

## Massachusetts and New Hampshire Militia

### Roche de Fermoy's Brigade

Michael

Jackson's 8<sup>th</sup> Mass.

Seth Warner's Green Mt. Boys

### Pierce Long's NH State

Levy

David Leonard's Mass. Militia

David Well's Mass. Militia

While very little information has surfaced specifically about the clothing of Colonel Wells and Colonel Leonard's Massachusetts Militia regiments or Colonel Long's New Hampshire one-year regiment, every indication is that they wore their own civilian clothing. J. F. Wasmus' account of General John Stark's militia from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and the New Hampshire grants at Bennington hint at informal dress that summer.

*Putting all of it in 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.*



Militia laws were rigidly enforced in New England during the early years of the Revolutionary War. Accordingly, militia drafted for two-months of service at Ticonderoga were likely functionally equipped with both arms and accoutrements. As regulars exchanged their old or locally made muskets for new French muskets, it is likely that these weapons were turned right over to militia men drafted for enrolled service. However, if previous campaigns at Ticonderoga are any indication, the long overland march to Ticonderoga may have significantly worn this equipment.



### **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, hats made of black wool or beaver felt, cut round, and left plain or cocked in appropriate civilian styles.

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

*Discouraged:* Grey or brown wool felt hats, cut down felt caps.

*Unacceptable:* Slouch hats from unfinished blanks, 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

Deserter descriptions of regulars, which include civilian clothing, very commonly describe, "short blue Coat," "a blue Sailor's Jacket," or "a Sailor's Habit".

Likewise, "an old Surtout, brown Colour," "a cloth-coloured Coat," and "a light surtout," show up with great frequency. Perhaps these garments were very common in civilian dress or popular for service up north. In either case either would be an ideal choice for a militia portrayal.

*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 sailors jackets with minor visible machine stitching.

*Discouraged:* Regimental coats, hunting shirts, smocks, or over-shirts.

*Unacceptable:* Baggy coats, coats and



jackets made of cotton canvas or damask upholstery fabric.

### **Jackets and Waistcoats**

Similar to coats, light-colored, white, and blue appear to be the most commonly described waistcoats on regular deserters.

*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**

No two garments show up more commonly in the Northern theater than leather breeches and canvas trousers. Leather breeches appear more commonly than any other garment. A very common civilian garment, they were also a common issue garment to regulars in 1776 and 1777. Likewise, long trousers are specifically mentioned by Brunswick surgeon J. F. Wasmus. This description is backed up by deserter descriptions of regulars wearing civilian clothing: "a Sailor's Jacket, and long Trowsers." Looking back to Connecticut state regiments in 1776, who merely received a hunting shirt as a bounty, more variety of trousers appear: "a brown surtout coat, blue duffil trowsers," or "on a light colour'd coat and long trowsers, was bare foot." For cloth breeches, blue, black and light colored appear most commonly.



*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.

### **Leg wear**

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

*Acceptable:* Well-fit canvas spatterdashers, or spatterdashers with minor machine finishing.

*Discouraged:* Wool leggings. Indian Leggings

*Unacceptable:* Military gaiters, baggy spatterdashers

### **Cartridge Pouches**

Militia laws were strictly enforced in Massachusetts and New Hampshire on the eve of hostilities in 1775. If anything these laws were only more carefully enforced through the next two years of the war as very real alarms required mobilizing drafts from the militia. Militia laws specifically addressed arms and equipment. The 1776 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.*



Massachusetts-Bay, *The Militia Act; together with the Rules and Regulations for the Militia*, (Boston: J. Gill, 1776), 8-9.

*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 narrow leather straps.

*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 fowlers, English fowlers, either plain or modified for a bayonet.

*Acceptable:* Old pattern Dutch, French, British, commercial 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:* David Uhl or similar plain single-envelope knapsacks, worn with a leather or hemp tumpline.

*Acceptable:* Plain single envelope knapsacks, drawstring canvas snapsacks, or hemp tumplines. Painted canvas Benjamin Warner or similar pattern 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.

