

GREAT COATS

by JUNE MARSH
photographs by FERGUS GREER



Charcoal wool coat with velvet collar, £125, and leather riding boots, £39.99, both from all branches of Marks & Spencer. Black felt Basque beret, £13.45, from The Hat Shop, 58 Neal Street, WC2. Black leather gloves, £39.99, by Dents, from Selfridges, Oxford Street, W1

THIS winter's coats stand out as the best example of how good-looking, as well as practical, uniform design can be.

Handsome buttons punctuate classic tailoring, and generously cut collars, often in velvet, add formal flair. Deep cuffs echo the military theme with braid, embroidery and plush velvet details.

Waists nip in at the back and are accentuated with half belts. Lengths vary, from a sweep to the ankle to boxy, hip-length reefer styles.

For decades, designers have found inspiration in military dress, unashamedly copying and mixing styles, nationalities and periods. A collar from this regiment, buttons from another and

LEFT: Red wool and cashmere coat with black velvet collar, £465, from Aquascutum, 100 Regent Street, W1. Black velour hat, £150, by Philip Treacy at Harvey Nichols, SW1 and Harrods, SW1. Black suede gloves, £75, from Swaine Adeney, 185 Piccadilly, W1. Leather boots, £39.95, from all branches of Marks & Spencer

colour from a third. The results: contemporary classics, such as the blazer, trench-coat and reefer jacket.

The army greatcoat—essential to the service wardrobe—is one of today's most copied styles. The difference, in fashion terms, is that designers have made good use of modern cloth, lighter than the heavy wools necessary for professional soldiering. Today's price is far from

uniform. A military coat can cost from as little as £50 from an army surplus store, up to four-figure sums for a top designer's version.

Riding boots look best with these coats. Like many contemporary clothes, most military uniforms evolved from equestrian costume. Hats and gloves polish off a look destined to be seen marching smartly down every high street this winter.



Grey wool, ankle-length, single-breasted coat with embroidered sleeves, £875, by Rifat Ozbek from Browns, 23 South Molton Street, W1. Floral-print pleated skirt, £530, from Browns; Feathers, 40 Hans Crescent, SW1; Brown Thomas, 40 Parliament Street, Dublin; Julie FitzMaurice, Harrogate, Yorkshire; and Lisa Sterling, 19 St Annes Street, Manchester.

Cream suede gloves, £45, from selected branches of Whistles.

Fur hat, £64.50, by Fred Bare from The Hat Shop.

Black leather, laced boots, £175, from Russell & Bromley

RIGHT: Blue wool twill fitted ankle-length coat with velvet collar, £975, and wool cap, £55, both from Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond Street, W1. Black leather riding boots, £175, from branches of Russell & Bromley. Leather gloves, £39.99, by Dents

Make-up and hair by Carl Stanley for Ethos.
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