

The Sewing on of Badges

by Sgt. Ben Linkewich

As a parent, you should be proud of your Cadet when they earn a new badge for their uniform, be it from a camp, first aid, level, or promotion. However, the next day, after the glow has faded somewhat, you are faced with a slight hang-up. Your cadet comes to you and says something along the lines of "Mommmy, can you sew on my new *insert name* badge???" However, it may be noted that the uniform is strictly the cadet's responsibility, so now please pick up your cadet and plunk them in front of the computer, as they're the ones who should be doing the work.

Good. Hello, fellow Air Cadet, your parent now has license to give you a hard time until you sew on your badges, so I'd suggest now, or at least ASAP as a good time.

Step 1: Get out a needle and thread. Tear off any badges your most recent acquisition may replace. Thread the needle with enough thread to go around the badge at least twice (in and out) plus a bit. Make it 12 inches for small badges and a good arm-length+ for the larger ones.

Step 2: Determine the spacing. Shoulder flashes go 2cm down from the shoulder seam, in line with your arm at attention. Ranks go between your shoulder and your elbow, in the same line as your (properly sewn) shoulder flash. Camp badges are 7cm from the bottom of your right sleeve, 3 to a line, all touching. Level badges are 7cm from the base of your left sleeve. First Aid badges are 1cm above the level badge.

Step 3: Make sure your badges are straight before you sew them. I use a chalk line (found at any hardware store) when sewing on ranks or shoulder flashes. Pin the badges in place as best you can, making sure to re-adjust them as you sew to keep them straight.

Step 4: Tie several knots in the same place at the end of your thread. Poke through preferably on one of the corners of the badge, pulling the thread through until the knot holds. Poke through the badge in nearly the same spot the thread came through it, in line with the stitching on the badge. Repeat at small intervals until you've gone around the entire badge, then go around it again in the looser spots. If you get stuck, ask your parents for help.

Step 5: Once you've sewn on your badge really well and you need to tie the thread off, turn the area inside-out. Stitch through the fabric behind the centre of the badge (not poking through the badge) 5-6 times if possible. Tie a couple of slip-knots as close to the fabric as possible to further prevent it from unravelling in the wash.

You may notice that when you complain/ask about your badges to various NCOs, they inevitably say something like "it's not too hard and/or bad." This is because if you are sufficiently incapable of determining which end of the needle is the pointier of the two, the resulting trauma to your nervous system releases chemicals in your brain that will effect you happily and forever couch the memory in a state of mild euphoric bubblyness. Trust me on this.

PS: Chalk washes out, but trying to brush it off is fruitless, so please don't procrastinate in sewing on your new badges until 2 hours before parade/drill competition. It may be noted that sewing in a hurry further dampens your pointy/non-pointy discernment.