

Artillery ship Niels Iuel, Danish and German naval uniforms

Introduction

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the newspapers in Schleswig-Holstein published a supplement with the title: "*Schleswig Holstein 1945 - Das Kriegsende*"

In addition to a number of articles about the conditions in Schleswig - Holstein, in the last months and a short time after the end of the Second World War, a number of incidents in the period from 2 January to 23 May 1945 are reported in diary form.

One of these journal entries caught my eye immediately:

"February 18, 1945: Der Leichte Kreuzer "*Nordland*" läuft aus Stolpmünde kommend im Kieler Hafen ein. Die "*Nordland*" was einst unter dem namen "*Niels Juel*" das größte Schiff der dänischen Marine gewesen."

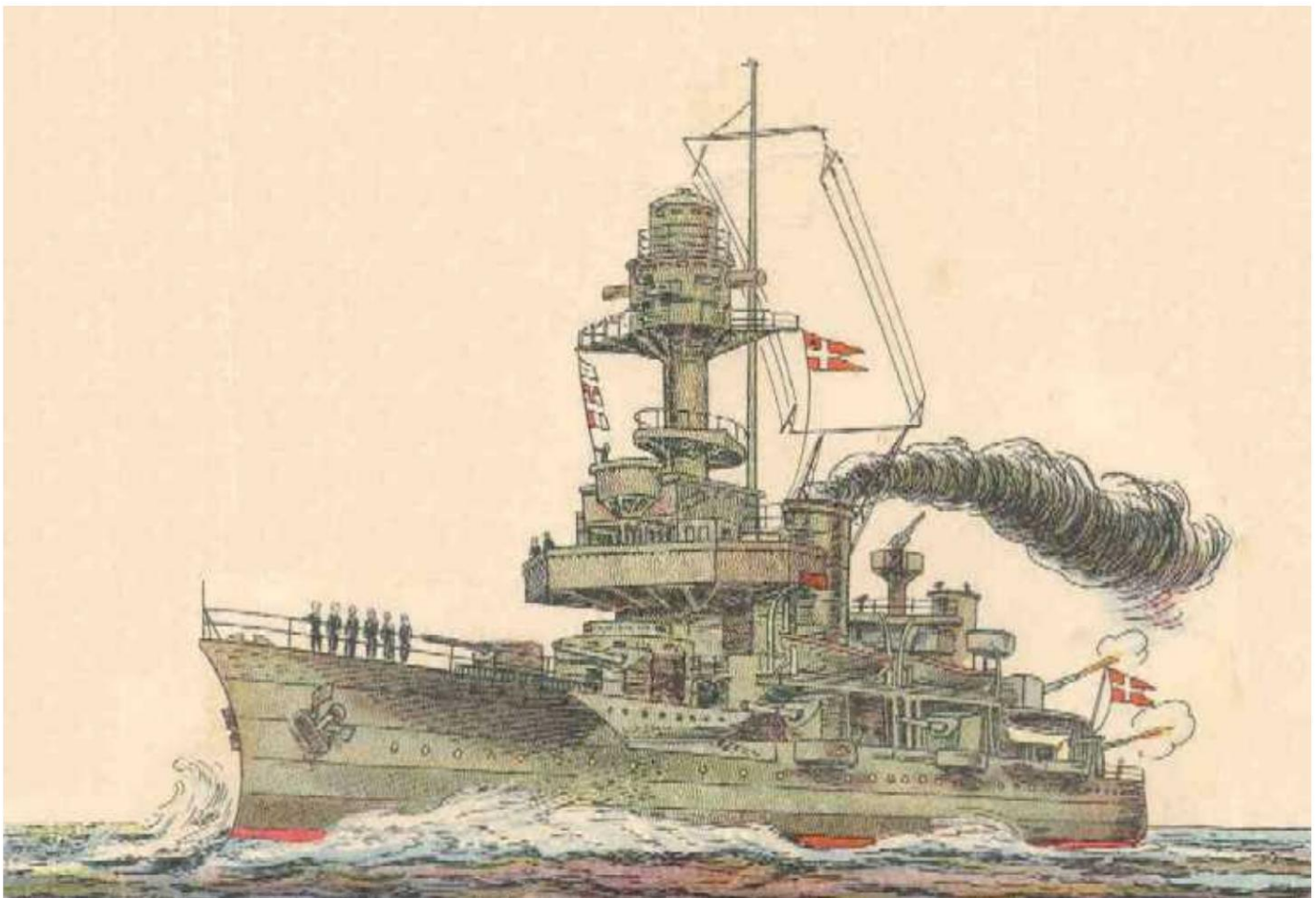
The cut sheet

When I was a child in the early fifties we played with "cardboard soldiers"; some of them have survived the many years. They come from the scrapbook "Danmarks Hær og Flåde" drawn by Ove Meier.

It was a very sought-after scrapbook, especially since you couldn't just buy it anymore, but if you dusted through various bookstores, toy stores and soap houses you might get lucky; not least if you were also lucky enough to have the few kroner that the price was then. I managed to acquire the complete scrapbook last year in Herlev Hallen at the Weapons History Association fair, yes the price had increased somewhat.

Per Finsted has scanned my clippings from my childhood in his article "*Scrapbook The Fleet 1941*". He has even succeeded in identifying the ships, including "*Niels Iuel*".

Niels Iuel was a very popular ship when we played; without us knowing which ship it was and that it was a specific ship.



*The aforementioned drawing of the Artillery ship Niels Luel.
Drawn by Over Meier.*

The history of the ship itself is particularly well described on several websites, including:

- <http://www.bubblewatcher.de/nordland.html> [http://](http://www.milhist.dk/besatelsen/nordland/nordland.htm)
- www.milhist.dk/besatelsen/nordland/nordland.htm

Since Niels Luel's story is also well described, I have only included the two links above, there are many more - so just get started.

About Niels Luel and the events of 29 August 1943, Per Finsted has, among other things, written here on the page.

Instead, in what follows, I will show a bit of the uniforms that the Danish Navy and the German Kriegsmarine wore in 1940-45, as well as a bit of the insignia used at that time.

Danish naval uniforms



Crown Prince Frederik



War captain



*Sea lieutenant
of the 1st degree*



*Machinist of the
3rd degree*



Orloggst

The uniforms on Over Meier's drawings are a bit too blue, compared to the normal uniform color for the Navy, which is very dark blue, almost black.

He has hit the service uniform of the two line officers quite well. He has reproduced the military guest and the quartermaster in landing uniform with equipment; the personnel on board Niels luel did not wear this in connection with the events of 29 August 1943, but several photos show them in white work uniform.

Note that the Quartermaster grades corresponded to Army Officers.

On the German website, an Artillery Quartermaster and a Deck Warden are mentioned among the fallen and wounded; it denotes the person's field of expertise, but not their rank. Ove Meier has drawn the exact rank on his Quartermaster figure. The military guest is drawn - just as the cartoonist Rasmus Christiansen has drawn several guests - in landing gear standing in a pipe position. The pipe position is shown as it was used in Denmark and Germany until sometime after the war, when we switched to the English one, which is still used.

The boss of Niels luel was Commander-in-Chief Carl Westermann. Commander captain is one rank higher than the shown war captain; this rank is equivalent to lieutenant colonel in the army. The command of the fleet's largest ship at the time is also a service area comparable to a Battalion Commander/Department Commander, which is the command level in the Army.

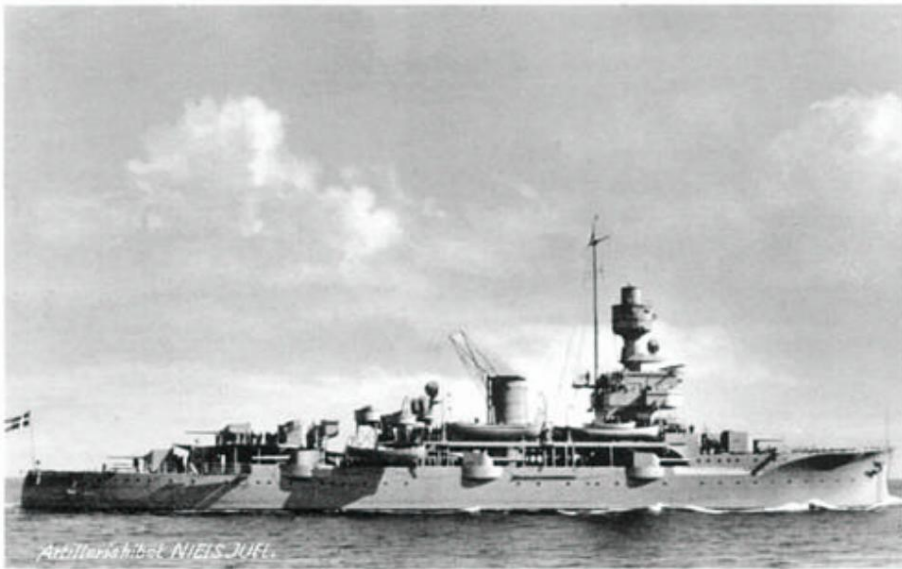


Orlogsgaster 1943

The uniform consists of a blue busseronne under which a white woolen shirt is worn, the neckline of which is edged with blue. Light blue collar edged with three white stripes and black "tie". The hatband bore the inscription "Kgl. Marine" in gold print. On the right side of the cap band is the national cockade, it can be seen faintly on the two guests.

War Captain 1943 On

the regulated uniform cape, the insignia were placed on the sleeve cuffs and not on shoulder patches, as in most other navies.



Niels luel under Danish command

Niels luel is taken over by the Germans



Niels luel on land approx. 100m from land in Issefjorden.

After the battle in Issefjorden, the ship's history changed.

The Germans dragged it free from the grounds and down to Kiel, where it arrived at a shipyard and was repaired. It was also rearmored primarily so that it could be deployed as a flak ship and training ship. The ship was renamed NORDLAND.

Niels luel was originally, when the keel was laid in 1914, planned as an armored ship with a main armor of two pieces. 30.5 cm guns. After the First World War, when the building was resumed, it turned out that the quality of the armor steel that had been delivered from the USA was of too poor a quality.

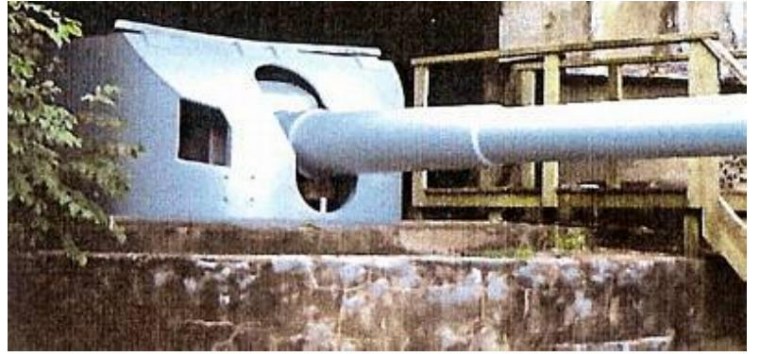
The plans were then changed to a lightly armored version and at the same time the armament was changed to 10 pieces. 15 cm guns. The reason for this change in armoring was that Krupp could not deliver. The solution was that the navy got the drawings for the 15 cm guns, which were then manufactured by Bofors in Sweden.

When the Germans re-armed Niels luel into a flak ship, the guns were supplied with new guns by Krupp so that they could be deployed in coastal defence.



In open position, no side restrictions.

In piles.



In piles.

This coastal defense is known as the "*Atlantic Wall*". Four of the guns were deployed in "*Stützpunkt Frederikshavn Süd*"; three in concrete bunkers and one in an open position. Four other guns were deployed in a bunker facility 8 km south of Løkken. There is no information on where the last two cannons ended up. A total of 69 bunkers were built in Frederikshavn. After the war, from 1952 to 1962, these were used as coastal forts by the Swedish Navy under the name Bangsbo fort.

After the refit, NORDLAND was moved to Stolpmünde (now Ustka in Poland) in 1944, where it served as a flak ship and training ship until it was withdrawn in 1945 and ended up in Eckernförde Bay at the end of the war.



Mannschaftsmütze: Hoheitsabzeichen, Kokarde

*Hoheitsabzeichen for private hat
(Team cap)*

German naval uniforms

Kriegsmarine 1940



*Hoheitsabzeichen
which is worn on the right breast.
Here machine embroidered for blue uniform.*

In 1933 the covert rearmament of the Reichsmarine started and on 1 June 1935 the Reichsmarine was renamed the Kriegsmarine, but already in 1934 it was ordered to put the Hoheitsabzeichen (popularly called Nazi Eagle) on all uniforms and headgear.

Likewise, the swastika flag with the iron cross in the upper left corner, also called the "Reichskriegsflagge" was now flown on all vessels. This flag is shown later in the article.



Obermaat (Unterfeldwebel) Summer 1939 (right)

The Obermaaten is dressed in peacetime exit uniform (summer) with jacket. This jacket was not to be worn after 6 September 1939 - the start of the war. On the left sleeve is the service branch's mark for teletypewriter (anchor with two lightning bolts over a cross), below that an angle which, in conjunction with the gold edges on the sleeve notices, shows his rank. That it is a summer uniform can be seen from the white hat cover and the white blouse. Note the 3 steps of the blue shooting line. The hatband has the ship's name printed on it; this was changed for security reasons at the beginning of the war, when everyone was given a cap band with "KRIEGSMARINE" printed on it. Naval units serving on land (coastal artillery for example) were dressed in "feldgrau", but with marine rank insignia.

Sailor (military guest) summer 1939 (left)

Parade uniform regulated for the summer period (20 April - 30 September). The white cap cover was not worn during the war, only the cap without cover. The equipment is cartridge pouches in belt with marine buckle in "gold" and rifle 98K.

Degree signs etc. on the white blouse are made of blue yarn. The cap band has not been replaced here with the "Kriegsmarine" type. In addition, the two ends of the hatband hung down the back approx. to the shoulder blades. It should be noted that the rules for wearing a white shirt and white cap cover were administered differently and relaxed later in the war, i.a. in the occupied countries.



Left

Dienstanzug (service uniform)

The blue uniform was identical in cut to the white one shown above. It was worn until the start of the war in the period 1 October to 19 April. The uniform shown here is without the jacket and with "Kriegsmarine" cap band. This dress is the basic uniform for all varieties of dress during the war. Degree sign and Hoheitsabzeichen are in "gold".



Right

Obermaat (unterfeldwebel) 1943, wearing Bordmütze

The Bordmütze was introduced in 1940 and was worn for all duty except guard duty, where the normal round cap was regulated. The tunic that Obermaaten is wearing is called Überzieher, but went by the nickname Collani after the supplier Berger & Collani Berlin and Kiel. Degree signs on Collanien were introduced in 1939.

Commanding Admiral Marinegruppe-kommando Ost Rolf

Carls, (29.5.1885 - 15.4.1945), Ritterkreuz 14.6.1940 White

cap cover was worn from 20/4 - 30/9. Carrying was banned during the war. Dagger M/1938.

Sailor, Dienstanzug with equipment, crew waist belt with brass buckle, support straps and cartridge pouches, Mauser carbine 98K.





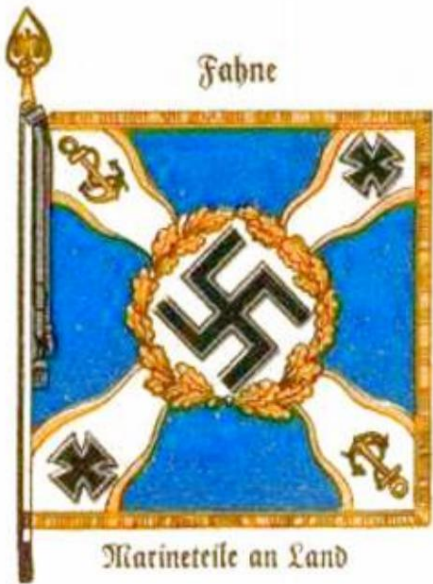
Korvettenkapitän (War Captain) 1940 (left)

Blue service uniform with gray gloves; dagger M/1938 could also be worn with this outfit. The service insignia above the sleeve rank insignia - a star indicates that this officer's career is naval officer (tactician/ship commander etc.) Decorations are the Iron Cross I and II class and decoration wounded in black (wounded 1-2 times). On the cap shadow a single row of oak leaves (bladder tang); the sign of a senior degree. Nearest lower rank kapitänleutnant (Ka'leun = slang) (Kaptajnlejtant) is oldest junior officer rank, this rank did not wear oak leaves on the cap.

Bootsmannsmaat (Unteroffizier) 1944 (right)

The clothing is intended for hard and cold roads on the lake. The southwest is the standard model, as are the gray mottled rain pants (rubberized fabric) and the turtleneck pullover. Above this Collani (Überzieher). On one of the websites I refer to, there is a picture of the crew/cadets in white driving uniform, with Bordmütze and Collani. Collani was worn only by the staff ranks and non-commissioned officers without portepe. The degree sign for Bootsmannsmaat is the gold edging on the collar and the gold stripe in the light blue collar mirror plus the anchor badge on the sleeve. The degree sign for Obermaat would be the same plus an angle below the anchor mark on the sleeve.

German naval ensigns



The tab (front and back) for marine units on land



Reichskrieg flag

Closing

I have tried to give an impression of a warship, brief glimpses of its history as well as of the crews that have fought on the vessel. All because of some toy that I have never been able to let go of. Thanks to Per Finsted and Peter Jonassen for technical support and advice along the way, and thanks to Lau Rasmussen for material about Bangsbo Fort. I hope mine

articles, have made you want to explore one or more of the topics hidden in this article.

Enjoy.

Niels Blangsted-Jensen

Sources

1. *Denmark's Army and Navy*, Arthur Jensen's Kunstforlag scrapbook, drawn by Over Meier.
2. *Uniformen des II Weltkriegs in Farben*, Peter Darman, ISBN 3-613-02078-5, Motorbuch Verlag.
3. *Die Deutsche Wehrmacht*, Cigaretten-Bilderdienst Dresden 1936
4. *Die Deutsche Wehrmacht, Uniformen und Ausrüstung 1933-1945, Die Kriegsmarine*, Adolf Schlicht/John R. Angolia, ISBN 3-613-01656, Motorbuch Verlag.
5. *Navy and air force uniforms 1939-45*, Danish Military Publishing House.
6. *Uniformen in den NATO Staaten 1900 bis heute*, Rolf Wirtgen, ISBN3-8132-0331-z, Verlag ES Mittler & Sohn
7. *Waffen im Einsatz, Die Deutsche Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, published by Christian Zentner.



Landing practice before the war.

Here, the personnel are dressed in white turncoats, with equipment provided.

(German postcard own collection)