

Information Booklet for Adults

Clothes Make the Soldier

Military clothing conveys messages about power, allegiance and military role. If you know how to read their codes, uniforms reveal unexpected information about the soldiers who wore them and the organisations they served.

This booklet will take you on a tour of the *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition while demonstrating how uniforms, whether showy or practical, express more than meets the eye.

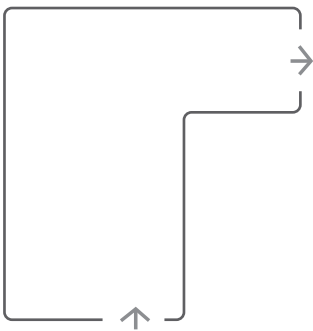


Soldiers and Chiefs Galleries

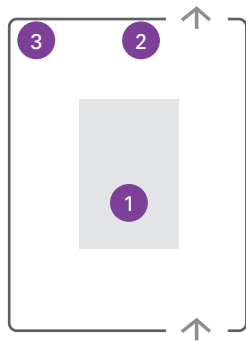
Follow the numbers shown on these plans of all the galleries. The numbers on the plans match the numbers of the stops. The title with each plan is the name of that gallery.

First floor

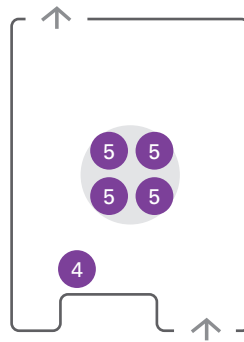
Introduction



The British Garrison in Ireland



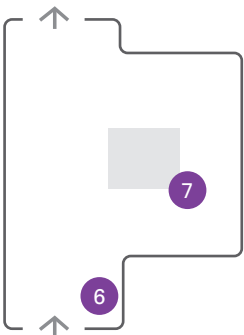
Warfare in Ireland



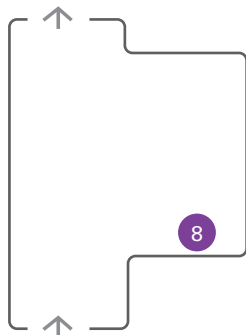
Irish Soldiers in Foreign Armies



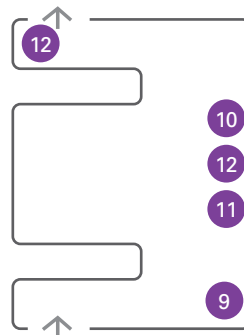
The Wild Geese



Irish in the American Civil War

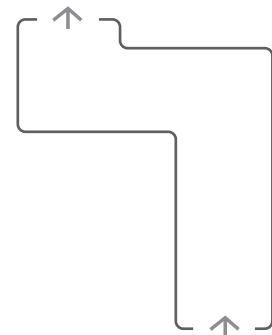


Irish in the British Service



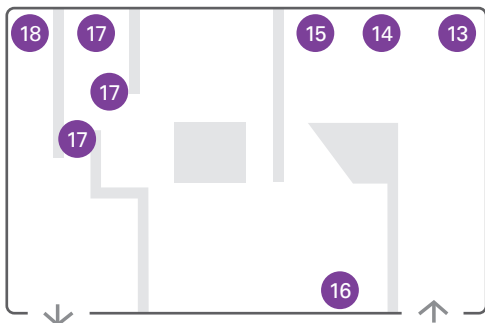
Balcony

Taking Flight



The Irish Wars

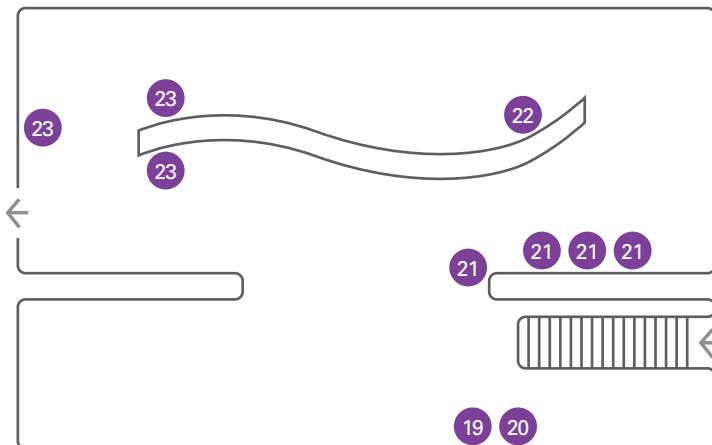
The First World War



1916 – The Easter Rising

Ground floor

Claiming the Future
The Emergency: The Second World War
Defending the Peace



You can find explanations of military terms in the booklet, 'Military Speak', a glossary to accompany these Information Booklets, which is available at the start of the exhibition or at Museum reception.

1

Military and Civilian Styles

When Stephen Stokes created this tapestry, he showed soldiers wearing infantry and cavalry uniforms as well as civilians wearing clothing in the military style.

The Military Style

The Royal family – Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children – are dressed in military style to take part in a military ceremony with the Duke of Wellington.

Cavalry or Infantry

The tapestry shows several kinds of cavalry uniforms – these were more ornate and expensive than the uniforms for the infantry because the cavalry were considered the elite of the army.

Sombre Civilians?

Several scenes on the tapestry show civilians of the time; by comparison with the brightly-coloured and tightly-tailored military uniforms, civilian garb is drab and loose. This difference made soldiers stand out in places such as Donnybrook Fair and contributed to the appeal of becoming a soldier.

2

A Civilian Style

Military uniforms influenced civilian clothes for men, but the reverse was also true.

Civilian styles inspired the dark colour and loose cut of this blue 'patrol jacket'. However the stand-up collar and trimmed cuffs are typical of the military style, as are the buttons fastened with braid.

This mid-19th century officer's jacket was part of an 'undress' uniform. Compared to the red, tight-fitting jackets (worn for occasions such as parades and ceremonies) the comfortable, loose fit of the patrol jacket made it practical for everyday use.

3

A Complex Coding System

The military tailor had to keep track of the British Army's complex requirements for military clothing. Each regiment – and there were over a hundred – had specific requirements for cut, decoration and badges that the tailor had to know and reproduce accurately.

You can appreciate the army's system of codes for uniforms by the complexity and overall thickness of J.B. Johnstone's record book.

4 A Functional Design

Cromwell's cavalry was well outfitted with uniforms suited for its task. Look at the shape and thickness of the yellow jacket in the display case to appreciate its clever design.

The thick leather provided a layer of protection against sword cuts. The short curved tails of the jacket allowed the rider to sit comfortably on his horse without sitting on his jacket.

5 When Is It a Uniform?

Examine the clothing worn by the soldiers in the centre of this room to see the variations from no uniform to full uniform.

The musketeer from the Nine Years War wears a minimal 'uniform': a helmet and an ordinary civilian cloak. He is probably dressed differently from his fellow soldiers because everyone wears his own clothes.

The pikeman from The Irish Wars of Religion may be wearing the same thing as his comrades, consisting of similar 'civilian' clothing issued by a military authority. The men in the group look the same but they do not wear a recognisable, official uniform.

The grenadier, a soldier from the War of the Two Kings, wears a full uniform – the more complete the uniform, the more convincing it is. He served in the army of the deposed King James II. James's army wore uniforms to mark the fact they considered themselves a legitimate army.

The Croppy boy from the 1798 Rebellion does not look like a soldier because he does not wear a uniform. He probably feels he is a soldier because he was given a weapon and fought with his friends in a group.

Fundamentally, the idea of a military uniform is that it identifies an agent of the state authorised to use force; having a whole group of soldiers in the same clothing indicates their cohesion and collective status.

6 National Colours

As you look around the room called 'The Wild Geese', you will find the codes used by European armies in the 18th century for telling apart their countries' uniforms. In general, British soldiers wore red, Austrians and French wore white, Russians wore green, and Prussians dark blue uniforms.

They wore different colours for a reason.

It helped if the colour of your uniform was distinctive on the battlefield, so you could identify friend from foe.

The bright uniforms did not make them clear targets on the battlefield.

Until the 1850s, most firearms could not hit distant targets. It was said that a soldier was very unlucky to be killed by an enemy who aimed at him with a musket from more than 100 yards away.

The standing replica figure is in the French Army: **you would expect his jacket to be white, not red.** The Irish soldiers wore red, the colour of the deposed Stuart monarchs, as a symbol of their allegiance to the Stuart dynasty: as a privilege, the French allowed them to continue doing so.

7 Regimental Colours

The standing replica figure of a soldier is a Light Infantryman in the French Army. You can tell that he served in Walsh's Regiment by the dark blue colour of his cuffs and facings. Other Irish regiments in the French Army had different distinguishing colours on their uniforms.



Bulkeley's Regiment – green



Berwick's Regiment – white



Dillon's Regiment – black

8

Trends in Military Fashion

In the last half of the 19th century, certain styles were imitated far from their place of origin. This kind of jacket (in a style called Zouave) was worn by members of a Union Army infantry regiment in the American Civil War.

The **Americans** selected the style in tribute to – a **French Army** imitation of – a traditional **North African** costume!

Usually when an army adopted features from the uniform of another country's army, it represented an attempt to suggest that their soldiers had the same qualities as those of a force that was regarded as particularly dashing or successful.

9

Climate Control

Compare the two helmets worn in the hot climate of India.

In 1860

Soldiers had to wear a dress helmet made of metal and surmounted with a horsehair plume.

A sash worn at the base absorbed some of the heat.

For less formal occasions, the soldiers could wear a 'pillbox' hat that gave no shade to the face.

By 1881

Soldiers had a practical cloth helmet with cork lining and ventilation holes.

The helmet covered the back of neck.

The beige colour reflected the heat, but did not reflect light to the enemy, like the shiny metal.

10

Extravagant Display

Light cavalry officers considered themselves to be *la crème de la crème* – the top layer of the elite part of the army, the cavalry. Their status was expressed in a uniform that made display far more important than utility.

Consider the impractical yet expensive features of Pakenham's hussar (light cavalry) jacket and hat:

- extensive gold braid (requiring frequent polishing)
- seventeen buttons to close the jacket
- astrakhan (Persian lamb) fur trimming the collar and cuff
- hat made out of sable (an expensive fur from Russia)
- egret and vulture feathers on the hat

And the cavalryman also wore several other equally ornate pieces of uniform with this one!

11 Basic Practicality

This custom-designed outfit is based on a military style. Consider the practical features of Parke's outfit made for a personal trip through the Congo:

- cool linen fabric
- pockets and belts for holding essential tools
- short trousers
- simple collar and no cuffs

12 From All-Purpose ...

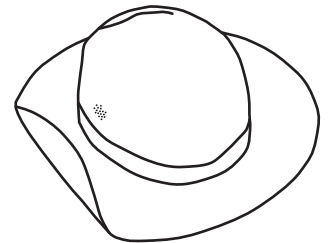
Until the late 19th century infantry soldiers in the British Army had basically only one style of uniform (such as the one shown in the portrait of General Hammerton). They wore it with different accessories for different occasions. This uniform, based on a red coat, became simpler over time, but continued to be worn by the soldier on most occasions, whether he was 'walking out' on a pass, parading for inspection, or fighting a battle.

... to Clothes for the Job

Between 1890 and 1914 the British Army replaced the all-purpose style of uniform with very different dress and undress versions – the red uniform to wear for dress occasions, such as parades and ceremonies, and the practical khaki version for everyday use (such as those worn by the soldiers in the Boer War).

What Is a 'Slouch' Hat?

You can see a slouch hat worn by soldiers in the photograph on the panel 'With the Boers'. The term 'slouch' suggests a relaxed and careless attitude and the hat, in fact, conveyed informality, relaxed discipline, and self-reliance. It also had the advantage of comfort, as compared to the stiff tropical helmet, which could get in the way when using a rifle from a prone position.



The hat was initially associated with the Boer fighters and with colonial soldiers from Australia and New Zealand. Eventually some British regiments adopted the style, often against the wishes of higher authority.

13 From Peace to War

These two jackets not only were a contrast in style, but also a symbol of the change in circumstances. The soldiers wore red tunics for dress occasions (such as on parade or in the mess) and plain khaki service jackets in the trench warfare of the First World War.

Consider the differences in the uniforms –

Red Dress Tunic

- tight fitting
- looks good
- stands out

Khaki Service Jacket

- comfortable
- plain
- blends into the background

14 Cavalry or Infantry?

By the First World War you could no longer distinguish a dismounted cavalryman by his fancy uniform. Only a few details of this khaki cavalry uniform make it different from that of an infantry soldier.

Cavalrymen

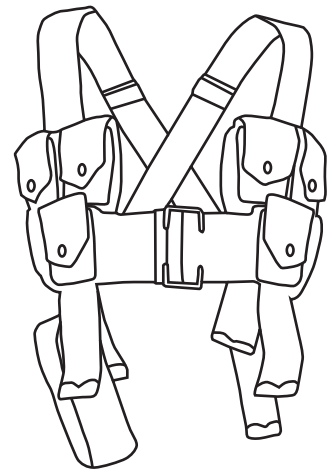
- wore breeches and spurs
- wound their puttees in the opposite direction to prevent them unwinding on the horse!

Otherwise both cavalry and infantry uniforms were plain and practical, with a minimum of distinctions to indicate regiment and rank. By looking like private soldiers, officers avoided being singled out and shot by enemy snipers.

15 Adapting a Uniform

With the simple addition of webbing equipment worn over the uniform, the First World War soldier's basic outfit could accommodate such essentials as a water bottle, mess tin, ammunition, a small shovel, clothing and food. This gear was cleverly designed to:

- carry the most important items the soldier would need in combat
- balance all the items front and back so the load was evenly distributed
- be taken on and off as a whole.



16 Dressed for Legitimacy

The two major branches of the nationalist cause adopted different uniforms, which reflected their different origins. They wore uniforms in their fight against the British because uniforms suggested that the wearer was part of a national army.

The Irish Citizen Army had dark green uniforms and the Irish Volunteers wore khaki. The latter had adopted badges showing 'FF' (*Fianna Fáil*) and a sunburst symbol and a motto. These symbols have been used for all uniforms designed for the Irish Defence Forces from 1922 to the present day.

17

Confusing Uniforms

Many of the Irish Republican Army men did not wear uniforms during the Irish War of Independence because they tried to blend into the urban population. In the countryside, where they conducted hit-and-run raids in groups, they wore a makeshift uniform.

Friend or Foe?

These examples show how difficult it must have been to identify the players in this conflict by their uniforms.

Citizen supporter of the Irish cause (War in the Shadows – a large silhouette of a woman)

- everyday clothing to avoid drawing attention
- weapon hidden in a book

Irish Republican Army, undercover (War Undercover – a replica figure of a man in a dark suit)

- no uniform, but carrying a weapon

Black and Tan of the British authorities (Watch Yourself – a photograph on the panel)

- official uniform
- Black-and-Tans were named for their uniform, a black police jacket with tan army trousers.

Auxiliary Cadet of the British authorities (Watch Yourself – a replica figure of a man in uniform)

- tam o'shanter hat
- designated 'police cadets', but mostly ex-First World War officers
- considered more dangerous than the Black and Tans

18

Symbolic Uniforms

Both Michael Collins and Liam Lynch wore a uniform when they were killed – an indication that each man believed himself to be commander of the legitimate military force of Ireland (Collins was head of the Free State Army, Lynch of the Anti-Treaty IRA forces).

19

Designed to Impress

Although the everyday uniform for soldiers in the newly-created Irish Defence Forces was a plain khaki outfit, the new dress uniforms were designed to impress. The different kinds of shoulder and cuff decoration on dress jackets represented various branches in the army, from engineers to medical personnel.

The Blue Hussars

This unit and their uniform were created, on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress, as a ceremonial corps to escort dignitaries. The decoration was deliberately ornate.

20 Republicans and Fascists

On 'The Fight in Spain' panel, compare the two photographs of soldiers, and their uniforms, from each side of the conflict. Judging from the design and the state of their uniforms, which army was better organised and had the most money?

Fascists

- had complete uniforms
- were based on the Spanish Army and supported by conservative elements in society
- had military support from Germany and Italy

Republicans

- had a few formal uniforms (the jacket on display is a replica but few soldiers would have worn it)
- had a loose alliance of anarchists, socialists and idealists (many from overseas)
- had few resources, and substituted idealism and courage for organisation and discipline

21 Uniform Variations

Across the room at 'The Irish Army During the Emergency' are examples of how uniforms can send different messages about soldiers from the same army.

Literally No Uniform

In 1942 this Construction Corps Worker was bare to the waist. His unit wore simple uniforms for carrying out special duties (such as digging turf). Arguably, he was not a soldier when out of uniform.

Looking Like the Enemy

The style of uniforms worn by soldiers in the Irish army at the beginning of the Second World War had an unexpected outcome. With the aid of newsreel footage of Irish soldiers training, British propagandists used the similar appearance of the Irish and German uniforms and helmets to falsely imply that the Irish government sympathised with the German cause.

Clothes for Nursing

During the Second World War, nurses might wear either a civilian or a military uniform. Women who volunteered to work as nurses for the Red Cross wore a traditional nursing costume, including the veil; those who enlisted in the Irish Defence Forces wore a military outfit capped by this army hat.

Part-Time Soldier

Soldiers in the Local Defence Forces served in Ireland during the Emergency. They needed only to wear an outfit that Irish citizens could recognise as they did their work. Thus LDF uniforms were cheap and simple, with no real military character.

Ex-Army

When the Irish Army demobilised its troops after the war, the former soldiers (known as E-men) received a civilian suit – the folded garment on the shelf. This 'demob suit' was cheap and (because it was a standard style and colour) easily recognisable, an unintended signal that the wearer was an ex-serviceman.

Outfitted for a Safe Landing

Paratroops – soldiers trained to parachute directly into battle or enemy territory – need specialised uniforms. A camouflaged smock covers their normal khaki battle dress. The smock has several practical features:

- it is warm
- it is waterproof
- it prevents equipment from becoming tangled in the parachute lines.

Airborne troops also wore a red beret to signal their elite status, and still do today.

Look closely at the right sleeve of the smock, which was repaired after the soldier was wounded.

Signalling the Role of Peacekeeping

Soldiers serving for the United Nations (UN) forces come from the armies of a particular country and their uniforms show both their national and UN affiliations. The addition of a new element to an existing uniform indicates the special role for the wearer – service in a United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping force.

Walk toward the exit and stop at any, or all, of the displays in this half of the room.

Look for these United Nations symbols worn with the soldier's basic uniform:

- the United Nations blue helmet or beret
- the United Nations blue vest
- the UN symbol

Military and Civilian Clothing

Do you think there are parallels between military and civilian clothing?

Sometimes the same principles are at work: both types of clothing make a distinction between casual attire and dressing for special occasions. Fashion designers sometimes adapt military styles for civilian clothing, drawing on military associations and messages.

If you are interested in fashion, go to the exhibition *The Way We Wore* in another part of the museum. When you look at the everyday clothing on display think about the similarities to military clothing.

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Want to know more?

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education and Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland.

Tel: 01 648 6453 **Fax:** 01 679 1025

email: bookings@museum.ie

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Cover image: Model of an Irish soldier in the Regiment Irlanda in the Spanish Army c.1768. Ken Hayes created this model.

