

British Army Impressions

The British Army was a well-established military force by the time of the American War for Independence. It comprised foot marching regiments, various forms of cavalry (including horse regiments, dragoons, and light dragoons), the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and the Corps of Engineers. Segments of the army were deployed throughout the realm's two kingdoms (Great Britain and Ireland) and its worldwide imperial possessions.

The basic components of a British soldier's uniform were divided into four categories. The first category, **clothing**, was further subdivided into "annual clothing" which included hats or caps, coats or jackets, waistcoats, and breeches, and "necessary clothing" which included shirts, neck stocks, stockings, garters, and shoes. Annual clothing was procured by the regiment's colonel and owned by him until replaced with subsequent annual clothing, after which it became the property of the soldier or his estate. Necessary clothing was typically distributed as needed and either paid for by the soldier via stoppages or provided free of charge.

Arms included weapons and support implements provided by the British or Irish Board of Ordnance upon a regiment's request. These items, such as muskets, bayonets, and 18-hole cartridge boxes, remained government property until they were deemed unserviceable or lost. **Accoutrements** such as cartridge pouches with shoulder belts, waistbelts, and powder horns were procured by the regiment's colonel and retained under his ownership. Finally, **camp necessities** were distributed on a cyclical timetable rather than based on immediate need and included items like canteens, haversacks, canvas knapsacks, and tents.

We recommend that each living history unit participating in the Battles of Saratoga 250th event uses clothing, arms, accoutrements, and camp necessities appropriate to what their unit would have used in 1777. While it is encouraged to dress in historically accurate attire from 1777, the park does not mandate this, and reasonable exceptions are permitted.

Context is key: Burgoyne's army present at Freeman's Farm/Saratoga in 1777 inhabited stationary encampments for multiple weeks with accessible light baggage. Specific examples that break the norm, such as men with beards following long expeditions without shaving, do not fit this context and thus should not apply. However, exceptional cases of non-standard items may have occurred.

Everything worn or carried by a living history participant at Freeman's Farm/Saratoga should reflect one's rank and social class. Commissioned officers traditionally wore and used higher quality items than privates, corporals, and drummers. This differentiation should be consistent across all living history interpretations, offering valuable interpretive opportunities with the visiting public.

Each subject, such as "shirts," is categorized into **standard**, **exceeds standard**, and **unacceptable**. The **standard** defines the minimum requirements for any living history impression at Battles of Saratoga 250th events. **Exceed standard** elements, while not required, are highly encouraged for their interpretive value. Anything listed under **unacceptable** is strictly disallowed.

It is expected that specialized impressions will maintain a high standard of material culture replicas. For any questions or concerns about these standards or for guidance on any other matters, please contact Paul Novotny at Major@24thfoot.org. Thank you.



Contents

Clothing: Shirts; Neckwear; Head Coverings; Coats and Jackets; Waistcoats/Vests; Breeches and Trousers; Stockings, Socks, and Garters; Spatterdashes/Half Gaiters and Leggings; Shoes and Buckles; Commissioned Officer Appointments; Noncommissioned Officer Appointments.

Arms: Firelocks/Guns; Bayonets; Swords; Hatchets/Tomahawks; Ordnance-Issue Cartridge Boxes.

Accoutrements: Cartridge Pouches and Shoulder Belts; Waistbelts and Shoulder Belts; Light Infantry Cartridge Boxes; Light Infantry Bullet Bags; Powder and Priming Horns.

Camp Necessaries: Canteens; Knapsacks; Haversacks; Blankets.

Hygiene and Personal Effects: Hair; Glasses/Spectacles; Artistic Objects, Jewelry, and Watches; Smoking.

Camp: Tentage/Housing; Furniture; Food/Cooking and Cookware.

Appendix: Orders for Canada Army British Uniform Changes, 1777

CLOTHING

Shirts

- **Standard:** Hand or Machine-stitched lightweight white linen, wool flannel, or cotton. Blue small-check linen shirt for soldiers. The body is long (to lower thigh) and full. Center front slit. Rank and file may have ruffling at chest only (optional; not usually displayed). Commissioned officers, serjeants, and drummers should have ruffling at chest and wrist bands. Collar closed with thread "Dorset" buttons or ties. Wrist bands (cuffs) closed with side-by-side sleeve links (cuff links) or a thread "Dorset" button and buttonhole. Use of non-thread buttons (bone or horn) are acceptable but discouraged.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance. Linen or wool flannel as detailed above (no cotton). Threat "Dorset" buttons and/or sleeve links. Center front slit may be closed with a metal shirt buckle (usually round or heart-shaped). Collar is pulled up high and worn snugly closed around the neck.
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic fabrics. Pattern fabrics other than blue check. Modern shirts.

Neckwear

- **Standard:** Black horsehair or velvet neck stocks closed with sheet brass buckles. British infantry soldiers may wear black silk rollers (long narrow rectangles) for fatigue or off duty. British Royal Artillery soldiers may wear printed cotton handkerchiefs (30-36" square) for fatigue or off duty; colors and patterns (block-printed, yarn-dyed, resist-dyed) must conform to relevant period examples. Black silk stocks or rollers for commissioned officers. Handkerchiefs and rollers should be fit snugly over the collar which should be pulled straight up, with collar completely hidden or collar points extending neatly over the top of the neckwear.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-hemmed and constructed after patterns taken from extant garments with relevant provenance. otherwise as detailed above.
- **Unacceptable:** Having no neckwear is unacceptable. Synthetic fabrics. Stocks or rollers of a color other than white or black. Handkerchiefs with modern pattern motifs.
Paisleys. Jabots.

Head Coverings

- **Standard:** Black wool felt (for other ranks) or fur felt (for commissioned officers) "Canada Army" caps with horsehair crests for battalion company and Royal Artillery

impressions (including drummers and fusiliers; grenadiers may wear a variant of this cap, such as with a feather). Light infantry leather or felt caps or hat-caps styled, constructed, and trimmed in accord with styles broadly documented to the 1770s. Broadcloth foraging caps of the colors conform to your corps. Officers may wear hats or round hats when off duty (no cloth foraging caps). Field officers may wear cocked hats in lieu of “Canada Army” caps if wearing coats. The general rule of thumb is hats must be worn with coats and caps must be worn with jackets (highland impressions excluded). Note: cocked hats, highland bonnets, bearskin caps, round hats, etc., as documented, may be worn by non-Burgoyne army British impressions per regulations.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-finished and trimmed. Round-blocked.
- **Unacceptable:** Having no head covering when outdoors is unacceptable. Highland bonnets unless worn as part of your unit’s proper uniform. Cloth “Santa” or WWII garrison-style foraging caps. Foraging caps worn by officers. Money or other papers stuffed in head coverings.

Coats and Jackets

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched, well-fitted. Because uniforms were not delivered for the 1777 campaign year, all British Army regiments in the Province of Quebec were ordered to trim their coats into short-skirted jackets in the spring of 1777. Basic details should conform to the 1768 Royal Clothing Warrant, annual general reviews, descriptions, styling, etc., according to your corps. Officers have the allowance to wear civilian clothing when off duty but may not mix military and civilian wear. Upon joining a regiment and receiving military clothing, British soldiers had to sell their civilian clothing and thus had nonavailable. Note: coats may be worn by non-Burgoyne army British impressions.
 - Infantry Private and Corporal jackets: Body made of madder broadcloth, regimental lace, and regimental white metal buttons. Corporals have one white silk epaulet.
 - Infantry Serjeant jackets: Body made of scarlet broadcloth (finer than privates/corporals), plain white braid, regimental white metal or serjeant plated buttons. Serjeant major jacket may be laced in silver instead of plain white braid (if documented).
 - Infantry commissioned officer jackets: Body and facings made of broadcloth (superfine) with worked (plain), laced, or velum buttonholes (as documented for your corps). Regimental silver plated or gilt officer pattern buttons. Laced or embroidered epaulets for battalion and grenadier company officers. Laced

shoulder wings for light infantry and grenadier officers (optional, and in addition to epaulets, for grenadier officers).

- German recruit jackets: some British battalion private soldiers may be clothed in nonregimental-specific German recruit jackets (cut down from coats). Body made of madder broadcloth, single breasted, with plain madder broadcloth cuffs and collar. Plain white metal buttons and worked buttonholes on the coat body only (none on cuffs or collar). Note: Proportionally, preferably no more than one soldier (a maximum of two) should be so uniform. All other arms, accoutrements, and camp necessities should be the same as other soldiers in the company.
- Royal Artillery – other ranks jackets: Body made of royal blue broadcloth, scarlet broadcloth facings. Yellow worsted lace and plain brass buttons set singly (not the 1782 ordnance pattern button). Bombardiers should have one plain gold epaulet on the right shoulder. Gunners should have gold-wash buttonhole lace. Corporals should have one plain gold epaulet on each shoulder. Sergeants should have finer quality uniforms, plain gold epaulets on each shoulder, gold-wash buttonhole lace, and gilt buttons.
- Royal Artillery – commissioned officers: Body made of royal blue broadcloth, scarlet broadcloth facings (superfine). Gold metallic laced buttonholes, the loops of which are pointed (such as with the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards). Plain gilt buttons. One gold thread embroidered epaulet on a scarlet superfine ground mounted on the right shoulder.
- Drummers: Broadcloth body and facings in the appropriate colors (all “red” colors should be scarlet). Shoulder wings and straps. Heavily or lightly laced, as desired. While most drummer’s coats were decorated with “wide” and “narrow” lace made with a looped pile, this is not a mandatory feature at Saratoga 250th living history events.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern derived from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Having no coat or jacket is unacceptable. Cotton canvas. Sleeved waistcoats (such as worn by the light infantry of Howe’s army in 1777). Smocks/overshirts (unless worn while resting or laboring in camp, never when under arms). Coats or jackets with standing or rise-and-fall collars. Lappets. Pre-war transitional uniform features seen in post-1768 Royal Clothing Warrant artworks, such as hanging sleeves, shoulder knots, slashed or “naval” cuffs, laced skirted waistcoats, etc. Other ranks coats or jackets must be laced (no unlaced regimental coats or jackets when on duty).

Waistcoats/Vests

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched broadcloth waistcoat, well-fitted (snug) and closed with small regimental buttons (plain for German recruits). Waistcoat neckline should be small and well-fitted around the base of the collar. White for most regiments (and German recruits), buff for buff-faced regiments, or madder for light infantry impressions (unless otherwise documented). Light infantry waistcoats should be laced (unless otherwise documented). Waistcoat skirting should extend to about the bottom of the lapels; light infantry waistcoats must be cut round. With or without pockets (scalloped flapped or welted). Royal Artillery soldier buttons must be plain brass (not the 1782 ordnance pattern button). Commissioned officers may wear nankeen (cotton) waistcoats of the appropriate color. Linen waistcoats are allowed but discouraged (they were not worn by British soldiers in Burgoyne's army).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Baggy or extremely long skirted waistcoats. Light infantry waistcoats with skirting. Collared waistcoats. Laced officer waistcoats (excepting buttonhole lace on light infantry officer waistcoats).

Breeches and Trousers

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched, well-fitted fall-front breeches or gaitered trousers ("trousers") made of white or gray linen. Breeches may close with buckles or buttons at the knees. Mounted officers may wear leather breeches. Officers should wear breeches and half gaiters (when their soldiers wear breeches and half gaiters) or pantaloons and half gaiters (when their soldiers wear trousers). Officer legwear may be made of fine flax linen or nankeen (cotton). Note: woolen breeches (white, buff, or scarlet, according to corps and position) may be worn by non-Burgoyne army British impressions.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Soldier legwear made of gray linen canvas (bleached out), hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Cotton canvas. Synthetic fabrics. Patterned fabric. Kilts. Open-legged trousers. Breeches with legs that extend to the mid-calf. Fly-front breeches. Pantaloons for soldiers.

Stockings, Socks, and Garters:

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-made stockings that fit above the knee, made of densely knit white linen or cotton (officers may wear woven silk stockings). Brass buckled leather garters. Socks may be worn with trousers.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Frame-knit stockings (or socks for trousers) knit flat to shape and stitched up the center back to form a visible seam. Hand-knit stockings or socks knit in the round to shape with a faux seam of purl stitches up the center back. Stockings are cut and sewn from knit fabric yardage using an accurate pattern.
- **Unacceptable:** Striped or clocked stockings. Diced (Highland) hose.

Spatterdashes/Half-gaiters and Leggings:

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched, well-fitted blackened linen spatterdashes to button close (Officers may wear leather spatterdashes). Blue wool leggings, well fit, closed with buttons or ties may be worn by soldiers portraying Fraser's Rangers only.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** When wearing breeches, having no spatterdashes (or leggings) is unacceptable. Saggy spatterdashes. Leather "Indian" or "Mountain man" leggings. Leggings with overwide "flairs". Fringed leggings. Long gaiters.

Shoes and Buckles

- **Standard:** Black shoes, constructed in a style consistent with 1770's British/Irish men's fashion, closed with replica buckles or tape ties (one or two holes per latchet). Appropriately styled knee-high leather boots are acceptable for Royal Artillery commissioned officers or when riding a horse (few officers in Burgoyne's army had riding horses). Modern black leather shoes with a distinct heel and a smooth toe may be worn.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance. Small original or replica buckles.
- **Unacceptable:** Shoes with no distinct heel. Modern shoes without spatterdashes, gaitered trousers, or leggings (if appropriate). Obviously modern footwear such as hiking boots, sneakers, lug soles, etc. Wingtips. Fake buckles.

Commissioned Officer Appointments

- **Standard:** Buff/tan or white kid leather gloves. Gilt or silver (or plated) gorgets for infantry officers only (pre-1796 “GR” cypher pattern). Woven silk crimson sashes. Note: gorgets should only be worn when on duty.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Replicas custom crafted according to extant examples with relevant provenances.
- **Unacceptable:** White (or any other color) cotton gloves. Fabric sashes. Black gloves. Modern leather gloves. Shoulder knots. Gorgets wore low on the body. Sash fringe falling below the knee. Sashes or gorgets worn with civilian attire. Ordnance or Cavalry officers with gorgets. Gorgets worn without a coat or jacket. Brass gorgets.

Noncommissioned Officer Appointments

- **Standard:** Buff/tan or white kid leather gloves. Woven wool sashes with single central facing color stripe for infantry noncommissioned officers. Woven silk crimson sashes for Royal Artillery noncommissioned officers.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Replicas custom crafted according to extant examples with relevant provenances.
- **Unacceptable:** White (or any other color) cotton gloves. Fabric sashes. Black gloves. Modern leather gloves. Sash fringe falling below the knee.

ARMS

Note—All firearms must pass safety officers inspection at event. Visitors may only touch firearms when unloaded, and only when the reenactor maintains physical control of the arm, i.e. while holding it. Visitors are not allowed to touch bladed or pointed weapons (such as bayonets, knives, tomahawks / hatchets, or swords), at any time.

Firelocks/Guns

- **Standard:** Replica British/Irish 1756 or 1769 land pattern muskets for rank-and-file infantrymen. British/Irish 1770 serjeant carbine OR land pattern musket for infantry serjeants. British 1756 artillery carbine for all enlisted men of the Royal Artillery. Buff or blackened tanned leather slings. All infantry company officers must be armed with British/Irish fuzees or carbines; the same is recommended for field officers.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom built from an extant example with relevant provenance. The specific pattern carried that matches the weapon historically used by the portrayed regiment in 1777.
- **Unacceptable:** Antique (original) guns. Pistols. Rifles. Fowlers. Any military longarm not in accord with those abovenamed, including other British/Irish Ordnance weapons. Percussion-cap locks. Spontoons. Note: all firearms must pass Saratoga 250th safety inspection at this Living History event.

Bayonets

- **Standard:** the bayonet must be compatible with the associated gun. Bayonets must have scabbard secured in waist or shoulder belts.
- **Exceeds Standard:** same as above.
- **Unacceptable:** Bayonets without fitted scabbards.

Swords

- **Standard:** Officers may field with hunting swords, smallswords, spadroons, or short sabers (most officers of Burgoyne's army left their swords behind with heavy baggage and thus did not have them at Freeman's Farm/Saratoga). Noncommissioned officers or grenadiers may field with their hangers (optional). All swords must be carried via waist or shoulder belt. All swords should broadly reflect English/Irish craftsmanship from the second or third quarters of the 18th century.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom-built or original sword secured in a scabbard and belting constructed from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** swords without fitted scabbards. Scottish Broadswords. Commissioned officers with brass-hilted swords.

Hatchets/Tomahawks

- **Standard:** Replica hatchets or tomahawks carried via waist or shoulder belt for light infantry (optional). Heads or cutting edges must be tightly secured in leather sheathings.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand forged heads with hand-drawn hafts constructed from extant examples with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Hatchets or tomahawks without sheathing.

Ordnance-Issue Cartridge Boxes

- **Standard:** Black painted 18-hole box with nailed leather flap embossed with the royal cypher, converted to wear over the shoulder (per General Orders, 3 Aug 1775).

In Burgoyne's army, worn by Light Infantry and the 47th Regiment of Foot (battalion companies) only.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom built from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Any British soldiers apart from those abovementioned using them.

ACCOUTREMENTS

Cartridge Pouches and Shoulder Belts

- **Standard:** Black soft-leather cartridge pouches housing a wooden box (block) drilled with 19-21 holes. Black hard-leather cartridge pouches housing a wooden box drilled with 26-36 holes. Suspended by a narrow (about 2-inch wide) buff leather shoulder belt. Match cases and twisted cord for grenadiers (unless otherwise documented). British Ordnance-pattern Royal Artillery Pouch and shoulder belt. British infantry officers may wear small leather cartridge pouches with buff leather shoulder belts or no pouch (even when armed with a fusee).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Tin cartridge boxes. BAR-pattern "suitcase" pouches. White-painted tanned leather shoulder belts. Cartridge pouches worn by light infantry.

Waistbelts and Shoulder Belts

- **Standard:** Whitened (excepting for most buff-faced regiments) buff leather waistbelt with regimental clasp or buckle closure. Waistbelts should be slung over the shoulder. Black or brown tanned leather waist or shoulder belt (if documented) for light infantry.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom built from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** White-painted tanned leather belting.

Light Infantry Cartridge Boxes

- **Standard:** Black or Spanish brown painted 9-hole box with nailed leather flap worn before (in front, around the waist) by Light Infantry only.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom built from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Any British soldiers apart from those abovementioned using them.

Light Infantry Bullet Bags

- **Standard:** small, tanned leather bag affixed to the powder horn strap or waistbelt (for light infantry only). Left brown or blackened.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Handmade and constructed from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** bags made of anything other than tanned leather. Suede.

Powder and Priming Horns

- **Standard:** Powder horns for light infantry. Priming horns for Royal Artillery other ranks. Note: Horns cannot contain black powder at any time – unused cat litter can achieve the desired weight effect.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Handmade and constructed from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Horns containing any black powder. Horns made or decorated in ways that do not conform to 18th century British/Irish-American styles.

Camp Necessaries

Canteens

- **Standard:** Ordnance pattern British tin canteen (“half-moon” or “crescent” shaped) suspended by “string” (thin help cord). Scoured Stainless-steel canteens
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hot dipped tin canteen with tin cap. Constructed from an extant example with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Fabric covered canteens. Cotton cord.

Knapsacks

- **Standard:** Hand or machine sewn, conformable to single-envelope goatskin packs or double-envelope painted linen canvas packs. Two shoulder straps. Knapsacks are not required at events but encouraged and they must conform to these basic standards if worn on a march or displayed in camp.
- **Exceeds Standard:** All hand-sewn, constructed from an extant example with relevant provenance.

- **Unacceptable:** Cotton canvas. Tumplines. Single-strap “sling” packs (such as seen in David Morier’s mid-18th century painting of the 46th, 47th, and 48th Regiment of Foot in marching order).

Haversacks

- **Standard:** Hand or machine sewn from natural gray flax linen which conforms to the standard pattern haversack issued to the British Army in the second half of the 18th century. May or may not close with buttons.
- **Exceeds Standard:** All hand-sewn, otherwise detailed as above and stamped with the correctly sized King’s mark (GR and broad arrow).
- **Unacceptable:** Anything else.

Blankets

- **Standard:** Plain white, hand or machine-woven wool. Blankets are not required at this Saratoga 250th Living History events, but recommended and then must at least conform to this minimum standard if carried on a march or displayed in camp.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Handloomed, without center seem, copied from the standard British Army issue blanket with two blue stripes and stamped with the correctly sized King’s mark (GR and broad arrow).
- **Unacceptable:** Anything else.

HYGIENE and PERSONAL EFFECTS

Hair

- **Standard:** Face must be clean, shaven, or up to a maximum of 4-days even stubble. Runners (ear-length sideburns) on younger fashion-oriented men are acceptable. Note: military protocols show that the men of a regiment typically shaved and washed on the same days twice per week. It was important to have personnel operating under the same shaving regimen to maintain a uniform appearance and system of subordination. Long hair must be clubbed, queued, or plaited as appropriate (or loose, if shoulder length).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as described above.
- **Unacceptable:** Anything else. Hair dyed with any unnatural color. Ponytails. Long loose hair.

Glasses/Spectacles

- **Standard:** Reproduction period-appropriate metal frames with circular lenses.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Original spectacles made prior to c.1790, i.e., with both circular lenses and temple pieces.
- **Unacceptable:** Modern-framed glasses.

Artistic Objects, Jewelry, and Watches:

- **Standard:** Watches worn in fobs (the little waistband pocket) for commissioned and noncommissioned officers (optional). Any facial piercings must be replaced with small clear retainers/hiders. Plain metal wedding bands. Medals, tokens, orders, or badges only if specifically documented to the wearer's corps and rank (such as a Society of the Blue and Orange medal worn by some commissioned officers of the 24th Regiment of Foot, or the Merit badge worn by some soldiers of the 5th Regiment of Foot). Note: medals and orders should not be worn when under arms.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above.
- **Unacceptable:** Artistic objects or insignias, medals, pins, patches, or badges (including SAR and DAR civic organization badges). Exposed St. Barbara medals. Modern jewelry (plain metal wedding bands excepted). Wrist watches. Watch chains worn across waistcoats (any exposed watch chain must be attached to a watch housed in a fob). Plastic proxy wedding bands.

Smoking

- **Standard:** Tobacco smoked from a clay pipe (allowed in camp after visitor hours only).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above, using heritage tobacco.
- **Unacceptable:** Use of cigarettes, cigars, or vaping in camp. All smoking is prohibited near historical buildings, at any time when high fire danger warnings are in effect, when under arms, or while in the possession of black powder cartridges.

Appendix:

Orders for Canada Army British Uniform Changes, 1777

Although the “look” of British battalion soldiers in Burgoyne’s army in 1777 is established in artworks and contemporary descriptions, official orders referring to these modifications are rarely seen. What follows here are transcripts of those orders.

When it became apparent that uniform clothing would probably not be delivered in time for the inevitable Northern Campaign of 1777, orders were placed by the British Army command in the Quebec Department to deal with the challenge.

General Orders, 18 December 1776:

As it is possible the Commander in Chief may intend to give some particular directions relating to the Clothing of the Army, for the next Campaign. The Coats and Hatts are not to be cut, nor is the fashion of the Cloathing to be formed, by any regiment until his Excellencys [Sir Guy Carleton's] Pleasure be known, who has been wrote to for orders on this subject.

What was apparent in December was viewed as likely by February 1777, to which the following **General Order, 13 February 1777**, was posted:

The Clothing for the several Regiments not being arriv'd, His Excellency the commander in chief allows the Commanding Officers of Battalions to accommodate the present clothing as shall be most convenient for the Men, and it is to be repaired so as to serve the Campaign until the new clothing arrives.

All further orders on the subject were codified on a regimental level. Unfortunately, no regimental orderly book covering this timeframe is known to exist except for the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Its extracts provide excellent guidance for the very same work being done by all British regiments in the Province of Quebec at the same time (not only by those regiments which ended up comprising Burgoyne's army). As the clothing in the worst condition worn by the soldiers were their woolen breeches, the first order was made to rectify their situation.

Regimental Orders, 7 March 1777:

The Commissary to deliver to the Q^r Master tomorrow at Eleven o'clock, all the old Tents, which are to be cut up into Trousers for the Men; the women of the three Companies, to be employ'd in making them.

Understanding applied nomenclature is key to understanding meaning. In British English parlance, “trousers” referred generically to any long-legged garment. The British sometimes used the more specific term “gaitered trouser” when referring to the species of long-legged garment commonly used by British Army soldiers during the war. But this term was not even typically utilized. Interestingly, American English use of the word “trousers” was tied to the open-legged variety only; Americans typically used the term “overalls” in lieu of “gaitered trousers.”

The above direction for cutting trousers for British Army soldiers was followed up nearly a month later with the order that codified substantive changes to the soldiers’ coats and hats.

Regimental Orders, 3 April 1777:

The Taylors are to receive four shillings p^r suit for altering the clothing, and, Two Pence P^r Pair for cutting the Mens Trousers; each man is to have a pair of Breeches cut and made agreeable to the pattern of Serjeant Ramsey. The Men's Hatts to be cut into caps after a pattern which will be given. A sufficient quantity of Horse Hair, to be bought and Dyed Reed [sic] for this purpose, and the old Coats...to be cut into plain jacketts[.] each Man to have another pair of Trowsers. The Adjutant to see this order executed.

Insofar as extant orders go, that's it. Nevertheless, this small series sheds light on the modifications made to the coats, cocked hats, and woolen breeches of the British infantrymen and artillerymen in the Province of Quebec a full month in advance of Burgoyne's arrival in early May.

Standards for the Battles Of Saratoga Living History Reenactment
October 7–11, 2027
v.3 PN