



## Brighton City Museum

### Seafaring Threads: The Cracker Jack Uniform

One of our newest exhibits, which is located on the second floor of our museum, features uniforms from the WWII era. One of the most interesting uniforms is the U.S. Navy jumper.



This “jumper” is part of the service dress blue uniform, which is still worn by sailors today. The uniform is often referred to as the “cracker jack” uniform because it is featured on a box of Cracker Jacks and worn by Sailor Jack. The cracker jack uniform is typically the “go to uniform” when a sailor is unaware of the clothing to wear for a specific occasion.

The jumper is just part of a two-piece set, with the bell-bottomed trousers completing the bottom half of this traditional uniform. The Navy jumper is adorned with piping (thin white stripes) which is located around the cuffs and on the collar flap. The rating badge and service stripes are worn on the left sleeve of the uniform for those E-2 through E-6. In addition to the adornments on the sleeve, ribbons or medals are also required as part of this uniform.

The enlisted hat or the “Dixie Cup” was initially made from canvas. The hat, according to the United States Navy Uniform Regulations, should be worn “1-1/2 inches above the eyebrows and not crushed, bent, or rolled.” Historically, in defiance of the uniform regulations, sailors would bend or roll them for easy storage when not in use.



The “neckerchief,” as it is called, was designed as a sweatband and colored black to hide dirt. The neckerchief, worn around the neck and under the jumper collar, is made from a 36-inch square piece of black silk. To properly tie the neckerchief, the silk square is folded into a triangular shape and then rolled tightly. Once rolled, it is tied in a square knot at the point where the jumper collar begins.

Since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this iconic uniform has been worn by naval enlisted personnel and proudly displayed in many ports around the globe. In 1952, First Lady Mamie Eisenhower said: “Ike says the sailors use language they wouldn’t want their mothers to hear, wear their uniforms so the spots won’t show, and still manage to be the best-dressed branch in the service.”



Uniforms Courtesy of the National War Museum of the Rockies