

The British Army Uniform

The British Army uniform developed along roughly the same lines as uniforms in other European armies. Its signature colour had become standardised as red for both infantry (foot) and cavalry (mounted) units by the end of the 17th century, except for the Royal Horse Guards and Royal Artillery who wore dark blue; then khaki (for everyday wear) and blue (for parade) in the 1930s. Netherwear and equipment followed European fashion. Exotic costume, such as that of hussars and zouaves, was either embraced late and toned down, or not embraced at all.

carry on luggage size The history of the British Army uniform is notable for an early and even eager embrace of camouflage in the form of khaki during the late 19th century. This reflected the exigencies of colonial war and the freedom allowed, and taken, by many of the officers who fought it. But it may also have had an aesthetic impulse. Armies in Europe were settling on mostly dark blue tunics and black equipment as a halfway house between display and practicality. This was not possible for the British army, wedded as it was to red tunics which in turn required white equipment to look pleasing. To become less conspicuous, the British army had no choice but to abandon red altogether on active service.

mother of pearl button British army uniforms currently exist in several grades, which are worn depending on the requirements of a unit or individual, ranging from ceremonial uniforms to combat dress. While there are officially fifteen different grades (or 'Numbers'), many of these are rarely worn or phased out altogether. Note that uniform distinctions can vary greatly from one Regiment or Corps to another, and the following descriptions are a generalisation.

Full Dress is the most elaborate order worn by the British Army. It was withdrawn from general issue in 1914; the Household Division resumed wearing their scarlet full dress in 1920, but for the remainder of the Army, red coats were only authorised for wear by regimental bands and in mess dress or on certain limited social or ceremonial occasions. The reason for not generally reintroducing the distinctive full dress was primarily financial, as the scarlet cloth required expensive red cochineal dye.

coat and hat hook Full dress is now rarely worn except by the Foot Guards and the Household Cavalry. It is issued at public expense to these units; other units may obtain and wear Full Dress (in their pre-1914 pattern if no modern order is prescribed) for use in historical displays, when acting as ushers or lining parties at weddings, and when acting as a sword guard to the Royal Horse Artillery.[2] However, these uniforms must be purchased and maintained from non-public funds.[3]

Young Teens in Pantyhose Each regiment or corps which commonly wears Full Dress prescribes its own unique style, approved by the Army Dress Committee.[5] They are generally a modified version of the pre-1914 uniforms. In the case of units created since the First World War, such as the Army Air Corps, the Full Dress order incorporates both traditional and modern elements.

Full Dress is worn whenever a parade is attended or ordained by the monarch or a member of the British Royal Family, including ceremonial parades, State funerals, and public duties around royal residences (such as the Changing of the Guard). It is worn by all members of the Household Division attending the Lord Mayor's procession, and also when participating in guards of honour or recruiting drives.

No. 1 Dress, sometimes referred to as "blues", are universal ceremonial uniform which is almost consistent throughout the British Army. No. 1 Dress is only worn on ceremonial occasions, and, in some regiments, by the Duty Officer. It is also regularly required to be worn by a short list of other units, senior staff officers (above the rank of Major-General), and officers appointed as aides to the Royal Family.[7] The order is not generally issued to all units, with the khaki No. 2 Dress functioning as the main parade uniform.

Hart Schaffner Marx suit For most regiments and corps No. 1 dress consists of a dark blue tunic and trousers (or skirt) with a coloured peaked cap. Different units are distinguished by the colouring of the cap, piping on the tunic and of the welts or stripes on the trousers, as well as badges. There are some exceptions: the tunic and trousers of The Rifles and Royal Gurkha Rifles are Rifle green and those of the King's Royal Hussars are crimson, and cavalry regiments wear shoulder chains in place of shoulder straps. Officers may wear a waist sash of Crimson, Silver and Crimson Silk, or a cross belt depending on the their Regimental Dress regulations and whether or not they are carrying a ceremonial sword. Other ranks wear a white buff belt with a Regimental pattern locket, with a buff bayonet frog if carrying arms.

Arsenic and Old Lace The peaked cap is not worn by all regiments; berets are worn in lieu by the Royal Tank Regiment, Army Air Corps, Parachute Regiment, Special Air Service and Intelligence Corps.[8] Berets are also worn by other ranks of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Royal Welsh in which feather hackles are displayed, recalling the plumes formerly worn on the full dress Busby.[8] The Royal Regiment of Scotland wear a regimental Glengarry with cock feathers taken from the former ceremonial uniform of the Royal Scots, the Royal Irish Regiment wear the Caubeen, while the Brigade of Gurkhas wear a round Kilmarnock cap.

Originally issued as a field uniform (see Service Dress (British Army)), this uniform is worn for most formal duties by all units. No.2 dress consists, for most corps and regiments, of a khaki jacket, shirt and tie with trousers or a skirt. Head dress is the same as that worn with No.1 dress, with the exception of the Brigade of Gurkha's, who wear the Slouch hat and The Queen's Royal Hussars who wear their tent hat (the only head dress worn without a cap badge or other distinction). The Royal Regiment of Scotland wear a special pattern of jacket with a cut away front, worn with a regimental tartan kilt or trews. Coloured trousers are worn by some units: crimson by the King's Royal Hussars and dark green by the Royal Irish Regiment and Royal Dragoon Guards.

Astro Boy T Shirt Officers are required to purchase their service dress, being provided with a Uniform Allowance to offset this and other uniform purchases. The pattern and material differs between Regiments: for instance the service dress of the Foot Guards and Honourable Artillery Company is darker than the 'standard', while the service dress worn by officers of 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards is of "Bays" pattern cavalry twill.

Regimental distinctions worn on No.2 dress can include collar dogs (sometimes with coloured cloth backings), coloured lanyards worn on the shoulder, and arm badges. Regimental buttons are worn; for most units these are of gold or silver colour, with black buttons worn by The Rifles and Bronze by the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Officers and Warrant Officers wear a leather Sam Browne belt (that of 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards is of pig skin which is not to be highly polished) or a cross belt. Infantry Warrant Officers and SNCOs wear a red sash over the right shoulder to the hip and Soldiers wear a white or black plastic waist belt with a plate buckle displaying the regimental badge.

Every regular army soldier is issued with one suit of No.2 dress. In general, issue of this order of dress to units of the Territorial Army is limited to officers, warrant officers and sergeants, with pools of khaki uniforms being held for use by junior ranks for special occasions