

## THE TOPPED GAITER of 1768 #213 - Steve Raynor

The topped gaiter represents a marked change from the pattern established during the earlier years of the 18th century, being developed during the post Seven Years War period and being officially mandated in 1768 for the marching Regiments of Foot.<sup>1</sup> The official reference to which is worded thusly:

"Gaiters. The whole to have black linen gaiters with black buttens and small stiff tops, black garters and uniform buckles." <sup>2</sup>

Further research from Cuthbertson writings tell us that. "... the greatest care should be taken to answer thoroughly that purpose (of keeping gravel out of the shoes) by shaping them to the leg without wrinkles, to come down low on the quarter of the shoe, and to have there tongues large enough to cover the buckles of the shoe, without rising from there with every motion of the foot ... they do not require being made longer then to meet the kneeband of the breeches, as a stiff leather to huzzar boots is occasionally added to them, which buckle behind above the calf, entirely covers the part of the knee, defends it when kneeling ..."<sup>3</sup>

"White linen tops, like these of the cavalry preserve the breeches from being soiled by the leather ones. They must be made to button tight upon the knee, to rise four inches above the leather top and to sink two inches under the gaiter ..." <sup>4</sup>

Cuthbertson also requires that garters be made an inch in width, initially and be polished, and gives the following prices: <sup>5</sup>

	£	s	d
Long gaiters	0	0	6
Short Gaiters			4
White Linen Tops			2

Notes 1,2, are from the Royal warrants of 1768, Notes 3, 4, 5 are from Bennett Cuthbertson's *A System for the Complete Interior Management and Economy of a Battalion of Infantry*, 1768. 🏰

