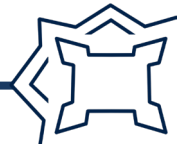


Green Mountain Boys and Massachusetts Militia Guidelines



"America's First Victory," the May 10, 1775 capture of Fort Ticonderoga pre-dated the Continental Army by over a month and was carried out without the knowledge of the Continental Congress itself. Uniform military clothing was not unknown at this early point in the war, on militia officers, militia 'grenadiers,' and volunteer independent companies, like Benedict Arnold's Second Company, Connecticut Governor's Foot Guards. Colonel Benedict Arnold wore this company's scarlet faced with buff uniform during the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. Though uniform clothing was not unfamiliar, the vast majority of the Green Mountain Boys and Massachusetts militia who captured Fort Ticonderoga wore civilian clothing. Accounts of clothing from the New Hampshire Grants—and subsequently the state of Vermont—provide a glimpse at the some of the civilian attire worn by Fort Ticonderoga's captures. In his narrative, Ethan Allen described his own clothing upon being captured in Canada later in 1775.

A few days before I was taken prisoner, I shed my clothes, by which I happened be taken: a Canadian dress, viz: a short fawn skin jacket double breasted, an under vest and breeches of sagathy, worsted stockings, a decent pair of shoes, two plain shirts and a red worsted cap; this was all the clothing I had, in which I made my appearance in England.

The, 'red worsted cap,' appears to be the most Canadian aspect Ethan Allen's dress. The woolen garments in the rest of Allen's account would not be out of place anywhere in New England. Albeit later in 1779, Colonel Herrick advertised two deserters amongst his regiment of militia, wearing plain suits of clothing.

Deserted from me the Subscriber, at Bennington, State of Vermont, two soldiers, namely, John Johnstone, and James Furgerson, who had enlisted with me, to serve in an expedition in defence of the northern frontiers of this State, to continue in service sixty days, having received an extraordinary bounty to engage:



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John is about twenty years of age, five feet ten inches high, light complexion, fair hair, middling size, had on when he deserted a dark brown coat, vest and breeches: James is a Scotchman, about 30 years of age, five feet eight inches high, middling size, light complexion, dark brown hair; had on a blue coat, vest and breeches, white woolen stocking, and a white hat.

British and German officers observed that militia and soldiers from northern New England frequently set aside their coats or jackets in the brief heat of the summer. General Orders from British Governor General Guy Carleton, on July 26, 1776, explained the dress of Lieutenant Benjamin Whitcomb of Maidstone, New Hampshire, from Colonel Timothy Bedel's extra continental regiment. Whitcomb was a wanted man for killing a British Brigadier General in camp along the Richelieu River.

He wears a kind of under Jacket, without Sleeves, slash Pockets, leather Breeches, grey woolen or yarn Stockings, and shows, Hat flapped, with a Gold Cord round it. He had a firelock, Blanket, Pouch, and Powder Horn.

Brunswick Dragoon surgeon, Julius Friedrich Wasmus described similar civilian clothing in his account General John Stark's militia from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont at the Battle of Bennington. Surgeon Wasmus described their informal dress in the summer August heat.

Putting all of it in a bag, I wanted to take it along, but my guide took it away from me and urged me to drink some strong rum with him. All the enemy were very well provided with it and I noticed that almost all of them were drunk. Each one had a wooden flask filled with rum hanging from his neck; they all were in shirt-sleeves, had nothing [to cover] their bodies but shirts, vests and long linen trousers, which reached down to their shoes; no stockings; [in addition] a powder horn, bullet bag, a flask of rum and a gun - that was all they had on them. They all were well-shaped men of very healthy appearance and well-grown; better than the Canadians.

In May 1775 cold nights would have been a greater concern than hot days, nonetheless New Englanders were happy to set aside their heavy winter coats. Leather breeches and trousers would have been very common among the Green Mountain Boys in May, as per these summertime descriptions.

Ezra Tilden of Stoughton, Massachusetts served from July 20 to December 10, 1776 in Colonel Ephraim Wheelock's Militia Regiment. His diary entry from August 5, 1776 describes his belongings, his personal clothing and the items he brought for himself and for sale in the campaign along Lake Champlain.

An Account of some things I carried into the Army in my Pack: A woolen Shirt with a snuffbottle full of ground coffee in it, and one and a half of chocolate in it too, wrapt up in a piece of brown paper and a new cotton and linen shirt and a new milk cheese wrapt up in it which weighed five pounds, a pair of white stockings, a pair of blue stockings, a bag of plumbs, a bag with three pounds and half of sugar in it, a pair of boots, a cap, a powder horn, four sheets of paper wrapt up in a piece of brown paper and four quills in it, a brown paper with two pieces of soap in it, one reat pin, four small ones, one

brown thread needle, and one worsted darning needle, one ball of white yarn, one ball of blue yarn, some strings, some thread, some sealing wax, a snuffbox Jull of snuff a pewter bason, a wooden plate, a spoon, a fork, a Jack-knife, a pen-knife, a pair of knee buckles, a pocket book and case to it, a small toothed comb, a pocket looking glass, an under-jacket, a short coat, a great coat, a pair of grey stockings, two pair, shoes, a striped shirt, a pair of long trowsers, a hat, two handkerchiefs', a pair of shoe buckles, a pair of garters, a pack to carry my things in, some bread, a pair of arm strings, a pair of leather breeches, a pair of cloth breeches, a leather strap, a cod line, a frock, some tow.

The basic military equipment required for military service was well-known across New England. In Massachusetts, most aspects of the equipment requirements went back to their 1693 Militia Act, with updates in 1699 for socket bayonets among others. The Massachusetts Provincial Congress in Cambridge ordered on December 10, 1774 that towns Minute Men should be equipped with, "an effective Fire Arm, Bayonet, Pouch, Knapsack, Thirty Rounds of Cartridges and Ball..." The January 22, 1776 Massachusetts Militia Act required:

That each and every Officer and private Soldier of said Militia... shall equip himself, and be constantly provided with a good Fire-Arm, with a Steel or Iron Ramrod, and a Spring to retain the same, a Worm, Priming Wire and Brush, and a Bayonet fitted to his Gun, a Scabbard and Belt therefor, and a Cutting Sword, or a Tomahawk or Hatchet, a Pouch containing a Cartridge Box, that will hold fifteen Rounds of Cartridges at least, a Hundred Buck Shot, a Jack-Knife and Tow for Wadding, six Flints, one Pound of Powder, forty Leaden Balls fitted to his Gun, a Knapsack and Blanket, a Canteen or Wooden Bottle sufficient to hold one Quart.



Shirts

Best: Hand-stitched checked, striped, or white linen shirt narrow band cuffs with thread Dorset buttons or made for sleeve-buttons (cuff links).

Acceptable: Machine stitched checked, striped, or white linen shirts.

Unacceptable: Cotton calico or plaid shirts.

Neckwear

Best: Silk, linen, or cotton neckerchiefs; linen neck stocks, or linen rollers, well-tied around the neck.

Acceptable: Machine hemmed neckerchiefs or linen rollers.

Unacceptable: Military horsehair or leather neck stocks.

Socks and Stockings

Best: White or grey wool yarn or worsted stockings or socks, when worn with trousers.

Acceptable: White, grey, black, brown, blue, or green stockings or socks of wool yarn, worsted, linen or cotton.

Unacceptable: Red, yellow, or polyester stockings.

Hats and Caps

Best: Hand-finished, round-blocked, civilian cocked hats and round hats made of black wool or beaver felt.

Acceptable: Knit-wool Monmouth or Dutch mutt caps, oval-blocked hats made of black felt in cocked or round styles.

Unacceptable: Slouch hats from unfinished blanks, grey or brown wool felt hats, cut down felt caps, straw hats, fur caps.

Shoes

Best: Hand-finished, short or long quartered shoes with round toes, made of black-waxed calf leather, fitted for buckles. Shoe boots, half-boots high-lows, of black waxed-calf.

Acceptable: Machine made, black leather, shoes with buckles or ties, high-lows.

Discouraged: Moccasins.

Unacceptable: Modern Footwear, modern moccasins, civil war bootees, or riding boots (except for field officers).



Coats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, wool broadcloth coats of drab, brown, green, red, or blue in straight-bodied or cutaway styles. Wool broadcloth short coats or sailor's jackets with short skirts and mariner's cuffs in similar colors.

Acceptable: Well-fit linen or linsey-woolsey coats of similar colors, broadcloth coats, short coats, and sailor's jackets with minor visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Regimental coats, hunting shirts, smocks, or over-shirts., coats and jackets made of cotton canvas or damask upholstery fabric.

Jackets and Waistcoats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit waistcoats of drab, brown, white, green, red or blue broadcloth, kersey, or serge, made single or double breasted, skirted or square cut, with or without sleeves.

Acceptable: Well-fit, waistcoats of linen, linsey-woolsey, cotton, cotton velvet, wool plush or silk, in solid colors or simple patterns, made single or double breasted, skirted or square cut with minor visible machine stitching. Sleeved waistcoats are acceptable as the primary outer garment.

Unacceptable: Regimental waistcoats, cotton canvas, upholstery fabric waistcoats, extremely long or baggy waistcoats.



Breeches and Trousers

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit trousers of linen or hemp canvas or checked linen, leather breeches, or breeches in black, brown, drab, kersey, linsey-woolsey, serge, cotton velvet, wool plush, broadcloth with buckled or tied knee bands.

Acceptable: Well-fit breeches, overalls, or trousers with minor visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Regimental breeches, fringed trousers, baggy breeches.

Legwear

Best: Just stockings or well-fit, hand-finished half-gaiters of black, brown, or drab wool.

Acceptable: Well-fit half-gaiters of black, brown, or drab wool minor machine finishing.

Unacceptable: Wool leggings. Indian Leggings Military gaiters, baggy half-gaiters.

Cartridge Pouches

Best: New England style soft cartridge pouches black or fair leather with approximately 19 round cartridge blocks, narrow black or buff leather straps, or linen webbing shoulder straps. Plain, empty, powder horns with narrow leather straps.

Acceptable: Small, simple leather shot pouches with narrow leather shoulder straps, or belt loops.

Discouraged: Belly boxes or shoulder converted belly boxes.

Unacceptable: British 36 or 29-hole cartridge pouches, New Model American pouches.

Powder Horns

Best: Plain, empty, powder horns with a narrow hemp cord or leather strap.

Acceptable: No powder horn to go with a cartridge pouch.

Unacceptable: Native styled powder horns, or black powder filled horns.

Arms

Best: New England style fowling pieces, English fowling pieces, either plain or modified for a bayonet.

Acceptable: Old pattern Dutch, French, British, commercially made muskets.

Unacceptable: Virginia or Pennsylvania styled long rifles, later French model muskets.





Side Arms

Best: Waist or shoulder belt mounted bayonet, hunting sword, or cutlass.

Acceptable: None, small axes carried in a knapsack.

Discouraged: Sheathed tomahawks, belt axes, carried in a belt.

Unacceptable: Horse pistols, naval pistols, unsheathed bayonets, tomahawks, or belt axes.

Knapsacks and Tumplines

Best: Plain single envelope knapsacks, hemp, or leather tumplines.

Acceptable: Painted canvas knapsacks, simple calfskin knapsacks, blanket rolls.

Unacceptable: British painted or goatskin knapsacks.

Blankets

Best: 2-3 point, checked, Dutch, or rose blankets.

Acceptable: Plain white or Hudson Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.

