

Seamen & their Uniform, Fined for a technical offence at Falmouth



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“SEAMEN AND THEIR UNIFORM FINED FOR A TECHNICAL OFFENCE AT FALMOUTH.

At Falmouth, on Thursday, William Williams and Jack Rommery, of the Training ship Foudroyant, were charged that on the previous day, being unauthorised, they wore a naval uniform, or one nearly resembling the same which was calculated to deceive.

Supt. Nicholls said the uniform worn by the defendants was the same that had been worn by the crew of the Foudroyant for many years, but after the commencement of the war arrangements were made by the naval authorities and Mr. Cobb whereby the Foudroyant's crew should wear a white armband on the right arm so as to distinguish them from the men of H.M. Navy. On the previous day the defendants were at the docks in their uniform without the armband, and it was difficult to distinguish them from naval men.

Commander W.C. Cochrane, R.N., said that thinking defendants were naval men he went and spoke to them, and discovered that they were from the Foudroyant.

Williams contended that there was a great deal of difference in the uniforms worn by the Foudroyant and naval men.

Mr. Wheatley Cobb, owner of the Training ship, said he did not admit that it was a naval uniform. He also submitted that the uniform was authorised with the armband. The caps worn by the Foudroyant crew were worn by every yachtsman, and had no “H.M.S.” on them. They wore blue jerseys with jumpers similar to those worn in the navy. They also wore blue trousers, but not of the same pattern as naval men. They wore a collar and lanyard, but the former was not a naval one. He agreed that any casual person might mistake them for naval collars. He admitted that defendants did not wear an armband, which was stupid carelessness on his part, as he sent the men to the docks not noticing that they had not the armbands on.

Commander Cochrane said that by the Foudroyant crew wearing this particular uniform they avoided being tackled by the recruiting sergeant, who took them for naval men.

The Mayor (Alderman A.W. Chard) said a good many lads had enlisted from the Foudroyant.

Mr. Cobb said that over 30 had enlisted since the war started, and over 50 altogether. He also offered his two ships to the Fortress Commander for any purpose he thought fit.

The Magistrates' Clerk said the Foudroyant had a good record as regards enlisting.

The Mayor said a technical offence had been committed through not wearing the armband, and defendants would be fined 5s each.”