

The Naval Crown: A Discussion of its Origins and its Development as an Heraldic Symbol and Insigne in Great Britain and Canada

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1. Introduction

The naval crown is one of the specialized crowns or coronets which find use in modern heraldry as either a charge or in a crest, and it would be difficult to find a general textbook on heraldic emblematics that did not include some reference to it. The brief discussion provided in *Boutell's Heraldry* is typical of what a casual reader might find on the subject:

The Naval Crown is a circlet on which are mounted the sterns and sails of ships alternatively. This has been granted as a crest-coronet or charge to distinguished sailors, including Lord Nelson, and figures in the insignia of some towns with naval associations, e.g. Chatham and Plymouth. It is used to ensign ships' badges of the Royal Navy, and forms part of the badge of the Merchant Navy.¹

While this provides a succinct summary of the modern form and principal uses of the naval crown in the United Kingdom, it offers no insight into its origins, or how it came to be used so widely in modern naval emblematics. This article will seek to expand upon the brief treatment the naval crown normally receives by examining its pre-heraldic origins and history in pre-Modern Europe, and suggesting how it came to be used in the ways Boutell indicates.

My investigation will begin in the Classical Greek domain, with an examination of the sources for the use of crowns of various forms as tokens

¹ J. P. BROOKE-LITTLE, *Boutell's Heraldry* (London, 1970), p. 188

of outstanding conduct by its principal city-states, especially crowns awarded for achievements in the naval sphere. It will then proceed to a similar examination of the use of a naval crown as a decoration by the Roman army under both the Republic and the Imperial Monarchy. The general practices related to Roman decorations will be described and a brief overview will be provided of the other, similar crowns, developed during the Roman Republic and Empire. This background will place the naval crown in context, and will be followed by a more detailed discussion of the particular use to which the Romans put the naval crown specifically and its unique importance in the system of Roman military decorations. Use will be made of primary sources which provide references to the naval crown, including writings from ancient authors and relevant examples from Roman coinage and sculpture.

From the fall of the Roman Empire and across the span of the Middle Ages, the concept of a unique naval crown appears to have fallen into disuse. The heraldic naval crown emerges in the first British heraldic grant to Lendon in 1658, but this grant must have had its precedents, if not in heraldry, then in the iconography of naval affairs - affairs that grew steadily in importance after the fourteenth century in many European nations. To understand the development of this iconography, this paper will devote its central focus to another source of clues as to the emergence of the heraldic naval crown: the commemorative medals and coins issued in a number of nations in the period preceding the Lendon grant. Extensive use will be made of the on-line collection of commemorative medals housed at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, England. By examining these medals over the period prior to the Lendon grant, we will attain some understanding of how the physical naval crowns of the ancients came to be modified and used as images in modern heraldry.

With this foundation established, the paper will briefly turn to the slow but steady growth of the use of the naval crown in English heraldry. Specific early examples of the use of the naval crown as a charge, as an honourable augmentation, as a crest cornet and its use in civic and military crests and badges will then be provided.

Finally, the paper will turn to the contemporary use of the naval crown in the Canadian context. Examples will be offered of its use in heraldry in this country and, in particular, of its use in the badges and emblems of the Royal Canadian Navy.

2. Ancient Origins

To begin, we will start by calling on Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) to give us some insight into the views held by the ancients towards crowns in general, when he states in his *Natural History*:

In ancient times crowns were presented to none but a divinity, hence it is that Homer awards them only to the gods of heaven and to the entire army; but never to an individual, however great his achievements in battle may have been...In succeeding times, those engaged in sacrifices in honour of the gods began to wear them...More recently, again, they were employed in the sacred games, and at the present day they are bestowed on such occasions, not upon the victor, indeed, but upon his country, which receives, it is proclaimed, this crown at his hands.²

Indeed, we know that the Greeks “used crowns extensively as a festive and funeral decoration, as an acknowledgement of public service, as prizes at poetic and athletic competitions and a reward for wisdom and valour”³ It is important to note from the outset that these ancient crowns were actual physical objects that were worn by their recipients, and not simply the images of a crown as used in modern heraldry. One of the first historical references to a nautical crown specifically, comes from the Athenian orator Demosthenes (384 - 322 BC) who wrote a speech entitled “On the Trierarchic Crown”, circa 350 BC. During this period, wealthy Athenian citizens were expected to personally cover the expense of building and equipping a trireme for the Athenian navy. Demosthenes’ speech was made in defence of a friend’s claim on the honour of receiving the Trierarchic Crown – a crown awarded to the citizen who first completed the task of building and bringing his trireme into service: “But in fact, the Assembly directed the Treasurer to give the crown to the first man to get his trireme ready, and this is what I did, for this reason I say I should be crowned.”⁴

There is no evidence that this Athenian crown had any unique shape or design, or, in fact, was different from any of the crowns awarded

² PLINY THE ELDER, *The Natural History*, Book XVI, Chapter 4.

³ Valerie A. MAXFIELD, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army*, (Berkeley 1981), p. 61

⁴ Victor BERS, Trans., *Demosthenes, Speeches 50 -59* (Austin 2003) p. 40

by the Greeks for endeavours as varied as excellence in the theatre or the Olympic Games, but it does set an early precedent for a crown awarded for prowess in naval affairs.

As in so many aspects of their culture, the Romans were eager imitators of Greek traditions, and this extended to the award of honours. It is equally fair to say, however, that the Romans took these traditions of honours and greatly expanded their systematic structure to lengths that greatly exceeded anything the Greeks had developed. Before we discuss the details of Roman crown giving, however, we need to provide some context for these practices.

Perhaps the first thing that needs to be noted is that crowns formed only one part of the extensive system of Roman military decorations, a system which itself extended over a period from the fifth century BC to the third century AD.⁵ Over a period of 800 years, generalizations about any practice must be used with care, and, indeed, we are aware of no specific written code that laid down the practices associated with Roman military decorations during either the Republic or the Empire⁶. Evidence of Roman practice does exist however, in the form of ancient writing, inscriptions on graves, and in the sculpture of both public monuments and on coins. We know that practices were not static⁷ but scholars who have studied the subject in detail have concluded that the evidence we do have is consistent and indicates a common thread of usage across much of Roman history⁸.

In the early Roman Republic, military duty was a citizen's duty and ambitions to public office required a minimum of 10 years military service before eligibility.⁹ Despite this focus on the citizen's duty to serve in the defence of "his" Republic, military decorations were available in significant quantities to those who distinguished themselves. From its outset the Roman army paid particular attention to the rewards and punishments of its soldiers, and contemporary authors ascribed at least some of the Roman army's success to this focus on these rewards and punishments.¹⁰ As Valerius Maximus noted, "There is not a man so low that he is not affected by the sweetness of glory".¹¹

⁵ MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, p. 19

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42

⁹ Paul ERDKAMP (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (Oxford, 2007) pp. 132-33

¹⁰ MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, p. 55

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57

In addition to *coronae* (crowns), Roman soldiers were eligible for a number of other decorations typically given for lesser acts of prowess on the battlefield. These included *hastae purae* ('pure spears'), *torques* (neck-rings), *armillae* (bracelets), *phalerae* (metal disks, normally awarded in sets of nine), and *patella* (shallow dishes).¹² Ancient authors highlight the achievements of several outstanding soldiers by enumerating the decorations they received over the course of their careers and these descriptions give us at least some indication of the frequency with which decorations were bestowed at various periods during the Age of Rome. The Roman soldier Siccus Dentatus, for example, is said to have been a veteran of 120 battles and to have received forty-five scars on the front of his body and none on his back. He is said to have been awarded eighteen *hastae purae*, twenty-five *phalerae*, 83 *torques*, more than 160 *armillae*, and 26 *coronae*.¹³

With the expansion of the Roman republican empire, a standing Roman army came into being, and this army required a more permanent structure and system of incentives to keep soldiers motivated. Soldierly passed from the hands of citizens to those of professional soldiers, many of who served for more than twenty years, and who were as likely to come from the Roman provinces as from Rome proper. Some specific awards were only available to those of a certain rank, and in some cases awards became more focused on monetary rewards — a necessary addition to a professional army where many retired soldiers would need the capital to acquire land and set themselves up to earn a living after their service was complete¹⁴. This practice, too, was reflected in the granting of crowns. Some early crowns were made of grass or leaves, but later versions were crafted of gold to carry not only a value of honour, but also an intrinsic monetary value.

There were six basic types of crown awarded by the Roman state, although, as we shall see, the exact form of some of the crowns changed

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 67 – 96.

¹³ G. R. WATSON, *The Roman Soldier* (Ithaca 1969) p. 116

¹⁴ This practice has some interesting parallels with modern Canadian military practice, where service personnel are eligible for a pension after 20 years and where some decorations, like the Order of Military Merit, are awarded with consideration to a service person's rank. It is worth noting, however, that awards for heroism in the Canadian Forces are awarded based on the degree of heroism demonstrated, without regard to the recipient's rank.

over time. The *corona obsidionalis*,¹⁵ or **siege crown**, was considered the highest of all the Roman military honours. This crown was awarded to the person responsible for raising a siege, and (at least in the early part of its history) was made of the grass or vegetation that grew upon the site of a siege — an analogy to the return of the land to the besieged. As a result, this crown had no prescribed form, and the material from which it was constructed suggests a certain lack of permanence or longevity as an artefact.

The *corona civica* was awarded to the soldier who both saved a fellow citizen's life in battle, and held the ground on which this saving act had occurred for the rest of the day. There is some suggestion that the debtor made the crown himself for presentation to his saviour,¹⁶ and like the *corona obsidionalis*, the *corona civica* was made of natural materials — in this case oak leaves.

The design of the *corona muralis* or **mural crown** is well known in armory, and it appears that its form has remained essentially unchanged over the millennia. Constructed of gold, and shaped to represent the wall of a fortified settlement, the mural crown was awarded to the first man in battle to surmount the wall and enter an enemy city. As we will note later in this discussion, the mural crown appears to have been used more widely in the Renaissance iconography of crowns than the naval crown, even in affairs that were primarily nautical in nature.

The *corona vallaris* was similar in function to the *corona muralis*, in that it was given to the first soldier in battle to enter an enemy camp. There appears to be some uncertainty as to the shape of this crown. Some have suggested that it took the shape of a temporary palisade, typical of an army's field camp, while others have suggested that it had the same elevation as a *corona muralis* but was square in plan, in contrast to the *corona muralis*, which like most crowns had a round or ovoid plan.

The *corona aurea* or **gold crown** was awarded for particularly distinguished prowess on the battlefield that was not covered by the other crowns. This might include victory in single combat, or capturing an objective of special significance. These gold crowns were constructed in the form of a wreath of leaves.¹⁷

¹⁵ This section draws from MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, Chapter 4.

¹⁶ Adrian GOLDWORTHY, *The Complete Roman Army* (London 2003) p. 96

¹⁷ This laurel crown of golden leaves will carry forward into some of the rank emblems currently in use in the Royal Canadian Navy.

Finally, we come to the **naval crown**, known by three separate Latin titles: the *corona navalis*, the *corona classica* and the *corona rostrata*. The naval crown appears to be particularly enigmatic in terms of the customs surrounding its award. It is perhaps most accurate to assume that these characteristics changed over the course of Roman history, and that each reference to it — while it may contradict other evidence — may have been correct for its time. Unlike the modern heraldic naval crown with its interspersed ship's sterns and sails, the ancient naval crown showed on each side a lateral view of several trireme bows, with the *rostra* or bow rams from each half of the crown, meeting in the crown's front. The crown was fashioned of gold, and was awarded for various acts of naval prowess. Some authors have suggested that it was awarded for the capture of an enemy ship,¹⁸ others that it was given to the first man to board an enemy vessel, and still others that it was awarded to the fleet commander for victory in battle.¹⁹ The evidence seems inadequate to determine which, if any, of these suggestions is correct, and it may be that it was used at different times for all of these diverse purposes.

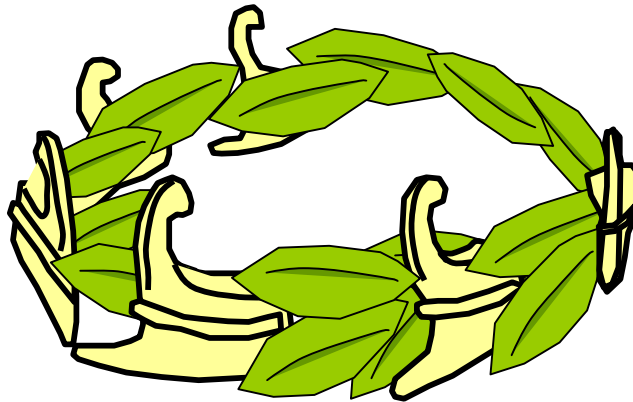


Figure 1. An Ancient Corona Rostrata showing the rostrata or bow sections of several triremes with oak leaves interspersed.

Regardless of the circumstances of its award, there appears to be consensus by ancient authors that the naval crown was awarded very sparingly. An understanding of the structure of the Roman navy will suggest why this may have been so. First, the Roman naval forces were an integral part of the Roman army, and were used more in the early years for

¹⁸ Peter CONNOLLY, *The Roman Army* (London 1975) p. 68

¹⁹ MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, p. 75

transportation than for battle at sea. Fleets were constructed as required, and it was not until the significant expansion of the Roman territories in the first century BC that a standing fleet was created.²⁰ As a result, Roman naval battles were far fewer in number than those on land.

Second, we know that many of the men who staffed the fleet were drawn from non-Roman members of the empire,²¹ and we also have clear evidence that only citizen soldiers of Rome were eligible to receive military decorations.²² In the year 52 AD, for example, the governor of Egypt stated unequivocally, “members of the fleet were not entitled to the same privileges as auxiliaries or legionnaires.”²³ Thus, the pool of men at sea who were eligible for the *corona navalis* was relatively small. Finally, there is some evidence that the naval crown was particularly subject to restrictions of social rank, some going so far as to suggest that only a Roman Consul could receive this crown.²⁴

With this general background of the naval crown understood, we will now turn our attention to the actual evidence of this crown provided by ancient sources. A. Cornelius Gellius (ca. 125 to after 180 AD), in his *Noctes Atticae* (Attic Nights), states that:

“Military crowns are many and varied. Of these the most highly esteemed I find to be in general the following: the triumphal, siege, mural, camp and naval crowns...The naval crown is commonly awarded to the armed man who has been the first to board an enemy ship in a sea-fight; it is decorated with the representations of the beaks of ships. Now the mural, camp and naval crowns are regularly made of gold.”²⁵

Pliny the Elder, in his *The Natural History*, gives some indication the relative merit of each crown when he states:

“It is with the leaves of [oak] trees that our civic crown is made, the most glorious reward that can be bestowed on military valour... Far inferior to this in rank are the mural, the vallar, and the golden one,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38

²¹ ERDKAMP, *Roman Army*, p. 201

²² MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, p. 121

²³ ERDKAMP, *Roman Army*, p. 212

²⁴ CONNOLLY, *The Roman Army*, p. 68

²⁵ A. CORNELIUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, Book 5, Chapter VI / 18

superior though they may be in value of the material: inferior, too, in merit, is the rostrate crown, though ennobled, in recent times more particularly, by two great names, those of M. Varro, who was presented with it by Pompeius Magnus, for his great achievements in the Piratic War, and of M. Agrippa, on whom it was bestowed by Caesar, at the end of the Sicilian Wars, which was also a war against pirates."²⁶

Seneca (4 BC – 65 AD), in his *Essays*, calls attention to the infrequent award of the naval crown when he states that "Agrippa... by the glory of a naval crown, gained a distinction that was unique among the honours of war".²⁷ Velleius Paterculus (19 BC – 31 AD) notes that "In this war Agrippa, by his remarkable services, earned the distinction of a naval crown, with which no Roman had as yet been decorated",²⁸ and Cassius Dio (ca. 155 to after 229 AD) echoes these comments with "Upon his lieutenants he bestowed various gifts and upon Agrippa a golden crown adorned with ship's beaks - a decoration given to nobody before or since."²⁹ Even Virgil (ca. 70 – 19 BC) calls attention to Agrippa's fame in the *Aeneid* where he states: "Elsewhere Agrippa, with the aid alike of winds and gods, led his towering line, and his forehead shone with war's haughty distinction, the ship-rams of the Naval Crown".³⁰ In contrast to what appears to be Agrippa's well-deserved receipt of the naval crown, we also learn from Suetonius (ca. 69 to after 130 AD) that Claudius awarded himself the naval crown for more dubious achievements:

"[Claudius] made but one campaign and that was of little importance. When the senate voted him the triumphal regalia, thinking the honour beneath the imperial dignity and desiring the glory of a legitimate triumph, he chose Britain as the best place for gaining it...without any battle or bloodshed [he] received the submission of a part of the island, and returned to Rome within six months after leaving the city and celebrated a triumph of great

²⁶ PLINY the Elder, Book XVI, Chapter 3

²⁷ Lucius SENECA Moral Essays (Cambridge 1928) Vol. III, *On benefits*, III. xxxi. 5 to xxxii. 4

²⁸ Marcus VELLEIUS PATERCULUS (c. 19 BC – c. 31 AD), *Compendium of Roman History*, Book 2, ch. 81

²⁹ Lucius CASSIUS DIO COCCEIANUS (150-235), *Roman History*, Book 49, Chapter 14

³⁰ VIRGIL (Publius VERGILIUS MARO, 70-19 BC), *The Aeneid* (Middlesex, 1956) pp. 221-222

splendour...among the tokens of his victory he set a naval crown on the gable of the Palace beside a civic crown, as a sign that he had crossed and, as it were, subdued the Ocean."³¹



Figure 2. Agrippa wearing his Naval Crown³²

In addition to these writings, several sculptures provide primary, ancient evidence of the naval crown. The first is Trajan's column which shows legionary standards decorated with crowns and in particular a ship's rostrum or prow.³³ The others are found on Roman coins and include:

1. A *Dupondius* of Augustus, showing a naval crown interwoven with laurel leaves;
2. A *Denarius* of Augustus also showing a naval crown and laurel leaves but with the back tied with a ribbon;
3. An *As* of the Gaius-Claudius period showing Marcus Agrippa wearing his *corona navalis*.³⁴ (Fig. 2)

³¹ Gaius SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS (c. 69/72- p. 130), *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars, The Life of Claudius*, Chapter 17.

³² David L. VAGI, *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire*, Volume One. (Chicago, 1999), p. 107

³³ MAXFIELD, *Military Decorations*, Plate 4, p. 100.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Plate 1, p. 97

3. The Re-emergence of the Naval Crown after 1600

3.1. The General Effects of the Italian Renaissance, c. 1400 – c. 1600

The decline of the Roman Empire brought with it a loss of many of the hallmarks of its social structure, its institutions and the cultural traditions that had dominated the western world for over a millennium. Among these losses were the Roman traditions of military awards and decorations. Across the Middle Ages, man's preoccupations turned to questions of a religious nature with the Roman Catholic church filling, in many respects, the vacuum left by the decline of Imperial Rome. While naval battles did occur, they were by no means as important as the conflicts on land, and they often mirrored ancient times both in terms of the type of ships used and in the use of naval fleets chiefly as transports for soldiers, as opposed to their frequent use as warships in maritime battles.

It is unlikely that we will ever know precisely what events brought the naval crown back into use in the seventeenth century, but we can make some intelligent comments about the factors that may have made its re-emergence possible. The first and most obvious fact is the onset of the Renaissance. By the fifteenth century the might of Rome and its history began to reassert itself in the intellectual affairs of European civilization. "While it is true that the Renaissance did not, strictly speaking, rediscover antiquity, its attitudes to it, its steady invocation of it, and the uses it made of it all amount at least to redefinition if not rediscovery."³⁵ To humanists and scholars alike Rome "offered the best possible truth"³⁶ and the systematic study of Roman artistic achievements began in earnest with such artists and archaeologists as Cyriacus of Ancona (c. 1391 – 1455) and Andrea Mantegna (1431- 1506).³⁷ Roman artefacts were carefully drawn and studied on a wide basis and "For many Renaissance artists some experience with this process of direct recording seems to have been a necessity to profit from the repertory of types and the mastery of anatomy and pathos that antique art had to offer."³⁸

To these artists and scholars, Roman art acted as a model of excellence in style, balance and subject matter and 'the final result of study

³⁵ Michael LEVEY, *Early Renaissance* (Harmondsworth 1967) p. 149

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 150

³⁷ Wendy Stedman SHEARD, *Antiquity in the Renaissance* (Northampton, Mass. 1978), p. 1

³⁸ *Ibid.*

of the past [was] imitation – not lifeless copying but the imitation which is art itself and also a bridge back, attaching the present to the great achievements of the past'.³⁹ Thus, the careful study of Roman art and its imitation was a means of invoking the majesty of the Roman Empire in the modern Renaissance world. For example, by 1475 the reliefs encircling Trajan's column were being used 'as a major source for sculptural style in Sixtus IV's ciborium for the high altar of St. Peter's...'⁴⁰ As previously noted, Trajan's column was also decorated with a number of Roman military motifs, including crowns, and the prow of a galley depicted on a legionary standard.

Renaissance artists looked well beyond monumental art and architecture and "Beginning with Pietro Barbo, a Venetian who became Pope Paul III (1464-71)...artists' uses of antiquity were increasingly influenced by collectors. The prevalence of small-scale antique objects – gems, cameos, medals, coins and statuettes – in these early Renaissance collections ensured their use as models by artists."⁴¹ It is in this spirit that Pisanello created Renaissance medals in the 1430s

... and [their] continuing importance throughout the period testify to the importance of small-scale antiquities like coins, medallions and gems in the creation of antique revival art ... Coins began to supplement literary remains as sources for knowledge of ancient history and customs, even though coin inscriptions and the scenes pictured on their reverses were at first often misunderstood.⁴²

It is worth pointing out two key elements in this revival of ancient art. The first is that ancient motifs often moved from an actual object to a symbol represented in art. Actual laurel crowns, for example, were not bestowed upon the monarchs of Europe, but the images of these monarchs as laureates became common on medals and coins. Similarly, ancient Roman crowns were not resurrected as actual objects to be bestowed on a victor, but they could be bestowed in images of a victor to represent the glory of a particular accomplishment. The second key element is that artists often "updated" the images taken from classical sources into contemporary settings and clothing. *St James on his way to Martyrdom* by the previously mentioned Andrea Mantegna, for example, shows Roman

³⁹ LEVEY, *Early Renaissance*, p. 152

⁴⁰ SHEARD, *Antiquity*, p. 2

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 4

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 5

legionnaires dressed as contemporary Renaissance soldiers. We can conclude, then, that an artist, examining a coin showing the ancient naval crown would feel free to take artistic license with the image and potentially update it to reflect a more current view of naval vessels.

The study of antiquity clearly went well beyond the efforts of artists and the renewed interest in classical authors and traditions must have broadened the population of scholars and artists aware of the structure, traditions and decorations of the Roman Army. The growing practice of "The Grand Tour" would have brought many upper-class and educated men from Britain and Northern Europe into direct contact with the Mediterranean cultures and in particular with Rome, considered an essential stopping point for any tutor and his "cub".⁴³ We know that a renewed interest in ancient writings and ideals had a great impact on the culture of Europe and Britain, and that many scholars used classical heroes as models for their pupils. It is unlikely that the career of someone like Agrippa would have escaped notice, and the particular emphasis on his unique award of the naval crown may have captured the imagination of Renaissance scholars.

3.2. The Effects of Maritime Rivalries and Naval Wars, 1486-1674

The second major current in history that may have made interest in the naval crown stronger was the massive expansion in European maritime affairs. The Age of Exploration, begun in 1486 by Bartolomeo Diaz's rounding of the southern tip of Africa, included the many voyages of Columbus as well as those of Da Gama, Cabot, Magellan, and Cartier, and the wealth discovered in the "New World" started a race both for colonies and for the riches they contained.⁴⁴ As overseas possessions grew, the security and wealth of empires became dependent upon maritime forces for both the transport and security of cargo and it is not surprising that this period also saw a significant increase in naval warfare.

The Anglo-Dutch wars marked the beginning of modern naval warfare and it is not surprising that the emergence of the naval crown in heraldry occurred in the 1650s, during these conflicts. These wars, which raged intermittently between 1652 and 1674, were highly typical of the

⁴³ Roger HUDSON (ed.), *The Grand Tour 1592-1796* (London 1993) pp. 13-25

⁴⁴ Robert Edwin HERZSTEIN, *Western Civilization, Volume 1: From the Origins Through the Seventeenth Century* (Boston 1975) p. 323

conflicts that arose over trade and the protection of overseas wealth and possessions. They have been characterised as follows:

The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the mid-seventeenth century established the form and substance of war at sea for the next two centuries. Not only were they the most “maritime” wars of the era, being struggles for commerce rather than territory, with no land fighting in the main theatre, but they were fought with an intensity unequalled in any subsequent conflict. They shaped the development of the English Royal Navy, witnessed the creation of the modern French Navy and wore down the hitherto dominant fleet of the United Netherlands. The ship types and tactics that evolved remained at the core of naval warfare until steam replaced sail in the 1850s.⁴⁵

The practice of employing competent army generals at sea was common during this period, with leaders like Robert Blake and George Monk moving from roles in Cromwell’s army to the navy with very little experience at sea. While Blake in particular proved to be an adept naval tactician, his ability seems to have been unique, and “the relatively badly manned English fleet of 1672-3 emphasized the need to impose professional standards and discipline, and in 1677 the Royal Navy introduced professional qualifications for sea officers”.⁴⁶ Where previously naval personnel had dressed and acted much like soldiers, over time European naval forces began to develop their own traditions and customs, distinct from anything seen in European armies. The desire to set themselves apart from their landlocked cousins may have led to the search for and development of uniquely “naval” symbols like the naval crown.

3.3. The Appearance of Naval Signs on Medals and Coins from 1340

3.3.1. Ships, Anchors, and Rudders

With these three factors in mind, the Renaissance, the growth in the importance of maritime affairs, and the development of modern navies, we will now turn our attention to the portrayal of naval affairs in the art objects of the period. Many potential sources exist for such an examination, but for the purpose of this paper we shall focus on the

⁴⁵ Andrew LAMBERT, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail* (London, 2000) p. 52

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76

evidence provided by commemorative medals with some additional discussion of coinage. A commemorative medal has been defined as “(a) medal struck at the time of the event which it was designed to mark, and (b) a medal struck for commemoration and not as a reward for merit”.⁴⁷

Commemorative medals are of particular interest to our present discussion for a number of reasons. First, they were struck on a pan-European basis starting well in advance of the seventeenth century and continue to this day, thus providing a continuous source of historical evidence across the period in question. Second, they are not bound by the normal constraints of coins which typically must include the sovereign’s bust and coat of arms.⁴⁸ Third, the fact that these medals are not commonly handled gives the artist the opportunity to work in detailed high relief, providing the opportunity for a full expression of artistic creativity. Fourth, the relative small size of the medals lends this artistic form to the use of symbols, like the naval crown, to project meaning into a small space. Finally, the on-line collection of medals at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich, England provides an excellent opportunity to access a renowned collection of commemorative medals quickly and easily. While it is not possible to enumerate the entire collection of medals held by the NMM in the period leading up to the Lendon grant, exemplary medals will be discussed that illuminate the developing iconography of crowns used to represent naval events during this period.

The collection of the NMM begins with a single medal from the fourteenth century (MEC1586)⁴⁹ — a medal that commemorates the Battle of Sluys in 1340. This is an auspicious place to begin our review, as the medal contains several characteristics that are commonly seen over the next few centuries.

The medal shows King Edward III wearing a crown and bearing his arms on a shield while seated in a lymphad. The particular characteristics included in this medal that will be seen over the next few centuries include:

⁴⁷ J. R. S. WHITING, *Commemorative Medals: A Medalllic History of Britain from Tudor Times to the Present Day* (Newton Abbot, 1972) pp. 13-14

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁴⁹ All medals and artefacts from the NMM collection can be accessed at www.nmm.ac.uk. Simply enter the number provided, for example, “MEC1586” into the search box on the upper right of the page and the item will be displayed. Alternatively, the complete collection can be browsed by going to the “Collections Online” section and choosing the appropriate part of the collection.

a. The use of crowns to designate royal or noble status; b. The use of lymphads or other ships as the predominant (and obvious) symbol of nautical affairs; and; c. The use of arms to indicate the principal person being commemorated on the medal.

A review of the NMM's collections over several centuries suggests that artists used standard motifs for their work and, in some cases, artists clearly used earlier works as models for their own efforts. It is also worth noting that over time the motifs did change. For example, although it may seem self-evident to use ships in medals to commemorate nautical affairs, there was a growing tendency to use other symbols, such as the fouled anchor, or classical symbols, to portray events as time went on.

The NMM collection contains eight medals from the fifteenth century, five of which are of the same design (MEC2691, as an example) and shows on the reverse St. Michael, and on the obverse a lymphad. Two of the three remaining medals also show ships.

The collection from the sixteenth century grows to 66 medals in total and begins with MEC0556 circa 1526, a French medal commemorating Admiral Philippe Chabot. This medal shows a fouled anchor with a crown on the obverse and Chabot's arms on the reverse. This is the first of several sixteenth-century medals that show a fouled anchor as a common nautical symbol, but the practice of showing ships continued to be even more common. It is worth noting that throughout this century, not a single example can be found of a naval crown in the collection, but the use of crowns, in general, does begin to expand. As noted, crowns are used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to denote noble or royal status and this use continued, but in the sixteenth century crowns begin to be shown as accolades in a more classical sense. MEC0049, for example, a Dutch medal from 1571 commemorating the Battle of Lepanto, shows the figure of Victory with a crown. The use of crowns as symbols of victory is certainly in keeping with the ancient traditions of crowns as military decorations and grows in prominence in the collection over the remainder of the sixteenth century. This sets the stage for the use naval crowns in the seventeenth century. Laurels too become a more common beginning in 1578 (MEC0558) with a medal showing laurels encircling an anchor.

It is worth noting that the greatest naval battle of the sixteenth century, the Defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, is well represented in the NMM collection by nine medals, but this great event brought about no particular innovation in medal design, with ships again being the most common symbol. The late sixteenth century does show some innovation,

however, in the use of more ancient symbols. Thus, in 1593 a medal commemorating the re-capture of Gertrundkey (MEC0057) shows a scene with two ships on the obverse and Alexander the Great on the reverse – an obvious attempt to invoke the prestige of the ancients in a contemporary battle. MEC0016 from 1596 continues this trend and shows Neptune riding on dolphins while MEC0060 from the same year shows Arian playing a lute, seated on a dolphin.

Thus, by the close of the sixteenth century we see in medals a slowly growing tendency toward the use of classical symbols and the use of crowns as marks of victory, in addition to their use as symbols of rank in the aristocratic hierarchy. The stage was being prepared for the return of the naval crown.

The NMM coins and medals collection grows substantially in the seventeenth century with holdings of 374 items available on-line. This, of course, is the century of greatest importance to our present study since it is in this century that we can find immediate precedents for the heraldic naval crown in the grant to London. The medals from this part of the collection continue the widespread use of ships but the trends identified previously in the growth of the use of laurels and ancient themes accelerate in their appearance. At least ten percent of the collection from this century show laurels in some form or another. Kings are often shown as laureates while dressed in Roman clothing (MEC0718); the figure of Victory is frequently seen presenting a laurel crown to a victor (MEC0309); laurels may make up a part of the medal design or be a charge on the medal face (MEC0117); and laurels are used as a border on some medals to frame the artist's work (MEC1118). Clearly artists from across Europe were striving to find the right imagery to reflect honour and victory in many of the medals they created and the laurel was widely used as a symbol of choice. The use of figures from Roman mythology accelerates as well. Neptune (MEC0563) is an obvious favourite, but many other classical gods and figures are used as well. Mars (MEC0238), Minerva and Diana (MEC3032), Hercules (MEC0305) and Ceres (MEC0763) are all invoked throughout the seventeenth century, and speak to the growing awareness of classical literature during this period. Ancient galleys (MEC0530) and trophies of ancient arms and armour (MEC1123) can also be found as artists stretched their creative powers and sought out potent symbols for their work.

After reviewing the entire seventeenth century collection, however, one is left with the impression that distinctly nautical symbols, beyond ships and anchors, are still in short supply. A number of artists used

rudders for this purpose (MEC0723, MEC0746, MEC0754, and MEC0310) but — as relevant an object as the rudder is — it simply does not invoke the power of a crown of glory.

3.3.2. *Naval Crowns used symbolically, 1653-1903*

What, then, of the use of the naval crown in this period? If the medals and coins of the NMM collection are any indication, the naval crown had a very slow and gradual adoption into mainstream works of medallic art. The first *bona fide* example of its use that I have found is on a medal from the Netherlands cast in 1653, commemorating the Battle of Texel, and the death of Admiral Tromp (MEC0091).



Figure 3. MEC0091 A medal from 1653 commemorating the Battle of Texel and the death of Admiral Tromp
Copyright National Maritime Museum

On this medal, two infant *genii* hold a naval crown above the bust of Admiral Tromp as an indication of the veneration he received from the Dutch as one of their greatest admirals. The crown itself is interesting to examine. Unlike both the Classical and the modern naval crown, the

crown on this medal is heightened by five visible masts with sails, and no ship's sterns. This design — which may be described as the **all-sails type** — is found in many of the other examples in the collection. The medal on which it first appeared was created by the artist O. Muller, and an examination of Muller's other works in the NMM collection is illuminating. Of the twenty-two medals by this artist in the collection, only two — MEC0091 and MEC0100 — show naval crowns. The artist makes frequent use of laurels in his designs, but the naval crowns are reserved for Admiral Tromp and for Admiral de Ruyter: the latter in a medal from 1666 (MEC0100). Again, the crown is held above de Ruyter's head, and is composed of five masts with sails. We can perhaps conclude that either the artist reserved the naval crown for the greatest of the Netherlands' naval heroes (in keeping with its limited use in ancient times), or that the naval crown was little known at the time, and was thus not a particularly effective symbol.



Figure 4. MEC0100 Medal commemorating the Battle of the Four Days and Admiral de Ruyter from 1666.
Copyright National Maritime Museum

The only other medal from the seventeenth century that bore what was certainly intended to be a naval crown of a more-or-less traditional type is a Danish medal from 1677 (MEC0338). Commemorating the victories at Oland, Langeland, and Kjøge, this crown appears to be composed of nine masts with sails of varying size: additional evidence that the design of the naval crown was by no means standardized at this point in time.



Figure 5. MEC0720 Medal commemorating the Battle of Cartagena 1643.
 Copyright National Maritime Museum

There is, however, one other interesting example in the collection of what probably intended to be a naval crown, dating from 1643. In that year, three medals were struck by French medallists to commemorate the Battle of Cartagena (MEC0719, MEC0720 and MEC0721). Each shows a different bust of King Louis XIV on the obverse, but each has a common symbol on the reverse “a trident within a crown decorated with palm and laurel rising out of the sea”. As indicated previously, different artists appears to have been quite ready to copy the work of others. What is intriguing about these crowns is that they appear to show three bows of ancient galleys interspersed with objects that may be either rudders or paddles. (See MEC0863 from 1718 to compare a bow view). This crown — which may be distinguished as the **proW-and-rudder type** — may be the earliest prototype of the modern naval crown in the collection, and is more in keeping with the concept of the ancient Rostra Crown, which emphasized the bow and not the stern of the vessel. We might conclude

that this was changed in more modern times as the stern of a warship became the seat of command and perhaps the most ornate and decorated part of the vessel.

A final note on crowns from the NMM's seventeenth-century collection is appropriate. Not only does the naval crown make its appearance but several examples of the mural crown also appear (MEC0756, MEC0760, and MEC0405 as examples). We can conclude from these medals that the use of naval crowns was not an isolated event and that the knowledge of Roman decorations extended to other crowns as well.

The above examples speak to the existence of the naval crown as an artistic symbol in use in Europe prior to the grant to Lendon in 1658, but we must acknowledge that if the medals and coins of the NMM collection are any indication, this usage was uncommon, non-standardized, and took a secondary role to the other, more common symbols of victory used during this period. An illustration from the tokens minted during this age should validate this point if it is not already obvious. Throughout the NMM collection from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, several examples exist of locally minted tokens. These were produced by individual towns and cities to make up for the lack of official coinage available from the Royal Mint. MEC1705, a Bristol Farthing Token from 1652 is as good an example as any. The token indicates its value on one side and on the other shows a ship, a trait common to virtually every other token in the collection from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

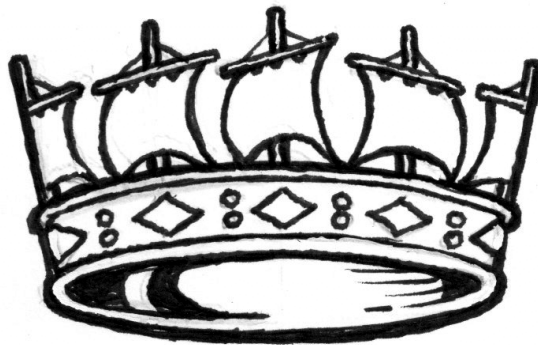


Figure 6. An example of a five mast Naval Crown common on naval tokens of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
(Artist: Gordon Macpherson)

It was not until 1794 and MEC1849 that we find a similar token with the ship image replaced by a naval crown – yet another indication of

how gradually the naval crown came into common usage. Even at this late date, the form of the crown was not standardized, as this token clearly shows 5 masts with sails and no ships' sterns. Yet another contemporary artefact, a small naval sword circa 1780 (WPN1056), shows two naval crowns, both in the modern pattern of interspersed sails and ships sterns, indicating two styles of naval crown in use at the same approximate time.⁵⁰ As further evidence we can look to a Royal Navy publication entitled *Signals for R.N. Convoys and Fighting Instructions* published in 1764. This publication includes a picture of the naval crown and the inscription "Naval Rostral Crown anciently given to officers, etc., who were first to grapple on board an enemy ship"⁵¹ It seems clear that this reference is instructional and indicates that the naval crown was not yet so common a symbol that no explanation of its origin or use would be required.

Before we leave the NMM's collection of coins and medals we will examine one final and far more recent medal with a distinctly Canadian connection. In 1903, the Royal Navy constructed eight King Edward VII class battleships. The lead ship of the series was christened HMS King Edward VII, but the remaining seven ships were named for important areas of the British Empire (HMS Africa, HMS Britannia, HMS Commonwealth, HMS Hibernia, HMS Hindustan, HMS New Zealand and HMS Dominion)⁵². HMS Dominion was completed in 1905 and at some point a commemorative medal was struck in her name (MEC1528). This medal shows a side view of the ship on the obverse and, on the reverse, the Arms of Canada with a naval crown above. Since the Canadian naval Service was not established until 1911, this may be the first example of the naval crown being used in a uniquely Canadian context⁵³.

⁵⁰ P. G. W. ANNIS, *Naval Swords: British and American Naval Edged Weapons 1660-1815* (London 1970) pp. 53-54

⁵¹ Commander A. B. CAMPBELL, *Customs and Traditions of the Royal Navy* (Aldershot 1956) pp. 93-94

⁵² Wikipedia reference available online: King Edward VII Class Battleship. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Edward_VII_class_battleship. Accessed: 5 April 2009.

⁵³ A number of silver artifacts from HMS Dominion, including a silver shield with an early example of the Arms of Canada, are on display in the Wardroom of CFB Esquimalt.

4. Early Heraldic Use of the Naval Crown, 1658-1794

With our examination of the coins and medals of the NMM collection complete, we will now turn our attention to the history of the use of the naval crown in formally heraldic contexts. In these it first appeared as a charge, as a charge on an ordinary or sub-ordinary, as an honourable augmentation, as a crest coronet, as a coronet used in conjunction with supporters and in its use in civic armories. I shall also discuss its use in some more unique historical applications as well.

Papworth provides us with several early examples of the naval crown as a charge. The grant to Lendon of 10 May 1658 is blazoned *Az. A naval crown within an orle of twelve anchors or.*⁵⁴ This is a particularly interesting grant, not only because it was the first in British heraldry to include a naval crown as a charge, but because it was given in the final months before Cromwell's death. The following evidence, referenced to Guillim's *Heraldry* (edition of 1724) indicates that the grant was provided from Charles II's court in Brussels as a reward to Lendon for deserting the Commonwealth with twelve ships:

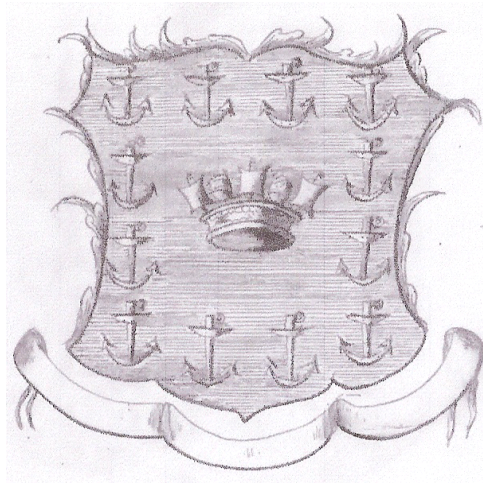


Figure 7. The Lendon grant as illustrated in De la Motte's *Principal, Historical and Allusive Arms*⁵⁵

⁵⁴ John W. PAPWORTH, *An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats of Arms Belonging to Families in Great Britain and Ireland; Forming an Extensive Ordinary of British Armories* (London 1874), p. 592

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Lendon, of Allington in Devonshire, Esq. ... These arms were granted by Sir Edward Walker, Knt. Garter king at arms, by patent, dated at Brussels 1658 to Captain Robert Lendon (**Fig. 7**), on occasion of his being the means of inducing twelve ships of the Parliament's navy (represented by the twelve anchors) to return to their duty, and again embrace the service of their Sovereign, against his revolted subjects.⁵⁶

Another particularly early grant to Sherland, co. Devon in 1668, includes the naval crown as a charge on a canton: *Argent A fess wavy between three lions rampant Azure a canton gules charged with a naval coronet or.*⁵⁷ Sherland's citation in Burke's *General Armory* reads: "Sherland, granted by St. George, Ulster, 1668 to James Sherland of Co. Down [sic], who served Charles II as captain of a ship of war."⁵⁸ The second grant with a naval crown in ten years at this stage of history may suggest a personal preference for the naval crown by either Charles II or his heralds. Its placement on a canton also suggests an honourable augmentation.

In terms of honourable augmentations, the arms of William Carnegie, seventh Earl of Northesk, include: *in chief the word Trafalgar and upon the breast of the Carnegie eagle a naval crown.*⁵⁹ Carnegie had a long and varied career in the Royal Navy and achieved the rank of full admiral. He was third in seniority at Trafalgar after Nelson and Collingwood and is buried beside these men in St. Paul's Cathedral.⁶⁰

The arms of Sir Graham Eden Hamond (the eldest son of Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Nova Scotia and a Commissioner of the Navy at Halifax) include supporters of *dexter, an eagle, sa., regardant, wings close, gorged with a naval coronet, and*

⁵⁶ Phillip DE LA MOTTE, *The principal, historical, and allusive arms, borne by families of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with their respective authorities* (London 1803), p. 329

⁵⁷ PAPWORTH, p. 781

⁵⁸ Sir Bernard BURKE, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 922

⁵⁹ Charles BOUTELL, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular* (London, 1864), p. 436

⁶⁰ Wikipedia reference available online: William Carnegie, 7th Earl of Northesk. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carnegie,_7th_Earl_of_Northesk Accessed 22 October 2009

lined.⁶¹ Hamond entered the books of the Royal Navy at the age of 5 as his father's servant and made Post-Captain at the age of 19. He served at sea during the Napoleonic Wars and eventually became Admiral of the Fleet. Despite his long years at sea, he survived to age 83.⁶²

Boss of Ryton Grove, Durham, was a Captain in the Royal Navy. His arms include a crest *out of a naval cornet ppr. An arm issuing, holding a billet*.⁶³

The arms of Sir Harry Neale-Burrard, contain two crests, one an honourable augmentation granted in 1815: *Out of a naval crown or, a cubit arm, erect, encircled by a branch of oak ppr. The hand grasping a trident, in bend sinister, point downwards, gold*.⁶⁴ Neale-Burrard was a naval officer and Member of Parliament for Lymington from 1790 to 1802. He was both an Admiral and Lord of the Admiralty. Vancouver's Burrard inlet was named in his honour by Captain George Vancouver.⁶⁵

In the corpus of English civic armory, the naval crown also finds use in many examples, including the arms of the Portsmouth City Council which feature a sea unicorn gorged with a naval crown.⁶⁶

Before we leave these historical examples of the use of the naval crown we will conclude with a particularly unique use of the crown by the British Army. In the later stages of the eighteenth century the Royal Navy suffered a shortage of marines to fulfil their normal ship-borne tasks. As a result, a number of line "regiments of foot" were taken aboard navy ships to carry out the normal duties of the marine contingent. As a result of their prowess in battle during these tours, several regiments received a naval crown as a battle honour for display on their regimental colours. Examples include: (1) the 41st (Welsh) Regiment of Foot, which received a naval crown superscribed "12th April 1782" for their services at the Battle of the

⁶¹ Sir Bernard BURKE, *A Selection of Arms Authorized by the Laws of Heraldry* (London 1860) p. 50

⁶² Wikipedia reference available online: Sir Graham Hamond, 2nd Baronet. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_Eden_Hamond Accessed 22 October, 2009

⁶³ Thomas ROBSON, *The British Herald* (Sunderland, 1830). Page numbers are not provided in this book but the references are arranged alphabetically, in this case under **Boss**. An illustration of the Boss arms is also provided in Plate 43, Figure 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* As above, see NEALE-BURRARD, SIR HARRY.

⁶⁵ Wikipedia reference available online: 'Sir Harry Neale-Burrard, 2nd Baronet.' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Harry_Burrard-Neale,_2nd_Baronet; Accessed 22 October 2009.

⁶⁶ Wikipedia reference available online: Portsmouth. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portsmouth>. Accessed 5 April 2009.

Saints;⁶⁷ (2) the 29th Regiment of Foot (Worcester Regiment);⁶⁸ and (3) the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, both of which received a naval crown superscribed "1st June 1794" for their service at the Battle of Ushant.⁶⁹

5. The Use of the Naval Crown in Canada Today

The naval crown finds widespread use in Canada today, particularly with respect to naval affairs. Perhaps the most widespread use of the naval crown is its use as an ensign for ship's badges of the Royal Canadian Navy. In this respect Canada follows the custom of the Royal Navy and most of the Commonwealth navies in using the same general form of naval ships' badges. To the general pattern established for the Royal Navy, Canada adds three maple leaves in base, just as Australia adds aboriginal weapons in base, and New Zealand adds silver ferns in base. India has also carried this tradition forward, although in the case of India, a unique naval badge has been designed to reflect the common ship designs of ancient India.

Formal ships' badges were first introduced in the Royal Navy in 1919, and took the place of unofficial badges that had been, up to this time, left up to the discretion of the ship's commanding officer. Major Charles ffoulkes, a former Master of the Tower Armouries, and later Director of the Imperial War Museum was approached by the Commanding Officer of the new destroyer H.M.S. Tower to design a suitable badge for the ship. As a result of his success in this regard, ffoulkes was appointed Admiralty Advisor on Heraldry and The Ships' Names and Mottoes Committee was established. ffoulkes established the criteria for future names and badges

⁶⁷ A photograph of the regimental arms can be accessed at <http://www.gtj.org.uk/en/large/item/gtj69421/> Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁶⁸ Reference available online: <http://www.worcestershireregiment.com/wr.php?main=inc/colours>. Accessed online 5 April 2009.

⁶⁹ Reference available online: <http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/distinctions/distinctions.html>. The Surreys no longer display the naval crown on their colors, but are entitled to do so. Accessed 5 April 2009.

and, on the basis of his recommendation it was agreed that the naval crown should ensign all Royal Navy ships' badges.⁷⁰

Canada's adoption of ships' badges occurred somewhat later, in 1946, but like the Royal Navy experience, there was a perceived need to replace the informal and often randy cartoon gun-shield art of the Royal Canadian Navy's Second World War fleet with official badges of a more heraldic character.⁷¹ Today, the Directorate of History and Heritage maintains Canadian Forces publication A-AD-200-000/AG-000, which includes, in chapter 6, the policies concerning badges and mottoes for all Canadian Forces organizations. Annex A to this chapter, "Badge Frames", includes twenty-one possible badge frames for use in the Canadian Forces, all of which are ensigned by a Royal Crown with two exceptions: the badge frames for naval formations and ships are ensigned with a naval crown⁷². As this suggests, all of these types of frames are insignial in character, representing a distinct type of ship or naval formation. Three of these are represented below in **Figure 8**.

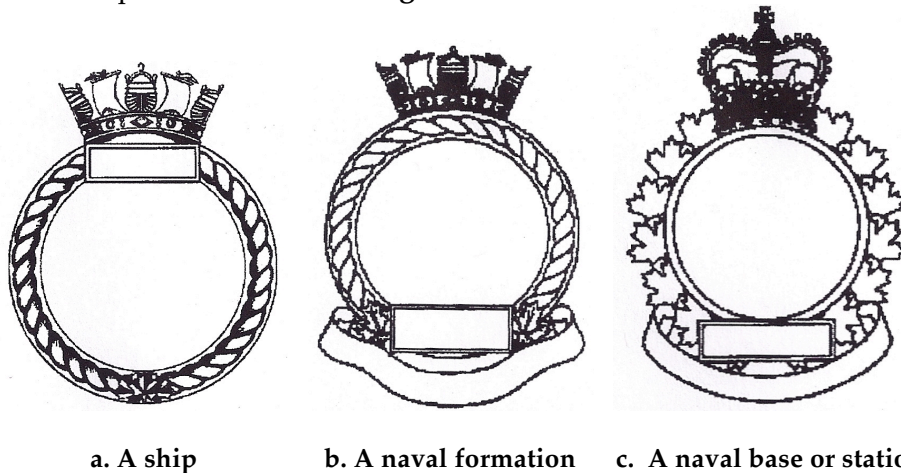


Figure 8. Three Types of Badge-Frame Representing Naval Units of Different Types, including the Two Ensigned by a Naval rather than a Royal Crown

In addition to its use on ships' badges, the naval crown is used in a uniquely Canadian way in Her Majesty's Canadian Ships on the Canadian

⁷⁰ Peter C. SMITH, *Royal Navy Ships' Badges* (St. Ives 1974), p. 10, and Reference available online: <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/training-and-people/the-rn-today/ship's-badges-and-flags/ship's-badges/> Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁷¹ Lt-Cdr. Alan B. BEDDOE, "Symbols and Ships." *The Crownsnest: The Royal Canadian Navy's Magazine*. Vol. 13 No. 10 (August 1961). pp. 5-9

⁷² National Defence publication A-AD-200-000/AG-000; pp. 6-1 to 6A-4.

Naval Ensign. To understand this usage better, it is necessary to provide some historical context to the current situation. Historically, Royal Navy ships flew the White Ensign from the stern along with the Royal Union Flag from the Jack Staff at the bow. The Royal Union Flag was only flown when Royal Navy ships were either in harbour or at anchor between the hours of 8:00 AM (Colours) and sunset. While at sea, only the White Ensign was flown.⁷³ Canadian naval vessels followed this tradition from the inception of the Royal Canadian Navy in 1911, although the Royal Union Flag was quickly replaced by the Canadian Blue Ensign (as a distinctive Canadian flag) at the bow.⁷⁴ This left Canadian naval vessels in the unique position of flying the White Ensign at the stern and the Blue Ensign at the bow.



Figure 9a. The Royal Canadian Naval Ensign, and 9b. The Queen's Colour

With the creation of the National Flag of Canada in 1965, the decision was taken to fly our National Flag from the stern of Canadian Naval Vessels, in keeping with the maritime tradition of most nations outside of the Commonwealth. This left the question of what flag to fly from the jack staff of HMC Ships. To fill this requirement, a uniquely Canadian Naval Jack was designed with the National Flag of Canada in

⁷³ The complete rules for flying the Naval Jack are: (1) When at anchor, moored, or alongside, from 8:00 AM to sunset; (2) When underway on dress ship occasions; (3) Both day and night when underway when wearing, or escorting another warship or merchant vessel wearing the Queen's personal flag or Royal Standard, a foreign Royal or Imperial Standard, the flag of a head of state, or the personal flag of the Governor-General of Canada, and (4) At all ship launchings.

⁷⁴ Canadian Order-in-Council P.C. 2843, 16 Dec 1911, as published in the *Canadian Gazette* 30 Dec 1911.

canton, and the fouled anchor and eagle on the fly ensigned by the naval crown. The fouled anchor with an eagle was the official emblem of Canada's navy (called the 'Maritime Command' before the recent restoration of its old designation 'Royal Canadian Navy'), but the addition of the naval crown has been unique, and was not found in the official **Maritime Command badge**. This same emblem, including the naval crown, was also incorporated into the **Queen's Colour of Maritime Command** (now once again the Royal Canadian Navy). In keeping with the decision to reinstitute a number of traditional military practices, 'on May 5, 2013, the Government of Canada restored a standard Commonwealth naval practice by authorizing RCN vessels to fly a distinctive Canadian Naval Ensign and fly the National Flag as the Naval Jack. Essentially, the flag previously known as the Canadian Naval Jack became the Canadian Naval Ensign, whereas the National Flag became the Canadian Naval Jack.'⁷⁵

Given the prominence of the naval crown in Canadian naval affairs, it is interesting to note that it has never found a place in naval rank insignia. Historically, a Petty Officer's rank insigne was two crossed anchors with a royal crown superimposed, and the cap badges of all ranks of both the Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy were ensigned by a royal crown rather than the naval crown. Similarly, the buttons that indicated the rank of a Chief Petty Officer were emblazoned with a royal crown.

Following the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1968 (by which the Navy was transformed into Maritime Command), a unified rank structure and a common green uniform were imposed. Nevertheless, a comparable use of royal crowns, based on that traditional in the Army, was maintained. Since then a Petty Officer, First Class, has worn an image of the royal crown as his or her rank badge, and a Chief Petty Officer Second Class that crown surrounded by the ancient Roman crown of laurels. Chief Petty Officers First Class wear the Canadian Royal Achievement as their badge of rank, and Command Chief Petty Officers wear the same emblem embraced in base by laurel branches.

By an act of 16 August 2011 the union of the armed forces was ended, and what had been Maritime Command was restored to its distinct legal status and its traditional designation as the Royal Canadian Navy.

⁷⁵ Reference available online:

<http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/navy-life/rcn-ensign/rcn-ensign-backgrounder.page>. Accessed online 2 December 2014

The restoration of traditional naval uniforms, rank-titles, and the insignia of commissioned ranks soon followed, but the rank-insignia for warrant- and non-commissioned officers established after unification has been maintained.



Fig. 10. The Naval Coronet in the Badges of (a) the Regular Naval Officer Corps and (b) H.M.C.S. Venture, the Naval Officer Training Centre

In contrast, the naval crown has also been adopted as a particular recognition symbol for the **naval officer corps**. The blazer badge of a **regular naval officer** in Canada (**Fig. 10a**) is a silver maple leaf charged with a red naval crown, while **reserve force officers** use the same pattern but with a blue naval crown. This distinguishing mark of the officer corps is seen in the ship's badge of H.M.C.S. **Venture**, the Naval Officer Training Center (**Fig. 10b**), which is blazoned *Barry wavy argent and azure on which a pile of the first fimbriated or, charged with a maple leaf gules bearing a naval crown or, sails argent*.⁷⁶

The naval crown also finds a place in the modern arms of many Canadian individuals with naval associations. The arms of Captain Thomas **Pullen** FRHSC (Hon)⁷⁷ are an obvious example of the use of a naval crown as a charge: *Azure on a Bend Argent between in chief a Maple Leaf and in base a Naval Crown Or three Escallops Gules, the middle Escallop charged with a Mullet of the Second for difference*. (**Fig. 11a**) The arms of Peter **Gardner**⁷⁸ are an example of arms granted by the Canadian Heraldic Authority:

⁷⁶ J. Graeme ARBUCKLE, *Badges of the Canadian Navy*. (Halifax 1987) p. 196

⁷⁷ The Pullen arms are, in fact, English arms granted to a prominent Canadian Naval Officer – the same individual who initiated the process of adopting ship's badges for HMC Ships. See BEDDOE, *Canadian Heraldry*, p. 5 for details.

⁷⁸ Reference available online: http://www.heraldry.ca/top_en/top_rollx.htm GARDNER, PETER A. Accessed 5 April 2009.

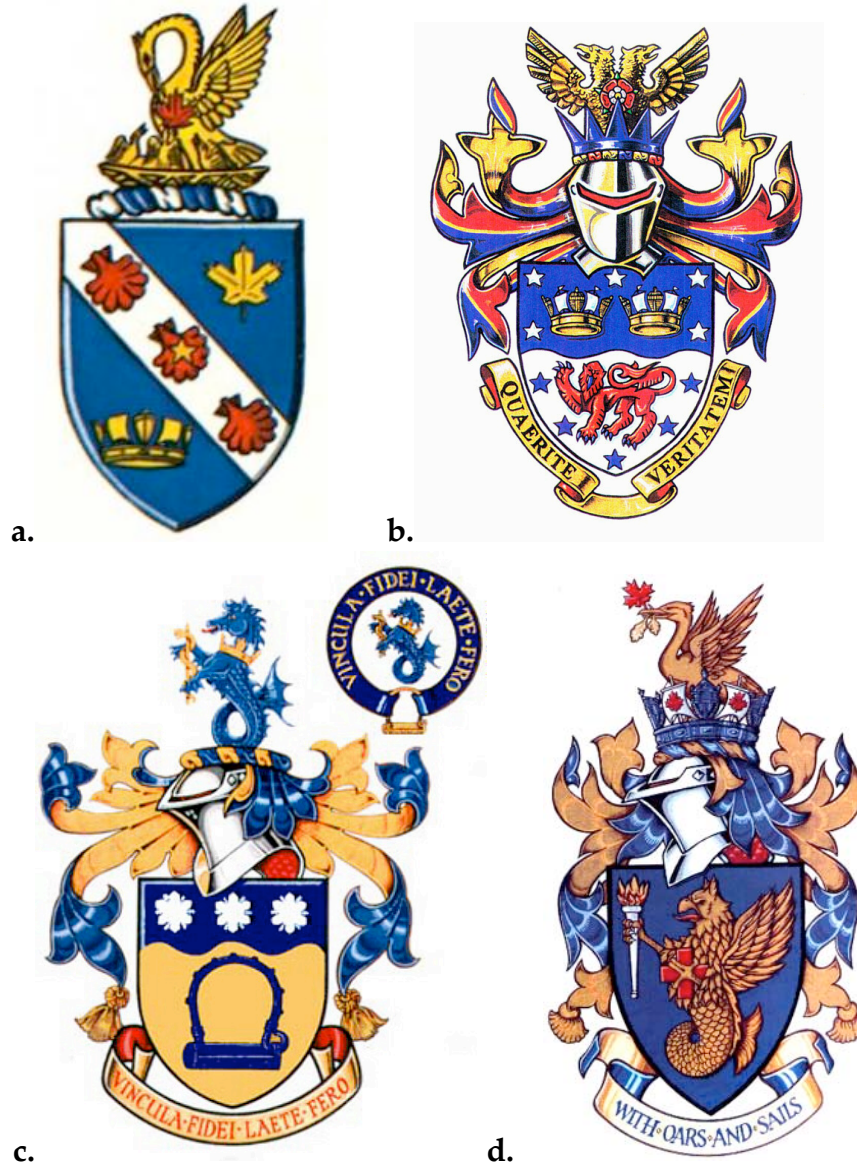


Figure 11. The Use of a Naval Crown in the Arms of Canadian Naval Officers.
 a. Pullen b. Gardner c. Greaves d. Davis

Per fess wavy Azure and Argent in chief two naval crowns Or sails Argent and in base a lion passant guardant Gules armed and langued Azure all within an orle of ten mullets counterchanged. (Fig. 11b) Other Canadians have used the naval crown in their crests, for example Lt. Kevin Greaves FRHSC: A seahorse rampant Azure, gorged with a naval crown Or, sails Argent, and holding between

*its forelegs, a rod of Aesculapius Or.*⁷⁹ (**Fig. 11c**) Another interesting Canadian variation on the naval crown is found in the arms granted to Cmdr. Mathwin **Davis**, which include *a naval crown Azure sails Argent each charged with a maple leaf Gules.*⁸⁰ (**Fig. 11d**)

Canadian corporate entities of various sorts with some significant tie to the Navy have also chosen to include a naval crown in their armories or insignia. Thus we find naval crowns in the arms of the Town of **Esquimalt** (**Fig. 12a**)⁸¹ and gorging the supporters and set on the mace of the city of **Halifax** (**Fig. 12b**),⁸² the home ports respectively of Canada's West and East Coast fleets. One particularly interesting use of crowns, including the naval crown, is found in the arms of the **United Services Institute of Nanaimo**, British Columbia (**Fig. 12c**). This organization's arms include a naval crown to represent the navy, an astral crown for the air force, and a mural crown for the army.⁸³

6. Conclusion

As was stated at the outset of this paper, the naval crown typically receives a cursory treatment in most heraldic textbooks. I have attempted to demonstrate that the naval crown has a fascinating and far-reaching history, which began with the ancient Greeks and Romans and continues to this day. The crown appears to have fallen out of use during the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the seventeenth century, and we may never know the exact circumstances that brought about its re-emergence. However, we can at least understand the circumstances that created the environment for its re-emergence, and with this in mind, appreciate its growing use, both in English emblematics, and in those of Canada today.

⁷⁹ Reference available online: http://www.heraldry.ca/top_en/top_rollx.htm GREAVES, K. W. Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁸⁰ Reference available online: http://www.heraldry.ca/top_en/top_rollx.htm DAVIS, CMDR. S. MATHWIN. Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁸¹ Reference available online: <http://www.esquimalt.ca/businessDevelopment/communityProfile/townshipSymbols.aspx> Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁸² Reference available online: http://www.halifax.ca/community/HalifaxCityHall/coat_of_arms_and_mace.html Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁸³ Reference available online: <http://www.gg.ca/heraldry/pub-reg/project.asp?lang=e&ProjectID=570> Accessed 5 April 2009.

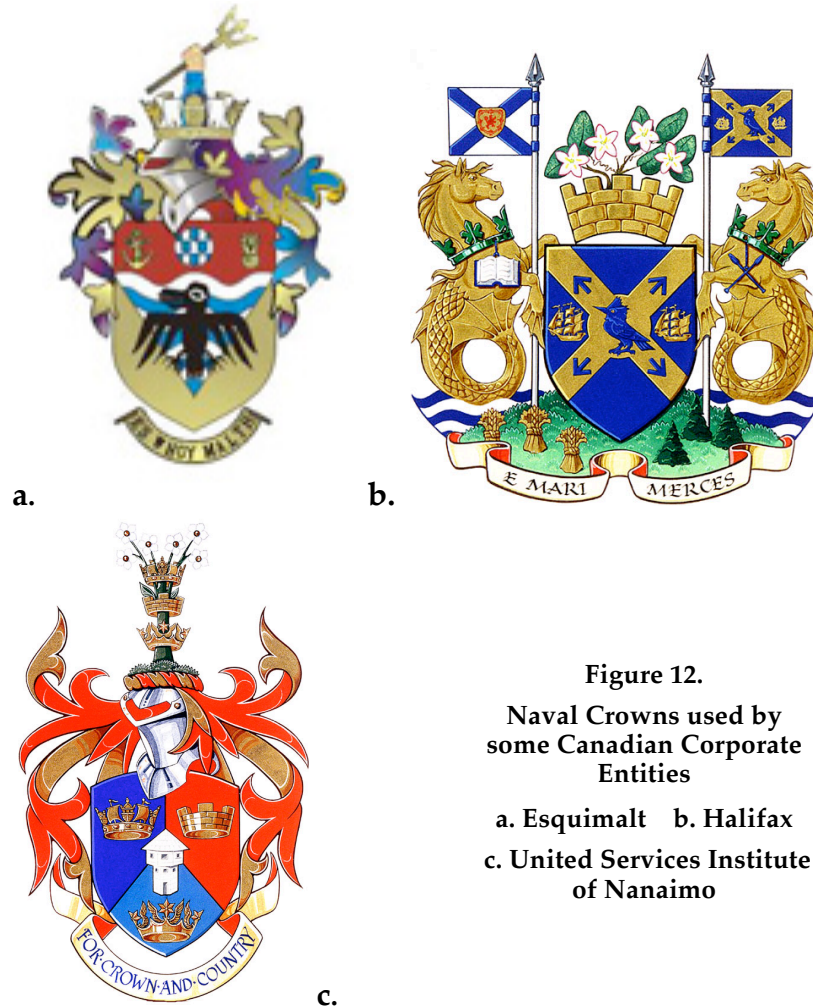


Figure 12.
Naval Crowns used by
some Canadian Corporate
Entities
a. Esquimalt b. Halifax
c. United Services Institute
of Nanaimo

English summary: *In this article, Scott Hanwell examines the history of the use of different forms of naval crown, first in Greek and Roman Antiquity, and then since their revival by the Dutch in 1653, in the Netherlands, Denmark, the British Empire and Commonwealth, and finally Canada. He demonstrates that before its assignment as a charge in an English grant of arms of 1658, it represented victory at sea, but that since then in British and Commonwealth contexts it has represented some sort of association with the navy, especially in the badges of ships and naval formations and institutions, and in the arms of naval bases, institutions, and officers.*

Sommaire en français: *Dans cet article, M. Scott Hanwell examine l'histoire de l'utilisation des types de couronne navale, afin de représenter, aux temps des Grecs et des Romains une victoire navale, mais depuis 1658 n'importe quelle association avec l'armée de mer (ou marine), chez les Britanniques et les Canadiens, surtout dans les badges et les armoiries.*