

Royalist American Combatant Impressions

Most Americans serving in Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne's army from Canada were enrolled in one or more of the newly raised royalist battalions and independent companies drawn largely from New England and New York. Many of these men had previously served in their colony's militia and were therefore subject to its militia laws regulating arms, accoutrements, and equipage (see Appendix 1). Even so, contemporary accounts confirm that a significant portion of royalists arrived unarmed. Some received weapons from Canadian stores; others acquired arms from the countryside or after successful engagements. A number never received arms at all and instead served as boatmen, laborers, drivers, pioneers, or artificers.

Royalist clothing generally mirrored that of their militia counterparts, with the notable addition of simple white paper slips affixed to their hats. Unsurprisingly, this led to occasional confusion on both sides of the battlefield. Notable exceptions are outlined in Appendix 2.

Context is king. At Freeman's Farm and Saratoga, both armies occupied stationary encampments for several weeks with their baggage close at hand. Examples drawn from other campaigns—such as men growing beards during extended ranging service when shaving was impossible—do not apply to the conditions at Saratoga in 1777. While exceptions undoubtedly existed among the nearly 1,000 American royalists who served under Burgoyne, this guide defines what was typical. In living history, our goal is to portray the common and the standard, not the outliers.

All clothing and equipment worn at Freeman's Farm/Saratoga should reflect one's rank and social standing. Commissioned officers, as a rule, wore higher-quality garments, arms, and accoutrements, often supplemented with items such as silk sashes or leather gloves. Such documented enhancements are encouraged.

Each subject area (e.g., "Shirts") is divided into three categories: standard, exceeds standard, and unacceptable. The standard defines the minimum requirements for any living history impression at Battles of Saratoga 250th events. Items listed under exceeds standard are optional but encouraged, as they offer the strongest interpretive value for visitors. Items listed as unacceptable are strictly prohibited. These standards apply for the entire duration of the event—not only during public hours.

These guidelines cannot anticipate every scenario. If you have questions about any standard, or about items not addressed here, please contact Paul Novotny at Major@24thfoot.org.

Why "Royalists"?

"Royalists" is used throughout this document to identify American adherents to the British Crown who served in Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne's Army from Canada. This was the term most consistently employed by Britain's Canada Establishment when referring to these men.

Other broad designations—such as "American volunteers" and "provincial troops"—also appear in Canada Establishment records, but their usage was more situational and context-dependent. "Loyalist," meanwhile, was the preferred endonym among most of these Americans themselves and remains entirely appropriate, though it reflects a distinctly British-aligned perspective.



Contents

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

Arms: Firelocks/Guns; Bayonets; Swords; Hatchets/Tomahawks.

Accoutrements: Cartridge Pouches/Boxes, Shot Bags, and Bullet Bags; Powder and Priming Horns.

Camp Necessaries: Canteens; Knapsacks and Haversacks; Blankets and Tumplines.

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

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

Appendix: Militia Law Requirements; Burgoyne's Royalists in Uniform.

CLOTHING

Shirts

- **Standard:** Hand- or machine-stitched plain white, natural, checked, or striped linen; lightweight white/natural wool flannel or cotton. Long, full body (to lower thigh). Center-front slit with or without ruffles. Collar closed with thread “Dorset” buttons or ties. Wristbands closed with sleeve links or a Dorset button. Non-thread buttons (bone, horn, metal) acceptable but not preferred.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched, patterned from an extant garment with provenance. Linen or wool flannel as above. Dorset buttons and/or sleeve links. Slit may close with a metal shirt buckle. For most impressions, collar worn high and snug.
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic fabrics. Modern shirts. Inappropriate patterns.

Neckwear

- **Standard:** Black or white linen, cotton, or silk handkerchiefs (30–36" square) or rollers. Colored/patterned handkerchiefs (block-printed, yarn-dyed, resist-dyed) appropriate for commoners. Worn snugly over a straight-up collar, either fully covering it or with collar points neatly over the top.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-hemmed and patterned from an extant example.
- **Unacceptable:** No neckwear. Synthetic fabrics. Bright/unhistorical colors. Modern motifs. Paisley. Jabots. Military stocks.

Head Coverings

Note: All royalist American men must visibly wear white paper in their hats as the sign of having taken the Oath of Allegiance—standard practice in Burgoyne’s army.

- **Standard:** Black wool or fur felt hats, round-cut and plain or shaped/cocked in appropriate 1770s civilian styles. Knit wool Monmouth or Dutch caps in natural colors or stripes. Knit Scottish bonnets.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-finished, round-blocked wool or beaver hats, lined in linen or silk.
- **Unacceptable:** No head covering outdoors. Unshaped hat blanks. “Santa” caps. Synthetic knit caps. Coonskin/mountain man/trapper caps. Fabric wrapped around the head. Civilian hats with cockades.

Coats and Jackets

- **Standard:** Hand- or machine-stitched, well-fitted garments of linen, wool, blends, cotton velvet, or corduroy in period-appropriate colors/patterns. Coats straight-bodied or cutaway, knee-length; jackets hip-length with shorter skirts, cuffs, and collar. Jackets may replace a waistcoat. Mostly single-breasted; double-breasted must be self-faced. Military uniforms must follow Appendix 2.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched and patterned from an extant garment.

- **Unacceptable:** No coat or jacket. Hunting/rifle/frontier shirts. Cotton canvas, silk, or leather. Horizontal stripes. Incorrect military uniforms. Smocks/overshirts except in camp, never under arms.

Waistcoats / Vests

- **Standard:** Hand- or machine-stitched, snug-fitting waistcoat of linen, wool, blends, cotton velvet, corduroy, or leather in period-appropriate colors/patterns. May be short-skirted or cut-round. Neckline small and fitted. Sleeved waistcoats styled as waistcoats but with sleeves.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched and patterned from an extant garment.
- **Unacceptable:** No waistcoat when wearing a coat. Baggy or overly long skirts. Cotton canvas or silk. Horizontal stripes. Large coat buttons. Collared waistcoats.

Breeches and Trousers

- **Standard:** Hand- or machine-stitched, well-fitted breeches or straight trousers of linen, wool, blends, cotton velvet, or corduroy. Leather breeches are acceptable. Period-appropriate colors/patterns. Breeches may close with buckles, buttons, or ties. Fly-front optional but rare.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched and patterned from an extant garment.
- **Unacceptable:** Cotton canvas. Synthetic fabrics. Horizontal stripes. Leather trousers. Breeches extending to mid-calf. Kilts or gaitered trousers except as noted in Appendix 2.

Stockings, Socks, and Garters

- **Standard:** Stockings fitting above the knee, of densely knit wool, linen, silk, or cotton in period-appropriate colors/patterns. Cloth/linen tape garters must be hidden under breeches.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Frame-knit stockings with center-back seam; hand-knit stockings with faux seam; cut-and-sewn stockings from knit yardage. Subtle, same-color gore clocks. Stockings held up by breeches knee band.
- **Unacceptable:** Commercial striped or clocked stockings. Buckled leather garters. Diced/Highland hose except as allowed in Appendix 2.

Spatterdashes, Country Boots, and Leggings

- **Standard:** Well-fitted wool or linen spatterdashes or country boots, buttoning or tying closed, cut round at the top. Black leather spatterdashes or gaiter-boots. Well-fitted wool leggings with buttons or ties. May be worn over modern shoes for beginners.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched and patterned from an extant garment.
- **Unacceptable:** Baggy spatterdashes. Chaps. Leather “Indian” or “mountain man” leggings. Over-flared or fringed leggings. Military gaiters.

Shoes and Buckles

- **Standard:** Black shoes in 1770s style, closed with replica buckles or tape ties. Black leather tied half-boots. Knee-high boots only for horsemen. Modern black shoes with a heel and smooth toe allowed only if covered by proper spatterdashes.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Fully hand-stitched and patterned from an extant example. Small original or replica buckles.
- **Unacceptable:** Shoes without a distinct heel. Modern shoes without spatterdashes. Hiking boots, sneakers, lug soles, moccasins, wingtips, fake buckles.

Commissioned Officer Appointments

- **Standard:** Buff/tan/brown or white kid-leather gloves (optional). Shirt ruffles at breast and cuffs (optional). Woven silk sashes and American-made gorgets (optional; sashes may be worn alone; gorgets only with sashes).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom replicas based on extant examples.
- **Unacceptable:** Cotton gloves of any color. Fabric sashes. Black gloves. Modern leather gloves. Shoulder knots. Epaulets on non-uniform coats. Plain or “trade” gorgets.

ARMS

Note: All firearms must pass Battles of Saratoga 250th safety inspection at each event. Visitors may handle firearms only when they are unloaded *and* only while the volunteer maintains physical control of the arm. Loading occurs exclusively within designated firing-demonstration areas. Visitors may not handle bladed or pointed weapons (bayonets, knives, tomahawks/hatchets, swords) at any time.

Firelocks / Guns

- **Standard:** Replica British/Irish military arms (1769 Short Land Pattern or earlier) or French Model 1728 muskets. Civilian “New England” or “Hudson Valley” fowlers. British/Irish or American-made fuzees or trade guns. Leather slings permitted but uncommon.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom-built arms based on extant examples with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Antique/original firearms; rifles (rare north of Pennsylvania); pistols; blunderbusses; hand mortars; matchlocks; wheel locks; dog locks without a functioning internal half-cock; British/Irish or French muskets outside the approved patterns; military arms from nations other than Britain/Ireland or France; percussion-cap locks.

Bayonets

- **Standard:** Bayonet must fit the associated firearm. Scabbards must be worn on a waist or shoulder belt. Bayonets are optional.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above.
- **Unacceptable:** Bayonets without fitted scabbards.

Swords

- **Standard:** Patterns commonly used in North America during the first three quarters of the 18th century, including hunting swords, spadroons, short sabers, and hangers. Officers may carry smallswords. All swords must be carried in a scabbard on a waist or shoulder belt. Swords are optional.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Custom-built or original swords with scabbards and belting based on extant examples with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Swords without fitted scabbards; Scottish broadswords (except as permitted under the uniform exemption in Appendix 2).

Hatchets / Tomahawks

- **Standard:** Replica hatchets or tomahawks carried on a waist or shoulder belt. Heads or cutting edges must be secured in leather sheaths. These items are optional.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-forged heads with hand-drawn hafts based on extant examples with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Hatchets or tomahawks without sheathing.

ACCOUTREMENTS

Cartridge Pouches/Boxes, Shot Bags, and Bullet Bags

Standard

- **Royalists outfitted per their colony's militia law** or equipped with **captured New Hampshire or Massachusetts Continental Army gear:**
Soft leather "New England" or "New York" style cartridge pouches (black or fair leather) with a **wooden block of 15–19 holes**, carried on a **narrow leather or linen web shoulder belt** (approx. 2" wide).
Cartridge boxes may also be worn at the waist on a waistbelt.
- **Men armed by the Canadian Establishment:**
British "government set" cartridge box, belt, and frog worn at the waist.
- **All impressions:**
Bullet or shot bags may be worn with powder or priming horns but **may never be used to carry cartridges.**

Exceeds Standard

- Hand-stitched construction following a pattern taken from an extant, provenance-supported example.

Unacceptable

- European hard-leather pouches (typical British infantry style).
- New Model Continental Army pouches (29-hole).
- Tin cartridge boxes.

Powder and Priming Horns

Standard

- Powder or priming horn with a **narrow leather or woven strap/cord**.
- Horns **must not contain black powder** at any time; unused cat litter may be used for weight.

Exceeds Standard

- Constructed directly from an extant, provenance-supported example.

Unacceptable

- Horns containing any amount of black powder.
- Horns made or decorated in ways inconsistent with **18th-century British, Irish, or American** styles.

Camp Necessaries

Canteens

Standard —

- British ordnance-pattern tin canteen (“half-moon”/ “crescent”) suspended by thin hemp cord.
- “Cheesebox” or staved wooden canteen.

Exceeds Standard —

- Hot-dipped tin canteen with tin cap, built from an extant example with provenance.
- Staved wooden canteen with interlocking wooden hoops (no metal strapping).
- Wooden canteens with 1" leather keepers and a narrow cord, woven hemp strap, or narrow leather strap.
- Period-correct wooden rundlet.

Unacceptable —

- Tin or stainless-steel modern canteens; gourds; modern flasks; glass or ceramic bottles/jugs; fabric-covered canteens; cotton cord.

Knapsacks & Haversacks

Standard —

For royalists outfitted per militia law or issued captured New Hampshire/Massachusetts Continental knapsacks:

- Hand- or machine-sewn knapsacks conforming to the *David Uhl*, *Benjamin Warner*, or *Elisha Gross* patterns.
- Linen (painted or unpainted) or animal skin (calf, bear, goat) with two shoulder straps.
- Knapsacks are not required at Saratoga 250th events, but if worn or displayed, they must meet these standards.

All participants:

- Hand- or machine-sewn natural gray flax-linen haversack conforming to late-18th-century British Army patterns; may close with or without buttons.

Exceeds Standard —

- Fully hand-sewn versions of the above.

Unacceptable —

- Cotton canvas; European military knapsacks (e.g., “Isaac Royall”); the Maryland “New Invented Napsack and Haversack.”

Blankets & Tumplines

Standard —

- Hand- or machine-woven wool or linsey-woolsey in plain white, checked, striped, or plaid patterns resembling extant examples.
- Appropriate types include 2- or 3-point blankets, rose blankets, and Dutch blankets.
- May be tied to a pack or carried in a roll with a leather or woven tumpline.
- Not required at Saratoga 250th events, but if carried or displayed, they must meet these standards.

Exceeds Standard —

- Handloomed blankets.
- “Imported” (single-piece) or “colonial” (center-seamed) construction.

Unacceptable —

- Civil War gray blankets; synthetic materials (e.g., polar fleece); Hudson Bay blankets.

HYGIENE & PERSONAL EFFECTS

Hair

- **Standard** — Clean-shaven or up to **4 days of even stubble**. “Runners” (ear-length sideburns) acceptable for younger, fashion-forward impressions. Long hair must be **clubbed or queued**; shoulder-length hair may be worn loose.
Note: Regimental practice typically involved shaving and washing on the same two days each week to maintain uniform appearance.

- **Exceeds Standard** — Same as above.
- **Unacceptable** — Dyed or unnatural hair colors; ponytails; long loose hair; any style not conforming to the above.

Glasses / Spectacles

- **Standard** — Reproduction **period-appropriate metal frames** with circular lenses.
- **Exceeds Standard** — Original spectacles made prior to c.1790 with circular lenses and temple pieces.
- **Unacceptable** — Modern-framed glasses of any type.

Artistic Objects, Jewelry & Watches

- **Standard** — Watches carried in **fobs** (waistband pockets). Facial piercings must be replaced with **clear retainers**. Plain metal wedding bands permitted.
- **Exceeds Standard** — Same as above.
- **Unacceptable** —
 - Artistic objects, insignia, medals, pins, patches, or badges (including SAR/DAR).
 - Reproductions of 18th-century medals or badges (e.g., Badge of Merit).
 - Modern jewelry (except plain metal wedding bands).
 - Wristwatches.
 - Watch chains worn **across** waistcoats (any visible chain must attach to a watch housed in a fob).
 - Plastic “proxy” wedding bands.

Smoking

- **Standard** — Tobacco smoked only from a **clay pipe**, and only **after visitor hours** while in camp.
- **Exceeds Standard** — Same as above, using heritage tobacco.
- **Unacceptable** — Cigarettes, cigars, modern pipes, vaping.
All smoking is prohibited near historic structures, during high fire danger, while under arms, or while carrying black powder cartridges.

CAMP

Tentage / Housing

Standard

- Machine-stitched tentage commonly used at reenactments: marquee, wedge, horse, awning (“fly”), lean-to, and bell tents.
- Wood poles, natural-fiber ropes, and metal or wooden stakes.
- *Note:* Modern tents may be used only in the participant parking area, not in camp.

Exceeds Standard

- Hand-stitched linen tentage constructed to documented dimensions with appropriate provenance.
- Drawn wood poles with iron fittings, wooden pins, and hemp or jute rope.
- Straight-sawn milled boards for sleeping platforms.
- *Brush huts:* Branch cuttings may be available. Do **not** bring brush to the event.

Unacceptable

- Modern tents in camp.
- Plastic rope.

Furniture

Standard

- Chairs, benches, folding stools, tables, boxes, chests, trunks, and portmanteaus broadly based on British/Irish/American camp scenes or artifacts dated ca. 1750–1780.
- *Recommendation:* Use furniture sparingly. Royalists were refugees with minimal belongings when they joined the Army from Canada.

Exceeds Standard

- **No camp furniture** for soldiers or followers.
- Officers may have **limited** furniture (e.g., up to three folding stools and a portmanteau), constructed from patterns based on extant examples with appropriate provenance.

Unacceptable

- Any furniture not grounded in historical examples as described above.
- Adirondack chairs.
- Lanterns or lantern poles displayed during public hours (permitted only outside visitor hours).

Food / Cooking and Cookware

Standard

- Foods appropriate to New England and Upstate New York in the 1770s.
- Cookware and eating/drinkware made of: wood (treen), pewter, tin, iron/steel, horn, silver, earthenware (redware, slipware, creamware), porcelain, stoneware, and glass.
- Wrapped foods on display must use parchment paper or linen.
- *Recommendation:* Limit cookware, especially fragile ceramics and large iron kettles/Dutch ovens/trammels. Soldiers and most officers relied primarily on tin kettles and small, lightweight iron kettles.

Exceeds Standard

- “Heritage” quality foods documented for Burgoyne’s royalist corps in Sept–Oct 1777: flour and salt pork as primary rations; occasional ship’s bread and fresh beef.
- Spruce beer.
- Seasonally available foraged foods (turnips, apples).
- Purchased foods/drinks from sutlers (cheese, ham, apples, bread, sugar, tea, milk, rum, wine, beer), acknowledging their extreme cost late in the expedition.
- Greater variety of foods for general officers with appropriate funds and baggage allowance.
- Hot-dipped tin kettles are based on extant examples.
- Cooking suspensions made from foraged tree branches (not steel).
- *Note:* Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed during visitor hours; listed here for interpretive accuracy only.

Unacceptable

- Displayed modern food packaging: plastic containers, plastic wrap, foil.
- Modern utensils.
- Overtly modern processed foods (e.g., cupcakes, sandwiches—*no, sandwiches, are not appropriate*).
- Stainless-steel cookware unless thoroughly blackened or scuffed.
- Any modern packaging or food consumption visible to the public.

Appendix 1: Militia Law Requirements

Each colony's pre-war militia law defined the weapons, accoutrements, and often the equipage that militiamen were expected to furnish. Noncompliance resulted in fines, typically deducted from militia pay or from proceeds of requisitioned goods sold at auction. Royalists who joined Burgoyne's army in 1777 would have been familiar with their colony's militia law, though many still entered service without arms or accoutrements.

Massachusetts

An Act for Regulating of the Militia (22 November 1693) required every listed soldier and householder (except troopers) to maintain:

- A well-fixed firelock musket of musket or bastard-musket bore, with a barrel at least 3½ feet long
- A snapsack
- A collar with twelve bandoliers *or* a cartouch box
- One pound of good powder
- Twenty bullets fit for his gun
- Twelve flints
- A good sword or cutlass
- A worm and priming wire

An Act in Addition...for Regulating the Militia (25 January 1758) expanded these requirements:

- A powder horn (or horns) containing one pound of powder
- Forty bullets fit for the soldier's gun
- Permission to carry a "good hatchet" in lieu of a sword
- Bayonets required for *half* of all non-commissioned officers and privates liable to train, each with a steel blade at least 15 inches long, fitted to the gun with a scabbard

Note: Although archaic in language—bandoliers were obsolete by the mid-18th century—Massachusetts' 1693 law remained in force until replaced on 22 January 1776.

New Hampshire

An Act for the Regulating of the Militia (14 May 1718) closely mirrored Massachusetts' 1693 law, requiring:

- A well-fixed firelock musket of musket or bastard-musket bore, with a barrel at least 3½ feet long

- A snapsack
- A cartouch box
- One pound of powder
- Twenty bullets
- Twelve flints
- A good sword or cutlass
- A worm and priming wire

Note: New Hampshire's law was not updated during the French and Indian War and remained unchanged until replaced on 19 September 1776.

Connecticut

An Act for Forming and Regulating the Militia (October 1754) required each listed soldier and householder (except troopers) to maintain:

- A well-fixed firelock with a barrel at least 3½ feet long
- A good sword or cutlass
- A worm, primer, and priming wire
- A cartridge box
- One pound of powder
- Four pounds of bullets
- Twelve flints

Note: Despite the 1754 update, Connecticut still required swords and did not mandate bayonets until the act of 26 April 1775.

New York

An Act for the Better Regulating the Militia of the Colony of New York (1 April 1775) required every foot soldier to possess:

- A good, well-fixed musket or fuzee
- A good sword
- A belt and cartridge box
- Six cartridges of gunpowder
- Six sizeable bullets

Note: Even on the eve of war, New York still required swords and did not require bayonets. The *Manual Exercise, Evolutions, Manœuvres, &c.* (Albany, 1772), p.18, confirms that “the Militia have no Bayonets.” Unlike Massachusetts, New York did not allow hatchets in lieu of swords.

Appendix 2: Burgoyne’s Royalists in Uniform

While most of Burgoyne’s royalist corps appeared essentially as militia—distinguished chiefly by the white papers fixed to their head coverings—several documented uniformed exceptions existed. Because these uniforms are finite, **only the following may be worn when portraying royalist American corps in Burgoyne’s 1777 army.**

1) King’s Loyal Americans (Jessup’s Corps)

In late 1776, Major James Gray of the King’s Royal Regiment of New York (KRRNY) was directed to provide Jessup’s newly raised corps with inexpensive winter clothing. By January 1777, Gray confirmed delivery of uniforms described as “**very common Red Stuff turn’d up with Green.**” Additional recruits received the same clothing a few months later.

Purchased materials were issued to the corps’ soldier-tailors, who produced “Sutes of Cloaths,” likely consisting of red coats with green facings, and **white waistcoats and breeches.** Men who enlisted during the 1777 expedition did **not** receive this uniform. Some early members later transferred into other royalist units—such as Captain Daniel McAlpin’s American Volunteers—meaning this clothing may have appeared sporadically across multiple corps.

2) King’s Royal Regiment of New York (KRRNY)

Burgoyne’s army included a very small detachment of the KRRNY: one lieutenant and a few soldiers assigned solely to guard the regiment’s baggage en route to Albany.

Their uniform consisted of:

- **Green cloth jackets** without lace,
- **Red facings,**
- **Buff bay linings,**
- **Buff cloth waistcoats,**
- **Round hats,**
- **White linen gaitered trousers.**

They carried **government sets only—no cartridge pouches.**

3) 1st Battalion, Royal Highland Emigrants (RHE)

A small detachment of officers and soldiers from the RHE served Burgoyne’s army in noncombatant roles. One captain and several men crossed Lake Champlain to work as artificers.

Their uniform closely followed that of the Royal Highland Regiment:

- **Laced short red coats** faced in blue and lined in white bay,

- **White cloth waistcoats,**
- **Highland bonnets,**
- **Kilts and tartan hose,**
- **Highland broadswords,**
- **Government sets only—no cartridge pouches.**

Standards for the Battles of Saratoga Living History Reenactment

October 7–11, 2027

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