



**SUPPLY  
LINE**

## Naval Collar

The naval collar was an iconic part of a Canadian sailor's uniform during the Second World War. It was worn over a shirt and a top called a jumper, and covered the sailor's shoulders. The collar was a traditional element but was not everyday wear for sailors at sea.

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Naval Collar © Canadian War Museum

### Uniforms Inspired by the British Tradition

When Canada's navy was created in 1910, it adopted the uniform and traditions of Britain's Royal Navy. Some details of the uniform dated back to the 1800s, including the naval collar.

This distinctive part of Second World War naval uniforms was worn by Canadian sailors until 1968.

### The "Square Rig"

Sailors had different types of uniforms for different duties and different occasions. The naval collar was part of the "square rig"

uniform. Worn on top of a white or blue shirt, the collar was folded and crossed in front to create a "V," and tied around the body.

The sailor wore a **jumper** over the shirt, arranging the naval collar to lay over the back. The uniform also included a black silk neckerchief, bell-bottom trousers and a rating's cap. Higher-ranking naval personnel, including officers, did not wear jumpers or collars like this.

The “square rig” uniform was often worn ashore, and for ceremonies, religious services and funerals. In the wartime Royal Canadian Navy, everyday sailors’ outfits were usually more functional, including sweaters, denim shirts and trousers, and waterproof clothing. This was especially true on the often rough and stormy North Atlantic Ocean.

## What is it made of?

The top of the collar is made of blue cotton denim. It is trimmed with three narrow white stripes. The underside is lined with blue-and-white-striped cotton. Flat cotton strips of cloth – often called tapes – were used to fasten it in place.

Most of the naval collars included in the Discovery Boxes are original to the Second World War. You may see different fabrics, as well as damage or staining, reference numbers and names. Because they were often trimmed to look tidy, the tapes may not be long enough to tie around everybody.

## Did You Know?

Naval collars have a long past. Their original purpose is unclear. They may have originally helped protect the main uniform from staining. Back in the days when sailors had long hair worn in pigtails, they often covered their hair in tar or tallow (fat), which could rub off on their clothing.

## Vocabulary

### Jumper :

A pullover top that was part of a sailor’s uniform. Some were made of wool; others were made of cotton.