

## CHAPTER 9

### WEARING OF SWORDS, SWORD BELTS, CEREMONIAL BELTS AND WHITE GLOVES

#### SWORDS

##### Description

0901. The following types of RAF swords are worn on appropriate occasions:

- a. Air rank (AO)
- b. Below air rank (BAO)
- c. Warrant officer (WO)

0902. The sword assembly consists of:

- a. *Sword.*
  - (1) *Blade.* Is straight, 32¼ to 32½ in (82 cm to 82.6 cm) long, tapered gradually and fullered both sides. There is less engraving on the warrant officer sword than on the officer patterns.
  - (2) *Mountings.* Consist of guard, grip, back piece and pommel, ferrule, under nut and invisible top nut. The guard is of gold plated rolled brass pierced with an ornamental device including the Royal Cypher. The back piece is in the form of an eagle's head. The officer patterns and some of the more recently manufactured warrant officer pattern also have a badge showing the RAF eagle and crown made of gold plated thin sheet brass, raised from underneath and fixed and brazed to the dome of the guard. The grip is 4½ in (11 cm) long, of wood and the officer patterns are covered with white fish skin, bound with gilt wire. The fish skin on the warrant officer pattern is black.
- b. *Sword knot.* The officer pattern is of blue and gold and comprises a gold lace strap with a blue silk line down the centre, gold acorn also gold and blue slider. The warrant officer pattern is of similar design but is of dark blue leather.
- c. *Scabbard.* Of tanned leather, blocked and polished and fitted with three gold plated brass mounts. On the officer patterns, the rings on the top and middle mounts are held by a ball attached to a laurel wreath. On the air rank pattern both mounts are ornamentally chased and the centre mount is slightly longer than on the other patterns. The bottom mount, known as the shoe or chape, is surmounted at the mouth by a laurel wreath on the officer patterns and a feature of the air officer pattern is that the shoe is asymmetric. On the warrant officer pattern, all laurel wreaths are omitted.
- d. *Ceremonial Belt.*
  - (1) *Officer pattern.* Of blue silk web 1 3/8 in (3.5 cm) wide with a bar of gold embroidery 3/8 in (9 mm) wide running length-wise along each edge. It is lined with blue morocco to match. The plate fastener bears the eagle and crown surrounded by a laurel wreath, with the motto PER ARDUA AD ASTRA under the eagle and within the wreath.
  - (2) *Warrant officer pattern.* Of dark blue leather 1½ in (3.8 cm) wide. The plate fastener is the same as the officer pattern.
- e. *Canvas belt.* Of plain canvas, 2 in (5.1 cm) wide with shoulder strap 7/8 in (22 mm) wide. The buckle, slide adjuster and attachment rings are of brass.
- f. *Slings.*
  - (1) *Officer pattern.* Of similar material and appearance to the officer pattern ceremonial belt but 1 in (2.5 cm) wide and with bars of gold embroidery 3/16 in (5 mm) in width.
  - (2) *Warrant officer pattern.* Of similar material and appearance to the warrant officer pattern ceremonial belt, but ¾ in (19 mm) wide.

Slings are worn in pairs, each connecting with the belt at one end and attached to a billet at the other. The shorter sling is worn at the left hand side of the belt and the longer sling at the rear of the belt.
- g. *Billets.* Fittings of gold plated brass, the air officer pattern is embossed with an eagle and crown motif, attached to a short leather strap. Billets are used to join the slings to the rings on the scabbard.

### Supply

0903. Swords and associated equipment are supply items and allocations to command headquarters are made for use on a pool basis. Officers in certain appointments and on the Special Duties List qualify for long-term loans and short term loans are made to officers participating in ceremonies on an individual basis. Items required for wear at weddings and private functions are to be obtained from commercial sources but in areas abroad, where not available commercially, hire from the supply squadron on a pre-payment basis is permitted. Supply procedure and entitlement to long-term loans is outlined in AP 830 and Command Staff Instructions.

### Dress with which swords may be worn

0904. Swords may only be worn with Nos 1, 1A, 6, 6A, 9 and 11 Dresses.

### Occasions when swords are worn

0905. Swords are to be worn on the occasions indicated in Annex D to Chap 10. A member of a church congregation, attending the service only and who is not taking part in any parade or ceremony before, during, or after the service, should not wear a sword unless specifically requested to do so. Similarly, where the wearing of a sword at an indoor ceremonial function is likely to be an encumbrance, permission to omit the sword may be given by the sponsor co-ordinating the occasion. Swords may be removed temporarily whilst travelling in an aircraft or car and at a social function which may immediately follow a ceremony. In these circumstances, the belt may continue to be worn with the slings joined to form a loop.

0906. Warrant officers are only to wear swords when parading as a member of a colour party escorting a Queen's or King's colour. This privilege does not apply on any other ceremonial occasion or to members of squadron standard parties.

### Method of wear

0907. There are two methods of wearing the sword:

- a. Parade commanders, commanders of guards of honour, officers under their orders, Directors of Music and warrant officers in colour parties are to wear the sword hooked up on the sword belt on the ceremonial belt worn outside the jacket. When worn this way with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses, the detachable belt is to be removed from the jacket and with Nos 1A and 6A Dresses, the sash is to be dispensed with. The ceremonial belt can be prevented from sagging by fitting a small brass hook on either side of the jacket at waist level or by use of needle and thread. When the greatcoat is worn the hilt of the sword is to be outside the sword slit of the greatcoat.
- b. Inspecting and reviewing officers, those in attendance upon them and other officers not referred to in sub-para a are to wear the sword in the normal fitting, ie when the scabbard containing the sword is clipped to the two slings which in turn hang from a plain canvas belt worn under the uniform jacket with the shoulder strap over the right shoulder. With the sword in this position, the jacket belt is to be worn with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses and the sash with Nos 1A and 6A Dresses. When the greatcoat is worn, the hilt of the sword is to protrude beyond the wrap-over, which is to be folded back.

The method of carrying the sword is outlined in AP 818 (Drill and ceremonial).

### WRAF CEREMONIAL BELTS

0908. WRAF ceremonial belts are similar in appearance and design to officers ceremonial sword belts except that the method of adjustment is different and there are no connections for slings. They are to be worn by WRAF officers on parade in Nos 1 or 6 Dresses when RAF officers wear swords and also when participating in passing out/graduation parades. This belt may also be worn by WRAF officers in Nos 1, 6 or 6A Dresses holding personal appointments when attending on the officer concerned in an official capacity. The ceremonial belt is not worn with a greatcoat or by PMRAFNS officers.

### WHITE GLOVES AND WHITE WEBBING

0909. White nylon or cotton gloves with one button or press-stud are to be worn by:

- a. RAF officers with Nos 1A and 6A Dresses, irrespective of whether a sword is being worn, also with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses when a sword is worn.

## WEARING OF SWORDS, SWORD BELTS, CEREMONIAL BELTS AND WHITE GLOVES

- b. Directors of Music with Nos 9, 10 and 11 Dresses.
  - c. PMRAFNS and WRAF officers with Nos 1A and 6A Dresses and by WRAF officers with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses when a ceremonial belt is worn.
  - d. Warrant officers with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses when a sword is worn.
0910. White nylon or cotton gloves are to be worn by airmen and airwomen with Nos 1 and 6 Dresses, as appropriate, when participating in:
- a. State occasions.
  - b. Royal occasions for the Royal Air Force.
  - c. Guards at Royal residences.
  - d. Guards of honour.
  - e. Service funerals amounting to State occasions and those sponsored by MOD.
  - f. Official memorial services.
  - g. Sovereign's birthday parades.
  - h. Annual recurring national ceremonies such as Remembrance Day parades and Battle of Britain parades, the Festival of Remembrance and Royal Tournament.
  - j. Regional ceremonies of national importance in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
  - k. Parades to present a Queen's or King's Colour, Squadron Standard or Personal Banner.
  - l. Parades to confer Freedoms.
  - m. Parades to exercise Freedoms.

White polyethelene webbing is also to be worn by airmen (other than warrant officers) when participating in the above events.

0911. White gloves and white webbing not committed to the events referred to in para 0909 may, on the authority of MOD (PI(Cer)(RAF)), be authorized for wear by the appropriate personnel on other occasions of a lower priority.



This file was downloaded  
from the RTFM Library.

Link: [www.scottbouch.com/rtfm](http://www.scottbouch.com/rtfm)

Please see site for usage terms,  
and more aircraft documents.

