

Care and Cleaning of Uniform

1. Boots:

It is very important you take good care of your boots – you pay for them! Keep them clean, dry and well polished and they will last for years. The more you wear them, the more comfortable they get. The more you polish them, the easier it becomes. Cleaning boots takes time – plan ahead and don't leave it until the last minute!

- Washing: Remove the laces from very dirty boots and wash off the dirt in a bowl of warm soapy water. Don't forget to clean the soles. Rinse the suds off the boots afterwards. Wash the laces too.
- Drying: A good pair of boots is fully waterproof and will not leak. The outside leather can absorb some water and needs out to be dried before polishing. Dry your boots naturally by leaving them in the sun or in a warm place (an airing cupboard is ideal). Never dry them by applying direct heat – the leather will crack and they'll be useless. If the insides are wet shove in some newspaper. Replace the soggy newspaper regularly.
- Polishing: Only polish dry boots. Use a good quality black polish like Kiwi. Apply a good layer of polish all over with an old rag/duster. Work the polish well into the leather in a circular fashion. Don't forget to polish the tongues and the underneath of the flaps where the lace holes are. Leave the polish on the boots for as long as possible. Remove the polish by brushing vigorously with a soft brush.

2. Berets:

Your beret must be shaped to fit your head smartly. The instructions for doing this are printed on the label inside. Neatly tie off the draw cord and hide it inside the beret band – do not leave it hanging out.

- Cleaning: The beret must not be washed with water because it will shrink. It can be dry cleaned. It is best to keep it out of dirt and cam cream. Brushing will remove all loose debris (cat hairs, fluff, pieces of grass etc.). You should brush your beret regularly to keep it looking tidy.

- Cap badge and Hackle: Every now and again clean your cap badge with Brasso. An old toothbrush and a tiny spot of toothpaste is good for keeping cap badges looking good too. Brush the badge exactly as you would your teeth, then rinse and dry with tissue paper. Try and keep the Hackle clean and dry. Do not pull feathers out of it. If the Hackle gets wet, leave it alone and it will dry back to its normal shape. Eventually the red colour gets washed out, so you will have to buy a new one.

3. Shirts and Combat Jackets:

Keep your shirts and combat jacket clean and ironed.

- Cleaning: Remove all items from pockets. Shirts need regular washing with a warm (40 degrees) machine or hand wash with detergent. Use a conditioner to keep the garment soft. Combat jackets should be washed as little as possible to avoid removing the waterproofing.
- Drying: Remove as much water as possible by spinning or squeezing the garment. Avoid wringing. Place the damp garments on a washing line or in a drying room where there is a good flow of air.
- Ironing: Use a steam iron if possible (don't forget the water). Make sure the heat setting of the iron matches that given on the garment label. Place an old handkerchief or pillowcase over the garment before ironing. Keep the iron hot and moving. Use lots of steam for removing stubborn creases. Shirts should be ironed flat on the front and back, and a single crease down each arm. Make sure the pockets are ironed flat. A single horizontal crease should be ironed between the shoulder blades. Jackets are ironed flat both sides, with creases down the arms only.
- Buttons: Remove hanging threads from buttons with a small pair of scissors. Keep all pockets buttoned/zipped up. Replace missing buttons ASAP.

4. Trousers:

Keep your trousers clean and ironed.

- Cleaning: Remove all items from pockets. Trousers need a regular warm (40 degrees) machine or hand wash. Use a conditioner to keep the garment soft.
- Drying: Remove as much water as possible by spinning the garment. Avoid wringing. Place the damp garments on a washing line or in a drying room where there is a good flow of air.
- Ironing: Use a steam iron if possible (don't forget the water). Make sure the heat setting of the iron matches that given on the garment label. Place an old handkerchief or pillowcase over the garment before ironing. Keep the iron hot and moving. Use lots of steam for removing stubborn creases. Trousers should be ironed with a single crease centrally down the front and back of each leg. Make sure the pockets are ironed flat.
- Buttons: Remove hanging threads from buttons with a small pair of scissors. Keep all pockets buttoned up. Replace missing buttons ASAP.

5. Jersey:

Keep your jersey clean, ironed and brushed free of fluff. It is a good idea to put a drawstring in the collar of your jersey – this makes the shirt underneath look smarter.

- Cleaning: Warm (40 degree) machine or hand wash with detergent. Do not scrub.
- Drying: Allow to dry in a warm place. Avoid wringing. Do not use an iron to dry it.
- Ironing: Use a steam iron. Place an old handkerchief or pillowcase over the jersey beforehand. No creases – iron the arm/shoulder patches flat.

6. Brassard:

Keep your brassard clean and ironed. It is a record of your achievements in the ACF – keep it looking good.

- Cleaning: Use a warm (40 degree) hand wash and detergent. Do not scrub as you will damage the badges.

- Drying: Allow to dry in a good flow of air in a warm place. Do not use an iron to dry it.
- Ironing: Iron a single vertical crease using a hot steam iron. Keep the iron moving. Place an old handkerchief or pillowcase over the brassard to stop it from burning. Be careful not to melt the edges of the badges. If you damage any badges ask for replacements.