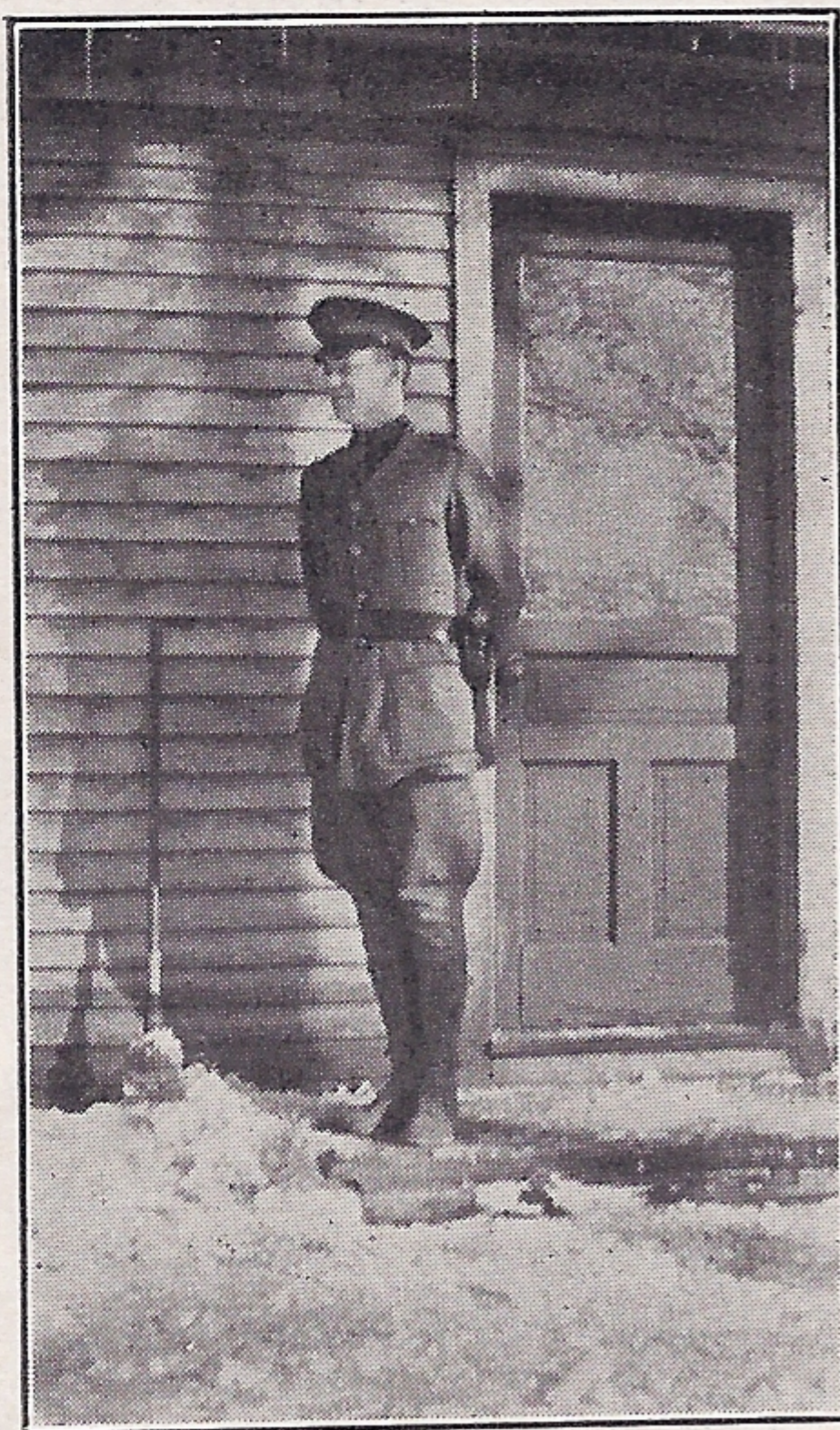


Why They Wear Grey and Purple

Origin and Meaning of Troopers' Uniform

THERE is something psychological about a uniform. It carries conviction and gives the wearer a standing for something, or it fails utterly in its purpose.

How well this was demonstrated in the appearance of our drafted men as they marched off in their ill-assorted civilian clothing, compared to the impression made by those same men clothed in the olive-drab uniform of our army. It transformed them from a crowd of ordinary men drawn from all walks of life, into soldiers, our Nation's defenders, our heroes.



A man on crutches in civilian clothes attracts barely a glance. In uniform, he brings a lump into the throat.

Note the traffic policeman on the crowded corner. The majestic wave of his white-gloved hand is authoritative and commands instant obedience from all. Could he do it in civilian clothes?

A uniform rarely wins commendation from the members of a rival organization. No soldier will admit that the uniform of any other army equals his own. And this pride in his badge of service also adds to the psychology of its effect.

The uniform of the New York State Police is unusual. It is military, yet nothing like the army; it is practical and comfortable, yet artistic; and once seen it is never forgotten.

The color of the trooper's uniform is an absolutely neutral grey, "smoke grey," the women call it. The coat is open at the neck, showing the grey flannel shirt above. It is snug-fitting to the waist line and then widens into a full-skirted effect. Below it the breeches

have their greatest flare just above the knee, being tight around the hips, exactly the opposite of the army cut.

Grey and Purple

The trooper wears puttees or high, brown, laced boots reaching almost to the knee, and a wide, brown, leather belt with cartridge pockets. The bit of color which lends distinction to the whole uniform however, is a royal purple necktie, and a purple cord around the grey, straight-brimmed service hat. This color has been used in no other uniform in this country to the writer's knowledge, except as a piping in the medical reserve corps of the U. S. Marines.

Its addition to the uniform of the New York State Police is associated with a bit of sentiment in the mind of Major George F. Chandler, the Superintendent, who designed it. Only those who are well acquainted with the Major and his family understand the significance of the purple tie, but none can deny its effectiveness.

The impression made by this uniform is reflected in the frequent reference made to it by newspapers, who often call the troopers "the men in grey," "the grey-clad riders," "the grey horsemen."

Major Chandler gives this rather interesting explanation of his choice of this color for the force he has organized.

"There should be a reason for everything," says the Major. "Some uniforms are gorgeous and striking, intended to attract the eye. Our army uniform is olive drab in color, because that lends itself most to invisibility on the field."

"In choosing a color for the State police, I had this thought: White stands for purity, goodness and the right. Black stands for evil and wrong-doing. An artist mixes black and white together on his palate to make a neutral grey, and as my men are to stand between the right and the wrong in the State of New York, it seems fitting to clothe them in the neutral shade made by mixing black and white together."

Whatever the inspiration that gave birth to the trooper's uniform, it wins admiration from everyone. Army men like it, the city police admire it, the wrong-doers flee from it, and the women—they love it.

Those who were present at the State Fair in Syracuse in the Fall of 1917 when the State Troopers made their official debut on the race track on Governor's Day, will never forget the tremendous impression made by the first appearance of the new mounted organization.

As they swept upon the race track, two hundred and thirty strong, with their grey uniforms and grey hats, with the touch of purple at the throat, and the purple guidons fluttering over their heads, the entire grandstand packed with humanity, rose to its feet as one man, and as though by concerted signal gave forth a mighty shout of admiration and approval at the first sight of the Empire State's new protective force, The New York State Police.

A Trooper's Funeral

Trooper J. N. Skiff, of Troop K, who was killed in a motorcycle accident at Ogdensburg, N. Y., was buried with military honors on May 29th in the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, New Rochelle, N. Y.

Captain J. A. Warner, of Troop K, eight men of his command and two from Troop D, composed the military guard. The services in St. Gabriel's Church were also attended by Major Percy E. Barbour, 22nd Engineers, formerly deputy superintendent of the Department of State Police.

Eight grey-uniformed troopers acted as pall bearers. The funeral procession was led by a sergeant and three patrolmen of the New Rochelle Police Department, followed by six men representing the New Rochelle Firemen's Benevolent Association. Two mounted troopers rode ahead of an open carriage filled with flowers which was followed by the hearse in which the coffin lay draped in an American flag.

Another mounted trooper rode behind the hearse, leading Trooper Skiff's horse, with the saddle reversed in token that his master would ride no more.

