

Helmets WP

The blue cloth 'Home Service' helmet was replaced by a white helmet in the RMA & RMLI in 1905. At the same time the universal helmet plate, similar to that worn today, was adopted in place of the RMA large grenade and the large star plate of the RMLI. The white helmet was a new pattern and not the same as the old tropical helmet. I am sure that the reason for the changes in helmets was as an economy by not having to issue two helmets to ranks who, because of their type of service in the Corps, were continually changing from one to the other. With regard to the universal helmet plate, I once heard it said that the amalgamation of the RMA & RMLI was already 'in the wind' at the turn of the century and this was a suitable occasion to move to a 'universal' badge. Both branches of the Corps wore the same pattern blue cloth helmet as the Army, except that the peak of officers' helmet was rounded (similar to the shape of other ranks' helmets) and not pointed. Although this was "more honoured in the breach than in the observance" as photographs of the period clearly show!

The Helmet WP was authorised in August 1912 (GORM 78/12), but no issues were made until "present stocks are exhausted". Very few Helmets WP were seen until after the First World War. Leather chin stays were worn with this helmet. In 1926 officers were ordered to wear gilt chin chains when the full dress tunic was worn, but they were not generally authorised for other ranks until May 1939.