

INTRODUCTION

Uniform is issued to cadets on a temporary basis: it belongs to the Royal Air Force throughout the time that you loan it, which is until you hand it back in at the end of your cadet career, or when you outgrow it. It is of utmost importance to **look after your uniform** until it is handed in. Responsibility lies with the **cadet**, *not* their parents: it is the cadet who signs the loan card. It is also good practice to learn how to iron and look after your kit **yourself**. If you get into the habit of getting parents, grandparents or anybody else to look after it for you, when you go on an Annual Camp, you will find that you cannot look after your own kit, and so will score very low on inspections.

This guide will provide you with information on **how to iron and care for uniform** properly, as well as how to **polish shoes and boots**.

UNIFORM MODES



RAF No 2 (Light blues)

- Beret
- Wedgwood blue shirt
- Black tie (tied in a Windsor knot)
- RAF blue trousers / skirt
- Black socks* / barely black tights*
- Brassard
- Blue belt
- Parade shoes*
- RAF blue jumper (in winter months)



RAF No 2C (Dark blues)

- Beret
- Dark blue shirt
- Trousers
- Black socks*
- Brassard
- Blue belt
- Parade shoes*
- RAF blue jumper (in winter months)



RAF No 3 (Greens)

- Beret
- Olive green (OG) t-shirt*
- DPM shirt[†]
- DPM trousers[†]
- Olive green belt[†]
- Thick black / olive green socks*
- Black assault boots*
- DPM smock (in winter months)[†]

* denotes items which are not issued from RAF stores, and must be obtained at private expense

[†] denotes items which may not be issued, and may need to be obtained at private expense

IRONING

Before you start ironing, make sure you have everything ready to iron. You will need:

Iron • Ironing board • Clean tea towel • Small jug of water • The items for ironing

If you have never ironed before, it may be a good idea to ask an adult to help you. Remember: irons are **hot**, and will burn you if you touch the plate when it is switched on, and for a while after it has been turned off. If in doubt do not touch it, ever.

When you are ready, set up the ironing board, and **after** checking that the iron has sufficient water in the reservoir, plug in the iron. It should be set between •• and ••• (a medium to high temperature).

SHIRTS

All uniform shirts are ironed in the same way, with the exception of DPM shirts, which are ironed in the same way as the blue shirts, with one minor difference. The below procedure is the best order in which to iron shirts:

1. Unbutton the epaulettes on the shoulders (blue shirts) or on the chest (DPM shirts). Iron these flat from the reverse side.
2. Iron the collar of the shirt from the reverse side.
3. Unbutton cuff buttons and lay the sleeve flat on the ironing board. With the **seam** at the bottom edge of the sleeve, when ironed, a **crease** should naturally occur at the centre of the sleeve from the shoulder, to the cuff (see figure 1).

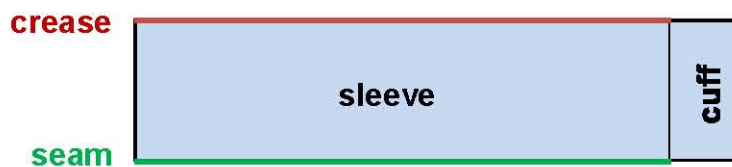


Figure 1: *ironing the sleeve*

4. Unbutton (and unzip for DPM shirts) the front of the shirt, and iron one side of the front at a time. It may be necessary to iron on the reverse side of buttons. Make sure pocket flaps are ironed flat, and that the whole shirt from the shoulder to the bottom seam is crease-free.
5. Iron the back of the shirt, again ensuring that the whole surface is ironed flat and crease-free.
6. **DPM SHIRTS ONLY:** The collar must be ironed flat against the chest as shown in figure 2:



Figure 2: *DPM shirt collar*

TROUSERS / SKIRTS

Blue and DPM trousers are ironed in the same way:

1. There should be a crease running down the front of the trouser leg from the waist line to the bottom seam. On the front, at the waist, there should be a small pleat, as a guide as to where to start: the crease should run from there to the bottom of the leg.
2. There should be a similar crease at the back of the trousers. Once the front crease is in place, placing the trousers on the ironing board should give a clue as to where to iron the back crease.
3. There should be no creases elsewhere on the trousers.

Skirts should be ironed flat all the way around, with no creases ironed in anywhere.

OTHER ITEMS

Brassard: The brassard should be ironed flat, and no creases should be ironed into it (see figure 3)

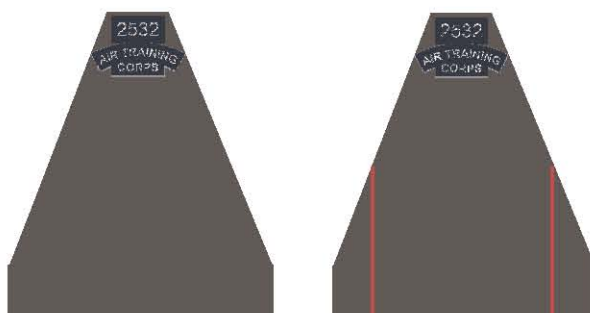


Figure 3: *Correctly ironed brassard (left); incorrectly ironed brassard with creases ironed in (right)*

Jumper: It may be necessary to iron the shoulder and elbow patches and the epaulettes of the RAF blue jumper after washing. Care should be taken not to damage the wool of the jumper itself.

DPM smock: Again, as with the jumper, it may be necessary to iron the smock after washing. Any creases made during the washing process should be ironed out.

OG t-shirt: This should be ironed flat like a normal t-shirt.

POLISHING

Before you start polishing, make sure you have everything ready. You will need:

Kiwi black polish • Two polishing brushes (on and off) • Old toothbrush
Old t-shirt (will be destroyed) • Small jug of water • The items for polishing

It is probably a good idea to line the area in which you will be polishing with old newspaper, so you don't get polish on the floor.

One brush should be allocated "on", i.e. it will only be used for applying the polish; the other "off", i.e. it will only be used for buffing the polish off boot. It is a good idea to label the brushes unless they are a different colour.

ASSAULT BOOTS

Assault boots can be polished simply using brushes and polish:

1. Using the "on" brush, apply polish to the whole leather surface of both boots.

2. Using the toothbrush, make sure that the gap between the leather of the boot and the rubber sole (the welt) is blackened.
3. Using the “off” brush, buff the whole surface of the boot and the welt.

PARADE SHOES

Male parade shoes should have a highly polished toecap, which is bulled to a mirror shine; the remainder of the shoe should be polished to a shine. Female shoes, which do not have a toecap, should have a highly polished surface all over. There are several different methods to achieve the required finish, which can be found online. One such method is detailed below:

1. To bull a new set of parade shoes, first start with a clean square of an old cotton t-shirt, and wrap it tightly around one finger. The surface of the t-shirt square should have a smooth surface, with no wrinkles.
2. You should start with a large amount of polish on the t-shirt, and this should be polished into the shoe with a light pressure, using a small circular motion.
3. Eventually, swirls should appear on the surface of the shoe. Dab the same piece of t-shirt in a small amount of water, and carry on polishing with the same motion. When the swirls disappear, start a new layer of polish.
4. You should carry on with layer upon layer of polish then water until you achieve a smooth surface.
5. Once you have a sufficiently smooth surface, you should reduce the amount of polish used on each layer until you are using the smallest of dabs and you have achieved the mirror shine.

Bulling shoes is a fine art, and one which will take practice to achieve. Do not feel obliged to follow the instructions above: if you have any relatives in the forces, they may have a different method, as can methods found online.

BERET MOULDING

Berets are manufactured into a “mushroom” shape, and if worn straight out of the wrapper, will not remain in the proper shape. Therefore, berets must be moulded to the correct shape, by the method below:

1. Taking care not to cut through any stitches between the cloth of the beret and the leather band, cut out the lining of the beret. This makes it easier to mould, and increases the chances of it holding its shape.
2. Remove the split pin, beret badge and cardboard backing to the badge, and keep them safe.
3. Prepare two bowls of warm and cold water: they should be big enough to plunge the beret in.
4. Plunge the cloth of the beret (trying to avoid wetting the leather band) alternately in the warm and cold water, a few times.
5. Allow the beret to drip dry for a few minutes, and then reinsert the badge, cardboard backing and the split pin.
6. Place the beret on your head (yes, whilst it is still wet – may be a good idea to wrap a towel around your shoulders). The badge should be over your left eye, and the loose material of the beret pulled towards the right as shown in figure 4, below.



Figure 4: *Beret shape*

7. You should allow the beret to dry in this position on your head. It may be necessary to pull the loose material to the right several times during the drying process.
8. Once the majority has dried, it may be a good idea to carefully remove the beret and place it in a warm area, such as an airing cupboard.