

Lesson 5

Your Personal Appearance and Uniform



Key Terms

align
Battle Dress Uniforms
bisecting
Class A and B uniforms
chevron
ferrule
fitted
formal inspections
garrison cap
gigline
hemmed
insignia
nap
nonsubdued
precedence
pre-inspection
shoulder marks
sized
tarnish

What You Will Learn to Do

- Demonstrate proper cadet appearance

Linked Core Abilities

- Take responsibility for your actions and choices

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe the uniform-wearing guidelines
- Demonstrate placement of uniform awards, insignias, and decorations
- Conduct a uniform pre-inspection
- Prepare for uniform inspection
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

People often form opinions of others based on their personal appearance. A good personal appearance complements the wearing of your uniform. A neatly pressed and clean uniform, with properly placed ribbons, awards, and insignia, demonstrates that JROTC cadets have pride in themselves as well as in their unit, and they use self-discipline to get things done. To assist you in this effort, this lesson covers the proper placement for the awards, decorations, and **insignia** you will be required to wear on your uniform. This lesson also presents four factors you can use to assess your personal appearance, reinforces the importance of a neat and clean appearance, and explains how those factors relate to your appearance in uniform.

Army JROTC Uniforms

The word *uniform* comes from two Latin words, *unus* and *forma*, that mean “one form.” Your JROTC uniform sets you apart from others and tells who and what you are. Uniforms date back to ancient times; for example, certain Romans wore togas. Today, society has uniforms to identify jobs and groups. Policemen, firefighters, athletic teams, and school bands all have uniforms.

Wear the JROTC uniform with pride! Every part of the uniform has a place and a reason. Later in this lesson you learn how to place insignias, awards, rank, and decorations on your uniform. First, however, take a look at the different types of JROTC uniforms.

Class A, B, and Battle Dress Uniforms

Figure 1.5.1 shows **Class A uniforms** for men and women. You wear them during ceremonies, social functions, **formal inspections**, and as required by your instructor.

Figure 1.5.2 shows **Class B uniforms** for men and women. These uniforms are worn during all occasions except field training and formal social occasions. The Class B uniforms are also worn at other times as required by your instructors.

Figure 1.5.3 shows the **Battle Dress Uniforms** (BDUs) for men and women. They are worn at summer camp and for participation on special teams.

Key Note Terms

insignia – an emblem, badge, medal, or other distinguishing mark of office, honor, or position; denotes grade and branch; may also indicate capacity and duty assignment in the U.S. Army

Class A uniforms – service uniforms that consist of an Army green coat, trousers, or slacks; a long or short sleeve shirt; a black four-in-hand tie or black neck tab; and other authorized accessories

formal inspection – an official examination of JROTC units that takes place on a prescribed schedule

Class B uniforms – service uniforms that are the same as the Class A uniform except the service coat is not worn. The black tie and black neck tab are required when wearing the long sleeve shirt; both tie and tab are optional with the short sleeve shirt

Battle Dress Uniforms – a camouflage uniform worn by members of the U.S. Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, and Army ROTC

Figure 1.5.1: The Class A uniform

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



Figure 1.5.2: The Class B uniform

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.





Figure 1.5.3: The Battle Dress Uniform

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Proper Placement of Insignia

Insignia are a way to show your advancement in JROTC. Insignia can include a badge, medal, or other mark of honor or position. Insignia can also represent your military branch and indicate a duty assignment. Depending on the type of insignia, where it's placed on your uniform is important. This section covers many insignia as well as the proper placement.

The Army Garrison Cap

Before positioning the appropriate cadet officer or enlisted cadet insignia on the **garrison cap**, you should first know how to wear it. Place it on top of your head with the front vertical crease of the cap centered on your forehead in a straight line with your nose. Tilt the cap slightly to your right but do not let it touch or rest on the top of your ear. Do not crush or shape the garrison cap to form peaks at the top front or top rear of it.

Note

The term *garrison* refers to a military post or to station soldiers in a town or post.

In Figure 1.5.4 you can see that cadet officers wear grade insignia, or rank, on the garrison cap while enlisted cadets wear the ROTC insignia. Position either insignia on the left side of the cap one inch from the crease and centered vertically between the top braid and the bottom of the cap.

Key Note Terms

garrison cap – headgear that may be worn with the Class A or B uniforms; for JROTC, the braid (piping used for identification purposes) will have a cord edge of the same material as the cap (or Army green shade 344)

Key Note Terms

shoulder marks – a pair of broad pieces of stiffened cloth worn on the shoulders of the Class A or B uniforms to display the insignia of grade; blank shoulder marks do not display an insignia of grade so that pin-on insignia may be used instead

chevron – insignia consisting of stripes meeting at an angle to indicate (enlisted) grade or rank

nonsubdued – bright and shining, not dull or flat, such as polished brass pin-on insignia

bisecting – to cut or divide into two equal parts

align – to arrange in a line; alignment: the arrangement of several elements on the same line

Insignia of Grade

To wear the grade insignia on long or short sleeve JROTC shirts, you normally wear **shoulder marks** (rank or shoulder boards). For cadet officers, place the narrow, pointed end toward the collar and the flat end toward the edge of the shoulder; for enlisted cadets, place the side with the pointed **chevron** (stripe) toward the collar, as shown in Figure 1.5.5.

The wearing of grade insignia for certain enlisted grades, such as cadet private and cadet private first class, may differ between schools. In some units, those cadets may wear **nonsubdued** pin-on grade insignia on both shirt collars or pinned to *blank* shoulder marks.

As seen in Figure 1.5.5, place these insignia centered on the collar, with the centerline of the insignia **bisecting** the point of each collar and one inch up from the edge of the collar point.

The area of both shirt pockets is where you place your nameplate, honor unit insignia, and personal awards. For female cadets, the pocket area (because those shirts do not have pockets) is where you also position these items. Imagine a horizontal line slightly above the top button on your shirt or one to two inches above the top button. This imaginary line allows you to properly **align** your awards, insignia, and nameplate in the same manner as male cadets do.

Nameplate

Center the nameplate on the right pocket between the top pocket seam and the top of the pocket buttonhole (see Figure 1.5.6). On the female uniform center the nameplate horizontally on the right side with the bottom of the nameplate on the imaginary line.

Honor Unit Insignia

Center the Honor Unit Star one-fourth of an inch above the top seam of the right pocket. On a female uniform, the Honor Unit star should be one-half inch above the nameplate and centered. You can wear the Honor Unit Star either by itself or joined with the Academic Achievement Wreath. In either case, center them as described.

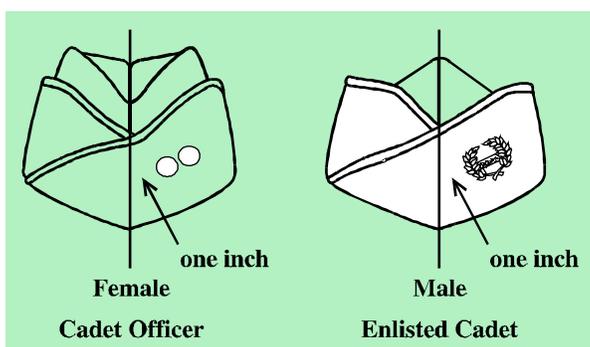


Figure 1.5.4: The Army garrison cap

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

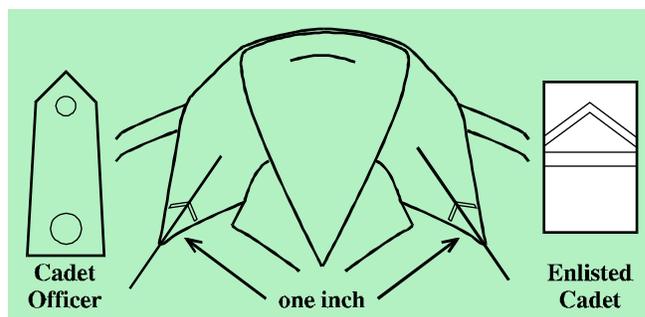


Figure 1.5.5: Placing the grade insignia

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



Figure 1.5.6: Placing the nameplate: female uniform (left) and male uniform (right)

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Awards and Decorations

Position individual awards for academic, athletic, and military excellence on the left pocket (or left pocket area); however, you cannot wear both the ribbon and the medal for the same award at the same time.

Center your ribbons on the pocket button one-eighth of an inch above the top seam of the left pocket (centered above the horizontal line for female cadets). Place awards of this type no more than three across. Do not start a second row until you have four or more ribbons; also, the first and second rows must have the same number before you can start a third row. Center the top row on the row beneath it. Wear your ribbons in order of **precedence** from top to bottom and from your right to left in one or more rows. This is shown in Figure 1.5.7.

Wear medals and place badges for excellence in marksmanship one-eighth of an inch below the top seam on the left pocket flap (or in a similar position for female uniforms), again in the order of precedence from your right to left.

When not wearing medals, center your badge or badges or space them equally from your left to right on your pocket flap. The upper portion of the badge or badges should be one-eighth of an inch below the top seam of the left pocket. If you only have one medal or badge, center it from left to right on your left pocket flap. Place the top of it one-eighth of an inch below the top seam of the pocket.

Key Note Term

precedence – the act or right of preceding or placing in order according to rank or importance; priority

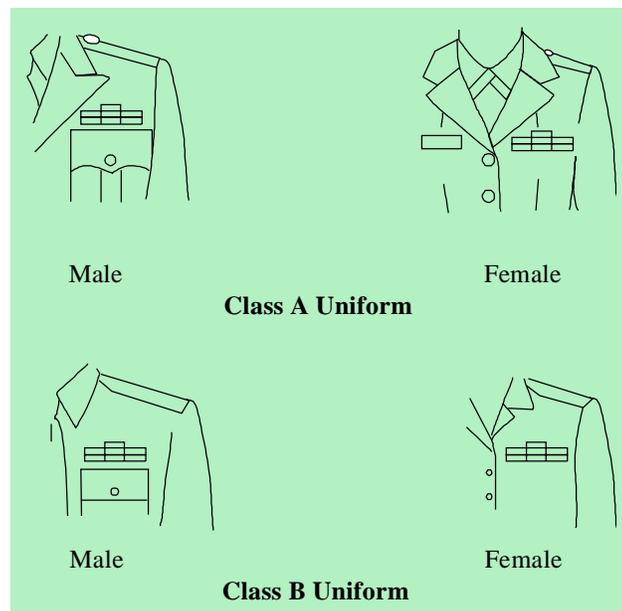


Figure 1.5.7: Award and decoration placement for Class A and Class B uniforms

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

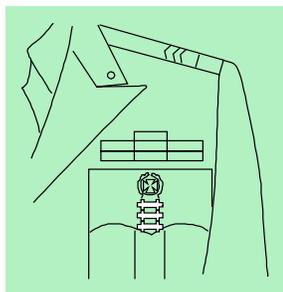


Figure 1.5.8: Wearing two badges or medals

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



Figure 1.5.9: Wearing the unit crest on the pocket

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Key Note Term

ferrule – a decorative metal cap attached to the end of a shoulder cord to prevent fraying; a metal ring or cap attached to the end of a staff or handle to give strength or to protect it against splitting

Wear two medals or badges equally spaced from left to right on the left pocket flap. Keep the top portion of them one-eighth of an inch below the seam, at least one inch between them, and special skill badges to the right. Figure 1.5.8 shows how to wear two medals or badges.

If you are wearing a special medal with one or more marksmanship badges, equally space all awards (but not more than three) from left to the right on the left pocket flap. Place the upper portion of the medals one-eighth of an inch below the top pocket seam. Wear the special medal to your right of any marksmanship badges.

These same rules apply for female cadets, except you wear your medals and/or marksmanship badges one-fourth of an inch below the bottom row of ribbons.

Miscellaneous Uniform Accessories

Certain units may authorize the wearing of approved unit crests. You can wear these crests in one of two places on the uniform.

The first option is on both shoulder marks, midway between the button and the insignia of grade; however, enlisted cadets who wear pin-on grade insignia on their collars should center these crests on blank shoulder marks.

The second option is to center the unit crest below the button on the right pocket, between the bottom of the pocket flap and the bottom seam of the pocket, as seen in Figure 1.5.9.

At the discretion of the senior Army instructor, you may wear scholar or service program insignia, such as national or local military honor societies, centered on the left pocket between the bottom of the pocket flap and the bottom pocket seam. The instructor staff may authorize you to wear shoulder cords for participation in certain JROTC activities, including the color/honor guard, drill team, and rifle team. Wear one cord by itself on the left shoulder, and any other cord on the right shoulder. When wearing cords with a **ferrule** (metal tip), keep the ferrule to the front; otherwise, wear these cords based on the procedures of your local unit.

Polishing Your Image

Neatness counts in JROTC. To achieve it, you must know the proper guidelines for wearing and cleaning your JROTC uniform.

Guidelines for Care and Cleaning of Your JROTC Uniform

The following are some basic guidelines for the care and cleaning of your uniform.

- Place coats on hangers wide enough to keep the shoulders of the coat in shape. Do not use wire hangers.
- Keep shirts on hangers to prevent creasing.
- Clean and shine shoes and boots.

- Keep trousers and slacks on hangers that allow them to hang at full length. Use a clothes brush with stiff bristles to loosen dust and dirt. This also helps freshen the **nap** and should be done each time the uniform is worn.
- Dry clean wool uniforms at a competent cleaner to take out stains or spots.

Guidelines for Personal Appearance in the JROTC Uniform

Keeping up your personal appearance will help you look great in your uniform. The following are guidelines for always looking your best.

- Acceptable hairstyles for JROTC cadets do not include any extreme fads. The JROTC instructor staff will make all decisions on questionable hairstyles.
- Male cadets: Keep your hair neatly trimmed, with sideburns no lower than the bottom of the ear opening, and be clean shaven.
- Female cadets: Keep your hair styled so that it does not touch the top of the collar and so that the cap can be worn easily.
- Keep fingernails short and clean.
- A good personal appearance includes good grooming, which you can only achieve by cleaning your hair, teeth, and the rest of your body. It also includes maintenance (care) of your clothing—making sure that it is cleaned and pressed. In JROTC, you must maintain your uniform.

Guidelines for Wearing Your JROTC Uniform

Now that you know how to care for your uniform and how to look your best, you need to know how to properly wear the uniform.

- Wear a clean and neatly pressed uniform.
- Tuck shirt into trousers or skirt; keep its seam aligned with the seam of the zipper flap of the trousers and the edge of the belt buckle (**gigline**).
- Male cadets wear a T-shirt under the Class A and B uniforms. Male and female cadets wear a T-shirt under BDUs and as a physical training uniform. Wearing T-shirts prevents underarm perspiration from affecting your uniform.
- Button all buttons, with the exception of the top or collar button of the shirt.
- Clean, polish, and properly display all brass on the uniform.
- Push the belt through the left front loop of the trousers first and adjust to allow only the tip of the belt to protrude from the buckle.
- Wear only issued socks and shoes with the uniform.
- The wearing of a wrist watch, a wrist identification bracelet, and not more than two rings is authorized with Army uniforms (unless prohibited for safety or health reasons) as long as the style is conservative and in good taste.
- Female cadets may also wear small circular earrings (not to exceed one-quarter inch in diameter).
- Do not carry bulky objects in any pocket of the uniform.
- Wear the hat at all times when outdoors.

Key Note Term

nap – a soft, fuzzy finish or cloth formed by short fibers raised on the surface

Key Note Term

gigline – line formed by the seam of the shirt aligned with the zipper flap and the edge of the belt buckle on certain JROTC uniforms

Guidelines for Taking Care of Brass Articles

Buttons, medals, and other articles made of brass need to be cleaned and shined on a regular basis. The following explains how to care for your brass items.

- **Brightly polish the lapel insignia, belt buckle, and cap insignia. The brass buttons are an exception. Do not use polish on the brass buttons; instead scrub them with ammonia and water.**
- **Perspiration tarnishes brass on contact, so be careful when putting the insignia back on the uniform and when handling the belt buckle. One helpful hint is to wipe any brass with cleaning fluid to remove the extra polish. This avoids dulling the shine that you worked hard to get and slows down any corrosion.**

Key Note Term

tarnish – to dull the luster of; discolor

Checking Your Look: The Pre-Inspection

Uniform inspection is an important part of JROTC. As a cadet, you should know how to care for your uniform and how to present yourself for inspection. Doing well on the inspection increases pride in yourself and in your accomplishments. Learning how to care for and maintain the JROTC uniform can also improve your self-discipline. When every cadet does well on the uniform inspection, it makes the unit look good and increases unit pride.

The **pre-inspection** is your chance to make sure that everything is in its proper place on your uniform and looks sharp. After learning how to wear your uniform and the placement of awards, it is now a matter of carefully checking your appearance. If your pre-inspection is done properly, there should be no surprises during the actual inspection.

Key Note Term

pre-inspection – an informal examination before an official or formal inspection

Getting Ready

Inspect your uniform before you ask someone else to check it, so be sure that you have all the basics. The major parts of your uniform are identified in the uniform checklist.

UNIFORM CHECKLIST	
<input type="checkbox"/> Garrison cap	<input type="checkbox"/> Placement of uniform accessories
<input type="checkbox"/> Coat	<input type="checkbox"/> Belt
<input type="checkbox"/> Shirt	<input type="checkbox"/> Shoes
<input type="checkbox"/> Neck tab/tie	<input type="checkbox"/> Socks
<input type="checkbox"/> Pants/slacks	

Placement

Follow the instructions you learned earlier in this lesson for the specific locations and proper placement of awards, insignia, and other uniform accessories.

A Preliminary Check

Table 1.5.1 shows you some of the items that the cadet staff and the instructors will look for during an inspection. You should use it only as a guide because your unit may have a different inspection form.

Table 1.5.1: Sample Inspection Criteria

Headgear	Clean? Brass shined? Brass properly placed?
Hair	Properly styled/groomed? Off the ears/collar?
Shirt/Coat	Properly sized? Clean and pressed? Grade insignia placement? Nameplate placement? Honor Star placement? Ribbons/badges placement? Unit crest placement? Shoulder cord(s) placement? Pockets buttoned? Strings?
Trousers	Properly sized? Clean and pressed? Belt buckle shined? Gigline straight?
Shoes	Shined/dusted? Black socks?

For male cadets, the black belt with brass buckle is an important item. Line the tip of the belt (which will be either brass or black) with the end of the brass buckle so that none of the belt shows. This makes the belt buckle appear as one solid unit.

The most obvious sign of a correctly worn uniform is the formation of the gigline. Properly done, the edge of the shirt, belt buckle, and zipper flap should form an unbroken vertical line.

Key Note Term

formal inspection – an official examination of JROTC units that takes place on a prescribed schedule

Head to Toe—The Inspection

Prior to the **formal inspection**, it is a good idea to ask a fellow cadet to look at your uniform and check it for anything that does not meet regulations. Make a final check yourself and then proudly present yourself for inspection. Always strive to be the cadet who scores the most points during each uniform inspection.

When to Wear the Uniform

You may wear the prescribed issued uniform in the United States and its possessions:

- During military ceremonies; this shows that you are a proud part of the Army JROTC program.
- When attending or participating in JROTC activities such as on the prescribed uniform day at school, during formal inspections, while instructing cadets in JROTC courses, and so on.
- When traveling to and from school where you attend JROTC.
- When visiting a military installation if you are taking part in drills, exercises, or summer camp.
- When required by your instructors.

Your Personal Appearance

How do you look today? Do you have good posture? Do you have good grooming (personal hygiene) habits? In addition to these two areas, proper weight control and good muscle tone are all equally important factors in your personal appearance. In JROTC, being neat and clean is a way of life.

Good personal grooming is an important part of projecting a positive image. Your personal appearance can make all the difference in how you look in uniform. The following guidelines will give you that polished look.

- **Good posture** involves more than just standing tall. It is sitting, walking, bending, and lifting properly. Poor posture can cause backaches, digestive trouble, and fatigue. You will become more relaxed and at the same time more energetic when you have good posture. It takes some practice to correct any bad habits, but in time the rewards are well worth the effort.
- **Proper weight** is a major health concern in our society. There is great pressure to be thin; however, being too thin (or overweight) can affect your self-image as well as your health. A balanced diet is the key to proper weight. Some people go to extremes by overeating or crash dieting; both are equally dangerous. See your family doctor for advice on weight reduction and dieting.
- **Good muscle tone** comes from a well-rounded exercise program. Swimming, bicycling, walking, and tennis are types of regular exercise that tone and build muscles. Exercise helps you feel good, both physically and mentally.

- **Good grooming means proper personal hygiene—taking care of your body. Daily showers or baths are vital, as is brushing your teeth. Proper amounts of sleep are also important to your mind and body.**

Because many of your peers will now recognize you as an Army JROTC cadet, they will be watching you and your appearance more closely than before. Therefore, your appearance both in and out of uniform must be immaculate.

The importance of good grooming

Rick was applying for a new job. On the day of the interview, he woke up late and did not have time to take a shower or iron a shirt that he was wearing with his suit and tie. As Rick ran a brush through his hair, he told himself, “Confidence and credentials are what will get me this great job . . . and I have those.”

When Rick arrived at the office, he told the secretary, “I have an appointment with Mr. Bender at one o’clock.” As Rick was leaving the receptionist’s area for the interview, dirt fell from one of his shoes. He meant to clean and polish them before the interview, but he did not have time. He apologized and told the secretary that he would clean up the dirt after the interview. She told him not to worry about it.

During the interview, Mr. Bender asked Rick several tough questions, which Rick felt he answered very well. Then, at the close of the interview, Rick expected to be offered the job. Instead, Mr. Bender thanked him for coming and told him that he would be in touch.

After a few days, Rick received a letter from Mr. Bender. It stated in part, “I appreciated your enthusiasm, and your qualifications were excellent, but the company has hired someone else for the position.”

Did Rick present himself to Mr. Bender in the best possible way? Even though Rick thought that he was mentally alert, confident, and ready for the interview, was he really prepared for it? Although Rick thought that his qualifications would get him the job, should he have taken more time and care with his personal appearance?

A Properly Fitting JROTC Uniform

According to Army regulations on the wearing and appearance of uniforms, “all personnel will maintain a high standard of dress and appearance.” This regulation means that your personal appearance in uniform should project the image to others that you are a part of one of the finest groups in the world.

Learning how to look your best in uniform takes time and effort. Your uniform must be **sized** and **fitted** to give you comfort and a good appearance. Pants, shirts, or coats that do not fit will make you look less than what you truly are. Your pants should be **hemmed** to the required length, and your shirt and coat, issued by size, should also fit well.

Key Note Terms

sized – the physical dimensions, proportions, magnitude, or extent of an object; any of a series of graduated categories of dimension whereby manufactured articles, such as shoes and clothing, are classified

fitted – to adapt to the proper size or shape

hemmed – to fold back and stitch down the edge of a garment

Factors That Affect Appearance

After you have a perfect fitting uniform, there are still other guidelines to follow for maintaining an outstanding appearance:

- **Have good personal grooming habits, such as caring for your hair and fingernails.**
- **Know how to wear the uniform properly.**
- **Know how to care and clean the uniform; a proper appearance requires a pressed and cleaned uniform.**

These factors, as well as the guidelines given earlier in this lesson, are the basic keys to a good overall appearance in your JROTC uniform. By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your uniform and your personal appearance are in accordance with regulations.

Conclusion

Your personal appearance affects what others think about you. How you look can also influence your own self-confidence. Take some time to study yourself. Are you neat and presentable in and out of uniform? It is not hard to look your best. A clean uniform, good personal appearance (posture, weight, and muscle tone), and good grooming are keys to success.

In the next lesson, you will learn about the American flag. You will learn about its origins and the true meaning of the Stars and Stripes.

Lesson Review

1. **What is the difference between a Class A and a Class B uniform?**
2. **What should you use to clean brass buttons?**
3. **When is the Battle Dress Uniform worn?**
4. **Define the word *ferrule*.**