

BROWN'S RAID AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR



Thomas Wood of Colonel Herricks' Vermont Rangers described liberating his comrades at Lake George landing in the opening moments of Brown's Raid on September 18th.

"At the landing, aforesaid, were five hundred American prisoners, previously captured by the British at Hubbardton, were recaptured by our men. The scene was now reversed: the five hundred British in their turn became prisoners, disarmed, and put under the care of the aforesaid five hundred American prisoners and ordered to march for Bennington aforesaid."

The British captured many American prisoners during Continental Army's evacuation of Ticonderoga on July 6, 1777. Stragglers along the road to Hubbardton were picked up by the British advanced guard and sent back to Ticonderoga. Soldiers of the American rear guard wounded or captured at the Battle of Hubbardton remained at that battlefield for weeks until they could be transported along with the British wounded back to Ticonderoga. As New Hampshire Fifer, Ebenezer Fletcher described it, "Thus I found, that as soon as the prisoners were able to ride, they were ordered to Ticonderoga." A few days later he added, "On the 22d of July, a number of men came down from Ticonderoga, with horses and litters sufficient to carry off the remainder of the wounded." Even the sick Continental soldiers captured at Skenesboro, would be rowed back to Ticonderoga. All of these captured Continental soldiers were housed together in a large barn, built by Canadian workmen, at the head of Lake George. Here they were, "daily employed moving provisions & c. stores... confined at night in a barn situated between the camp and the landing place on the lake," according to Royal Navy Lieutenant John Starke.

John Patterson's Brigade

- * Thomas Marshall 10th Mass.
- * Ebenezer Francis 11th Mass.
- * Samuel Brewer 12th Mass.
- * Gamaliel Bradford 14th Mass.

Enoch Poor's Brigade

- * Joseph Cilley 1st NH
- * Nathan Hale 2^d NH
- * Alexander Scammel 3^d NH



Roche de Fermoy's Brigade

- * Michael Jackson's 8th Mass.
- * Seth Warner's Green Mt. Boys
- * Pierce Long's NH Line
- * David Leonard's Mass. Militia
- * David Well's Mass. Militia

Benjamin Bellow's Brigade

- * Benjamin Bellows NH Militia
- * Peter Olcutt's VT. Militia
- * Moses Robinson's VT. Militia
- * John Williams's NY Militia

Miscellaneous Units

- * Benjamin Whitcomb's Independent Corps of Rangers
- * Thomas Lee's Independent Company of Rangers
- * Jeduthan Baldwin's Artificers
- * Ebenezer Stephen's Artillery



Exact numbers or muster rolls of each of these prisoners of war are unknown. Instead it has to be assumed that they potentially came broadly from the regiments guarding Ticonderoga at the time of its evacuation. A broad spectrum of uniforms were worn by the prisoners, from complete regimental clothing, to simply hunting shirts, to simply civilian clothing. Captured, these Continental regular and militia prisoners were stripped of their arms and accoutrements and tried to hold on to their clothes and personal items. For most the remains of the clothes on their backs and the contents of their pockets would be their only possessions in captivity.

Revenge came shortly after dawn on September 18th. Ensign Thomas Hughes of the 53rd Foot described the reverse of fortunes from the British perspective.

"As soon as taken we were carried to a barn at Lake George landing, where they had taken by surprise another detachment of our Regt of the same numbers as ourselves. Here we had time for recollections, hitherto all had been confusion. In this very barn had I often been guard to the Americans, now, sad reverse, those former prisoners with our own weapons prevented my getting out."

British accoutrements and arms worn with the mix of attire from the summer of 1777 would be the perfect way to recreate these prisoners fighting back after captivity. However, accoutrements like New Model Cartridge Boxes bear striking similarity to the British 29-Hole Cartridge Pouches they were copied from. Similarly, those participants of Brown's Raid with Continental Army uniform clothing, the portrayal of a re-armed prisoner of war is the best option to get into the spirit and history of Brown's Raid.

Coats

Civilian coats, regimental coats, and hunting shirts are all equally good for an American Prisoner of War portrayal. Among civilian coats, short nautical styles appear commonly like, "a Sailor's Habit," or, "a blue Sailor's Jacket." Brown or drab coats appear with frequency on deserters, such as, "on an old Surtout, brown Colour," or "a brown Coat." There are some exceptions, like an October advertisement for a deserter from Bradford's regiment which listed, "one reddish coat, striped jacket, black breeches."

Best 1: Hand-finished, well-fit, wool broadcloth short or long coats of drab, brown, red, or blue, made either straight-bodied or cutaway.

The German copies of the Von-Germann watercolors, distinctly show short regimental coats on the American Soldier and American Officer. This style is corroborated by portraits of other American officers earlier in the war. Advertisements from the firm of Otis & Andrews, requesting coats made unlined or faced with the outer body cloth, as well as Washington's later complaints about contractor made coats hint that these coats were likely made unlined or only partially lined. These coats likely could have had non-functional lapels, merely stitched down. The Von-Germann watercolors show pointed cuffs on the sleeves. The point centers on the top of the sleeve seem, with or without buttons set along the outside of the bottom seam. The pocket flaps are shown vertical, but canted forward at the top. The Von-Germann watercolors appear to show four buttons, but three would be fine as well. Both the officer and soldier are shown with the coats



front corner turned back with some sort of loop onto the second or third button on the pocket flap. This reveals the coat lining which is the same color as the facings. Pockets, if the garments had any, were set into the coat tail lining. There is little evidence for regimental buttons on these coats. Almost all regimental buttons recovered at Fort Ticonderoga are from 1776 documented regiments. Coat-sized pewter or similar buttons appear to be the most common buttons on these coats. Brown coats to drab coats with red, white, blue or sea green facings all are documentable. Likewise, blue coats faced with red or white are appropriate. Grey faced with buff or yellow is shown in the Von-Germann watercolors and specifically mentioned by Surgeon J F Wasmus. The coats recommended for Fourth Connecticut model company events are perfectly suitable.

Best 2: Contract-made regimental short-coats, made with slanted vertical pockets, pointed cuffs, stitched-down or functional lapels of broadcloth or kersey, made half-lined (in facing-colored serge, bay, or flannel) or unlined.



Hunting shirts appear in large numbers in some Massachusetts regular regiments. From Continental stores at Fort Ticonderoga Colonel Jackson's regiment drew 238 hunting shirts, Colonel Marshall's regiment drew 36, and Colonel Bradford's regiment drew 116. One deserter from Colonel Francis' regiment was described in, "a Toe Frock, Moose skin Breeches," on June 7, 1777. The majority of these hunting shirts were of cheap osnaburg or tow-cloth. Brunswick Surgeon's description of these hunting shirts as "a short white shirt over their clothes, the sleeves being bordered by a number of rows of white linen fringes" likely describes these tow-cloth hunting shirts bleached in the sun. Extant examples like the Captain John Duryea hunting shirt or contemporary German illustrations of American soldiers show hunting shirts with short shoulder capes which end at or just beyond the shoulder. These shirts are made open at the front, with edges trimmed in one or two rows of fringe. All hunting shirts must be made in this manner for the Rear Guard.

Best 3: Osnaburg, split-front hunting shirts, with short capes and fringe.

Unacceptable: Smocks, over-shirts, baggy coats, cotton hunting shirts, Very long hunting shirts.

Jackets and Waistcoats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, single or double-breasted, skirted, square cut or belted waistcoats with or without sleeves made of drab, brown, green, red or blue broadcloth, kersey, or serge.

Acceptable: Well-fit, single or double breasted, skirted or square cut waistcoats of linen, linsey-woolsey, cotton, cotton velvet, or wool plush in solid colors or simple patterns. Sleeved waistcoats are acceptable as the primary outer garment.

Unacceptable: Upholstery fabric waistcoats, extremely long or baggy waistcoats.

Breeches and Trousers

Quartermaster's records for 1776 show hundreds of pairs of leather breeches issued out of continental stores at Ticonderoga. Many of the Massachusetts regiments drew breeches from Ticonderoga stores as well, Colonel Jackson's regiment drawing the most: 66 pairs. These may have been leather or made of the myriad of woolen fabrics in Continental stores. Jackson's regiment and Marshall's regiment both received overalls from Continental stores, 57 and 233 pairs respectively. There was considerable controversy over the shipping of clothing in the spring of 1777. A June 8th letter to James Mease, clothier general, complained that Massachusetts clothing destined for Peekskill did not arrive as planned. This clothing included a "quantity of light Clothing, such as Shirts, Frocks and overalls." By the 13th of June, correspondence with James Mease speculated that this light clothing had been shipped north to Albany and Ticonderoga as Massachusetts soldiers were ordered north. Most likely the overalls issued out of Continental stores at Ticonderoga were light-weight, osnaburg or similar materials.



Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, leather breeches or trousers of linen or hemp canvas or checked linen. Well-fit osnaburg, ticking, or tow-cloth overalls.

Acceptable: Well-fit leather breeches, breeches with buckled knee bands in black, brown, drab, kersey, linsey-woolsey, serge, cotton velvet, wool plush, broadcloth .

Unacceptable: Fringed trousers, baggy breeches.



Shirts

Best: Hand-stitched shirts made of osnaburg, checked, striped, or white linen with narrow band cuffs and thread Dorset buttons or made for sleeve buttons (cuff links).

Unacceptable: Cotton calico or plaid shirts.

Neckwear

Best: Silk, linen, or cotton neckerchiefs; linen neck stocks, or linen rollers, well-tied around the neck

Unacceptable: Military horsehair or leather neck stocks.

Hats and Caps

Best: Hand-finished, round blocked, black wool or beaver felt, round hats, fan tail hats, or cocked hats

Acceptable: Leather caps. Knit wool Monmouth, Dutch mutt, or Kilmarnock caps, oval blocked, white felt cocked or round hats.

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

Unacceptable: Slouch hats from unfinished blanks, straw hats, fur caps.

Socks and Stockings

Best: White or grey wool yarn or worsted stockings or socks seamed with back seams.

Acceptable: No Socks worn with trousers.

Unacceptable: Red, yellow, or polyester stockings.

Shoes

Best: Hand-finished, short or long-quartered, round-toe, shoes with black waxed calf uppers, fitted for buckles. Shoe boots, half-boots high-lows, with black waxed-calf uppers.

Acceptable: Machine made, black leather, shoes with buckles or ties or high-lows.

Discouraged: Moccasins, half-boots worn with trousers.

Unacceptable: Modern Footwear, modern moccasins, civil war bootees, or riding boots (except for field officers).



Leg wear

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

Discouraged: Spatterdashers worn with trousers. **Unacceptable:** Military gaiters, Indian leggings, baggy spatterdashers.

Cartridge Pouches

Best: British 36 hole reversible block pouch or 29- hole "Fanning" style cartridge pouch.

Acceptable: 18 Round Government Accoutrement set.

Unacceptable: New Model American pouches. New England Style Soft Cartridge Pouches. Powder Horns (other than proper light infantry horns with ball bags for Light Infantry companies). 36 round B.A.R. Suitcase pouch.



Arms

Best: 1756 Long Land Pattern or 1768 Pattern Short Land Pattern British Ordnance Muskets.

Unacceptable: Older pattern British Ordnance muskets, Dutch, French, commercial or American made muskets. Virginia or Pennsylvania styled long rifles.

Side Arms

Best: Bayonet mounted in white buff leather waist belt.

Discouraged: Sheathed tomahawks, belt axes, carried in a belt.

Unacceptable: Horse pistols (except for officers), naval pistols, unsheathed bayonets, tomahawks, or belt axes.

Knapsacks and Tumplines

Best: Painted canvas Benjamin Warner or similar pattern knapsacks.

Acceptable: Plain single envelope knapsacks, drawstring canvas snapsacks, or hemp tumplines blanket rolls. Nothing.

Unacceptable: British painted or goatskin knapsacks.

Blankets

Best: 2-3 Point checked, Dutch, or Rose blankets.

Acceptable: No Blanket

Discouraged: Hudson Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.



Canteens

Best: Wood cheese box, or staved canteens of documented period pattern with narrow leather or linen webbing strap. Cheese box canteens should have narrow leather keepers or narrow iron staples to retain the strap.

Discouraged: Tin canteens of kidney or half-moon shape.

Unacceptable: Wool canteen covers, jacked leather canteens, covered glass bottles, copper canteens, stainless steel canteens, gourd canteens, and Petite Bidon.