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28 JAN 1953
RECEIVED

DJ V

The Commander-in-Chief
Mediterranean
22nd January 1953

No.112/Med.2005/15
THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY

Reference:- A.L. V.1A/1455/52 of 14th May 1952

V. RECEIVED
29 JAN 1953

TRIAL OF OFFICERS' CAP WITH WHITE
PLASTIC TOP

see copy of
A.L. enclosed

Be pleased to inform Their Lordships that I have used no (other) cap other than one with a white plastic top since the 1st May 1952. My Flag Lieutenant has also used only a cap with a plastic top or a blue cap with a white plastic cover during the same period. The separate white plastic cover is not as neat looking or as satisfactory as a permanent white plastic top. The answers to the questionnaire about white topped caps are :-

- 1.(a) The appearance of these caps are in my opinion smarter than a blue cap with a white cap cover and have retained this smart appearance after more than 8 months' hard continuous wear.
2. No breakdown of the plastic fabric has occurred.
3. There has been no observable discoloration.
- 4.(a) My cap has become dirty on occasions when my head has touched an oily overhead pipe or funnel smuts have settled on it and once when dropped to the ground.
(b) My steward informs me that the cap is very easy to clean by wiping over with a sponge using soap and water.
5. The plastic top cap is cooler, lighter and in every way more comfortable.
6. This cap is definitely acceptable for wear all the year round.

2. I note that in my predecessor's submission No.214/Med.2005/15 of 30th January 1952, although he stated that the trial white plastic seaman's cap was an improvement on the present white cap he did not recommend the wearing of permanent white caps at home. Having seen the reports of the authorities concerned I find that four out of five were in favour of abolishing blue caps altogether; I therefore raised the whole question once more at a meeting of all the Commanding Officers of the Fleet at which the caps with white plastic covers were demonstrated.

3. Their general views were that the caps were very smart but that there was a tendency for the white surface to glint in the sunlight which might possibly be overcome by slightly roughening the material, though in any case this was not a serious disadvantage.

4. The Commanding Officers were further unanimous in their view that it would be a great benefit to abolish the blue cap, which doubles the space required to stow seamen's caps and increases the expense of upkeep for officers as well as ratings.

5. All officers and Petty Officers are well aware of the unfortunate tendency of cap bands and cap covers to wander from the central position so that it is no unusual sight to see a high proportion of officers and Petty Officers with neither cover nor cap badge correctly lined up. With the plastic topped cap, the white top cannot move and the cap band with badge can be sewn permanently in the correct position.

6. I feel very strongly that the time has come to abolish blue caps throughout the Navy and to wear white caps all the year round on all stations. They invariably look smarter and no advantage whatever can be seen in blue caps.

7. Officers possessing blue caps can, of course, retain them and wear them with white cap covers, linen or plastic.

Mountbatten of Burma

A D M I R A L

V. RECEIVED
27 MAY 1953

Doyle
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ADMIRALTY
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CENTRAL
28 MAY 1953
MAIL OFFICE

Commander-in-Chief
Mediterranean
19th May 1953

No. 781/Med. 2005/15
THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY

TRIAL OF OFFICERS' CAPS WITH WHITE
PLASTIC TOPS

V85/153
1 Doyle
28/5/53

With reference to my submission 112/Med. 2005/15 of 22nd January, 1953, be pleased to inform Their Lordships that experience in the last six months has more than confirmed the opinions I previously expressed. I strongly reaffirm my opinion that the time has now come to abolish blue caps throughout the Navy and to wear white caps with plastic tops all the year round on all Stations.

Mountbatten of Burma

ADMIRAL

1st June, 1953.

Ref. No. 36/26

FLAG OFFICER MALAYAN AREA.

ROYAL NAVAL OFFICERS' CAP WITH PLASTIC
CROWN AND QUARTERINGS.

The following report is forwarded in accordance with Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station's letter No. FES.804/1 of 17th April, 1952. Replies to the questionnaire are as follows:-

1. (a) Generally satisfactory though the cap has a cheap and ersatz appearance as compared with the normal pique covered cap.
- (b) Yes except for the factors mentioned in Flag Officer Malayan Area's letter Malaya No. 521/4 dated 10th December, 1952.
- (c) Yes except for reasons given in paragraphs 1 (a), 3 and 4a.

2. No.

3. Discolouration has now spread over the crown, head band and outer surface. This has caused the cover to crinkle. The inside of the cap is badly stained and the inner head band has begun to rot especially where it comes into contact with the forehead. The inner peak is very soiled after constant thumbing. The chin stay button covering is badly frayed and the buttons are rusting.

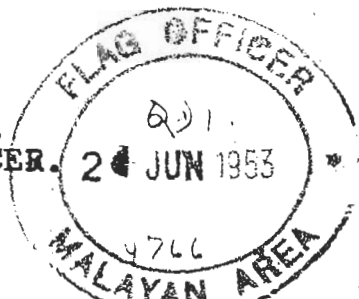
4. (a) The cap needs washing with soap and nail brush weekly. During a hull inspection of a ship the cap was worn in machinery spaces, bilges etc., and despite frequent markings with paint etc., it was very easily cleaned.

(b) Yes - as far as the outer surface is concerned.

5. The cap is quite as comfortable in hot weather as that at present in general issue.

6. For general daily use yes, but it is not up to ceremonial standards for which purpose an additional pique cover must be used.

H. Kirkwood
(H. KIRKWOOD)
A/CAPTAIN, R.N.
COMMANDING OFFICER.



Enclosure:-



TRIAL OF OFFICERS' CAP WITH WHITE PLASTIC TOP.

FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER, H.M.S. VANGUARD, at Sea.

DATE 17th September, 1952. No: 9025/77

TO THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, HOME FLEET.

The following report is submitted in accordance with Admiralty Letter V.1A/1455/52 of 25th March, 1952.

APPEARANCE.

2. The appearance of the cap is satisfactory when new, and no deterioration has taken place in six months.

3. The plastic cover has a freshly laundered look and is indistinguishable from a new pique cover at a distance. At close quarters it has a distinct bloom, like a starched cover, which is not however detrimental to its appearance.

4. In general I would say that this cap is superior in appearance to that of anything but a new cloth cap with a new pique cover, and the cover seems to retain its shape far better than a cloth cap does. Although perhaps lacking in individuality, it has the advantage that it cannot be worn in a "gorblimey" fashion, or without a grommet.

5. The crown of the cap as supplied for trial was cut disproportionately large.

DURABILITY.

6. No sign of breakdown of the plastic fabric has occurred.

DISCOLOURATION.

7. No sign of discolouration has been observed.

CLEANING.

8. The plastic material appears to be much less subject to soiling in wear than an ordinary pique cover.

9. Ease of cleaning is the cap's most striking quality. Ordinary soiling is quickly removed by a sponge-over. Two particular tests have been carried out: in the first, the contents of ash trays were tipped onto the cover and rubbed in, and in the second, some fuel oil was spilt onto the cover - a quick sponging, and in the case of the oil a rub with lighter fluid, removed all sign of staining in both cases, and the cap looked like new. Penetration of oil into the seams might, however, be more difficult to remove.

COMFORT.

10. No opportunity has arisen to wear this cap in hot weather.

11. My only criticism as regards comfort is that the cap as supplied had a tautly stretched crown which prevented the cap from being well settled down on the head, and caused it to perch uncomfortably high. By shortening the grommet this defect was to some extent remedied. The plastic cover must, however, necessarily be well stretched, and does not ~~not~~ take up the shape of the crown of the head quite as comfortably

ACCEPTABILITY.

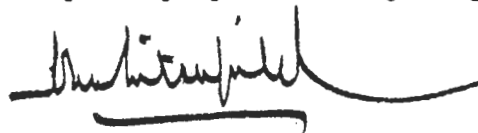
12. I consider this cap to be quite acceptable for wear all the year round. It is smart, durable, easily cleaned, and probably far cheaper than a cloth cap with the cost of piqué covers added. It is not, however, quite so comfortable.

13. If it should be introduced, I would suggest that it should be an optional alternative to the cloth cap with piqué cover, at any rate until its acceptability to officers as a whole has been established.

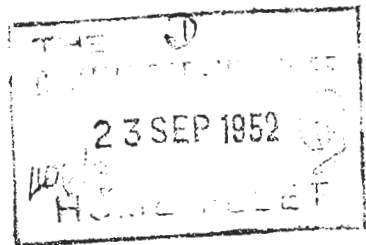
METAL CAP BADGE.

14. I have no hesitation in saying that I consider the metal cap badge, as supplied, to be greatly superior in appearance and durability to the embroidered pattern. After several years of wear, I have found that these metal cap badges have retained an almost new appearance, in marked contrast to the discoloured and faded badges which are so often to be observed. The metal badges require no cleaning.

15. The pattern as supplied is perhaps disproportionately large.



C A P T A I N .





Commander-in-Chief,
Home Fleet.

H.M.S. VANGUARD
at ROSYTH

H.F. 1120/496/3

Date 7th October, 1952.

Subject

TRIAL OF OFFICERS' CAP WITH WHITE ELASTIC TOP

Enclosures

The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. Vanguard's letter
No. 9025/77 of 17th September, 1952.

THE SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY

(Copies to:-

- The Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station.
- The Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station.
- The Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.
- The Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic.
- The Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies.
- The Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth.
- The Commander-in-Chief, The Nore.
- The Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth.
- The Flag Officer Air (Home).
- The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. Vanguard.)

Forwarded for the consideration of Their Lordships.

2. The Officers' cap with white elastic top has many advantages, particularly in wet weather, and its appearance is superior to the average cap with a used piqué cap cover. On the other hand it is inferior to a new cloth cap with a new or freshly laundered piqué cover.

3. It is recommended that the plastic top should be introduced as an optional alternative to, and not as a replacement for, the existing cap.

4. The adoption of the metal cap badge is not recommended.

W. Brittain

for ADMIRAL

Malaya No. 521/4

10th December, 1952.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,
FAR EAST STATION.

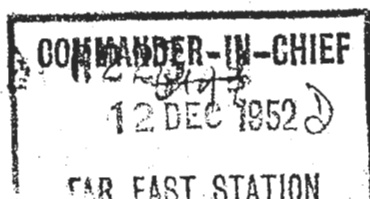
(Copy to:-

The Commanding Officer,
H.M.S. TERROR).

ROYAL NAVAL OFFICERS' CAP WITH PLASTIC CROWN AND
QUARTERINGS

With reference to FES.804/1 of 17th April, 1952, the plastic cap allocated for trial has been worn consistently by an officer whose duties necessitated his being largely out of doors. The following are the replies to the questionnaire:-

- 1 (a) Generally satisfactory though the cap has a somewhat cheap and garish appearance in comparison with that now in issue.
(b) Yes - except for factors referred to in paragraphs 1(a), 3, and 4(a).
- 2 No.
- 3 The cap now is not as white as the normal pique cover. An officer wearing one on parade would definitely be shown up by the caps of ratings in his Division. Further, discolouration has appeared as a ring where the head band of the cap bears down when the cap is placed top downwards.
- 4 (a) Cap needs washing with soap weekly to get dirt from seams and piping. Although the wearer uses little hair dressing the inside of the cap has become very stained. The staining has not spread to the outer surface of the cap but has caused some slight crinkling.
(b) Yes - as far as the outer surface is concerned.
- 5 The cap is quite as comfortable in hot weather as that at present in general issue.
- 6 No - for the reasons given in paragraphs 1(a), 3, and 4(a).



A. J. P. [Signature]

REAR ADMIRAL.

FROM ... THE COMMANDING OFFICER, H.M.S. NEWFOUNDLAND, at Sea.

DATE ... 23rd May, 1953

Ref.No. 287/1

TO ... THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, EAST INDIES STATION

TRIAL OF OFFICERS' CAP WITH WHITE PLASTIC TOP.

The following report is forwarded in continuation of my letter number 287/1 of 6th October, 1952 and your letter number 705/E.I. 1102/1 of 15th October, 1952.

2. With reference to the questionnaire with Admiralty Letter V.1A/1455/52 of 25th March, 1952

1 (a) and (b) Yes.

2. No

3. No

4(a) In constant daily use it is soiled by funnel smuts, occasional dirt and grease, and all the normal hazards common to the cap cover of current pattern. This soiling is however less marked than with the pique cover.

(b) A sponge dipped in soapy water has successfully cleaned the cap without difficulty except for one faint persistent mark of ink.

5. Equally comfortable.

6. Yes. If white topped caps were worn all the year round, thus allowing the plastic top to replace the blue cloth, the cap would prove lighter and less hot.



CAPTAIN



FROM ... THE COMMANDING OFFICER, H.M.S. NEWFOUNDLAND, at Sea.

DATE ... 20th November, 1953

Ref.No.287/1

TO ... THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, EAST INDIES STATION

TRIAL OF OFFICER'S CAP WITH WHITE PLASTIC COVER

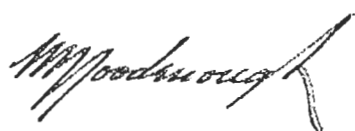
The following report is forwarded in continuation of my letter number 287/1 of 23rd May, 1953.

2. With reference to the questionnaire with Admiralty Letter V.1A/1455/52 dated 25th March, 1952:-

- 1.(a)(b) & (c) - Yes. Most satisfactory.
- 2 and 3. - No
4. (a) - Temporary dirt common to constant daily wear.
4. (b) - The cap cover cleans easily with soap and water and then looks like new.
5. - Equally comfortable.
6. - Far more acceptable and economical as the cover retains its new appearance after cleaning.

3. It is intended to retain the cap for a further five months, and then to return it to the Director of Victualling, rendering a further report only if the cover deteriorates.

2.
23 NOV 1953



CAPTAIN

ROYAL NAVAL OFFICERS' CAP WITH PLASTIC CROWN
AND QUARTERINGS.

(The Commanding Officer, H.M.S. TERROR, Singapore's
letter No. 36/26 dated 1st June, 1953.)

II

Malaya No. 521/4.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,
FAR EAST STATION.

(Copy to:-

The Commanding Officer,
H.M.S. TERROR.)-

Forwarded in continuation of Malaya No.521/4
of 10th December, 1952.

2. Even when new this cap was not so smart as
that now in issue. After 12 months service its
inferiority is apparent.

3. I do not recommend its introduction in the
Service.

The Flag Officer,
Malayan Area,
H.M. Naval Base,
SINGAPORE.
8th June, 1953.

REAR ADMIRAL.

KN.

