

High Collar, Olive Drab, Officer Coats

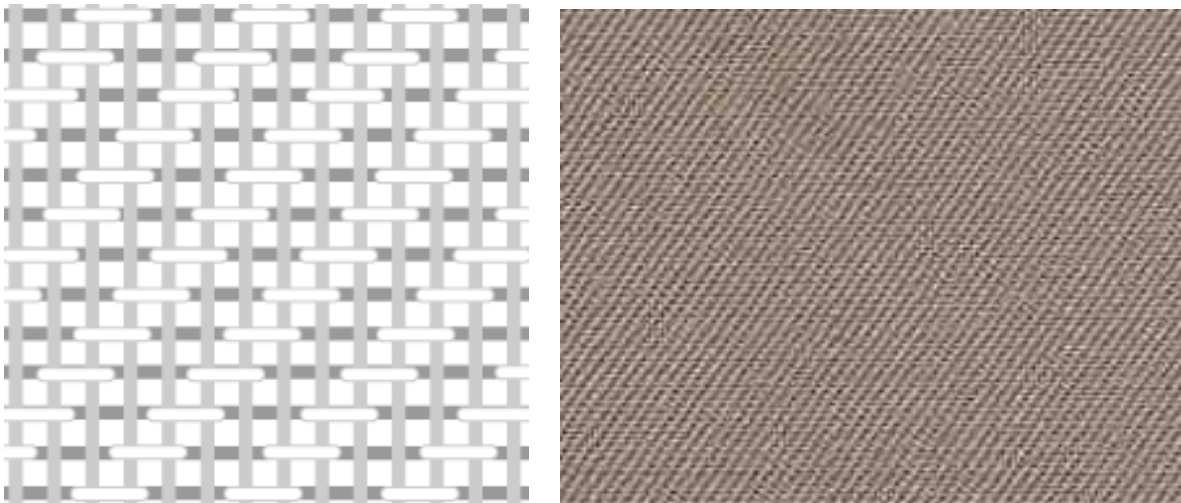
Officers' olive drab, high collar uniforms, like other pre World War II officers' uniforms, differed from enlisted uniforms. Officer high collar coats came into use in 1925 for the Air Service and in 1926 for other branches.

While some design features are similar to the enlisted uniforms, other features are considerably different. Officers bought their own uniforms and many companies worked to supply them. Besides the evolutionary changes caused by regulation changes, the many different tailors and the flexibility given to officers regarding their uniforms, resulted in a great variety of coats. Even so, office coats can be distinguished by both cloth and pocket styles.

Officers' coats were made from significantly better materials than enlisted coats and officers' uniforms presented a wide range of hues. Because of this, a person can find many versions of officers' coats.

One noticeable difference between officer and enlisted coats is the quality of material. Twill is a textured material and often is rather stiff and is woven in a cross-hatch pattern. This results in both strength and durability. Twill can be made from cotton and from wool. Regulations specified, and uniform makers frequently offered, certain woolen materials, usually twills.

Serge is a type of twill using a two-up and two-down weaving process. Twill uses worsted wool. Worsted is carded to remove short and brittle fibers, thus only long fibers are left, which results in a finer material that is more wrinkle resistant. Gabardine is another example of worsted material. Gabardine has a diagonal ribbed surface with more warp than weft. While serge shows fine lines running at 45 degrees, gabardine shows fine lines running at greater than 45 degrees.



Threads used to make twill have a pattern of two threads over and two under. The result is a pattern of noticeable raised lines.

These materials are also identified by weight, which is how much one yard of material weighs. The Pasquale Company of San Francisco showed in its 1912 catalogue officers' coats made from a range of serges:



- 18 oz OD serge, \$22
- 20 oz domestic OD serge, \$24
- 14 oz imported waterproof OD serge, \$23
- 22 oz imported OD serge, \$25

The Pasquale 1919 catalogue offered officers' OD wool serge coats as follows:

- 14 oz \$25
- 15 oz \$28.50
- 16 oz, \$30
- 20 oz, \$35
- OD whipcord, 18 oz, \$37.50
- OD Bedford Cord, 18 oz, \$40

The Henderson Ames Company had in May 1917, 33 types of cloth, ranging from lowest \$17.50 factory made to best hand tailored at \$68.

The illustration of the uniform is shown, followed by the page with prices.

THE HENDERSON-AMES CO. KALAMAZOO MICHIGAN 3

SERVICE UNIFORM FOR ALL OFFICERS

COAT No. 3909A

THE HENDERSON-AMES CO. KALAMAZOO MICHIGAN 4

SERVICE COAT FOR ALL OFFICERS

COAT No. 3909A

Made in accordance with 1915 uniform specifications, and subsequent amendments. A single-breasted sack coat of olive woolen material or khaki-colored cotton material, made with two outside breast choked-bellows pockets and two outside pockets of same pattern below waist; pockets to be without plaits and covered by flaps, rounded at edge, buttoned by a small regulation button. The coat to have falling collar, from one inch to one and three-fourths inches in width, depending on the wearer. On each shoulder a loop of the same material as the coat let in at the shoulder seam and reaching from the sleeve seam to the edge of the collar, and buttoned at the upper end with a small regulation button; loop to be two inches wide at the shoulder end and one inch wide at the collar end. The coat to fit closely at the waist and loosely at the chest, buttoned down front with five regulation buttons. The skirt to extend one-third the distance from the point of the hip to the bend of the knee. Sleeves to be without cuffs. All buttons for this coat to be dull-finished bronze metal. Collar ornaments to be of dull-finished bronze metal, insignia of rank to be placed on loops. All officers except the General Staff Corps will wear a band of brown braid one-half inch wide on the sleeves of the service coat, the lower edge of the braid three inches from the end of the sleeves. For officers of the General Staff Corps the braid will be black.

Cloth Quality	Factory Tailored	Hand Tailored
B.....	\$17 50	\$41 85
C.....	18 05	42 40
D.....	18 60	43 00
E.....	19 10	43 45
F.....	19 65	44 00
G.....	20 25	44 60
H.....	20 70	45 10
I.....	21 30	45 65
J.....	21 85	46 20
K.....	22 35	46 70
L.....	22 90	47 25
M.....	23 45	47 75
N.....	24 35	48 75
O.....	24 90	49 30
P.....	25 40	49 75
Q.....	25 95	50 35
R.....	26 55	50 90
S.....	27 00	51 40
T.....	27 60	51 95
U.....	28 05	52 50
V.....	28 65	53 00
W.....	29 20	53 55
X.....	29 75	54 10
Y.....	30 25	54 60
Z.....	32 20	56 55
AA.....	32 75	57 10
EE.....	33 25	57 60
FF.....	33 80	58 20
GG.....	34 35	58 75
HH.....	34 85	59 25
JJ.....	35 40	59 80
KK.....	36 00	60 35
LL.....	43 55	68 00

All hand tailored coats will be made up in basting and forwarded for try-on if desired. An extra charge of \$2.00 will be made for factory tailored coats forwarded for try-on.

Even Sears Roebuck and Company sold World War I uniforms. A sample ad is shown.

Officers' Service Uniforms.
 Olive drab wool serge cloth (Summer weight). Shpg. wt., 4¾ lbs.
No. 6L20003½ Price of coat and pants, collar devices included\$35.00
 Olive drab wool serge cloth (Winter weight). Shipping weight, 5¼ pounds.
No. 6L20004½ Price of coat and pants, collar devices included\$45.00
 Uniform, made of olive drab cotton khaki cloth. Shpg. wt., 3¾ lbs.
No. 6L20005½ Price of coat and pants, collar devices included\$15.00
 Enlisted Men's Uniform, made same style as No. 6L20005½, except not as good in quality.
No. 6L20014½ Price of coat and pants (without collar devices and sleeve stripes)....\$8.50



Generally, officer coats evolved from the early rolling collar to a straight standing version about 1911. During and after World War I the skirts became more flared and longer. At this same time, officers' coats took on a wider divergence from "standard patterns" because of the British uniform influence during World War I.

Army regulations introduced in December 1902 called for, in part, "A single breasted sack coat of olive drab woolen material, and of khaki-colored khaki material for summer wear on in the tropics, made with two outside breast pockets and two outside patch pockets below the waist; pockets covered by flaps, rounded at edges, buttoned by small regulation button. The coat to have falling collar, from 1 to 1-3/4 inches in width, depending on the wearer." Officers had to equip themselves with new OD uniforms by July 1, 1903.

The coat was to "fit closely at the waist and loosely at the chest, at least 5 inches in excess of the chest measurement; buttoned down the front with five

regulation buttons. The skirt to extend one-third the distance from the point of the hip to the bend of the knee."

In December 1904 the army called for officers' coats to have "choked-bellow pockets" but otherwise the details were similar to 1902. Patch pockets, which were flatter than the bellows style, came in with the 1912 regulations. Details of the coat pockets, like the collars, can help distinguish the dates of manufacture.

By January 1912 the coat had changed only slightly. In addition to pockets returned to the plain patch style, the desired fitting was described as, "closely at the waist and easy of the chest" while the collar was, "To be standing collar of suitable height, fastened with hooks and eyes." The fitting continued to be very loose over the chest and shoulders but fitted at the waist. This wording generally remained until 1924 when the fitting became, "The breast to have an extra fullness of approximately 3-1/2 inches...."

In World War I and afterwards the coat pockets, especially lower ones, were to be "slightly rounded," which referred to the lower corners. Coat pockets become wider at bottom than at top due to British influence and this continued after WW I.

**Summary of Officer Service Coats as
Defined in Army Regulations**

Year	Collar	Pockets	Skirt	Shoulder loops	Cuff trim
Dec 1902	Falling, 1 to 1-3/4 inches	Patch. Rounded	1/3 distance, hip to knee	Yes	None
Dec 1904	Falling, 1 to 1-3/4 inches	Choked below	1/3 distance, hip to knee	1 in. at collar, 2 in. at shoulder	GSC* has black braid.
Aug 1907	Falling, 1 to 1-3/4 inches	Choked below	1/3 distance, hip to knee	1 in. at collar, 2 in. at shoulder	GSC black. Others brown.
Jan 1912	Standing, of "suitable height"	Patch. Bottom rounded	1/3 distance, hip to knee	1 inch & 2 inches. Shoulder crossed stitched.	GSC black Others brown.
Feb 1913	Standing, of "suitable height"	Patch. Bottom rounded	1/3 distance, hip to knee	1 inch & 2 inches. Shoulder crossed stitched.	GSC black. Others brown.
Aug 1917	Standing, of "suitable height"	Patch. Lower corners slightly rounded	1/3 distance, hip to knee	1 inch & 2 inches. Shoulder crossed stitched.	GSC black. Others brown.
Feb 1919: WD Circ 85 recognizes coats made in Europe may be worn. Longer skirt, w/ or w/o back slit. Large bellows pockets, especially lower. If not too exaggerated, may continue "until such time as they can be reasonably expected to do so without undue financial hardship."					
Apr 1920: WD Circ 161 provides guidance, OD woolen or cotton coats. Skirt to extend to the crotch. For mounted, skirt authorized to be no less than 1-1/2 inches shorter. No slits in coat's skirt. Coat pockets to be rounded at bottom & each covered with flap rounded at corners with point in the center. Max pocket dimensions: Upper-7-1/2 deep w/ top 6 inches wide and 7-1/2 at bottom. Lower-9 inches deep w/ top 8 inches wide and 10-1/2 at bottom.					
Oct 1921 Old pattern authorized as long as serviceable.	Standing, of "suitable height according to neck of wearer."	Patch. Slightly rounded corners. Same size as Apr 1920. Flap corners & center pointed.	To extend to the crotch. Mounted: not to be shorter than 1-1/2 inches from crotch. Flair at hips. Skirt slit to 3/4 to waistline.	1-1/2 inches & 2 inches. Crossed stitched at shoulder.	GSC black. Other officers brown. Forest green for WO and EM commissioned during war.
Nov 1924 Old pattern authorized as long as serviceable.	Standing, not to exceed two inches. When white collar worn, not to show over 1/4 inch	Upper patch, w/ bottom slightly rounded. Lower, inside hung w/ flaps.	Full, extending 2 to 3 inches below crotch, with slit to 3/4 skirt length	1-1/2 inches & 2 inches. Crossed stitched at shoulder.	GSC black. Other officers brown. Forest green for WO and EM commissioned during war.

*CSC = General Staff Corps.

Standing collar coats for officers were replaced by lapel coats starting in 1925 when Air Service officers adopted them. All branches were authorized lapel coats in February 1926. Standing collar coats were authorized to be modified to lapel versions, which could be worn as long as serviceable.