

Onward to Canada Connecticut Guidelines



Elements of three regiments of Connecticut soldiers departed Ticonderoga under General Richard Montgomery for the invasion of Canada in the last days of August 1775. Three veterans of the 1758 Battle of Carillon commanded those regiments. Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull ordered Colonel Benjamin Hinman to march to Ticonderoga, while his regiment was enroute to the siege of Boston by May 30, 1775. This regiment garrisoned Ticonderoga that summer and fall. Brigadier General David Wooster's Regiment and Colonel David Waterbury's Regiment mustered and guarded New York City, before sailing up the Hudson River to Albany on their way to Ticonderoga. Companies of these regiments began to assemble and encamp at Ticonderoga by the end of July, in preparation for embarking with General Montgomery. Captain Edward Mott—the architect of the capture of Fort Ticonderoga—joined this force, even as his regiment served in the lines around Boston.

The Connecticut Provincial Assembly mobilized all these soldiers with a draft from their militia in resolves on April 26, 1775. The militia of the Province of Connecticut was quite large and quite active, in the years prior to the Revolutionary War. The 1774 report to the Connecticut board of trade summed up the state of the Militia as follows.

XV. The Number on the Militia Rolls is 26,260—It is constituted under the Regulations provided in "An Act for forming and regulating the Militia; and for the Encouragement of Military Skill, for the better Defence of this Colony" All Male Persons from sixteen Years of Age to Forty-five, to bear Arms, excepting civil and ecclesiastical Officers, and others therein mentioned: The Train-bands in each Town, to attend four Days in a year, for Instructions in Military Discipline. There are eighteen Regiments, with a Troop of Horse to each, and to some two Troops; each Regiment to attend Regimental Exercises once in four Years. The Militia spend their own Time,-- the Soldiers and all Householders provide themselves with Arms &c.—Fines and Penalties are imposed for every Neglect and Defect.—It is no otherwise of any Expense to the Colony.



The Connecticut Provincial Assembly Resolutions of April 26, 1775 drafted a levee of one man per every four from the militia to create six Connecticut regiments for service at Boston or wherever the colony's defense required. Similar to provincial service during the French & Indian War, enlistment terms in 1775 were short, seven months only from the day of enlistment. This term of their enlistment contract was a detail that these soldiers were keenly aware of in the late months of 1775. Each soldier was required to provide much of his own clothing and equipment as the assembly resolutions stated.

Onward to Canada Connecticut Soldier Guidelines

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That a premium of Fifty-Two Shillings per man shall be advanced and paid to each non-commissioned Officer and inhabitant upon their enlistment, they supplying themselves with a blanket, knapsack, clothing, &c., to the acceptance of their respective Captains, and that one month's pay shall be advanced and paid to each of said Officers and enlisted inhabitants. And it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the establishment of pay and wages shall be as follows, viz: the pay for their whole services:

The Connecticut Provincial Assembly resolved to provide much of the camp equipage and supplies, but left the responsibility of each soldier's clothing, accoutrements, and arms to the soldiers themselves. Descriptions of deserters from the Connecticut regiments of 1775 show the breadth civilian clothing soldiers brought from home. Benjamin Buffington deserted from Colonel Hinman's Regiment on May 24, just before it began marching to Ticonderoga. According to an advertisement in the June 19, 1775 edition of the Connecticut Courant, he wore, "a gray outside jacket, lapelled, green plush breeches, streaked trousers, two hats, a new beaver or castor, and an old beaver, two or three pair of stockings, and two pair shoes." Writing from Fort Ticonderoga, Captain Edward Mott placed an advertisement in the same June 19, 1775 edition of the Connecticut Courant for Thomas Clark, who wore, "a light colored fustian coat, calico waistcoat, drab breeches and white stockings, and understands the manual exercise well..." An advertisement in that same edition of the Connecticut Courant, described James Parker for Colonel Wooster's Regiment wearing, "a light colour'd coat" Thomas Cushing deserted from a company of Colonel Jedediah Huntington's regiment outside Boston wearing, "a dark brown Coat, with black Cuffs and Cape, Deerskin breeches with a white Linnen Shirt and seemed Worsted Stockings," according to an advertisement in the Massachusetts Spy on August 9, 1775. The August 28, 1775 Norwich Packet, advertised, "a transient Person," William Darby who deserted from Colonel Huntington's Regiment with, "a blue Coat, Leather Breeches something old, a Pair coarse white Tow Stockings, or a Pair of mix'd coloured Worsted ditto which he stole." African-American soldier, James Parsons, Deserted from Colonel Charles Webb's Regiment had on, "a short green coat with brass buttons, black velvet breeches and jacket, shoes, white stockings and a white linen shirt," according to an advertisement in the September 25, 1775 New-York Gazette; and the Weekly Mercury. According to the August 25, 1775 Connecticut Gazette, John Thayre deserted from Colonel Huntington's Regiment, "wore or carried off with him a Check'd Shirt, red Jacket, blue Surtout, or blue strait bodied Coat &c." Also from Colonel Huntington's Regiment, John Jefferds, wore "a double breasted Bearskin Jacket and old Leather Breeches," when he deserted in a Norwich Packet advertisement from December 18, 1775.

In absence of any issued military clothing, there are a handful of military styled coats among descriptions of Connecticut soldiers in 1775. Writing to Reverend Joseph Fish on July 22, 1775 Captain John Chester of Colonel Joseph Spencer's regiment described his experience of the Battle of Bunker Hill five days earlier.

I waited not, but ran and got my arms and ammunition, and hasted to my company (who were in the church for barracks) and found them nearly ready to march. We soon marched, with our frocks and trowsers on over our other clothes (for our company is in uniform wholly blue, turned up with red), for we were loath to expose ourselves by our dress, and down we marched.

The New London Independent Company, in the 6th Article of their founding charter agreed.

That each Member of the Company shall appear at all Times of public Training in the following livery Regt. A dark blue broadcloth coat with yellow metal Buttons, Buff Cuffs & Lapelles, buff jacket & blue Breeches & white stockings, also each man shall appear with a black cockade in his Hat, nor shall any member at any time be suffer'd to appear under Arms unless he has on a handsome Wig or powders his Hair.

In their follow up meeting on September 5, 1775, they altered their uniform to a more fashionable cut.

The Independent Company then met & Voted that the Breeches be altered from Blue to white with black straps also white jackets & the coat to be cut short & turned up behind, wear half-Boots or black leggings-

In addition to independent companies, whole towns opted to enhance their militia companies with grenadiers. In the May 1774 Connecticut Provincial Assembly resolves, the towns of Pomfret, Woodstock, and Killingly successfully applied to jointly create, "a distinct military company of grenadiers, to be formed out of the inhabitants of the said three towns ..." The Mansfield, Connecticut militia officers voted on January 16, 1775 to add, "in each of their Companies there be appointed Grenadiers, at least six, and not exceeding twelve to each company;" adding uniform and equipment guidelines.



...it is recommended to them to dress uniformly Blue Coats, Scarlet Jackets white Breeches and stockings, with Halfboots, and Scarlet pyramidical Caps Stripp'd and Tossled with white and the word America inserted on the Frontispiece in White.

Recommended and Directed that each Soldier be furnished with a suitable bayonet to his Firelock, and Cartorage Box or Pouch well strapped, and belted, and be so provided that he be excused from Producing a Sword or Cutlass at Reviews,--also that each Soldier appear with white Stockins and a Light blue Cockade of the Button of his Hat that to be Cocked etc.—

These officers further voted to include, "two Drums, two Fifers, and one Hatchet Man," or pioneer per company. As a clothing distinction, "Drummers a white Lace and black Feathers on Hats; Fifers black Feathers and red Cockades over the Hats Button..." If these companies had over 100 men, than they were to have a third drummer and fifer, dressed as the Grenadiers.

As the Colony of Connecticut appointed officers and drafted men from the militia, these uniforms appeared on Connecticut officers and soldiers in the field. Serving in the 22nd Continental Regiment, under Connecticut Colonel Samuel Wyllys, Lieutenant Roger Hooker's May 13, 1776 inventory included, "1 Scarlet Coat faced with buff with a gold Appolet, 1 Blue Coat faced with Red..." among a great deal of waistcoats, breeches, & etc. In an August 10, 1775, New-England Chronicle advertisement Lemuel Allen of Ashford, Connecticut deserted from Colonel John Patterson's Massachusetts Regiment wearing, "a blue Coat, with buff colour'd Cuffs and Lapels." Though exceptional, a smattering of uniform coats existed among Connecticut soldiers in 1775.

In their April 26, 1775 resolves, the Connecticut Provincial Assembly promised to equip their soldiers, relying primarily on the arms and equipment already in the hands of their militia-eligible citizens.

That each inhabitant so enlisted shall be furnished with good fire-arms; and that the fire-arms belonging to this Colony, wherever they are, shall be collected and put into the hands of such enlisted inhabitants as have not arms of their own; and that each enlisted inhabitant that shall provide arms for himself, well fixed with a good bayonet and cartouch box, shall be paid a premium of Ten Shillings;

The assemblage of arms in the Colony of Connecticut in 1775 included a great deal of the arms the Colony acquired during the French & Indian War. In February 1756, the Connecticut Provincial Assembly requested, "at least three thousand stands of arms, with proper accoutrements," from the 10,000 sets of 1742 pattern King's Arms, and accoutrements shipped to stores in Boston. The Colony of Connecticut also purchased commercially made muskets, "something lighter than the Kings Arms," according to a February 27, letter to then governor, Thomas Fitch. Much to the frustration of the Colony of Connecticut in subsequent years, these arms went home with many of their provincial soldiers. Several examples of fowling pieces survive with provenance to Connecticut service.

The Connecticut Provincial Assembly lumped the rest of their soldiers' equipment with their clothing, explaining, "it is resolved by this Assembly, that each enlisted inhabitant or person as aforesaid, shall be entitled to a premium of Fifty-Two Shillings upon their enlistment, they supplying themselves with a blanket, knapsack, clothing," to the acceptance of their captains. Much as in the French & Indian War, Connecticut captains had latitude to sell necessary like knapsacks and blankets to their companies.



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.

Neckware

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.



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, or 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, cotton, or linsey-woolsey coats of similar colors, broadcloth coats, short coats, and sailor's jackets with minor visible machine stitching. Conservatively-cut militia regimental coats in blue faced with red or buff, or red with buff facings.

Unacceptable: 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 knee bands.

Acceptable: Well-fit breeches 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 Pouch

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.

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: Old pattern British or commercially made muskets, New England style fowling pieces, either plain or modified for a bayonet.

Acceptable: Old pattern Dutch or French, muskets. British short land pattern muskets or American 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 check, Dutch, or rose blankets.

Acceptable: Plain white or Hudson Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.

