

National Park Service (NPS)



They Also Serve: Ancillary Uniforms 1920-1991
DRAFT 1999

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National Park Service Uniforms
They Also Serve
ANCILLARY UNIFORMS 1920-1991
Number 6
By R. Bryce Workman

A Publication of the National Park Service History Collection Harpers Ferry Center

* Harpers Ferry, WV * 1999

Publications in the

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNIFORM SERIES

Number 1 - Badges and Insignia - 1894-1991

Number 2 - In Search of an Identity - men's uniforms -1872-1920

Number 3 - Ironing out the Wrinkles - men's uniforms -1920-1932

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Number 5 - The Developing Years - men's uniforms - 1932-1970

Number 6 - They Also Serve - ancillary uniforms - 1920-1991

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They Also Serve

The following groups of National Park Service personnel have, for the most part, uniforms assigned to them under the “Special Uniform” category in the National Park Service Uniform Regulations, or Standards as they were later called.

Several of the “Special” uniforms, such as “Backcountry” and “Frontcountry,” both mounted and foot, have not been included here since these duties utilized articles of apparel from the ranger’s own closet that could be used in other applications and thus, in essence, are not really special. The same might be said about the men and women that perform ski patrol. This has been included here because it is such a distinctive field requiring special training, and the uniform has no other use than specified.

As a matter of fact, all the enclosed positions, except possibly maintenance, require extensive training in order to fulfill their missions. There are even many duties in maintenance that require special skills.

With a few exceptions, the following are basically part of the ranger force that have had special training in their field. The specialized apparel that they wear, in some cases, belongs to the National Park Service and is issued on an “as needed” basis. These articles could justifiably be considered as equipment, but since they are worn in the performance of their respective functions, they have been included here.

At least one group, Search and Rescue, is somewhat nebulous since each park site has different requirements as to what is needed to affect rescues in its area. For instance, the challenges confronting rescuers at water recreation areas are entirely different from those faced by rangers in mountainous or winter recreation parks.

Consequently, the uniform regulations do not address this particular activity as far as uniform clothing is concerned. Each park is left to implement what works best for it. This results in the use of a lot of different articles and pieces of articles of apparel being worn.

The last group covered, while not actually on the payroll, is nevertheless an official part of the National Park Service, at least as far as the uniform specifications are concerned. The presence of Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) has enabled many parks to better serve the public than their limited staff and resources would otherwise have allowed. It was felt that these good Samaritans should be recognized as well.

Boatmen

The men who manned boats in the early days of the Service were probably just rangers assigned to that duty, although captains of the larger vessels may have been civilians hired for that specialized position. Photographs of early boat operations show that the people staffing the boats wore no particular uniforms. Most seem to be wearing denim jeans with a nondescript jacket, or khaki shirt and pants with some sort of nautical hat.

It is not known exactly when the term “Boatman” came into being, but it first surfaces as an entity of the National Park Service in the 1940 Uniform Regulations. These Regulations were in the form of a booklet, whose pages were to be removed and replaced with new ones as the regulations for specific items were amended or superseded over the years. This format was originated in 1938, but since only fragments of this original booklet have come to light, it is impossible to determine if the boatman was included in it.

However, since the only extant photographs of men wearing the first authorized boatman uniform date from 1941, it would seem logical to assume that they were first introduced with the 1940 Uniform Regulations.

The Regulations state that this first boatman uniform was to be based on the style and cut of that worn by chief petty officers in the U.S. Navy. The entire uniform was to be made of dark blue (navy blue) wool, with the coat being of the four button, double-breasted style. Buttons were to be the standard National Park Service pattern. “USNPS” collar ornaments were to be worn in the same manner as prescribed for the standard ranger coat.

The trousers were of the same material as the coat, with two side and two hip pockets (button-down scalloped flaps on hip pockets), as well as a watch pocket. Trouser legs, while not specifically spelled out, were to be without cuffs, according to the accompanying drawings.

The hat was to be the same dark blue wool as the uniform, with a black ribbon band, as well as a black leather visor and chinstrap. An ornament consisting of a two-inch circle with crossed anchors in the center, embroidered in gold (probably yellow) was sewn on the front. The color of the background material is not specified, but was probably the same dark blue fabric, or possibly black. It is impossible to tell from the black and white photographs. The remainder of the uniform was made up of a white shirt, black tie, shoes, and socks.

The above was to be used in the winter. The summer uniform was the same except that everything, including shoes and socks, was to be white except the tie. All cloth items were to be of white duck or some other suitable material. There are no known images of anyone wearing the summer uniform.

As with the standard National Park Service uniform, the coat was to be worn on all normal occasions and could be dispensed with only during hot weather with the authorization of the Superintendent or Custodian. This phraseology, “Superintendent or Custodian”, would seem to indicate that the uniform was to be used wherever boats were used.

While not specifically spelled out, as in later regulations, apparently badges were not authorized for Boatman; at least there is no mention of this aspect in the 1940 specifications.

The Regulations state that this uniform is “For the national parks and other areas where park employees are assigned to boat operation the following articles of uniform are prescribed for wear by the *boat captain, engineer, purser, or other employees of the boats.*” [italics added] And thereby hangs the dilemma. Small boats can have a captain, but only the larger boats that plied Lake Superior at Isle Royale, or some of the other deep-water operations, would also have had an engineer and a purser. And if “or other employees of the boats” referred to the crew, then why single out the three officers instead of a general statement as to what the Boatmen would wear?

Unless of course, the “other employees” did not pertain to the crew. This seems to be borne out by the fact that the only images showing these uniforms being worn are of the three officers of the RANGER II at Mott Island, Isle Royale National Park in 1941. Since this uniform was specified for twenty years, it seems logical that there would be at least one image of one of the crew wearing it, if it indeed included them.

One answer may be that it was found to be unsuitable for the work performed on the vessels, but this still doesn’t answer why the crew didn’t wear it when ashore. Hence, if they did, there should be photographs.

There are only 4 photographs of this uniform being worn, and as mentioned above, 3 of these are of the same three individuals, and appear to have been taken on the same day. Charles R. Greenleaf captain; Edwin C. Johnson, engineer; and George T. White, purser. The fourth is a photograph of Greenleaf in this uniform that was used to illustrate the Boatman uniform in the 1950 photographic supplement to the 1947 Uniform Regulations, but there is no way of knowing when this was taken.

The specifications for the Boatman uniform remained unchanged through the 1947 and 1956 Regulations but appears too not been an unqualified success. The few images of men on and around boats of this period indicate that either the uniform was changed, or enforcement of the uniform standards was rather lax. In a 1951 photograph, only one year after his image was used to illustrate the proper Boatman uniform, Greenleaf is shown wearing khakis and a white Coast Guard officer style hat with a large patch containing an eagle over a wreath.

Another photograph, dated June 1957, shows Greenleaf, Johnson and White, along with three other men (crew?) wearing, what would appear to be khaki uniforms. They are also wearing the baseball style of yachting cap (long visor), two of which even have the unofficial yachting patch (life ring superimposed over crossed anchors) on the front. All are wearing USNPS collar ornaments and the arrowhead patch on their sleeve.

With the 1959 (effective 1 January 1961) National Park Service Uniform Regulations, the Service finally got around to defining the “who, what, and where” of the Boatman uniform. From extant photographs, it would appear that no one favored wearing the blue Boatman uniform, even the officers that owned them. Apparently, due to the lack of enthusiastic support on the part of

the employees themselves, the Uniform Committee must have decided to bring the Boatmen back into the fold and follow the Park Service's original theme of having all uniformed employees look the same. In any case, the new regulations changed the Boatman uniform from dark blue to the standard green (forestry green).

The Regulations specify:

"Boatman's Uniform--Officers.

To be worn only on large boats or ships, such as the RANGER III in Isle Royale National Park at present. Essentially, the uniform is the National Park Service Dress Uniform except for the cap.

Engineer. Aboard ship, as the situation demands, this officer may wear either the National Park Service dress uniform or field uniform; both to be worn without badge but with the boat officer cap. Ashore he will normally wear the dress uniform.

Crew. Crewmembers will wear the National Park Service Field Uniform substituting the National Park Service cap for the hat. Foul weather gear same as officers. Ashore they may wear the same uniform adding official outer clothing as required. For dirty work situations ashore where public contact is not involved they will get completely out of uniform.

Badge. The badge will not be worn by boat officers or crew.

Foul Weather. In foul weather the usual shipboard protective clothing may be worn over the uniform aboard ship. In foul weather ashore the official stormcoat and raincoat are prescribed.

Cap, Boat Officer. Navy (or identical Coast Guard) type officer's cap with removeable fabric top. The cloth top shall be forestry green, 19-oz. wool elastique to match heavy trousers or dress jacket when worn. When dressed in the lightweight uniform, the wearer's cloth cap-top shall of 8-9 ozs., 50-50 wool-dacron tropical weave to match the trousers.

The visor shall be rigid, waterproof, of standard shape and size, cordovan color.

The inside of cloth cap-top shall be faced with oil silk, as shall the sweatband. The top shall be shaped by a ring of tubular nylon cane.

The boat officer's cap shall be decorated with embroidered golden crossed anchors, centered in front on the band, just above the visor.

Foul Weather Gear. For boat officers and seaman aboard ship, foul weather gear shall be of any reasonable materials and design best suited to meet the circumstances. Boat captains shall control the wearing of kinds of foul weather gear so that the crew of a given vessel shall present a reasonably neat and uniform appearance.

There is no objection to wearing the National Park Service stormcoat or raincoat, aboard ship. In fact, where practical, it is intended that this be done. Ashore, however, these items are mandatory when boat officers or seamen are in uniform and require protective clothing."

A rough draft of an Operating Prospectus for M.V. RANGER III, the passenger-cargo vessel out of Isle Royale National Park, from around this period, amplifies the term “officers” in regard to the uniforms. According to the prospectus, officers meant master, first mate, and purser, while engineers referred to the chief marine engineer and assistant chief engineer.

This separation seems strange, since all were to wear the forest green boatman’s style cap with the dress uniform. The differentiation may have simply been a flaw in the outline that occurred when the writer attempted to indicate that the engineers were authorized to wear the field uniform while working on board the vessel.

Nothing is mentioned in either the uniform regulations or the prospectus about changing the cap to the “flat hat” when ashore. It does address a safety concern, though. It states, “As a safety precaution neckties will not be worn while working in the engine room, or around moving machinery.”

It would appear that the boatman, as far as the Park Service Uniform Committee was concerned, was on its way out. There was no mention of boatmen or boat operators in the 1969 uniform regulations. The regulations published in 1970 had pertained only to women, and the new regulations (called the National Park Service Standards) released in January 1971 covering men contained only one small paragraph mentioning boatmen. Under Section E, Men’s Special Uniforms, “Item 5. Boat operator[.] The men’s work uniform with cordovan color rubber soled shoes will be worn by boat operators [officers?] and crewmen.”

We know that the naval cap was, and still is, being worn, at least on Ranger III at Isle Royale, but this is not address in the specifications. It would seem that the uniform committee was making a move to wipe out any vestiges of uniforms other than the mainstream.

NPS Uniform Standards of February 1974 no longer refers to boatmen or boat operators, but simply states what will be worn by rangers using boats on patrol. Other than canvas deck shoes, the articles of clothing are stock items for all rangers. It states:

“Boat Patrol:

a. Hot Weather:

- (1) Shirt, gray, short-sleeved (with patch, badge and name tag).
- (2) Shorts, Bermuda length, field trousers or green denim jeans hemmed. Regular length uniform trousers may be substituted.
- (3) Shoes, canvas-top, deck shoes, green or white.
- (4) Cap, knit, black.
- (5) Belt, regulation.
- (6) Cap, forest green, visor-type, ventilated.

b. Warm Weather: Same as hot-weather uniform except the regular field or green denim trousers are worn in lieu of the shorts.

c. Cold Weather:

- (1) Shirt, gray, long-sleeved (with patch, badge and name tag).
- (2) Shirt turtleneck, black (to be worn under the gray shirt in lieu of necktie).
- (3) Trousers, cold weather field trousers or green denim jeans.
- (4) Cap, knit, black.
- (5) Parka, Sportcaster (appropriate to weather).
- (6) Shoes, canvas-top, deck shoes, green or white.”

The National Park Service Uniform Standards issued in October 1977, does not have an entry covering rangers on the water. The only thing that shows up in these regulations is a paragraph entitled “Water Use Areas”. It states that “Badge, patch, name tag will be worn on outer garments. (Shirt coat, parka, shell) — To increase visibility and identification to park visitors.” This statement obviously refers to rangers that work at these areas, not those that man watercraft.

Starting with the NPS Uniform Standards of 1981, the committee once again began addressing the “wet feet” rangers. Now they were treated like the rangers that required specialized clothing to perform their mission. The required articles were now under the heading of:

“Watercraft and Other Water-Related Operations

This uniform is approved for employees requiring these items for the safe effective performance of their duties and are only worn while actually performing water-related or watercraft operations.

Items authorized include:

- Shirt, gray
- Shirt, black turtleneck (to be worn under long sleeved shirt)
- Trousers, twill, or jeans
- Shorts, NPS green, with knee socks
- Socks, dark brown
- Belt, regulation
- Cap, baseball, ventilated
- Parka, NPS green
- Wetsuit, as required
- Flotation jacket, as required

Exposure wear, as required

Shoes, canvas, green, brown or white (identical within park)

Shoes, deck, leather

Rain gear

Windbreaker/Overshell”

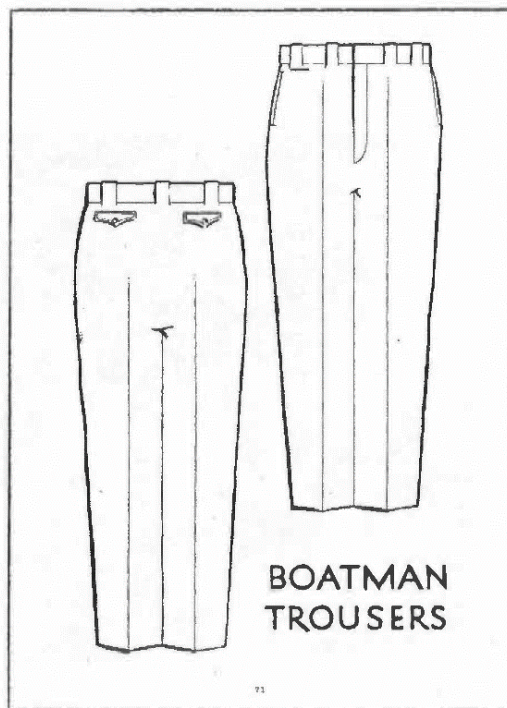
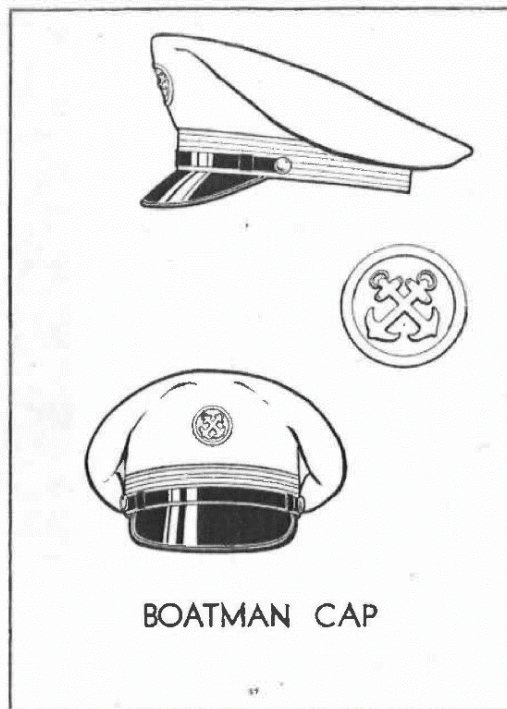
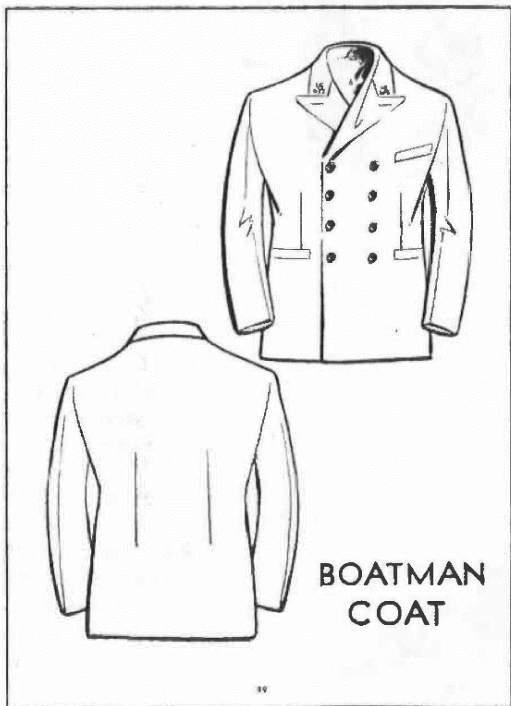
These specifications have carried over until today. The one item not addressed is the boatman hat which is still being worn, at least in the “Deep Water Navy.”





Fishing for bass on Lake Mead - Oct. 8, 1939. As this photograph of NPS No.1 at Lake Mead (then known as Boulder Dam) National Recreational Area attests, there were apparently no specifications covering the uniforms worn by the men manning the boats of the National Park Service prior to the 1940 uniform regulations.

NPSHPC-George A. Grant photo-HFC#270



Drawings illustrating the Boatman's uniform first appeared in the 1940 National Park Service Uniform Regulations Handbook.

NPS Archives-HFC RG Y55



3 Boatmen from Isle Royale National Park wearing the new boatman's uniform, 1941.

Left to right:

Edwin C. Johnson

Charles R. Greenleaf

George T. White

NPSHPC-ISRO#40-342



NPS and CCC Personnel, Mott Is. 1941.

This image of a group of Civilian Conservation Corps men taken at Isle Royale National Park includes the three officers of Ranger II in their new uniforms as well as Chief Ranger George Baggley. The man in uniform standing on the right is a CCC officer.

Standing:

George F. Baggley, chief ranger, left

Charles R. Greenleaf, captain, Ranger II, 5th from left

Kneeling:

George T. White, purser, Ranger II, 5th from left

Edwin C. Johnson, engineer, Ranger II, 7th from left

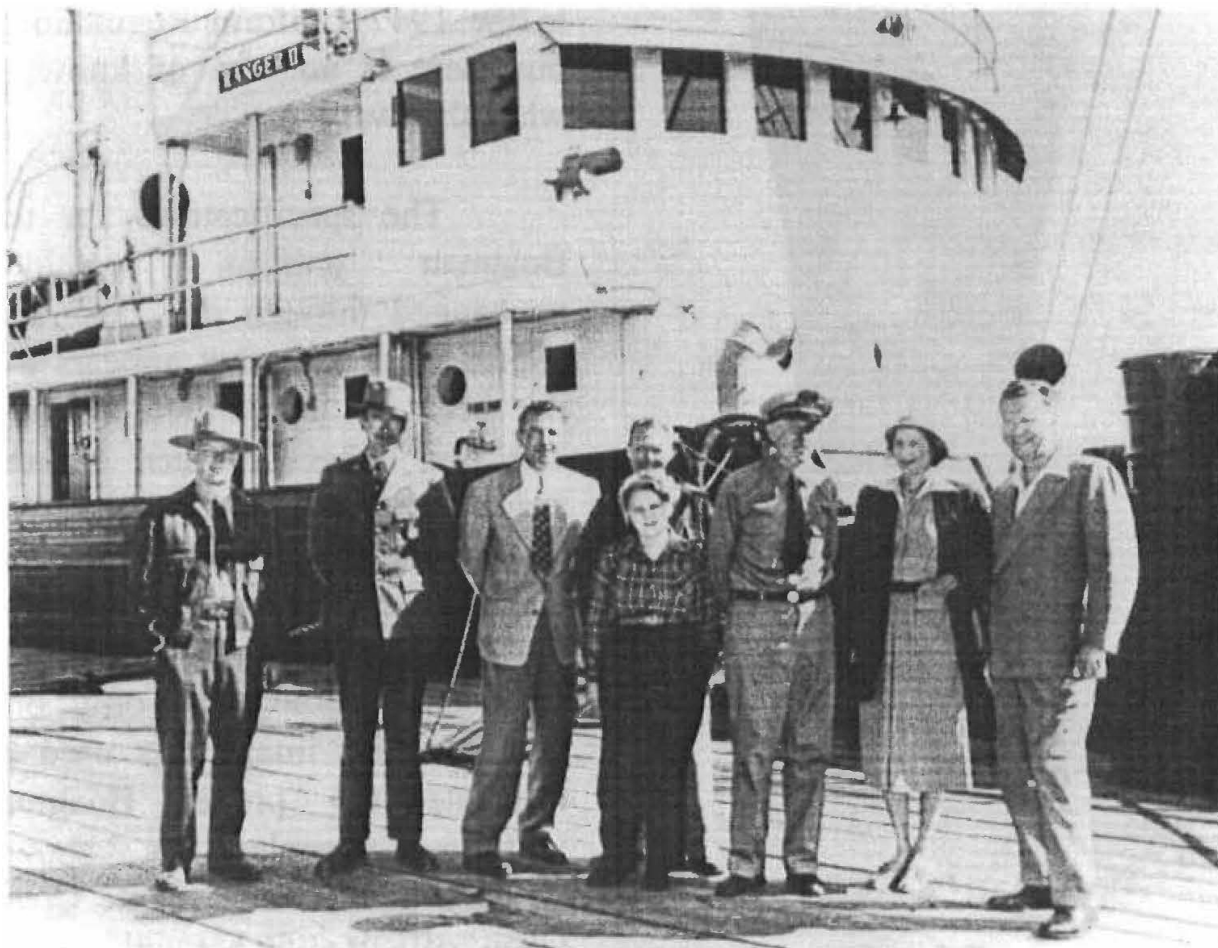
NPSHPC-ISRO#40-30



Boatman's Uniform

This image of Charles R. Greenleaf, captain, Ranger II, appears in Amendment No.5, May 1950, to the 1947 National Park Service Uniform Regulations. This amendment consisted of photographs showing how the various uniforms were to be worn.

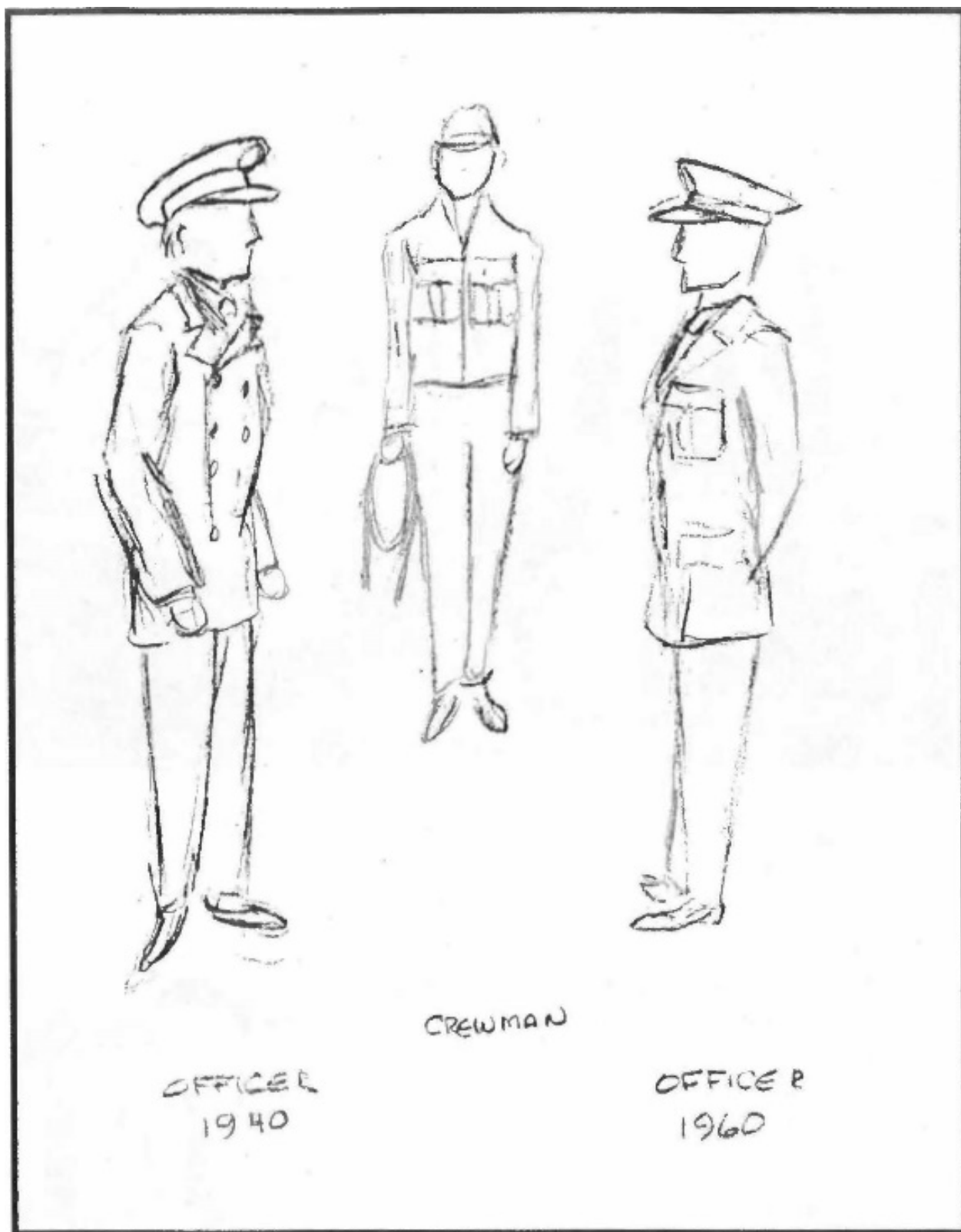
NPS Archives-HFC RG Y55



Ranger II at RHL (Rock Harbor Lodge). August 1951. Charles R. Greenleaf (3rd from right), Captain of the Ranger II, at Isle Royale National Park is wearing a khaki uniform with an odd eagle emblem on his hat, even though the blue uniform was still in effect until 1961.

Left to Right: Seasonal Rgrs. James T. Orsborn, and Dr. Franklin C. Potter. Supt. Chas. E. Shelvin, RHL manager Mr. Harold Fischer, Mrs. Fischer, Capt. Chas R. Greenleaf, Mrs. Doty, and Asst. Sec'y of Interior Dale E. Doty.

NPSHPC-Abbie Rowe photo-ISRO#50-133



Uniforms worn by boatmen of the National Park Service.



Crew of the "Ranger II", 1957. Isle Royale National Park. The Ranger II crew are all wearing the "sun-tan" (khaki) uniform authorized for hot weather parks. This, along with the yachting cap being worn, was not authorized for boatmen at this time. Greenleaf's plaid coat seems somewhat out of place with the otherwise uniformed crew.

Left to right: Francis Bellville; Charles R. Greenleaf, captain; John Williamson; Russell Bergh; Werner Jutila; Ralph Bergh

NPSHPC-R.M Linn photo-HFCI/ISRO#50-812



Captain Charles R. Greenleaf on the bridge of the Ranger II, 1961. Greenleaf's uniform conforms to the 1961 uniform regulations, although he should be wearing forest green naval style hat instead of the crew cap (NPS field cap).

NPSHPC-HFCI/ISRO#61-JB-1007



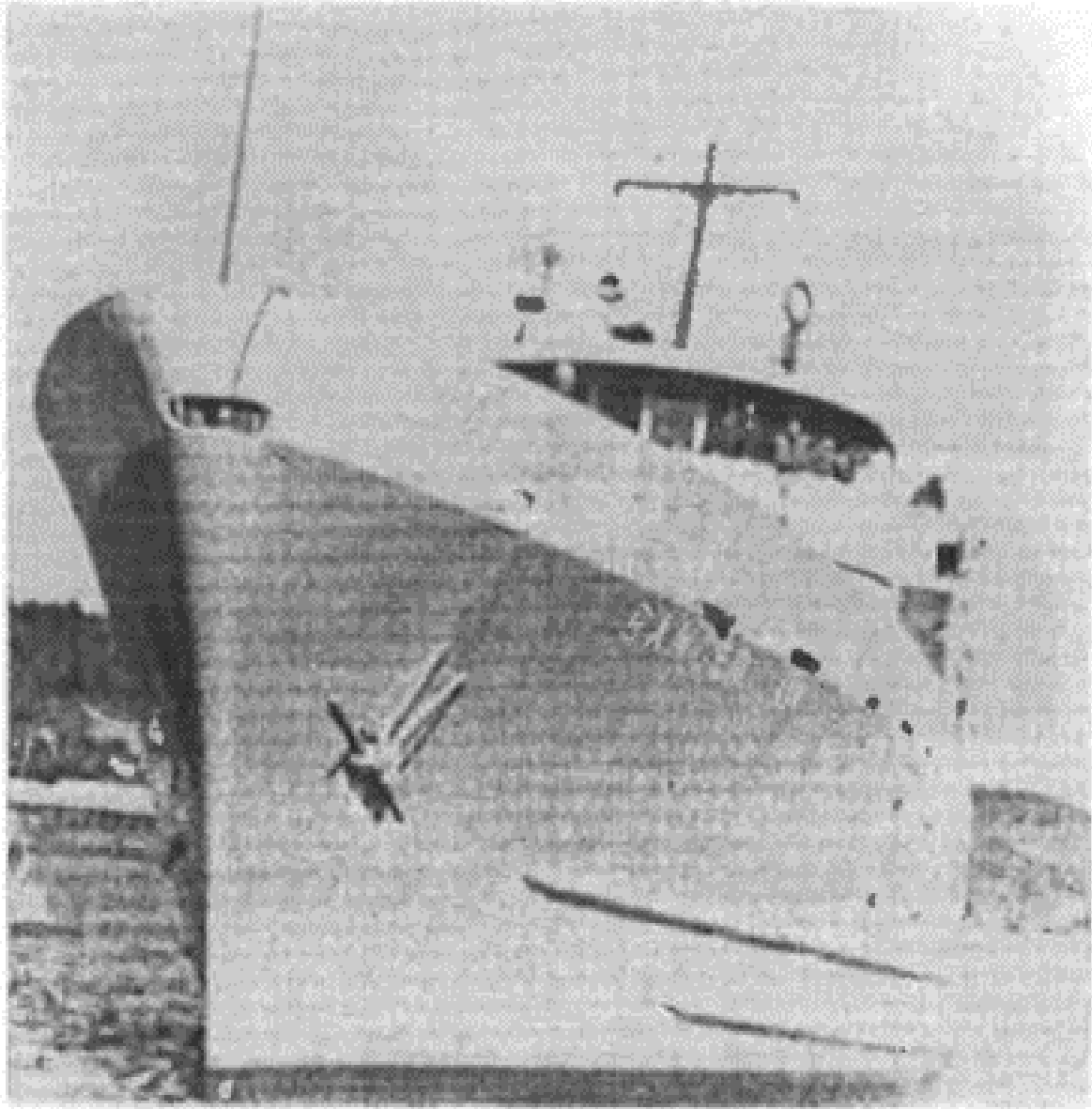
Boat operator, Dave Hysinger, Jan. 22, 1968, Channel Islands. Hysinger is wearing the forest green boatman's hat as he operates one of the NPS small boats.

NPSHPC-Fred E. Mang, Jr. photo-HFC#6B-CHIS-1-M



Uniformed staff at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 1965. Regulations state that boatmen were to wear the standard hat when ashore, but apparently Gene F. Gatzke (right end, second row) ignored this. He has the specified crossed anchors on his cap along with a small round disk with NPS on it. It appears the park had only one uniformed woman at this time.

NPSHC-LAME-HFC#96-1349



RANGER III, Isle Royale National Park., 1959. This is the current NPS vessel plying Lake Superior between the mainland and the park, carrying people and cargo.

NPSHPC-ISRO



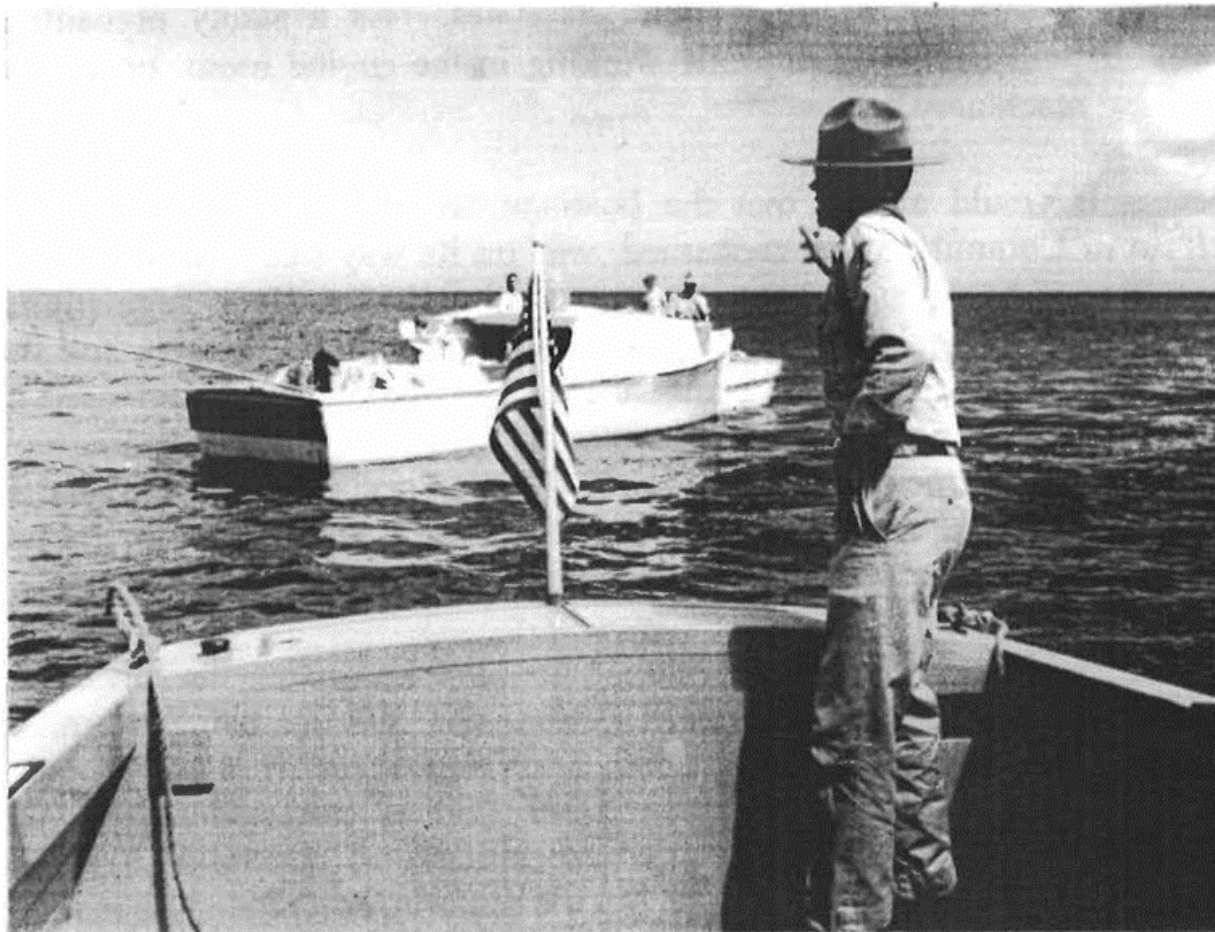
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana. Park Rangers patrolling Yellowstone Lake by boat. Ranger is wearing his Class A dress uniform, less coat.

NPSHPC-Jean Speiser photo-HFC#WASO-F-123



Border poaching, ranger inspecting illegal firearms; ranger and poacher in airboats. While “preserving and protecting” acts such as depicted here are part of a ranger’s responsibilities, this is probably a posed picture since the ranger is unarmed. Also note spare shirt on back of NPS boat seat.

NPSHC-Jack E. Boucher photo-HFC#58-JB-327



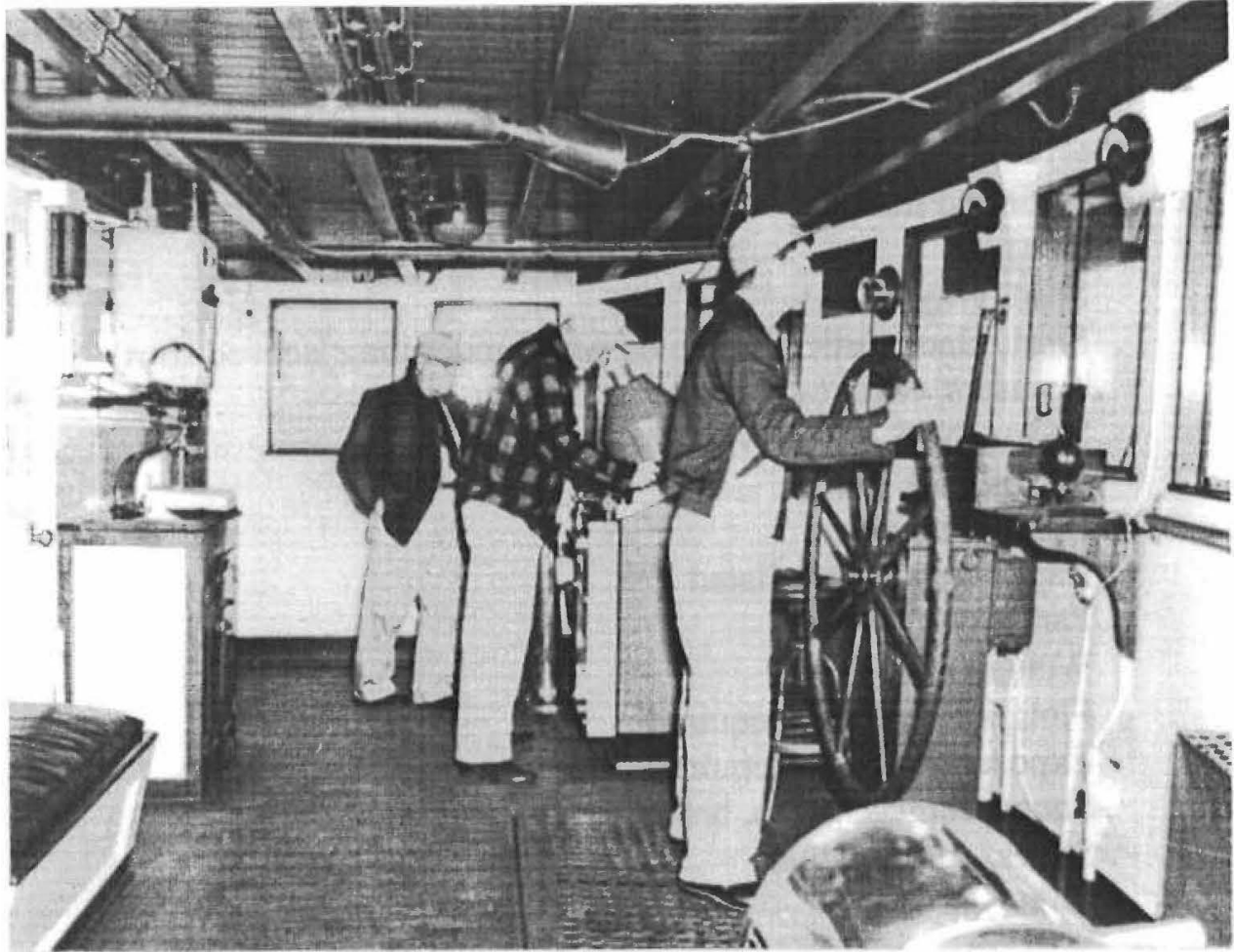
Everglades National Park, Florida, 1958. Ranger checking boat of fishermen in Park waters. Ranger is wearing his standard (“flat”) hat instead of the prescribed field cap.

NPSHC-Jack E. Boucher photo-HFC#58-JB-330



National Park Service rangers at Lake Mead National Recreation Area stress boating and water safety techniques for visitors. Lake Mead, formed by Hoover Dam, stretches 116 miles up the Colorado River from Hoover Dam to Grand Canyon. Ranger is wearing a life preserver in addition to his field dress uniform and mesh-back cap.

NPSHPC-Richard Frear photo-HFC#76-300-6-32



Pilot house of the Ranger II, c. late 1950s. While everyone is wearing what appears to be a khaki uniform of sorts, their coats are of “many colors.”

NPSHPC-ISRO



Charles R. Greenleaf, Capt. "Ranger II", Isle Royale National Park. Even with the tie, Greenleaf's dress is somewhat less than pristine.

NPSHPC-ISRO#40-335



Ranger patrolling Lake Meredith, 1971. Hard hats were coming into vogue during the 1970s, even for boat patrol.

NPSHPC-Fred E. Mang, Jr. photo-LAMR#71-279-5-29