

Queensland Uniforms

Colonial Forces Study Group (Queensland)

Number One

Queensland Marine Defence Force Officer's Dress

It was not until October 1885 that the Senior Naval Officer placed a requisition for various articles for the use of the Marine Defence Force, including 12 Officers swords and sword belts (Navy pattern), 1000 large gilt naval buttons with the letters H.M.Q.N in raised letters, 1500 medium and 500 small.

The first dress regulations for the naval forces of the Colony were published in January 1887. Officers of the Permanent Marine Force were proscribed a uniform similar to the Royal Navy, (defined in the 1879 *Uniform Regulations for Officers of the Fleet*) with the exception being buttons bearing the crown and anchor embossed with the letters 'HMQS'.

Officers of the Queensland Naval Brigade (who were not permanent forces) likewise wore Royal Navy pattern uniforms, with the exception that instead of the gold lace curl, executive officers wore a triangle surmounting the top distinctive sleeve stripe. It is presumed these Officers wore Royal Navy buttons where appropriate. White trousers are recorded as being worn as undress by QNB Officers from September 1886, though it likely dates earlier. Cap-covers were also worn in undress.

Surgeons, Engineers and Pay Masters did not wear the curl or triangle, but had coloured velvet between the gold lace stripes to denote the branch i.e. red for surgeons, purple for engineers, and white for pay officers. Officers in these branches also wore single rather than double-breasted uniforms unless they were on Permanent Staff, and distinctive epaulettes according to Royal Navy regulations.

The uniforms for the Queensland Naval Artillery Volunteer Corps were the same as the Marine Defence Force, although all distinctive marks were in silver instead of gold.

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Although naval vessels had been acquired earlier, the Queensland Marine Defence Force was not officially established until February 1885, coming into existence under the *Defence Act, 1884*.

Permanent Staff were often Royal Navy Officers and likely wore the uniform of that service prior to the promulgation of dress regulations. Some articles of clothing for *Gayundah* crew were supplied from Royal Navy stores in Sydney. Queensland Naval Brigade and Queensland Naval Artillery Volunteer Corps uniforms were made locally, no doubt to Royal Navy patterns.

Taking effect from July 1898, new regulations changed the rank distinctions of Queensland Officers of the Permanent Force. Like the Naval Brigade, executive officers wore a triangle surmounting the top distinctive stripe, instead of the curl. Permanent Staff below the rank of Commander wore a gold star above the apex of the triangle. HMQN buttons continued to be worn by the Permanent Staff.

The uniforms of the Queensland Naval Brigade did not change. The gold lace triangle surmounting the upper distinctive stripe on the Executive Naval Brigade Officers' uniform were regulated to enclose an equilateral triangle of blue cloth with sides of three-quarter of an inch.

The buttons on the sleeves of the uniforms of Commissioned Officers were also discontinued from all future issues.

Officers of the Marine Force were allowed to wear plain clothes on ordinary leave, but when on duty, on board or on shore, they were to wear the uniform of their rank.

The uniforms, and Orders of Dress, were based on the Uniform Regulations for Officers of the Fleet, published for the Royal Navy in 1893. These superseded all previous ones:

All officers were required to strictly conform to the new regulations.

No 1 Full Dress- This order of dress was worn on State occasions, and special ceremonies and entertainments at the discretion of Senior Staff Executive Officer. It consisted of frock coat, cocked hat, epaulettes, plain blue trousers, sword, undress belt and white gloves. Purchase of No 1 Full Dress was optional.

No 2 Ball and Mess Dress- was worn at official and public balls, and special dinner and evening entertainments. No 2 dress comprised blue jacket, white or blue mess waistcoat, laced trousers and white gloves.

No 3 Frock Coat - This order of dress was worn at ordinary occasions of duty and ceremony on shore or afloat, funerals, courts-martial, dances, entertainments & c., in the daytime. It consisted of

frock coat, morning waistcoat, plain blue or white trousers, cap, sword, undress belt and white gloves.

No 4 Undress was worn at drills and exercise, and occasions of duty ashore and afloat as requisite. No 4 dress was an undress coat (single-breasted with stand-up collar), morning waistcoat, plain blue or white trousers, cap, sword, undress belt, brown dogskin gloves.

White undress could also be worn as No 4 dress. This consisted of a white undress coat with shoulder - straps, white trousers, helmet or white cap cover, sword, undress belt, and brown dogskin gloves.

No 5 Mess Undress was worn at ordinary mess dinners, evening lectures and entertainments. It comprised blue or white jacket, plain blue trousers, evening waistcoat (blue or white) or white cummerbund.

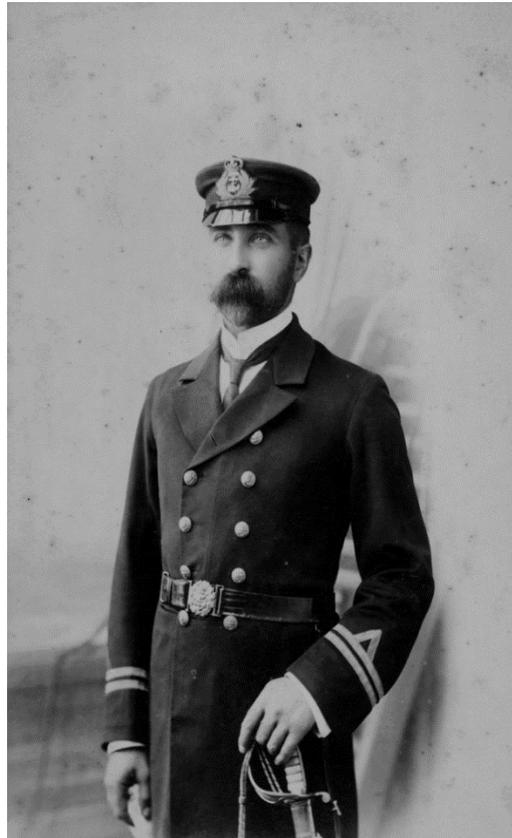
Gaiters were worn as ordered.

Queensland Marine Defence Force

Captain Townley-Wright of HMS *Gayundah* in Royal Navy rig around the time of his arrival in Queensland in 1885



Below: An unknown Lieutenant of the Queensland Naval Brigade, wearing the No 3 Frockcoat order of dress, and carrying his white gloves.



Navigating Lieutenant Smith of HMS *Gayundah* wearing the same order of dress c1889-92.



Left: A Queensland Naval Brigade Sub-Lieutenant in Cairns, c1887-91, wearing the single-breasted undress coat (with pocket), a white collar and shirt beneath, with plain white trousers and a white cap cover over his blue cap. He carries his sword and scabbard but has no visible sword-belt.

Right: QNB Lieutenant Lee-Bryce c1892 showing blue cap and cuff details.





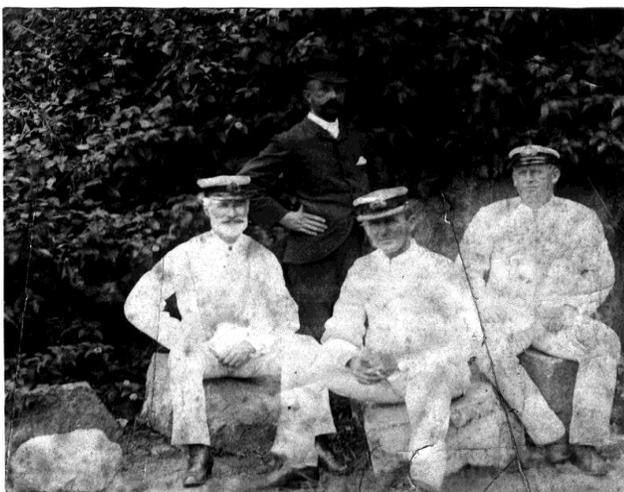
Above: Sub-Lieutenant Thornber of the Queensland Naval Brigade in Mackay, c1900. He is also wearing the white cover to his cap, undress coat, plain blue trousers, and brown dogskin gloves. His sword-belt is worn under the frock.



Above: QMDF Officers wearing the white undress uniform with rank on the shoulder-straps. The black mourning crepe likely indicates the photograph was taken in 1901 after Queen Victoria's death.



Right: A QNB instructor c1890s wearing blue undress and the leather laced gaiters.



Left: Gayundah Officers c1889-92 wearing white undress uniforms without shoulder straps

This information has been prepared for the Colonial Forces Study Group (Queensland) Inc. using information obtained from published Regulations, General Orders, newspaper accounts, and QMDF correspondence files.