

# The Band Uniform

Proper attire, deportment and attitude are crucial elements in establishing a professional demeanor and gaining respect on and off the competition field. While not part of the scoring system in the United States, Dress and Deportment is judged in Scottish competitions.

Pipe Bands around the world wear a variety of uniform styles reflecting the culture of the country and history of the Band.



*Early photo of the band in front of Joslyn Castle, Omaha, NE*



The uniform worn by the Omaha Pipes and Drums has changed over the Band's 40-year history. The white, then black, traditional military looking "Class A" (top) was replaced with the more comfortable and modern civilian looking uniform of today.

Each component of the uniform has its own history and significance. Starting from the bottom and working up...



**Ghillie Brogues**, or Ghillies, are a type of shoe with laces along the instep and no tongue. Ghillies originated as a shoe that would drain water and dry quickly due to the lack of a tongue, and not get stuck in the mud because of their laces above the ankle. A ghillie or gillie is a man or boy who attends to someone (originally his employer and/or guests) on a hunting or fishing expedition. The word "brogue" is derived from the Scottish Gaelic word bròg meaning "shoe". The plural ("shoes") is "brògan".



The very first type of **Kilt Hose** worn – the *cadadh* – were cut and sewn from tartan cloth. They were not necessarily the same tartan as the kilt – most often they were a different tartan entirely. In fact, two tone red and white (or red and black, blue and white, and other color combinations) were popular. The earliest portrait of anyone wearing the *cadadh* with a kilt is from the early seventeenth century. The Band wears two colors of hose (not at the same time); green for competitions and informal events, and white for formal events.

The Band wears contrasting red garter **Flashes** underneath the folds of the kilt hose with just a few inches of the tips showing. These are symbolic of the original flashes that were wrapped around the leg and tied to keep the hose in place.



The **Sgian Dubh** (pronounced "skee(a)n doo") is a ceremonial dagger. It is worn tucked into the hose with only the pommel visible. The name comes from the Gaelic meaning "black knife", where "black" may refer to the usual color of the handle of the knife. It is also suggested that "black" means secret, or hidden.

When the sgian dubh first began to be worn full time in the stocking top, it is shown in oil paintings of the early to mid 1800's. The sgian dubh has been banned on a number of occasions in the USA and even in Scotland. Because of this, the Sgian Dubh is an option band uniform item.



A **Sporran** is a pouch (the word is simply the Scottish Gaelic for 'purse'). Now a decorative part of Highland dress, it was originally an everyday practical item. Since the traditional kilt does not have pockets, the sporran serves as a wallet and container for any other necessary personal items. Historically, the sporran was

used to carry a day's rations.



The sporran is worn on a chain or **Sporran Belt** around the waist, allowing the sporran to lie below the waist. Belted Plaids were worn as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. While once worn to hold the Great Kilt closed, the modern Kilt Belt is primarily an accessory – if a kilt fits properly, a belt is not needed. The **Kilt Belt** worn by the Band is a traditional military style and is not worn with the waistcoat.



The **Waistcoat** (or vest) is one of the few articles of clothing whose origin historians can date precisely. King Charles II of England, Scotland and Ireland introduced the waistcoat as a part of correct dress during the Restoration of the British monarchy. It was derived from the Persian vests seen by English visitors to the court of Shah Abbas. The band wears the waistcoat with both a short- and long-sleeve **White Shirt** and **Black Tie**.



**Glengarry** - is a type of cap which Alasdair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry invented; a boat-shaped cap without a peak made of thick-milled woolen material with a *toorie* or bobble on top and ribbons hanging down behind, capable of being folded flat. It became part of the uniform of a number of Scottish regiments, with differences in whether or not the cap had a diced band around above the brim and in the colors. The Band wears a black Glengarry with a red toorie and the Band Cap badge.



The **Inverness Cape** has come to be almost universally adopted for rainy weather by pipe bands the world over, and many other kilt wearers also find it to be the preferable garment for such conditions. Unlike most raincoats, the Inverness cape has no sleeves. Instead, there is a wide cut in the sides to accommodate the arms. This enables the wearer to access a sporran without unbuttoning and opening up the cape. The opening in the side is covered by a short cape, which can be buttoned in the front. The Band rule is that if one member of the Band forgets his or her Inverness and it is raining, the entire Band goes without wearing theirs.

### **What's Worn Under the Kilt?**

The question of what is worn *under* the kilt is a source of endless speculation and tiresome attempts at humor. Many traditional Scots will tell you, "Nothing is *worn* under the kilt; it is all in working order."

You'll have to learn the answer to that question on your own.