

1759 BATTLE ON SNOWSHOES ROGERS' RANGERS GUIDELINES



Robert Rogers set out from Fort Edward to reconnoiter Carillon for the upcoming campaign season on March 3, 1759. On his scout report from that day, Rogers listed, "of the Rangers Lieutenants Toot Holmes Brewer and Stark: seven Sergeants and Seventy-nine Privates..." among his total command of 358 rangers, Mohawk warriors, and British Regulars. In his published journal, Robert Rogers wrote of the opening of the 1759 Battle on snowshoes, recalling their position on Cape Diamond, the future Mount Independence of 1776.

"Here I halted, and sent two Indians and two Rangers to observe their situation. They returned in a few minutes, and brought intelligence that the working parties were close to the banks of the lake, and opposite the fort, and were about forty in number; upon which we stripped off our blankets, and ran down upon them..."

Underneath their blankets Rogers' Rangers generally wore short green coats or double-breasted waistcoats with sleeves. While no uniform was officially proscribed for His Majesty's Independent Companies of Rangers, rangers' dress was commonly known and in good supply by 1759. In an April 22, 1758 letter from Albany, purchasing agent John Macomb wrote to his New York City employer, the merchant firm of Gregg & Cunningham, about Robert Rogers clothing purchases that winter.

"The Close that Rogers had made for his people are chiefly of Green Bath Rug & and low priced green Cloths with wt. Mettle Buttons, & white Silver lace Hats, some of them Silver laced, cord or looping on their Green jackets, all lin'd with Green Serge- I apprehend it would be running a very great reisque, the ordering such a great Quantity of Clothes without a Certainty of getting then disposed of. Mr Forsey made the greatest Qty. of any one, Kenedy & Lyle, & Preble & Wiles made a fiew also.

If you intend such a thing, I think the best way would be to consult with the Major about that Matter, but you know best. . .I believe a parcel of Scotch Bonnets would sell well, as the Rangers who can get them wear nothing else when they go out."



1759 Battle on Snowshoes
Rogers' Rangers Guidelines



Accounts of clothing from deserters in 1759 show some of the variety within rangers' dress. The July 2, 1759 Weyman's New York Gazette announced, "Run-away about a fortnight ago, from John Lavenue, inn holder at Albany, an English servant man named John Exelby. . .had a Rangers green waistcoat on, with his hat cut in the form of a jockey cap."

A July 1759 advertisement in the New York Mercury, detailed the dress of an African-American man, who had served several years in the rangers in the hopes of gaining his freedom.

"Taken up, and now in the Goal of Goshen, in Orange County a Negro Man named (as he says) Jacob; has a Scar from his Chin under his under lip; has the Negro Mark with a Cut on each Cheek in his own County; has had the Small-pox, and a little pitted with it; has a Scar on his right Wrist, he says he was shot with a Ball; is five Feet seven

Inches and a Half high, is about 25 or 30 Years old, has a green Jacket lined with red, Buckskin Breeches, blue Indian Stockings, fine white shirts, Chitterlings; has a gun iron mounted, spotted silk Handkerchief; he says he was in Rogers Rangers three Years, and was at the Battle of Ticonderoga; that he belonged formerly to one Daniel McCoy, in New York, who lived near the Old-Sly, and that his Master had given his freedom for serving three Years in the Rangers, and that Mr. Livingston's Negro Wench Rose, had his Freedom Paper; he is a spry able Fellow..."

Such variety of dress was inevitable as rangers' were paid an advance of their monthly wages to clothe and equip themselves. Yet by 1759, garments like Indian stockings, short coats of coarse green woolens, hunting caps, and scotch bonnets had been available in numbers sufficient to be purchased as needed by British regular officers or colonial officials for their troops. By 1759 blanket coats were available for rangers serving in the winter too. A March 5, 1764 Boston Gazette runaway advertisement listed a blanket coat, among dress strikingly similar to ranger attire.

"RAN-away on Saturday Morning the 11th of February, a Negro Man nam'd Jacob, belonging to George Wray at Albany. He had on when he went off, a Blanket Coat with red Stripes, Buckskin Breeches, green Leggings, a pair of Moccasins and red Worsted Cap;"

Much like clothing, there was some consistency in the arms and equipment for Rogers' Rangers, even as rangers purchased their own. Though Captain John Knox of the 43rd Regiment of Foot saw Rogers' Rangers at Halifax in the summer of 1757, his description of their accoutrements remained the norm in 1759.

"These light troops have, at present, no particular uniform, only they wear their cloaths short, and are armed with a firelock, tomahock, or small hatchet, and a scalping knife; a bullock' horn full of powder hangs under their right arm, by a belt from the left shoulder; and a leathern, or seal's skin bag, buckled round their waist, which hangs down before, contains bullets, and a smaller shot, of the size of full-grown peas: six or seven of which with a ball, they generally load; and their Officers usually carry a small compass fixed in the bottoms of their powderhorns, by which they direct them, when they happen to lose themselves in the woods."

Tumplines were the most common for carrying blankets and personal equipment by 1759, even whole regiments of British regulars issued them. In the 1759 account book of sulter Reuben Allin, Captain John Stark purchases of a new "Muttoomp Line," along with clothing and a blanket.

Shirts

Best: Hand-stitched checked, striped, flannel or other woolen, or white linen shirt with short collar (under two and a half inches) 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. Multiple ones are fine for the cold.

Acceptable: Machine hemmed neckerchiefs or linen rollers.

Unacceptable: Woolen scarves, horsehair or leather neck stocks.

Hats and Caps

Best: Knit scotch-style blue flat caps, green or brown cloth hunting caps, or jockey's caps.

Acceptable: Monmouth caps, Dutch mutts, or other knit caps, black wool felt-round hats.

Unacceptable: Fur caps, cocked-hats, Voyageur caps, straw hats, slouch hats, glennegarry caps, green scotch caps.



Jackets and Waistcoats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit waistcoats of green, drab, brown, red or blue woolen cloth, kersey, or serge, made single or double breasted, with or without sleeves. Sleeved waistcoats are acceptable as the primary outer garment.

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.

Unacceptable: Regimental waistcoats, cotton canvas, upholstery fabric waistcoats, extremely long or baggy waistcoats.

Breeches or Trousers

Best: Hand-finished, leather breeches, or breeches in green, black, brown, drab of kersey, linsey-woolsey, serge, cotton velvet, wool plush, or broadcloth with buckled or tied knee bands.

Acceptable: Well-fit breeches with minor visible machine stitching. Well-fit trousers of linen or hemp canvas or checked linen.

Unacceptable: Regimental breeches, fringed trousers, baggy breeches

Coats

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, military or hunting style, short coats with lapels and mariner's cuffs, made of green heavy woolen cloth.

Acceptable: Well-fit, civilian style short coats of wool broadcloth, bearskin, or duffle in green, or dark colored wool with little visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Hunting shirts, Blanket shirts, Fur skins.

Legwear

Best: Well-fit wool Indian leggings of green, blue, red broadcloth, or other stout woolen cloth. Garters made of the same material, or native-produced finger-woven garters

Unacceptable: Buckskin leggings, or baggy wool leggings.



Footwear

Best: Pucker toe or vamped moccasins, with multiple layers of wool moccasin liners.

Acceptable: black waxed-leather buckled shoe.

Unacceptable: Half boots or jockey's boots; Dyer, Arrow, Minnetonka moccasins, Shoepacks

Cold Weather Attire

Best: Hand-finished, well-fit, Blanket coats, made from 2-3 Point or Dutch blankets, with red or blue woolen ties.

Acceptable: Well-fit, Greatcoats, surtouts of broadcloth, or similar heavy woolen cloth. Blanket coats, made from white British or Dutch blankets, with red or blue woolen ties with little visible machine stitching.

Unacceptable: Fur Coats, Blanket shirts, 19th-century blanket coats.

Mittens

Best: Knit-wool mitts or sewn wool cloth mitts.

Unacceptable: Modern gloves or trigger finger mittens.

Arms

Best: British Long land pattern muskets, English commercially-made muskets or Native-American trade guns, English, New England, or Hudson Valley fowling pieces.

Acceptable: Dutch muskets, earlier French muskets or fusils.

Discouraged: British short land pattern muskets.

Unacceptable: Canoe gun, blunderbuss, long rifles

Cartridge Pouches

Best: Small leather shot bag carried on waistbelt.

Acceptable: Nine-round Government accoutrement sets. Shot bag carried on a shoulder strap.

Discouraged: Quill Worked Shot Pouches, British military cartridge pouches.

Unacceptable: Possibles bags.



Powder Horns

Best: Plain, empty, powder horns with narrow leather straps.

Acceptable: Native styled powder horns with native-produced strap (should reflect Mohawk or Mohican influence)

Unacceptable: Black powder filled horns.

Sidearms

Best: Sheathed knife and sheathed tomahawk, all carried on a waist belt.

Acceptable: Simple Iron Naval cutlasses, sheathed, carried in a simple leather waist belt

Unacceptable: Pistols, daggers, dirks.

Tumplines and Knapsacks

Best: Hand-woven, hemp webbing, or leather tumplines.

Acceptable: Hair-on calfskin knapsacks, Single envelope two-strap knapsacks, or drawstring canvas knapsacks carried in conjunction with hemp tumplines.

Unacceptable: British painted or goatskin knapsacks, Benjamin Warner Knapsacks.

Blankets

Best: 2-3 Point blankets, check blankets, Dutch blankets or, Rose blankets

Acceptable: British Army blankets, Plain white or Hudson's Bay blankets.

Unacceptable: Civil War grey blankets.