

Milice

Despite having their own personal wardrobes milice often only wore their government issued clothing. These issues of clothing typically consisted of souliers d'boeuf, leggings, breechcloths, shirt, shoes, capote and a knit wool cap. Often only a tobacco pouch, pipe, and their own firelock accompanied a soldier of the milice from home during the Summer months. Colonel Francois-Charles d'Borlamaquelisted a standard summer issue of clothing and tools for summer campaigning in 1757:

- 1 blanket
- 1 capot
- 1 cap
- 2 cotton shirts
- 1 pair of breeches
- 1 pair of underpants
- 1 pair of leggings (mitasses)
- 2 skeins of thread
- 6 needles
- 1 awl
- 1 fire steel
- 6 gunflints
- 1 butcher knife
- 1 comb
- 1 gunworm
- 1 tomahawk
- 1 pair of moccasins every month

Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste d'Aleyrac of the French Languedoc regiment detailed what this summer issuance of clothing looked like in his memoirs of his service during the French and Indian War.

It is true that the Canadians are obliged to go to war to defend the country when it is attacked. Meanwhile, those who remain in the parishes must cultivate the fields of those who are at war for free. Moreover, those who go to war receive a capote, two cotton shirts, a breechcloth, a pair of leggings, a blanket, souleirs de boeuf, a wooden handled knife, a gun worm, and when they don't have a gun they are given one. The breechcloth is a strap of wool that is passed between the legs in the manner of the Indians and whose two ends are attached to a belt; it is put on without breeches to march more freely in the woods. The leggings are a type of very broad gaiters whose two sides are sewn together, about four fingers from the edge without buttons or buttonholes. This is another native invention. The souliers de beouf are made entirely different than those in France, they have a sole as thin as the uppers that surrounds the entire foot, to the height of the quarters; then, we sew another



smaller a strip of leather upon them which covers the top of the foot; this fashion allows marching more conveniently in the woods and mountains.

Apart from clothing, Canadians have some other unique characteristics that set them apart from others. French soldiers coming to Canada noted the wide variety of tattoos worn by Canadians. Peter Kalm in 1749 wrote:

Many French country people who often travel through Canada for the fur trade take pleasure in following this Indian custom, but they never like them tattooed their face but only other parts of the body, such as the breast for example, the back, their thighs and especially their legs. These tattoos represent in a few lines Our Lord on the cross, or whatever their fancy suggested them.

The milice serving at Fort Carillon in the summer of 1758 served with few personal comforts beyond the bare essentials. Traveling light in the manner of their native allies they put their native influenced, government issued clothing to hard use. Individual milice may well have brought extra gilets, vestes, and capotes from home for extra layers of warmth during the colder and more wet days that summer brought.

Shirts

Best: Hand-stitched white or blue linen or correct period cotton shirt with narrow band cuffs with thread buttons or made for sleeve buttons (cuff links).

Acceptable: White or blue linen or correct period cotton shirt with narrow band cuffs with thread buttons or made for sleeve buttons (cuff links) with minor visible machine-stitching.

Discouraged: Checked, striped linen, or wool shirts.

Unacceptable: Cotton calico or plaid shirts.

Neckwear

Best: Silk, linen, or cotton neckerchief.

Unacceptable: Leather neck-stocks.

Hats and Caps

Best: Knit bonnet or toque, preferably of red wool.

Acceptable: Tapaboard, sewn wool toque.

Unacceptable: Fur cap, voyageur cap.



Capotes

Best: Hand-finished well-fit blue, grey, brown or white wool broadcloth capote with or without a contrasting color hood and buttons.

Acceptable: Well-fit blue, grey, brown or white wool broadcloth capote with minor visible machine stitching.

Discouraged: Blanket coats or capotes from a white-bodied, blue or red striped blanket.

Unacceptable: 19th century trapper blanket coats; Blanket shirts.

Gilets

Best: Hand-finished well-fit, square-cut gilet made of red or blue broadcloth or similar material, made with or without sleeves.

Acceptable: Well-fit Square-cut gilet made of red or blue broadcloth or similar material, with minor visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Extremely long or baggy gilet or modern upholstery materials.

Vestes

Best: Hand-finished and well-fit, sleeved veste made of blue, red, grey, brown, drab, or light colored woolen cloth.

Acceptable: Well fitted sleeved veste made of blue, red, grey, brown, drab, or light-colored woolen cloth with minor visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Extremely long or baggy veste or modern upholstery materials.

Breechcloth

Best: Undecorated wool breechcloth or brayet.

Discouraged: Breeches.

Unacceptable: Trousers.

Legwear

Best: Well-fit, unadorned blue or red wool Indian leggings, or "mitasses" with plain wool or Native garters.

Unacceptable: Buckskin leggings, gaiters, or baggy wool leggings.

Shoes

Best: *Soulier de beouf*.

Acceptable: Vamp or pucker-toe styled *soulier sauvage* or moccasins.

Discouraged: Half boots or buckled shoes.

Unacceptable: Modern shoes, boots, or Dyer, Arrow, Minnetonka moccasins, Shoepacks.



Arms

Best: Fusil de chasse or fusil de traite.

Acceptable: French Military Muskets of 1728 or earlier pattern.

Discouraged: British arms, Anglo-American fowlers.

Unacceptable: Canoe guns, Blunderbusses, rifles.

Side Arms

Best: Boucheron or sheathed trade knife; Sheathed casse-tête or hatchet, all carried on a simple leather belt or a sash.

Acceptable: Trade knives carried in a neck sheath.

Discouraged: Bayonets, swords.

Shot bag

Best: Leather slit pouch, simple drawstring leather pouch.

Acceptable: Shoulder slung shot bag.

Discouraged: Cartridge pouches and boxes, belly boxes.

Powder Horn

Best: Empty, plain white powder horn slung on a small leather strap.

Acceptable: Native influenced horns reflecting Abenaki or Nippissing culture.

Unacceptable: Filled powder horns.

Knapsacks and Tumplines

Best: Hemp tumpline or single strap snapsack.

Acceptable: Jute or leather tumpline.

Unacceptable: Two-strap knapsacks.

Blanket

Best: 2-3 point check, Dutch, or rose blankets. Bear skin hides may also be used.

Acceptable: Plain white or Hudson Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.

Canteen

Best: Gourd, ceramic, glass canteen, slung over the shoulder on a hemp cord or leather thong.

Acceptable: Leather or tin kidney shaped style canteen.

Discouraged: Wooden cheese-box canteens.

