



With Pride & Distinction

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Junior Officer Advisory Group

Vol. 2, August 2011: Summer Whites

Members of the Marine Hospital Service (MHS), a PHS predecessor, did not wear uniforms from 1798 until approximately 1871. Supervising Surgeon John Maynard Woodworth, who was appointed to lead the MHS in 1871, had served in the Union Army during the Civil War under General William Tecumseh Sherman. Dr. Woodworth reorganized MHS physicians into a military structure, with old Civil War uniforms to complete the transformation.

By the early 1900's, uniform regulations revealed numerous options for the male officers, including some uniforms we might recognize today such as the Full Dress, White Service, and Service Khaki. Other options, such as the Olive Drab Service uniform (popularly known as the "doughboy"), have long been gone from our inventory. Females, who were enlisted as nurses in the early 1900's, wore a blue or khaki suit with matching skirt or a long white dress, all with insignia on the left sleeve. Hem lines were clearly identified in the regulations and could not be higher than three inches from the floor, which is quite a change from the current regulations. PHS officers who served in WWI or WWII generally wore a modified

version of the uniform of the service to which they were attached (Army, Navy, or Coast Guard), with a substitution of the PHS buttons and insignia for those of the other service.

The practice of wearing the uniform declined between the end of the Korean War and the closure of the PHS hospitals and clinics in 1981. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, who sought to revitalize the image of the Corps, reinstated the wear of the uniform for officers in the late 1980's although a formal directive was not issued until 1993. The uniform was required to be worn one day per week, but pressure increased for daily wear of the uniform. However, it was not until July of 2008 that the daily wear of the uniform was officially required. Over the past four decades, PHS uniform regulations have generally followed those of the Navy with some exceptions. These include the old Army sweater, rolling the BDU sleeve so only the outside fabric was visible (in the manner of the land-based services), and the much loved "Salt and Pepper", which was actually an old enlisted uniform and is now phased out of use.

August Trivia: Continued outbreaks of which disease prompted Congress to pass federal quarantine legislation in 1878?

DID YOU KNOW ?



Summer Whites may be worn during the spring and summer months for normal office work. Did you know there are two authorized materials for the Summer White uniform, Certified Navy Twill (CNT) and polyester/cotton? When wearing this uniform, be sure that the cloth belt and cap cover are the same fabric as the uniform. Alternatively, a white web belt and a white vinyl cap cover may be worn with either uniform material.

Required basic uniform components for both males and females include the summer white shirt, white slacks, white dress shoes, white belt with gold buckle, white socks, hard shoulder boards, and (of course) the PHS name tag and ribbons. In addition, all males must wear the white combination cap, while females may also wear the beret.

Optional items that can be worn with the summer whites include the black V-neck style sweater, the black wind-breaker jacket, the blue all-weather coat, or the Reefer. Females may also wear a white, belted skirt with undecorated flesh tone hosiery.



For females, a rectangular white handbag with a flap, made of grain or synthetic leather, can be carried as well. Dimensions must be between 7 ½ to 12 inches in width, 5 ½ to 8 inches in height, and 2 to 3 ½ inches in depth. Handbags may be purchased from commercial sources as long as they meet regulation. Earrings must be a shiny or brushed matte finish yellow gold 4mm-6mm ball. Plain white dress pumps made of either smooth or synthetic leather may be worn so long as they have closed heels and toes and have a height ranging from 5/8 inch to 2 5/8 inches and a width no greater than 1 ¾ inches as measured from the forward edge. Additionally, the sole must be no thicker than ¼ inch.

For further information on required and optional components of the Summer White uniform, please visit the following links:

Uniforms for Male Officers - http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM26_3_4.pdf

Uniforms for Female Officers - http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM26_3_5.pdf