the undress coat being without decorations.

Passed midshipmen in full dress wore the same coat as commanders, but with a gold fowl anchor and star on the collar. For dress, the midshipmen wore the undress coat with only the anchor on the collar. In undress, passed midshipmen wore the frock coat with the anchor and star device while midshipmen wore a short jacket with the anchor in buff cloth.

The official instruction of 1841 stated, "A captain commanding a squadron entitled to wear a broad pendant, shall have on the strap of each epaulet a plain silver anchor and eagle, with a silver star above the eagle." The epaulets of captains showed only the anchor and the eagle, while those for commanders and lieutenants had no devices. Until 1845 a lieutenant wore an epaulet on the right shoulder only. No other officers were permitted to wear shoulder ornaments. A system of rank indication in undress was initiated, the fore-runner of the shoulder mark pattern of today. The shoulder straps of a commodore were blue, edged with gold and with a

silver star in the center; for captains, the same strap without the star. Those for commanders and lieutenants were of gold lace. All straps were a half inch wide and two and a half inches long.

The decoration of the cocked hat for lieutenants can be noted in the painting and is similar to commodores and captains except with four bullions, the center two not twisted. The hats for other officers entitled to wear them had a loop of gold lace over the cockade, as shown on the surgeon's hat. In undress a dark blue cap could be worn instead of the cocked hat. The band was gold lace for commissioned officers and midshipmen and blue for others. Midshipmen wore as a cap device, the anchor and star or the plain anchor as ordered for their coat collars. This was the first time a cap device was specified in the United States Navy.

Under the 1841 order white webbing sword belts were worn in full dress and black leather belts in undress. It is to be noted that the swords were supported by a frog and not by slings as they had been prior to 1841 and after the next order of 1852.

Although the 1841 uniform instructions are silent on the uniforms to be worn by engineers, a uniform had been approved in 1837 when the Navy manned its first sea-going steam vessel, the *Fulton*. The commanding officer, Captain Matthew C. Perry, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, issued instructions covering the dress of the specialists who would operate the ship's engines. Engineers were to wear the undress uniform with an indication of their rating on the rolling collar. Chief engineers showed a gold embroidered five pointed star on either side of the collar, first assistants, silver stars, second assistants, a silver star on the right side only, and third assistants, a star on the left. Only chief engineers were permitted to wear cocked hats; all others wore caps. Although Congress made provision for engineers in the Naval Establishment in 1842, putting chief engineers in a commissioned status and directing that a suitable uniform be prescribed, no official action was taken by the Navy Department until the 1852 Regulations were issued.

The enlisted men in the background, near the Customs House in Monterey, are shown in the white uniform covered by the 1841 order. The white frock had a blue collar and breast, while the blue frock had a white collar, white cuffs and blue breast piece. In cold weather, a blue jacket was worn. The order also made provision for a sleeve device to indicate petty officers—an eagle and anchor, white on blue garments and blue on white frocks. Boatswains' mates, gunners' mates, carpenters' mates, masters at arms, ship's stewards and cooks wore the device on the right sleeve; other petty officers had the device on the left arm. Not until 1866 would a series of specialty marks for petty officers be introduced.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

1852

**A** MOST IMPORTANT PERIOD in the development of the uniform of the United States Navy was instituted in 1852 when a new regulation was issued on March the 8th. This order, with modifications prescribed the dress of the Federal Navy during the Civil War. The present system of using distinctive corps devices to identify officers of the Line and Staff, although begun in a small way in 1830, was further developed. One innovation was the employment of gold lace on the sleeves to indicate an officer's rank, the current practice in blue uniforms. The two previous instructions had employed a few drawings to show details, but the 1852 order was the first to give pictorial information on insignia, devices, hats and to include illustrations of officers in the various types of dress. It was from 1852 that the "uniform" uniform really developed.

The painting shows the various types of uniforms specified for Line and Staff officers and some of the details of insignia. The captain in full dress is identified by the three strips of three-quarter inch lace around his cuffs, and by the inches and a half wide lace around the top of the collar and down the seams of his trousers. For a commander, the collar and trouser lace was one and a quarter inch wide and he had two strips of three-quarter inch lace on his cuffs. Both lieutenants and masters had collar lace one inch wide and lieutenants the same lace on their full dress trousers. A master was identified by a three-eighths inch gold cord on the trousers. On the cuffs lieutenants had a single strip of lace and masters none. Passed midshipmen had inch wide lace around the top of the standing collar, but none at the base and only a quarter inch cord on the trouser seams. Midshipmen, instead of gold lace around the collar had the gold embroidered anchor of 1841 set on either side.

The epaulets under the 1852 order showed indications of a commissioned officer's rank and specialty. The reproductions of the 1852 illustrations show the devices for both Line and Staff officers. It is to be noted that the various staff corps were identified by letters in Old English characters, M.D., for the Medical Department; P.D., for pursers, and an E for chief engineers, the only commissioned members of the Engineer Corps. The decorations of the cocked hat were like those specified in 1841 except that staff officers now wore the four bullions formerly worn only by lieutenants.

The officer in the left foreground is a surgeon in the undress frock coat. He is identified as a senior member of the Medical Department by the shoulder straps. The corps device, M.D., is in the center of the strap with a gold acorn at either end. In undress, either the cocked hat or blue cap could be worn.

The Navy in earlier regulations had permitted white trousers and vests to be worn in warm weather but made no provision for white jackets or coats. The 1852 order took into account the ever widening activities of the Navy with its growing number of seagoing steam vessels and provided a white jacket to be worn aboard ship in warm climates. This first all-white uniform is worn by the lieutenant. The jacket was double breasted with the same number of small gilt buttons on the breast as specified for the full dress and undress frock coats. The cuffs were decorated only with four small buttons in the openings. The white uniform was worn with the blue cap, adorned with the proper devices, and shoulder straps for those officers entitled to wear epaulets. The distinguishing insignia of the lieutenant are his gold cap band which shows he is a commissioned combatant officer, the cap device, the oak and olive wreath with the horizontal anchor specified for officers of his grade, and masters; and the insignia on the shoulder straps, the horizontal silver anchor of his epaulets. In 1852, the only other officers

permitted to wear gold lace bands on their caps were the engineers of whom only the chief engineers were commissioned.

The chief engineer in the right background is in the single-breasted coat prescribed for all engineers for undress. Full uniformity in dress had not been attained, for, while surgeons and pursers wore the double-breasted full and undress coats like their Line counterparts, engineers, the newest addition to the Navy's family, wore a coat that showed their status. The gold cap band, the exception to the general rule that this band was reserved for combatant officers, is surmounted by the device of the Engineer Corps, the gold wheel and silver anchor in a wreath of oak and olive leaves.

It is to be noted that in full dress, the staff officers did not show the collar or sleeve lace of the Line officers with whom they had relative rank. The device for the collars and cuffs of surgeons was the sprig of three oak leaves introduced in 1847 but without the border of leaves and acorns prescribed by the 1841 order. Pursers retained the band of oak leaves around the standing collar of the 1830 and 1841 orders, but lost the strip of leaves of the 1841 instruction. They were permitted to show the embroidery on the cuffs however. Engineers had the wheel and anchor of their caps on the collar with no cuff embroidery.

The description of the uniforms for enlisted personnel in the 1852 order was almost word for word as it had been in 1841 but the cut of the clothing was changing. The official documents of the Perry Expedition to Japan in the early 1850's contain many illustrations of drawings made during the cruise. Seamen are shown in the earlier type collar as worn by the boatswain's mate in the painting and also in the collar worn during the Civil War, which had a close resemblance to that worn today. The order stated that blue frocks were to have the collars and cuffs faced with white and the white frocks to be worn with blue faced collars and cuffs. The order also stated that the collars and cuffs were to be stitched around with thread, so many men added decorative touches not spelled out in the instructions. Uniforms of the period show most elaborate embroidery, not only on the frocks, but also on the trousers. The bib type frock would disappear at the time of the Civil War but had been worn for many years.

The boatswain can be identified as a petty officer by the presence of the eagle and anchor device of 1841 with the star above it, prescribed in 1852. It would not be until 1866 that a system of rating badges would be introduced, so we can determine this man's rating only by the all-covering petty officer's device, worn on the right arm and the boatswain's pipe.

Changes to the 1852 Regulation prior to the Civil War brought the dress of staff officers into close agreement with that of the Line. In September 1852, the Medical Department device was changed to a sprig of olive replacing the M.D. of the cap device, and the new device was worn above a gold band in the same wreath used by the Line. Under the same change pursers were given a sprig of oak as a device also to be worn above a gold cap band. The insignia was removed from the epaulets of surgeons and pursers leaving them plain. A General Order of 23 August 1856 directed surgeons and pursers to wear the same uniform as line officers with whom they ranked including the collar and sleeve lace but without the lace on the full dress trousers. In February 1861 engineers were instructed to wear the standard double-breasted coats of the Line, but only chief engineers wore sleeve lace for their assistants were warrant officers. The engineer device was changed to a cross of four oak leaves to be worn only on the cap. While it would be some time before all staff officers would be permitted to wear the dress of the Line and use sleeve lace to indicate their relative rank, a major step toward uniformity had been taken.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

## 1852-1855

THE MIDSHIPMEN shown in this illustration are dressed in the uniforms as prescribed by the Regulations of 1852 with some modifications as ordered by the newly created Naval Academy. Prior to the establishment of the school at Annapolis in 1845, the young men who would be the future officers of the United States Navy had been educated in a rather haphazard manner. Since the Continental Navy was authorized in 1776, provision had been made for the young men who would in time command the ships of the Navy, but no real provision would be made for their education for many years. With the creation of the Federal Navy in 1797, the rank of midshipman was approved, and young men and, in some cases, mere boys were appointed as warrant officers. Many midshipmen who served in the early Navy had little formal education and, in most cases, no experience at sea or aboard ships. Basically they were supposed to learn their profession by observing their senior officers and doing such duties as might be assigned to them.

The need for educational opportunities was evident and as a stop-gap measure chaplains, when they were available, were supposed to do what teaching their other duties and the shipboard duties of the midshipmen would permit. To provide some small measure of assistance, Congress in 1813 established the rating of "schoolmaster," but the rate of pay of \$25 per month did not attract qualified teachers. In March 1835 the position of Professor of Mathematics was created with the status of a civil officer. With a better rate of pay and a quasi-officer status originally, some good instructors were secured, but the training program, mainly aboard ship, was not adequate for the Navy's needs.

To supplement shipboard training, a school had been established in 1802 aboard the Frigate *Congress*, then in ordinary, or in today's parlance, mothballs, at the Washington Navy Yard. Any midshipmen who had the desire for a somewhat formal education and could be spared from other duties availed themselves of the meager facilities. Three such schools were in operation in 1833 at Boston, New York, and Norfolk. The first truly Naval School was opened in Philadelphia in 1838 at the Naval Asylum, but education for midshipmen was basically still aboard ship at sea when duties permitted attending school. The problem was not solved, so Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft, historian and man of letters, took matters into his own hands. In 1845, the unused Army facility at Fort Severn, Annapolis, Maryland, was transferred to the Navy with the approval of President James K. Polk. The Naval School was opened in makeshift quarters on 10 October 1845, with Commander Franklin Buchanan as Superintendent. As a staff, Lieutenant John H. Ward was to act as the executive officer and also instruct in gunnery and steam engineering. A Navy surgeon, John A. Lockwood, was instructor in chemistry, Chaplain George Jones taught English, while Passed Midshipman S. Marcy taught mathematics. Three Professors completed the staff, Henry Lockwood in natural philosophy; Arsene N. Girault in French and William Chauvenet in mathematics and navigation. It was a small staff but the beginning of a proper educational system for Naval officers. Congress gave official recognition to the Navy's school when \$28,200 was appropriated for repairs in 1847, and again in 1850 when the name was changed to the Naval Academy.

The early classes at the Naval Academy were made up of midshipmen, some of whom had served at sea or attended the so-called schools ashore and new appointees. In 1850 a new code of regulations was placed in effect and new appointees reported to the Academy as "acting midshipmen" to be attached to the Academy for two years and after this first term to go to sea for two and a half years to become a warranted midshipmen and then attend classes an additional two years. The 1852 Uniform Regulations

provided dress and undress uniforms for midshipmen and passed midshipmen, while the Academy established a uniform for acting midshipmen. The various uniforms are shown in the illustration.

Both the foreground figures are shown in the official 1852 uniforms. The Passed Midshipman is wearing the undress frock coat of the senior officers of the Navy but the sleeves of his coat are plain with only the three small buttons in the cuff opening. In 1852 a captain in undress would have three strips of three-quarter inch wide lace on the sleeves of his coat; a commander, two strips, a lieutenant, one, and a master, three medium buttons around the cuff. Commissioned officers in undress could wear either the epaulets or shoulder straps of their rank, while passed midshipmen wore only a strap of gold lace one-half inch wide and four inches long in lieu of the more decorative straps. Midshipmen, not passed, had no shoulder ornaments. As other officers, passed midshipmen wore the blue cap with the same cap device as lieutenants and masters, a wreath of gold oak and olive branches with a silver fowl anchor in the center. Under the 1852 order, masters and above had a band of gold lace around the cap but none was specified for midshipmen. Under a uniform change of 11 February 1853, all midshipmen could wear lace bands.

In the right foreground, the midshipman is shown in full dress. The coat is a direct descendant of the one introduced in 1813; tight fitting, with tails and a standing collar. The sleeve lace of the senior officers and the buttons of a master were omitted from midshipmen's coats, and the amount of lace on the collar was reduced to a minimum, an inch wide band around the top with no lace at the bottom for a passed midshipman, and none for a midshipman. In lieu of collar lace, a midshipman had a fowl anchor embroidered in gold thread on either side of the collar. The 1852 order had introduced the use of gold lace along the outer seams of the full dress trousers, the width of the stripe diminishing as the rank went down. For a passed midshipman, instead of flat lace, a gold cord a quarter inch in diameter was used and midshipmen had no seam decoration. The cocked hat was like that of all officers entitled to wear them below the rank of commander, a loop of four gold bullions over the cockade. Captains and commanders had loops of six bullions, the center two twisted.

The midshipmen in the center background are shown in the Academy's variation of the official 1852 uniform instruction. The 1852 order provided that jackets could be worn by all officers when at sea except at general muster or in charge of the Deck. The double-breasted jackets had the same number of buttons as the full dress or frock coats, and officers entitled to wear epaulets wore the shoulder straps of their rank. A jacket was certainly a more suitable coat for young active midshipmen at an educational institution than the cumbersome frock or full dress coats. The standard undress cap was worn as shown on the left center figure without the grommet so that the cap had a nautical flair. As a substitute for the gold cap band of the 1852 order for warranted midshipmen, the cap was worn with a silver fowl anchor. The Academy cap device was introduced at Annapolis in 1855, as was the practice of displaying a gold fowl anchor on either side of the rolling collar. Acting midshipmen were not permitted to carry the sword of the 1852 order but instead carried the Model 1842 cutlass as a side arm. The plebe or first year man, right center, is wearing the white trousers permitted in warm weather under the official regulations and the tropical straw hat, a very suitable dress for the very hot weather which sometimes reaches Annapolis.

In the background is shown U.S.S. *Constellation* which for many years served as school ship at the Academy. The original system of sending acting midshipmen to sea after two years at the Academy was changed in late 1851, and summer cruises provided the sea experience deemed necessary for the education of young naval officers.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

## 1862

THE UNIFORM of the United States Navy during the Civil War was governed by the 1852 order with changes to meet the need of an expanding Navy. A Uniform Change issued by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles on 31 July 1862, directed that the full dress coat be omitted from an officer's wardrobe, and that the undress frock coat of 1852 be used for full, undress, and service dress. In full dress the coat was worn with epaulets, cocked hat, sword and sword knot; in undress, either epaulets or shoulder straps could be worn, and the cap replaced the cocked hat; in service dress, shoulder straps and a cap were worn. The gold laced full dress trousers were not to be worn under this change. A less formal and more comfortable coat was authorized for service dress, the single or double-breasted blue jacket with the same number of buttons as authorized for the frock coat, and with shoulder straps and cap, with the gold lace stripes of rank on the coat sleeves.

An Act of Congress of 16 July 1862, "To establish and equalize the Grades of Line Officers of the United States Navy" created a new rank structure for the ever growing Federal Navy, which was made up of ships of all sizes and types, from new ironclads to converted merchant ships and ferry boats. The rank of rear admiral was finally authorized, and the previous title of "flag officer" was changed to "commodore." The rank of lieutenant-commander was set between that of commander and lieutenant, and a new junior rank of ensign was created. To identify the officers of this expanded list, it was of course necessary to modify the existing instructions.

The use of the three-quarter inch wide sleeve lace introduced in 1852 was continued, to be supplemented by strips of quarter inch lace. The uniforms for staff officers was covered by a single paragraph in the 1862 order: "Coats of all other officers to be the same as now prescribed for undress of their respective grades, except that all cuffs will be closed and without small buttons, and with the same arrangement of lace as that worn by 'line officers' of the same relative rank." Since relative rank had been officially established for surgeons, paymasters (title changed from purser in 1860) and engineers prior to 1859, these officers had been permitted to wear the lace of their relative rank on their sleeves. The indications

of their non-combatant status were the staff corps devices on caps and and shoulder straps, and the lack of insignia of any type on their epaulets.

The revised rank structure made a change in line insignia necessary. It is to be noted that the epaulet and shoulder strap insignia designs of 1852 were modified and extended by the official 1862 change. The cap devices, basically those of 1852, were carried forward to cover the new rank pattern. The cap device was to be worn above a band of gold lace for all officers except Professors of Mathematics and secretaries, who had no distinctive device. These two classes of officers wore the wreath of oak and olive leaves only, above a blue cap band. No head cover was prescribed for chaplains although they had been directed to wear a blue uniform, single-breasted with a row of nine buttons, and plain cuffs. In practice, chaplains wore the blue cap without any decoration.

The lieutenant, in command of the gun crew, shown in the painting, is in the service dress of the 1862-1863 period, with the one wide strip of lace and a second narrow lace on his sleeves. The present insignia of a lieutenant, two bars, appear at either end of the shoulder straps, but in gold, against the blue background of the strap. Silver bars were worn on epaulets only. The cap device is that of the three junior officers; lieutenants, masters, and ensigns.

The dress of the enlisted men of the gun crew is but little changed from that prescribed in 1852, with only minor modifications in the cut of the clothing. White frocks, or jumpers, retained the blue faced collars and cuffs of the 1841 regulation, but the white collars and cuffs for blues directed by the 1852 order had been removed by a change in 1859. It is to be noted that the petty officer displays no form of rating badge, only the device worn by all petty officers, that introduced in 1841 and modified by the addition of the star in 1852. It is possible to determine the man's rating for the petty officers' distinguishing mark was worn on the right arm by boatswain's mates, carpenter's mate, gunner's mates, sailmaker's mates, ship's stewards and cooks only. Other ratings showed the mark on the left arm, and since the petty officer is in the gun crew, he is evidently a quarter gunner.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

1864

THE REGULATIONS FOR THE UNIFORM OF THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES, approved by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles on 28 January 1864, finally brought all the changes to the 1852 instruction up to date. The instruction of 1862 was but a modification of the 1852 order, not a new regulation. Changes had taken place after the modifications of 1862, so a new complete order was needed to provide a better understanding of what uniforms, insignia and rank designations were to be worn. The Navy had expanded greatly and many of the officers and men were the volunteers so badly needed to supplement the comparatively small regular Navy of 1861 when the war began. Another reason for the issuance of a new uniform order was the granting of relative rank to certain commissioned civil officers, who previously had no form of rank, and the modification of the relative rank of medical officers, paymasters (pursers until 1860) and engineers.

By a "General Order" dated 13 March 1863, Fleet Surgeons, Paymasters and Engineers and other officers in these departments who had had more than fifteen years in the senior ranks of these corps, were to rank with captains of the Line. After five years in grade, surgeons, paymasters and chief engineers ranked with commanders, and for the first five years with lieutenant commanders. Passed assistant surgeons held the relative rank of lieutenant; assistant surgeons, paymasters and first assistant engineers ranked with masters; second assistant engineers, with ensigns. The third assistant engineers retained their warrant status, ranking with midshipmen.

The relative rank granted those officers not previously coordinated with their Line counterparts was established as follows:

Naval Constructors after 20 years service, with captains.

Naval Constructors, Chaplains and Professors of Mathematics, with more than 12 years in grade, with commanders and those with less than 12 years service, with lieutenant commanders.

Secretaries, with lieutenants.

Officers, while detailed as chief of a Bureau, were to rank with commodores.

A major modification of the uniform instructions, following the extensive 1862 change, occurred in May 1863. The combinations of three-quarter and quarter-inch lace were replaced by strips of quarter-inch lace, from eight for a rear admiral to one for an ensign. A five pointed star to be worn above the lace was introduced and has remained the device of the Line ever since. Staff officers of the same relative rank as their Line counterparts wore the lace indicated, but without the star.

On 11 November 1863 a uniform change was issued, prompted chiefly by the modification of the relative rank of surgeons, paymasters and engi-

neers, and by the granting of relative rank on 13 March 1863 to chaplains, professors, naval constructors and secretaries. The corps devices for the older groups of staff officers were modified slightly and new insignia provided for the officers who had just been given status with the Line. Medical officers wore the device on the cap only, within the standard wreath of oak leaves and acorns, while other groups had the device on their shoulder straps as well as on the cap. The same order also modified the cap insignia of line officers, two silver stars for rear admirals, and a vertical fowl anchor for all other commissioned officers.

When new uniform regulations were issued on 28 January 1864, the previous changes were reflected, and some new features introduced. Although a full dress uniform was included, it was not to be worn during the war, so cocked hats and epaulets remained in storage. The shoulder straps were modified and all combatant officers used the silver fowl anchor, introduced as a cap insignia of officers from commodore to ensign, as a device in the center of the strap. Staff officers except for medical officers, who had nothing but rank devices on their shoulder straps, used the corps insignia in lieu of the anchor. The shoulder straps of the Line appear in the 1864 instruction.

For service dress, the frock coat was worn with shoulder straps and cap as indicated by the Rear Admiral and Fleet Engineer. A short jacket could be worn in service dress aboard ship except for more formal occasions such as muster or as "Officer of the Deck". This comfortable coat is worn by the lieutenant. The Fleet Surgeon is shown in a "sack" coat, not included in the official instructions of 1864 but seen in many photographs of naval personnel. Although the sack coat would not be officially authorized until January 1865, as had happened earlier, coats were "adopted" and later confirmed by official orders. Straw hats had long been permitted in warm climates and the dimensions had been spelled out in detail. Civil War photographs show many varieties of straw hats from the regulation type shown, to the floppy, wide-brimmed planter type.

Under the 1864 order, certain petty officers were permitted to wear a double-breasted blue jacket, with two rows of medium sized buttons on the breast. The sleeves were slashed with four small buttons in the openings. The master-at-arms, the leading petty officer of the period, is shown in this jacket, with a plain blue cap. As a further indication of petty officer status, the master-at-arms wore the device introduced in 1841, the anchor, eagle and star on his left sleeve.

The ship in the background is one of the ironclads built during the Civil War, an outgrowth of Ericsson's *Monitor* with the same low freeboard but with two revolving turrets.

# UNIFORMS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

1898

THE LATTER PART of the 19th century is to be remembered as the beginning of the "New Navy", not only in the type of ships built, but also in a new concept of naval strategy needed to support a growing America and expanding world trade. The changes had a bearing on the dress of officers and men of the Navy. The long period of naval neglect which followed the Civil War ended when Congress in 1883 authorized the construction of four steel ships; the protected cruisers *Chicago*, *Boston*, and *Atlanta*, and the dispatch boat, *Dolphin*.

Staff officers, who had had their relative rank adjusted upwards during the Civil War and had been reduced to their pre-war status in 1869, were finally recognized by Congress in 1871 as an important part of the Navy and again had their relative rank adjusted upwards. Civil engineers, long a part of the Naval Establishment, were given relative rank in 1881. A Regulations Circular of 8 January 1885, grouped enlisted personnel into classes and established the ratings of first, second and third class petty officers, doing away with the former all-inclusive rating of "petty officer". The rating of chief petty officer was established in September 1894.

In the painting, the captain, Civil Engineer Corps, is shown in the service dress uniform first introduced in 1877 to replace the sack coat of the Civil War. The light blue cloth between the gold sleeve lace follows the pattern established by the Navy in 1869 when all staff corps were assigned a colored cloth to be worn on the sleeves. A Uniform Circular of 24 August 1881, which prescribed the insignia for civil engineers, directed that the corps device be the letters C.E. in Old English and the sleeve lace light blue velvet. In using Old English letters as a corps device, the Navy reverted to the 1850's when medical officers had an "M.D." device, and pursers (paymasters), the letters "P.D.". The corps device is shown behind the silver eagle of the captain's relative rank on the standing collar. The cap visor is edged with a band of gold lace, not the gold oak leaves and acorns of the senior Line officers. The visor decorations were introduced in 1897.

The rear admiral's body coat with tails, worn in 1898 as "special full dress" is a direct descendant of the coats of the early 19th century, and very like that specified in 1852 but dropped during the Civil War. The gold lace around the standing collar is an inch and three-quarters wide, and the trouser lace the same width. The same width lace was worn by commodores, while captains and commanders had inch and a half lace; lieutenant commanders, lieutenants and lieutenants (junior grade), one inch; ensigns, half inch. The sleeve lace, the two inch band, with a half inch strip above it, is used today to indicate a rear admiral in blues. The lace over the cockade of the cocked hat was an inch and a half wide for flag officers, captains and commanders, and narrower for the more junior officers. Only flag officers had gold lace on the fans of the hat. The trim of the dark blue full dress belt varies with rank—the three quarter inch strips shown for flag officers, seven narrow strips of lace for captains and commanders, five one-sixteenth wide strips for lieutenant-commanders and lieutenants; and three for lieutenants (junior grade) and ensigns. Staff officers wore the same full dress belts as officers with whom they had relative rank.

The frock coat worn by the commander in undress had for years been a standard item of an officer's wardrobe. In 1898 it was worn for full dress with epaulets, laced trousers, cocked hat, full dress belt and sword; with plain blue or white trousers, epaulets, cocked hat, plain black belt and sword for dress. In undress, the coat was worn with shoulder straps, plain blue or white trousers, the cap, with cover to match the trousers, plain belt and sword. The visor of the cap shows the newly introduced gold embroidery for commanders and captains. Flag officers had, as they do today, an additional band of embroidery around the back of the visor. The cap device for all commissioned officers was the silver eagle and shield and the two crossed fowl anchors, basically that employed today.

The dress of the 1st class boatswain's mate follows the general pattern of the previous uniforms for enlisted personnel. The right sleeve shows the type of rating badge introduced in 1886 after classes of petty officers were instituted. The Vee of the chevrons contains the rating badge, the whole being surmounted by a spread eagle. The badge of a boatswain's mate was two crossed anchors, the same as it is today. In 1898 fifteen specialty marks were all that were required to indicate a man's specialty while today, the Navy uses many times this number to indicate the many, many skills needed to man the ships and planes and to provide for the other naval activities. The boatswain's badge on the right sleeve indicates he is a member of the starboard watch.

The most colorful uniform in 1898 was that of the bandsmen in full dress. The scarlet, single-breasted tunics were trimmed with white and yellow and the skyblue trousers had scarlet strips on the seams. The full dress helmet was identical to that of enlisted Marines, and the gilt helmet device was like that of the Army with a silver lyre superimposed. All bandsmen wore shoulder knots, those of bandmasters being trimmed with gold cord, while bandsmen had white mohair cords.

The use of a coat for certain leading petty officers was first introduced in 1862 for a few ratings. Under the 1886 regulations, all first-class petty officers wore double-breasted sack coats, either blue or white, with a blue visored cap or a straw hat. Their trousers were full bottomed like those of other enlisted men. When the rating of chief petty officer was created, the chiefs took over the coat of the 1st class and were permitted to wear trousers, cut like those of officers. The device on the cap, the letters U.S.N. in silver superimposed on a gilt fowl anchor, was similar to that in use today. The master-at-arms, a member of the starboard watch, wears the three red chevrons, connected by a red arc on which is perched a white eagle. The specialty mark, a five pointed star, is also in white. On white clothing, the chevrons and arc were red but the eagle and specialty marks in blue.

The ships in the background are from contemporary photographs and from left to right, represent the Protected Cruiser *Columbus*, Armored Cruiser *Brooklyn* and the Battleship *Iowa*. Prior to the War with Spain in 1898, the major ships of the Navy had white hulls and straw colored superstructures. During the war, slate gray was used.