

Uniform

The British Army issued a number of patterns of combat uniform that never fully replaced the previous version.

General

Unless noted, jackets have four large pockets on the front, a pen pocket on the left sleeve and a first aid dressing pouch on the right sleeve. The wrist has velcro tabs for fastening. Draw cords are available at the hem and waist and the zip is full length. Shirts have two small breast pockets and are in OG. Combat trousers have a rear pocket and two large map pockets along with the traditional two hip pockets. Trousers are in DPM if combats or OG if lightweight (which has only 1 map pocket on the left). Flies are zipped. The jersey heavy wool (usually known as the "wooley pully") is only in OG and has no pockets. All pockets are buttoned. Note that many experienced soldiers tailored their kit to move or add pockets, etc. All shirts, jackets and jumpers have two epaulettes. Helmet covers were issued in DPM, desert camm, UN blue and Arctic. The belt was a green plastic belt (which was often replaced by a 58 pattern webbing belt in the field as this was much more comfortable).

68 Pattern

Thick and heavy trousers and jackets were popular even though this was the oldest pattern (the trousers were especially popular with cavalry for the extra thickness. The combat trousers added a field dressing pouch on the front which was all but unusable as it was very badly placed when prone! Pockets were patch pattern and hold less than later versions. The jacket included a button storm flap over the zip and a separate button on hood was available. The jacket had buttoned cuffs instead of velcro. Boots were the low leg Directly Moulded Sole (although these were no longer worn by anyone by 1995 and none were available from stores).

85 Pattern

These were a lighter issue which had the benefit of drying faster. Pockets were larger but were in early versions badly attached and were known to fall off if holding a heavy load (e.g. A belt of 7.62)! Boots became the Boots, Combat High. NBC suits were over the head in OG. The jacket needed an extra button sewing on at the rear of the collar to use the detachable hood.

90 Pattern

An improved version of the 85 pattern these were a darker colour (although the first batch was a strange orange colour instead of brown). Final versions of the lightweights deleted the map pocket as an economy measure. The jacket incorporated two large zip pockets behind the upper pockets but deleted the first aid dressing pouch, removed the ability to fit the hood and lost the storm flap over the zip. NBC suits change to DPM and after an initial issue quickly changed to full length zip.

95 Pattern

A brand new issue this changed the shirt to DPM, added a fleece (at first OG but later DPM) with two slash pockets, deleted the jumper (after an attempt to replace it with a newer smarter version) – many soldiers retained the older jumper though, deleted the lightweight trousers (as the trousers were thinner to fulfil both roles), moved the epaulettes to the front of the chest and introduced a lighter weight material. The jacket retained the zip pockets but lost the pen pouch (incorporating pen holders in the shirt and left zip pocket of the jacket). The storm flap returned with an epaulette attached. Early versions of 95 pattern kit wore out very quickly. Pocket buttons became taped not sewn. Norwegian roll neck shirts became an issue item (although they had been worn since the early 1980s as a private purchase item). Issue boot became the Combat Assault Boot (although many patterns were worn bought as private



Illustration 1: PWRR soldiers in Soldier 95 pattern kit. Both carry SA80A1s. The man on the left wears DPM 90 pattern webbing whilst the man on the right wears an issue chest rig.

purchase). The belt was changed to a webbing pattern (identical to the PLCE web belt but with standard buckles - many in fact still have the rear belt loops) which was much more comfortable.

98 Pattern

The wartime economy version introduced from mid 1997. Changes from Soldier 95 were, the fleece lost the pockets and once again became OG, trousers lost the internal drawcords at the ankles, shirts were frequently without pockets and some cuffs were velcro as opposed to buttons, the jacket lost the internal pen pocket and the quality throughout the kit was decidedly poorer. Boots were simplified and returned in style to the older combat high boots, losing the shock absorption and were less waterproof. Note that this pattern is a game invention and was never issued in reality.

Desert pattern

90 and 95 pattern versions were issued in a two colour desert cam. Boots (when available) were a special brown suede pair. NBC suits were available in desert cam.

Jungle pattern

Similar to 85 pattern in a fine cotton. No jacket was issued, just a shirt (with field dressing and pen pouches). Replaced by 95 pattern. Boots were a fabric and rubber boot (in green to about 1990 then in black).

Arctic pattern

A special thick quilted lined parka (similar to but heavier than the SAS/Marine pattern) was issued as was a padded field cap with ear flaps. Thin over whites were issued. Arctic mittens with separate trigger fingers rounded off the kit.

ECW (Extreme Cold Weather) jacket and trousers

A thick quilted jacket and trousers was issued with 65 pattern and this was unchanged until deleted with the introduction of 95 pattern.

Coveralls

Available in OG for general use and for tank crews in black. Only the black came in fire resistant versions. Features a pen pocket and two small chest pockets. Press stud fastening.

Specialist jackets and trousers

A number of specialist jackets were issued including:

Para – issued to the Parachute Rgt. As per normal but thick woollen cuffs and an external “nappy” fastener for parachute jumps. Pockets had press studs to reduce catching on parachute cords. Only in DPM. Often replaced by SAS smocks by members of the Parachute Rgt and often worn by non paras.

SAS – very popular across the army but only issued to the SAS. Finer cotton made it wind proof. Pockets were larger (12” deep on the jacket lower pockets). Epilletes were only on the chest. The 95 version deleted the first aid dressing pouch and reduced the size of the pen pocket but added the two zip pockets and added a button to secure the hood. A desert version was introduced but was rare.

Marine smock – only in DPM, issued to the RM and often confused with the SAS smock. Identical to it but includes an epaulette on the rear and the hood is wired (although these were often inserted/removed to taste).

Army Air Corps – Differently angled zipped pockets and clear leg pocket on the trousers. Designed to be more accessible in the aircraft restraints.

RAF Uniform

This was identical although OG trousers, shirts and jumpers were in blue. DPM kit was unchanged. Berets were RAF blue. The RAF regiment wore standard army uniform. Rank was usually shown by slides even for NCOs.

Naval Uniform

This was as per the comments for the RAF but in Navy blue. Royal Marines wore standard army uniform with green berets.

Army Forms of Dress

Full Dress

Full dress was rarely worn except by the Foot Guards and the Household Cavalry, to whom it was issued at public expense. The principal occasions on which full dress was to be worn by the household troops are: on ceremonial parades attended by a member of the Royal Family, by guards of honour, for public duties, in the Lord Mayor of London's procession. In the Winter months, the scarlet tunics are covered by grey Greatcoats.

In addition, all regular army bands are issued with one set of home service full dress. The patterns for the band uniforms are agreed by the regiment or corps, with the approval of the Army Dress Committee. They are generally a modified version of the pre-1914 uniforms. In the case of some units created since the First World War, such as the Army Air Corps, a uniform has been devised incorporating traditional and modern elements.



This dress was put in abeyance from 1st June 1997. From the first day of the war troops on public duties in London changed over into combats.

No.1: Temperate ceremonial uniform



No.1 dress "blues" are only worn on ceremonial occasions, and, in some regiments, by the Duty Officer. The uniform is not generally issued, with the khaki No.2 dress replacing it as the main parade uniform. As for full dress this was abandoned on 1st June 1997, although cadets at Sandhurst who had been issued it continued to wear it to their passing off parade.

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 distinctions: for example, the tunic and trousers of Royal Green Jackets, Light Infantry and Royal Gurkha Rifles are Rifle green, cavalry regiments wear shoulder chains in place of shoulder straps, and the overalls (trousers) of the King's Royal Hussars are crimson. The

peaked cap is not worn by all regiments: berets are worn in lieu some units such as the Parachute Regiment and the Army Air Corps.

No.2: Service dress (temperate parade uniform)



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 Gurkhas, 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 Scottish regiments 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.

Pre war officers were 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. Once the war started a pool was established to issue in the circumstances that required it, although initially many officers did purchase their own.

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 Royal Green Jackets, the Light Infantry. 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.

Pre-war every regular army soldier was issued with one suit of No.2 dress. In general, issue of this order of dress to units of the Territorial Army was limited to officers, warrant officers and sergeants, with pools of khaki uniforms being held for use by junior ranks for special occasions. This was also suspended from 1st June 1997 although it is still a permitted dress for those officers who own it.

No.3: Warm weather ceremonial uniform

No.3 dress is the warm weather equivalent of No. 1 dress worn in specified overseas stations. Formerly it comprised an all white high collared tunic and trousers worn with the coloured No.1 dress cap. Since the 1970s it has consisted of a white linen tunic, cut in a similar fashion to the No.1 dress jacket. Head dress, trousers, footwear and badges are generally as for No. 1 dress. Widely worn during the 1950s and 1960s (when Britain still maintained significant garrisons in tropical stations) this uniform is now usually restricted to military attaches and a few bands.

No.3 dress was issued temporarily, being withdrawn from the units on leaving the station. The band of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment was entitled to a permanent issue of No.3 dress. This dress was also abandoned on 1st June 1997.

No.4: Warm weather Service Dress (officers only)

Issued to officers on first posting to a warm weather area: the uniform is similar to No.2 dress but in a stone coloured polyester/wool worsted mix. No.4 dress may be worn on formal occasions when not on parade with troops.

When officers are taking part in parades and formations with other ranks in warm weather areas, they wear either No.3 or No.6 dress. This dress was also abandoned on 1st June 1997.



No.5: Desert combat dress

Desert combat clothing is listed as: bush hat, jacket and trousers and is issued to soldiers posted to Cyprus and the Middle East. It is in the desert pattern camouflage. Initial versions had an epaulette on each shoulder, later versions changed this to a single one on the chest.

No.6: Warm weather parade uniform (bush jacket)

The "bush jacket" uniform (in Australia, this is known as the "safari uniform"). It consists of a tan bush-style 4-button jacket worn with or without a shirt and tie underneath and tan trousers. It is worn by all ranks for parades and

formations (as with No. 2 Dress), unless No. 3 dress is worn, and by ORs for all other occasions. From June 1997 this was no longer issued but those troops who had it retained it.

No.7: Warm weather barrack dress

The tropical shirt-and-trousers uniform, consisting of a tan long-sleeve shirt worn with No2 dress trousers (kilt or trews for Scottish regiments), stable belt and regimental headgear. With the withdrawal of No2 dress this was abandoned.



No.8: Temperate combat dress

DPM shirt and trousers, temperate pattern or DPM field jacket (smock) and trousers, worn with beret, helmet or camouflaged hat. Working headdress is normally worn, which is typically a beret. Troops from other services, regiments or corps on attachment to units with distinctive coloured berets often wear those berets (with their own cap badge). Colonels, brigadiers and generals usually continue to wear the beret of the regiment or corps to which they used to belong with the cap badge distinctive to their rank.

The beret will often be replaced with the Combat Helmet, covered in DPM material. However, in jungle or warm weather conditions, the helmet is often replaced with a DPM bush hat - or equally in cold

conditions, a DPM peaked hat (either a cold weather cap with ear flaps or a temperate version without), occasionally a rolled woollen tube known as a cap comforter, or other specialised head gear. When the British Army finds itself in peacekeeping roles, regimental headdress is worn (where the tactical situation allows) in preference to the helmet or DPM hat, in order to appear less hostile to local civilians.

Some Regiments and Corps wear a stable belt in No 8 dress whilst others restrict its use to Nos 13 and 14 Dress. The stable belt is a wide belt, made of a tough fabric. It is fastened with a set of buckles on the wearer's left hand side (in some units to their front or for WFR to the right), or with a metal plate at the front bearing regimental or formation insignia. The fabric of the belt itself is in regimental colours, either a single colour or striped along its length. The stable belt dates back to a time when soldiers in cavalry units wore similar belts to carry necessary equipment for looking after the horses. It has since become much more formalised and not restricted to cavalry units.

On exercises and operations the stable belt replaced with a plain green field belt, plastic until the 95 pattern when it became the same material as the PLCE belt (although many soldiers used a 58 pattern belt in the field prior to this).

No.9: Tropical Combat Dress

This was the previous tropical issue kit. With the introduction of Soldier 95 it was no longer needed as this fulfilled the role. As a result the tropical dress was abandoned.

No.10: Temperate mess dress

Short Jacket, with which men wear trousers or a kilt, and women a long skirt. Normally worn by the rank of Sergeant upwards for formal functions, its colours can vary greatly from unit to unit but generally match the traditional full dress of the regiment or corps. Thus jackets can be scarlet, dark blue or green with lapels and waistcoats in regimental colours. A private purchase item this is very rarely encountered today.

No.11: Warm weather mess dress

A white jacket is substituted for the coloured one of temperate mess dress. Waistcoats are not worn. Even rarer than No10 dress.

No.12: Protective clothing

This covers all the odds and ends such as coveralls, chef's whites, etc. that are specialist to role.

No.13: Temperate barrack dress

Trousers and shirt from No.2 dress with pullover and stable belt or barrack trousers and green shirt. Some Regiments officers and WOs may wear coloured pullovers in place of the green pattern, The following regimental patterns and colours are authorised

- * Grey/blue v-neck: Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
- * Grey/blue/green knit: Queen's Royal Lancers
- * Grey/brown v-neck: 1st the Queen's Dragoon Guards
- * Grey/green v-neck: Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
- * Green v-neck: Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, 307 (South Nottinghamshire Hussars Yeomanry) Battery RA (V)
- * Lincoln green v-neck: 68 (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (V)
- * Pale green v-neck: Royal Dragoon Guards
- * Dark green: Queen's Royal Hussars
- * Emerald green v-neck: Royal Army Dental Corps
- * Brunswick green v-neck: 9th/12th Royal Lancers
- * Lovat green v-neck: Royal Yeomanry
- * Green fleck v-neck: Royal Wessex Yeomanry
- * Lovat green and red fleck v-neck: 70 (Essex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (V)
- * Black: Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Army Chaplains Department
- * Black v-neck: Staffordshire Regiment, 265 (Kent and County of London Yeomanry) Support Squadron (V)
- * Navy/corvette blue: Royal Artillery
- * Dark blue: 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (V)
- * Dark blue v-neck: A (London Scottish) Company, The London Regiment
- * Storm blue v-neck: Queen's Own Yeomanry



- * Light blue/green fleck: Light Dragoons
- * Maroon: Royal Army Veterinary Corps
- * Maroon v-neck: Royal Army Medical Corps
- * Brown/crimson/green/black with crimson shoulder and elbow pads: King's Royal Hussars
- * Red heather/London brick: Cheshire Regiment
- * Mid brown v-neck: Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry

The pullover is used in other colours by the other services (navy blue for the Royal Navy, and blue-grey for the Royal Air Force).

This dress is no longer used with the withdrawal of No2 dress trousers and barrack trousers.

No.14: Shirt Sleeve Order

As for No.13, but with the shirt sleeves rolled up to above elbow level. The pullover is not worn.