

Uniform Specifications #201

BRITISH ROYAL WARRANT/ EARLY AMERICAN (1775 - Sept. 1778)

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NOTE: Footnotes which appear inside the period at the end of a sentence refer to that sentence only. Footnotes outside the period refer to the previous paragraph or group of sentences.

TAILORING:

Uniforms were tailored to fit the individual (Cuth. p.50).

BUTTONS:

All buttons were white metal (RW p. 174; Cuth p. 53) with the number of the regiment on the button (RW p. 172). All buttons/buttonholes on the coat were laced (RW p. 174).

BREECHES:

Breeches were made of linen or cloth [wool] (Simes., Cuth. p. 55).

Breeches are worn low, with the waistband on the hips. They are laced at the rear of the waistband for fitting. The seat is cut FULL and gathered on the waistband to allow bending and sitting comfortably. The front should fit smoothly without any extra fullness. The legs should fit as closely as possible without being tight. (Simes, Cuth. p. 53)

The waistband is fastened at the front with three buttons (Cuth. p. 54). The fall is fastened with one button at each corner (Cuth. p. 54). If there is also a middle buttonhole, it is buttoned to the lowest of the three waistband buttons. There is also a slit [watch] pocket in the right front side of the waistband (Cuth. p. 54).

The legs are cut so that the knee band rides below the knee in front, but rises to the top of the calf in back (Cuth. p. 53). Cuthbertson recommends 4 buttons on the leg and 1 on the knee band. Simes, recommends 4 buttons and a buckle.

WAISTCOAT:

The waistcoat should fit snugly across the stomach and chest. The neck opening should fit smoothly, and come up to the shirt collar seam. The bottom waistcoat button should be located directly over the lowest of the three waistband buttons on the breeches (Simes).

The triangular opening formed by the "skirt" falling away from the bottom button should be about seven or eight inches on each side. The back vent should be left open to the bottom of the breeches waistband. The tops of the side vents should be even with the top of the back vent. The bottom of the waistcoat should be parallel to the ground (Simes,).

The front is closed with 10, 11, or 12 small [5/8"] buttons spaced evenly (Simes,). The pockets should be even with the bottom button. The Royal Warrants specify cross [horizontal] pockets, but no flaps. Cuthbertson (p. 54) recommends no pockets but a 1" welt to simulate a pocket.

If the waistcoat is not snug enough after construction, twill tape ties may be sewn to the side seams and tied at the center back to pull the waistcoat tighter across the chest and waist areas.

COAT:

All edges, including buttonholes, are left raw [unfinished]. Unless otherwise specified, all buttons are 7/8".

Regular infantry coat length is 6" from the floor on a kneeling man and light infantry coats are 9" from the floor on a kneeling man (Simes,).

Lapels are 3" wide (RW p. 174; Cuth. p. 51). There are 10 buttons and buttonholes on each lapel, including the one on the collar. The bottom edges of the lapels should be even with the bottom edges of the waistcoat when the soldier stands at attention. The tops of the back and side vents should be the same distance from the floor as the bottom edges of the lapels. There is one button at the top of each back vent (RW p. 174).

The collar width matches that of the lapels in front, but may be narrowed to about 2" at the sides to achieve a straight line with the lapels, and should fit close around the neck (Cuth. p. 52). The back center of the collar is 3 1/2" wide. A diagonal buttonhole in each front corner allows the collar to be fastened to a button which also passes through the lapel (Cuth. p. 52). The collar should fit close around the neck (Cuth. p. 52).

The sleeve, when finished, should extend to the joint of the wrist (Cuth. p. 51). The width of the sleeve opening should be just wide enough to admit the hand (Cuth. p. 52). There are 4 working buttons on each small round cuff, placed so that they hold the cuff up to the correct height of 3 1/2" (RW p. 172, 174; Cuth. p. 51).

The coat should fit smoothly over the breast, without restraint (Cuth. p. 51) and fastened in front by large heavy duty hooks and eyes.

Pocket flaps are cross [horizontal] and stitched down all around (RW p. 174). The top edge of the flap is even with the bottom edge of the lapels and in line with the top of the vents. There are 4 evenly spaced buttons on each flap (RW p. 174).

The skirt lining is sewed in on a line with the top of the pockets and the vents. Working pockets about 6" wide and 10" long are set into the lining behind the pocket flaps (RW p. 174). Be sure not to sew the pockets shut when sewing the buttons on the flaps.

The skirts are turned back with a hook and eye joining the front corner and center back corner on each side of the coat. The turnback may be decorated in a prescribed fashion (Simes, Cuth. p. 52).

If the uniform has shoulder straps they are set on in a straight line from the ear to the center of the top of the armhole seam. The pointed inner end of the strap should end just outside of the edge of the collar. Each strap is fastened with a small [5/8"] button. The outer edge of the strap should be sewn to the coat, not sewn into the sleeve seam. The strap should also be sewn down to the coat for a distance of about 1" from the armhole seam. The resulting space between the button and the sewn-down portion should be just wide enough to admit the shoulder carriage (Simes).

SHIRT AND NECK STOCK:

1/2" of the shirt collar should hang out over the neck stock (Cuth. p. 59). Cuthbertson (p. 59) suggests horse hair stocks.

COCKED HAT:

The hat is worn with three cocks. The front cock is worn over the outside of the left eye, 1" above the eyebrow. The hat should touch the right brow. (Cuth. p. 78)

The tape is 1 1/4" wide, 1" showing on the front and 1/4" on the back side (RW p. 175). A white sizing cord is wrapped twice around the crown and looped over in front. The ends are tasseled: the right tassel hangs just over the brim, the left tassel lies so that the fringe is even with the edge of the brim (Cuth. p. 57).

The leaves are held up with narrow white tape (Cuth. p. 57). The left side has a white loop and button holding a black cockade (RW p. 175). Inside the crown there is a sweat band, with a draw string for fitting.

FATIGUE CAP:

Both Simes and Cuthbertson recommend that a fatigue cap be made from old coats. Cuthbertson (p.55) describes it as "a red cap, lined with coarse linen, and turned up in the front, by a small, stiff flap of the facing of the Regiment, with an occasional falling cape, to defend and cover the neck "

Examples of a cap that meets this description exist in artwork both before and after the period of the Revolution. Hogarth's "March to Finchley" painting, from the 1750's, shows a Coldstream Guardsman wearing a red night cap with a blue [facing color] flap in front and a red tassel. The foul weather cape is rolled up into a red band along the bottom of the cap. Pyne's 1803 drawing "British Army Camp" shows soldiers wearing similar headgear.

GAITERS OR SPATTERDASHES:

Both have black buttons (RW p. 173, 175). They should fit smooth and without wrinkles. The tongue should be cut so that it ends at the first bend in the shoe at the base of the toes, thus covering the buckle [shoe lace area] completely (Cuth. p. 61). The bottom of the gaiter in the back should come to the point where the heel of the shoe meets the body of the shoe. There is a black leather strap under the foot. (Cuth. p. 61)

Gaiters end 2" above the knee. Spatterdashes are 11" tall in front and end at the swell of the calf in back (Cuth. p. 61).

They were blackened and polished in the period (Cuth p. 80, 81). [A good 20th century substitute is 3 coats of black acrylic latex high gloss paint.]

STOCKINGS AND GARTERS:

Unless there is documentation to the contrary, all the men in a company should wear the same type of stockings on a given day (Cuth p. 60).

Garters have brass buckles and the loose ends point inward, with the same amount of excess leather for each man (RW p. 173, 175).

SHOES:

Shoes must be of black leather with a smooth toe. This means no seam on the front of the shoe.

HIVERSACK AND CANTEEN:

The haversack strap goes over the right shoulder, over any other accoutrements other than the canteen. The top of the haversack is worn even with the bottom rib and the canteen sits on the haversack so that their tops are even.

CARTRIDGE POUCH:

If it is carried on a shoulder carriage, the top of the pouch should be even with the bottom of the hip vent button (Cuth p. 69).

CARRIAGES:

Shoulder belts are 2 3/4" wide and waist belts are 2" wide (RW p. 174).

MUSKET SLING:

They were worn tight (Cuth p. 71).

RANK:

Officer - epaulette of gold or silver lace or embroidery on the right shoulder (or both for grenadiers), gold or silver uniform lace, silk sash, gorget, sword and knot, espartoon (RW p. 172-173). Cuthbertson (p. 82) suggests gloves. Serjeant - white uniform lace, worsted sash with facing color stripe, halberd (except grenadiers) (RW p. 173). Hats laced silver (RW p. 175). Cuthbertson (p. 82) suggests gloves. Corporal - silk epaulette [white] on the right shoulder (RW p. 173).

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