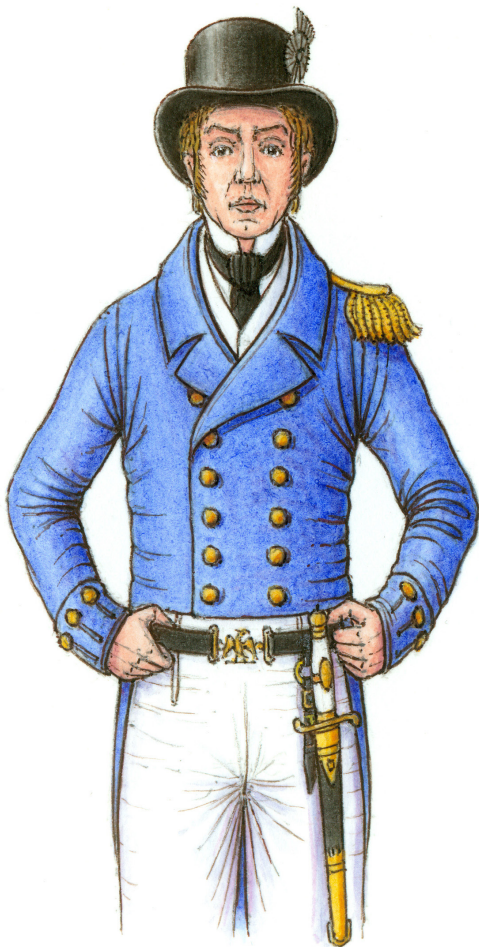


Rules of the Navy Aboard Ship

“I will obey the rules of an officer on ship”

When sailors enlisted to serve on a navy vessel, they promised to “comply with and be subject to such rules and discipline of the Navy of the United States as are, or that may be established by the Congress of the United States, and to be governed and commanded in time of action with an enemy, according to the same rules and discipline, and subject ourselves to the same penalties as are thereby imposed or directed.”

Beyond the navy-wide regulations outlining the duties and responsibilities of officers and crews, each captain established a list of “internal rules and regulations” for his ship. Often, these included detailed instructions telling sailors what they could and could not do while on board. The 1809 rules for *Constitution* included the following (there were 105 in all):



- Discipline (as it respects alertness) can only be preserved by a constant and steady attention to whatever is carrying on. It is therefore required that the officers of this ship will not suffer the most trifling thing under them to be exerted with indifference.
- No person is to be struck upon the Quarterdeck if it can be avoided, or improper language used thereon.
- The Warrant and Petty Officers together with the sea men, ordinary seamen and marines, are to breakfast at eight o'clock and have their dinners regularly at noon. One hour is allowed them at each meal. The common duty for which all hands are employed, is to be concluded at 4PM on every day.
- No fire is to be suffered in the galley after 8 or 9 o'clock afore and except what may be necessary for rations lighting matches & making preparations for battle.
- The officers are requested to see that the men do not perform ordinary duty in their best clothes & when employed washing decks they are desired to make them take off their shoes and stockings and to tuck their trowsers up.