

Widows' Men

The Naval Pension Scheme in 1815



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(An entry from Falconer's New Universal Dictionary of the Marine of 1815)

WIDOWS' MEN, (noms supposés ajoutés au rôle des équipages Anglois par ordre du gouvernement et dont la paie se retient pour la soulagement des veuves des marins, Fr.) an appellation given to a certain number of men, according to circumstances, in every hundred of which the complement of a ship shall consist, who are directed by Act of Parliament to be borne on all his Majesty's ships' books as able seamen, the produce of whose wages, and the value of whose provisions, are applied to the relief of poor widows of commissioned and warranted officers in the royal navy.

For the due performance of this benevolent scheme, every captain, or other officer, commanding any of his Majesty's ships or vessels of war, is directed to enter on the books of the ship or vessel he commands, as part of her complement, one or two (as the clerk of the check shall inform him that circumstances require) fictitious names in every hundred men of her complement, which are to be borne as able seamen, under the appellation of "widows' men", with numbers 1, 2, 3, &c. set against them; observing, that when the number to be borne in every hundred is two, if the whole complement, or the part exceeding the hundreds of the complement, amounts to twenty-five, and does not exceed seventy-five, one widow's man is to be entered for that number; and if it amounts to seventy-five, two widows' men are to be entered; but if only one widow's man in each hundred of the complement is to be borne, none to be entered for any broken number above the hundred, unless it amounts to fifty; and, in small vessels in this case, where the complement consists of fifty, one widow's man is to be borne; these widows' men are to be borne for wages, as if they were men actually serving on board, but not for victuals; and, when pay-books are made out for the payment of the ship's company, the widows' men are to be entered on them in the same manner as the seamen serving on board are entered, but without any deductions whatever being made from their wages.

WIDOWS' PENSION, (pension des veuves des mains, Fr.) an allowance paid quarterly from government to the widows of commissioned and warrant-officers of the royal navy.

On the 1st January, 1814, the pension of sea-officers' widows was increased to, and established at the following rates, viz. (per. Annum)

The widow of a flag officer of his Majesty's fleet	£120
The widow of a captain superannuated, with the rank of rear admiral	£100
The widow of a post captain of three years' standing	£90
The widow of a post captain of under three years' standing	£80
The widow of a commander	£70
The widow of a lieutenant, superannuated, with the rank of commander	£60
The widow of a lieutenant	£50

The widow of a master	£40
The widow of a surgeon	£40
The widow of a purser	£30
The widow of a boatswain	£25
The widow of a gunner	£25
The widow of a carpenter	£25
The widow of a second master of a yacht, or master of a naval vessel warranted by the Naval Board	£25

Provided that those widows only shall be reputed proper objects of the charity, who have not pensions on the ordinary estimates of the navy, or by any other grant from Government, and whose annual incomes, arising from their real or personal estates, or otherwise, do not amount to double the sum allowed for their respective pensions.

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