Preparing a British Unit for Service in America: The Brigade of Foot Guards, 1776

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On 13 February 1776 the Earl of Loudoun, commanding His Majesty’s Foot Guards, issued orders forming a detachment to serve in the American War for Independence. The unit was to consist of men and officers from all three existing regiments: the First (now Grenadier) Guards, the Coldstream Guards, and the Third (now Scots) Guards. When first detached for this service the men were attired in their own regimental uniforms. Some new items of equipment and clothing were issued to prepare them for the impending campaign. In addition, between the time the detachment formed in March and the date it went ashore in North America in August, significant alterations were wrought in its appearance. For these to be fully appreciated, however, one must understand the parade-ground uniform of the Guards in London.

Uniform in England

There are four principal sources of information pertaining to the clothing and accouterments of the Foot Guards in 1776. The first is a series of orders or warrants, issued between 1768 and 1774, prescribing their uniforms.1 Secondly, a series of drawings once in the collection of Landgraf Ludwig IX of Hesse-Darmstadt depicted the uniforms of the Guards ca. 1775. Cecil C. P. Lawson’s notebooks in the National Army Museum (London) contain his colored sketches of them. These include a grenadier from each Guards Regiment, as well as an officer and a drummer2 (FIG 1). Third, the National Army Museum owns three Guards coats dated between 1770 and 1780: one is a drummer’s coat and two are privates’ coats.3 Finally, there is a painting by John Collet entitled “Corporal Cartouche instructing Miss Camplove in her martial exercises” (FIG 2). It depicts the famous actress Charlotte Walpole in 1778 learning her role for the play The Camp. Her teacher is a Third Guards corporal painted in profile.4

While the three regiments of Foot Guards were all attired in scarlet coats with white breeches and waistcoats, each maintained unique features.5 The principal distinction among them was the pattern of coat lace. All privates wore plain white tape, but First Guardsmen laced their coats diamond fashion and had plain buttons evenly spaced (FIG 3). Third Guards’ regimental buttons were in groups of three with pointed loops (FIG 4). The Coldstream Guards wore scallop-headed loops and their regimental buttons set in twos (FIG 5). There was also a difference in the brass waist belt buckles. The First Guards used a square frame buckle, the Third Guards wore a...
curved rectangle, and the Coldstream Guards utilized a curved rectangle with “CG” in the center (FIGS 6 and 7).

In all three regiments, waist and shoulder carriages were white to match the small clothes. The badge on the First Guards cartridge pouch carried the traditional regimental version of the Royal Cipher—a “GR” intertwined with a reversed “GR.” The other two regiments utilized a plain “GR” within an open circle, backed with red wool. Both badges were surmounted with a crown. Private’s buttons were white metal, but buckles and badges were of brass. The officers’ metal was gold. The Darmstadt drawings show a white neckcloth, but black stocks were also available. Battalion companies wore the traditional cocked hat taped with white. The Guards had both white and black long gaiters, the former worn only on special occasions.

The coats were faced with dark blue, signifying a Royal Regiment. Linings were white padua serge. Shoulder straps, although not prescribed in the warrants, exist on the surviving Guards’ infantry company coats. The coat skirts were turned back by a rectangle with points on both ends and a small regimental button in the center. Both the shoulder straps and turnbacks were blue with white taped edges.

Grenadiers sported the black bearskin cap with the King’s coat of arms in white metal on a colored background. They were also distinguished by blue flank company wings on their coats and brass match cases on their cartridge pouch carriages. Guards grenadiers evidently wore no hangers, as none are visible on the Darmstadt figures. Their musket slings were constructed without buckles to allow rapid loosening if the weapon needed to be slung to facilitate handling grenades. The Darmstadt figures show either a leather slide or a leather button on the grenadiers’ slings. Presumably, the battalion companies used a traditional brass buckle.

The weapons consisted of a bayonet worn on the waist carriage and a Long Land Pattern Musket with a metal rammer. While it is generally thought that most, if not all, of the Army had adopted the Short Land Pattern by the time of the war, there is ample evidence that all three regiments of Foot Guards were still using Long Lands until at least 1781.

**Forming the Detachment**

The original order called for the detachment for American service to consist of 30 officers, 82 NCOs, 14 drummers, 6 fifers, and 960 privates. Three staff officers, 5 additional staff, and 1 drummer were added to the strength prior to embarkation for North America. The men were to be selected by draft from the three regiments of Foot Guards. Edward Mathew, Captain and Lieutenant Colonel, Coldstream Guards, was chosen for the command. An augmentation to each regiment was ordered to replace the men going abroad.

In early March 1776, a draft of 15 privates from each of the 64 companies in the three regiments provided the men for American service. They were reorganized into ten new companies. The 120 drafts from the 8 existing grenadier companies (4 in First Guards, 2 each in Coldstream and Third) formed a
composite Grenadier Company. The 56 regular infantry companies (24 in First Guards, 16 each in Coldstream and Third) contributed 840 privates. Ninety-six of them were diverted to form a composite Light Infantry Company, since there was no extant light infantry in the Guards. The remaining 744 men were divided into 8 regular infantry companies of 93 men each. The ten new companies were formed on 12 March and began training together three days later. The detachment assembled on Wimbledon Common to be reviewed by the King on 19 March. They left their quarters in and around Wimbledon on 25 March and set off for Portsmouth. The King reviewed them again on 30 March, this time on Moulsey Hurst.

Uniforming and Equipping the Detachment

It is evident from the few relevant pieces of correspondence in the Loudoun papers at the British Library (London) and the Huntington Library (California) that he and Lieutenant Colonel Mathew had, from the inception, entertained ideas of altering the uniform of the service detachment. It may be that Lord Loudoun’s experiences in North America during the Seven Years’ War contributed to these plans. Some of the ideas under consideration included trousers, leggings, and checked shirts. On 28 February Mathew sent Loudoun an estimate of the cost of the extra clothing he desired:

- a Cloak: -11.-
- a pr. of Leggens: 4.6
- 2 pr. of Trowsers: 5.-
- a Cap: .6
- 2 pr. of Mittens: 1.2
- 2 pr. of half Gaiters: 2.-
- a Check Shirt: 3.9
- 2 pr. of Shoe Soles & Heels: 2.4
- 3 pr. of Socks: 1.3
- Alteration of the Mens Knapsacks: .6

... for a total of £1.12.0 per man. In the same document he requested an “Allowance from the Govermt. to each Man for a Knapsack” at a cost of 2 shillings 6 pence. Unfortunately, in some cases the implementation of an idea cannot be verified. In others, no description or pattern remains to provide a picture of a given item. Despite these gaps in documentation, a wealth of detailed information can be compiled regarding the uniform and equipment provided for the detachment in 1776.

Mathew faced opposition to the immediate implementation of some of his ideas. He had evidently asked that the detachment’s new 1776 clothing be altered in some way. The King, however, insisted that their new clothing be the traditional uniform that would be issued to the remainder of the Foot Guards in London in June. A letter from Loudoun to Mathew elaborates “… His Majesty had order’d the new Cloathing to be sent out compleat in the Same Shape as it would have been deliver’d here … . As to the old Cloathing, after the Detachment is given into your Hands I shall ask no Questions.” Thus, after 15 March Mathew had the power to alter the 1775 clothing that the men were wearing. Any new items, however, required the approval of the King.

Mathew evidently did receive permission to implement the portion of his plans that affected officers and sergeants. On 12 March the officers bound for America were ordered “to make up a Uniform with white Lace like the Privates of their Respective Regiments … .” In addition, they carried fusils instead of spontoons. These orders must have been instituted immediately, since the Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser (London) reported that at the review before the King five days later, the “officers and soldiers were dressed in the same uniforms.” Sergeants were likewise instructed to make up uniforms with white lace and to carry fusils. Officers evidently began serving in the detachment without swords, but in late March were instructed to send for them.

Flank Companies

From the beginning, Colonel Mathew envisioned a light infantry company uniformed and equipped in a manner that distinguished it from the rest of the detachment. In mid-February he proposed cutting “the 2nd Clothing of this Year into Jackets.” A number of notes and memoranda in Loudoun’s papers mention Mathew’s ideas for equipment for the Light Infantry Company. These include caps, pouches and belts, ball
bags, powder horns, and light infantry accouterments. It is not clear whether they received all of these items. Loudoun wrote to the Secretary at War, Lord Barrington, on 24 February noting that Mathew had “demanded” only the following:

£ S d
A Tub and Strap, instead of the Canteen 2.6
A Bill hook with case and Bayonet belt 7.1
A Powder horn 1.3
A Ball bag .6
A Pr. of Bugle Horns 7.7

The new belts may have been necessitated by Mathew’s desire to have a, “Bill Hook and Bayonet in the same case.” It appears that the authorities complied with all of these requests. Barrington notified Loudoun that he had received the letter of the 24th, and that the King had allowed the tubs and straps, and the “remaining Articles, specified in your Lordship’s Letter ...” Loudoun then wrote to Mathew, and specifically mentioned approval of the wooden tubs, bugle horns, powder horns, and ball bags. The light infantrymen were to be furnished with unique head wear as well. They received, “Hatt Caps according to the Pattern approved of instead of Hats for the New Clothing.” On 12 March this directive was issued “... the Coats of the Offrs., Non Com-mld., Private & Drummers of the light Infantry Company to be cut according to the Pattern To be seen in the Coldstream Regiment Orderly Room. This order relates only to the present Clothing.” No record has survived of the manner in which the coats were cut. At a minimum, they were shortened to the traditional light infantry length of nine inches from the ground on a kneeling man. Since Mathew had earlier mentioned jackets for the light infantry, the coats were probably cut still shorter. The necessity for a pattern may indicate even more radical changes. Finally, instead of taking regular firelocks, the men were issued, “Light Firelocks,” also referred to as “Light Infantry Musquets.” These were Short Land Pattern Firelocks, rather than the Long Land Pattern carried by the rest of the Foot Guards. Despite Mathew’s desire for light infantry pouches, the company was probably equipped with the traditional pouch carried by the battalion companies.

The Grenadier Company appears to have maintained most of its traditional accouterments, since it is referred to only twice in orders. Once, it was directed to hand in a return of the number of match boxes wanting among soldiers from the First Regiment. The other order, however, implemented a radical change in appearance. Along with the light infantrymen, the grenadiers received “Hatt Caps” “instead of Fur Caps or Hatts for the New Cloathing.” It is not certain when the flank companies received the hat caps. An order of 11 March required that the detachment’s 1776 new clothing be packed up and delivered to the regimental Quarter Masters with the exception of “the Hatt caps of the Grenadier & Light Infantry Companys which are to be delivered Separately.” The delivery was probably prior to 26 March, since the Middlesex Journal announced that at that time part of the detachment had marched out: “The men had felt caps with black feathers delivered to them before they set off, to wear instead of hats.” Since there is no record of any hats or caps with feathers being worn by the battalion companies of the detachment while in England, this report probably refers to the hat caps of the flank companies.

Other than the newspaper report, no description of these hat caps has survived. A rather intriguing hint, however, was left behind by Maj. John Andre on his map of a skirmish which was part of the Battle of Whitemarsh on 6 December 1777 (FIG 8). On one side of the title he drew a cap, and on the other side he drew a light infantry horn and bayonet. The cap has no brim other than a small visor in front. There is a turban around the base of the crown with a bow at the back.
Feathers arch over the top. A frontlet with a white edge and the letters “L.I.” on it complete the cap. The engagement depicted is one which involved only the Queen’s Rangers, the Light Infantry of the Guards, and a company of Jaegers. The cap is not associated with the Jaegers or Rangers, nor is it the standard light infantry cap of the period. Thus, it is quite possible that Andre drew the hat cap worn by the Guards Light Infantry Company in 1776–1777. The grenadiers’ hat caps were probably based on the same pattern. They would not have carried the “L.I.” on the frontlet, but perhaps a grenade symbolized their uniqueness. The hat caps were almost certainly felt rather than leather, as indicated by the inclusion of the word “hatt” in the name. The report in the Middlesex Journal reinforces that conclusion, since it mentions that the caps with feathers were made of felt.

Necessaries

Efforts were made to see that the men going to war were provided with adequate supplies of what were termed “necessaries.” The prices of some of these items were recorded, and a number of them were inventoried and inspected prior to the departure of the detachment. The items ordered by Loudoun were as follows:

Three Shirts
Three Pair worsted Stockings
Two pair of Socks 7 1/4 pr. Pair
Two pair of Shoes
Three pair of heels and Soles 1 1/2d pr. pair
Two Black Stocks
Two Pair of Half Gaiters 1s/ pr. pair
One Cheque Shirt 3/9d
A Knapsack (2/6d Allowed by Government)
Picker, Worm & Turnscrew
A Night Cap

The soles, socks, and half gaiters were packed aboard the transport ships with the new 1776 clothing. The Coldstream Guards considered some of the items to be “Extraordinary Necessaries,” implying that they were over and above the normal allotment. These included the soles and heels, check shirts, half gaiters, socks, stocks, and caps. The men’s coats, waistcoats, and breeches were inventoried and reviewed to see if they were “Clean” or “Dirty.” The necessaries—shirts, shoes, stockings, gaiters, turnscrews, pickers, brushes, and black balls—were counted to see if any were wanting. Firelocks, bayonets, shoulder belts, and waist belts were examined to see if any needed repairs. Finally, the knapsacks were checked to see if they were serviceable or unserviceable.

The men began service with the detachment wearing full gaiters. They left Britain, however, wearing half gaiters. Even though the new issue spatterdashes were packed up, Mathew ordered on 26 March that, “The Gaiters, at present in use to be made into Half Gaiters forthwith.” This conversion was completed almost at once. Only four days later the detachment paraded for the King in “half Gaiters & White Stockings.” The flank company officers also paraded in stockings and half gaiters, while the other officers wore boots.

Some company commanders evidently tried to send inferior clothing with their privates who were drafted for the detachment. Their superiors, however, acted to rectify the situation. Maj. Gen. Francis Craig, Lieutenant Colonel Commanding, First Guards, received complaints from the officers going to America about the quality of the shirts provided to the men by their companies in London. The third shirts were the worst problem and were, in many cases “reported to be no better than a Rag ... .” General Craig ordered that in such instances a new shirt was to be supplied the next day.

Trousers were procured for the men in 1776, as they were in each subsequent year. Mathew had estimated their cost at five shillings for two pair. While trousers do not appear on any of the inventories or lists of necessaries actually acquired, they were provided to the detachment. On 28 April, officers commanding companies were given permission to issue them. The material of which the trousers were made was never mentioned in 1776. In July of 1777, however, companies in the First Battalion were ordered to acquire drill or duck for trousers, probably the same material that had been used the previous year.

Miscellaneous Items

Field equipment for the detachment was under consideration in early February. Barrington ordered Loudoun to procure 1,062 water flasks with strings, 1,062 haversacks, and 1,062 knapsacks. The new haversacks were provided, but for reasons which were not elaborated, the men altered their old knapsacks and were compensated for the difference in price between old and new. There is no documentation for the style of Guards packs in 1776. They may have been the double shoulder-strap variety that the Guards carried in the 1790s.

No information has been found regarding the alteration of the knapsacks for American service. Regimental identification may have been removed to foster a sense of unity in the detachment. The packs may have been waterproofed like those of a Guards detachment sent on service in 1790. Although they would seem to be an item which did not require tailoring, orders were given that the knapsacks “be fitted to each Man, according to a late Regulation, and to be seen that they are perfectly whole and strongly sewed.”

There is considerable confusion about the canteens carried by the detachment in 1776. Loudoun’s original instructions were to acquire tin water flasks for the men. The correspondence between Barrington, Loudoun, and Mathew on 29 February, however, states that the King was “pleased to allow that the detachment from the Brigade of Foot Guards, shall be furnished with Tubs and Straps, instead of the Canteens, mentioned in the List of Camp Necessaries ... .” This is curious, since the notes and correspondence on the light infantry seem to indicate that Mathew intended for it to be the only company equipped with tubs and straps. To add to the confusion, a Treasury Warrant dated 30 April lists a payment for 1,062 “Water Flasks with Strings.” Not only are the orders, correspondence, and warrant contradictory, but the prices are...
not consistent either. Loudoun had estimated the cost of a tub and strap at 2 shillings 6 pence and a canteen or flask at 10 pence.\textsuperscript{61} The Treasury Warrant indicates a price of 1 shilling 6 pence. Thus, it is impossible to determine with certainty which type of canteen was issued. In addition, research has not revealed the construction of a tub and strap.

Foul weather gear for the detachment consisted of eighty watch coats, probably of kersey.\textsuperscript{62} Several other items for
inclement weather were mentioned in the memoranda and correspondence but may never have been supplied. These include mittens and leggings, as well as cloaks (although Mathew did note that they could be dispensed with).63

Caps are mentioned a number of times in documents regarding the detachment. A nightcap was on one of Mathew’s preliminary lists.64 A later estimate mentioned “Caps” at a price of six pence each.65 An order of 13 March required that each man going to America receive “A Night Cap” with his necessities.66 On 24 March the Coldstream Guards listed “Caps” among the extraordinary necessaries.67 The Middlesex Journal reported that on 19 March each soldier had been provided with, among other things “a woollen cap, to wear during the voyage.”68 There are references, therefore, to caps, nightcaps, and woolen caps. While these could be three different items, most likely they were all the same article: some sort of fatigue cap. Captured American officer Alexander Graydon confirms this idea. He noted that in New York in the autumn of 1776, virtually every British soldier “was accommodated with a woollen night cap, which most of them had yet on.”69

Rather than taking their old muskets and bayonets, the men (with the exception of the light infantry) carried the new ones which had been ordered for the augmentation.70 These were the Long Land Pattern Muskets carried by the rest of the Guards. The old weapons were left behind for the replacement troops. The detachment was evidently equipped with the new cartridge pouches and straps ordered for the augmentation as well.71 The grenadiers and battalion company men must have worn their old waist belts, since new ones had not been ordered.

The detachment carried its own ammunition. It expended some, both in the reviews for the King and in target practice.72 Mathew requested additional powder and cartridge paper several times.73 By the time the authorities responded, it was too late for ammunition from the Tower of London to catch up with the detachment. As a result, directions were given for Mathew to draw it from the stores at Portsmouth. He was to receive the the following: 20 barrels of powder, 39½ Cwt of ball, 5,000 flints, 8½ reams of fine paper, 24 [illegible] of thread, and 20 musket formers.74

Voyage and Arrival in America

As the detachment boarded its transports on 26 April 1776, the accoutrements were placed in storage and the men were ordered to reverse their coats during the voyage.75 Each company took its own camp equipage on board, along with “a sufficient quantity of Oil to preserve the Arms from the effect of the Sea Air & Salt Water.”76 The convoy put to sea on 6 May. After a series of mishaps, including a great fog and a storm, most of it arrived at Sandy Hook, New York, by 12 August.77 Gen. William Howe, Commander in Chief of the Army in North America (except for the province of Quebec), ordered the Guards to field as a brigade composed of two battalions with five companies each. The First Battalion consisted of the Grenadier Company and four line infantry companies; the Second was composed of the Light Infantry Company and four more regular infantry companies.78

Uniform Changes in America

Upon arrival, Mathew, now a brigadier general, ordered a series of truly radical alterations in the uniform of the brigade.79 All of these were accomplished before the men disembarked for the invasion of Long Island on 22 August. While no explanation of Mathew’s reasoning remains, most of the changes he instituted are consistent with Loudoun’s North American service during the Seven Years’ War.80 The foliage in the colonies was easily seen as a factor which could restrict the mobility of a soldier wearing a uniform with elements that could be be snagged by brush or tree branches.

The first adaptation forced the battalion companies to join the flank companies in a loss of traditional head wear. On 14 August they were ordered to “cut their Hats round immediately & sew the Lace on again, one flap to stand up & the other two to be down.”81 The soldiers were evidently unable to remove the lace in adequate condition for re-use, since the order was amended two days later to, “The Hats to be Cut round but not Laced again, if Black Ferrett can be procured the Hats to be bound with it.”82 A portrait of Capt. Thomas Dowdeswell, First Guards, shows the charming, though unusual, result of this order.83 (FIG 9).

Mathew also initiated alterations of the uniform coats. On 17 August he ordered them to be stripped of their elaborate taping, “The Lace may be taken off the Officers & Private Mens Coats when it can be conveniently done.”84 While this adaptation reflects Loudoun’s previous experience, it also reduced the differentiation among the three regiments of Guards within the brigade. The next day, the First Battalion was ordered to “keep the Lace on their Shoulder Straps,” evidently as a battalion distinction.85 On 18 August, Mathew indicated that, “The Coats to be Cut after a pattern to be seen on Board the Royal George till 4 o’Clock this Evening.”86 While the change could not have been too complicated if the pattern was only available for a day, no information remains as to what it was. The most logical assumption is that, consistent with Loudoun’s experience, the coats were shortened to light infantry length. The pattern was probably needed to demonstrate how the front corner was to be turned back. The final step in altering the coats was to make, “The Epaulets & Shoulder Straps ... plain blue According to a pattern to be seen,” further reducing the differentiation between privates and the commissioned and non-commissioned officers.87

One of Mathew’s changes was a particularly surprising innovation. On 17 August he ordered that the bayonets “be carried fixed to the Pouches according to a pattern to be seen on board the Aeolus. The Waistbelts to be Stowed in some dry manner till further Orders.”88 The wording in all versions of the order specifies that the bayonets were to be affixed to the pouches, not the carriages in the fashion sometimes used by the French. Glyn’s version reads “fixed to the Mens Pouches,” implying that the officers retained theirs in the original location.89 On 20 August, a concern for conserving any left-over
leather is reflected in this instruction, “Whatever the Compys.
have Cut off their Waistbelts is to be Carefully Preserv’d.”

Orders Governing Disembarkation

Although there were not changes in the uniform of the
brigade, a series of orders specified the accouterments and
supplies it was to carry at its disembarkation. Canteens,
haversacks, trousers, and blankets were to be ready for im-
mediate delivery beginning 14 August.9 The five hundred new
flints “of a better sort” (about five per man) were provided
to each company.90 Each soldier was to carry sixty rounds of
ammunition.91 Whatever could not “be put into the Cartridge
Boxes, to be carried tied in small parcels, Bladders, Canvass,
or other small bags with which the Compys, must provide
themselves forthwith.”92 Resistance from the rebels was
expected when the army landed on Long Island. As a result,
the soldiers were limited in what they could carry. General
Howe ordered that, “When the Troops land they are to carry
nothing with them but their Arms, Ammunition, Blankets, &
three days provisions. The Commandg. Officers of Compys.
will take particular care that the Canteens are properly fill’d
with Rum & Water ... .”93 The previous day, Mathew had
specified that the proper proportion was two gills of rum to
each canteen.94 He had also ordered every man in the Brigade
to disembark with “a Blanket, in which he is to carry three
days provisions, one Shirt, one pair of Socks, & one pair of
Shoes.”95 Since Howe’s order superseded this, the socks,
shirts, and shoes were probably left behind. Glyn implies that
the Guards carried their provisions in haversacks, since his
version of the order mentions disembarking with “a Blanket
& Havresack.”96 The brigade landed on Long Island with the
rest of the Army on 22 August. On the morning of the 23d,
it brought the camp equipage and knapsacks ashore to begin
its years of foreign service in North America.97

Conclusion

The picture presented by the Brigade of Guards on Long
Island in 1776 was a startling contrast from its London parade
ground appearance. Trousers and spatterdashes had replaced
breeches and long gaiters. The traditional cocked hats and
bearskin caps had been succeeded by small round hats and
hat caps. Finally, the coats of both men and officers were plain
and efficient, having lost their regular length and splendid
regimental lacing. The brigade was fully prepared for field
service rather than for the public duties in England.

Notes

1. “Miscellany Book: Clothing Correspondence,” 9 April 1768, 27
November 1770, 15 November 1773, 11 July 1774, Great Britain, Public
Record Office, War Office, Class 30, vol. 13a, 24, 26, 28, 31; quoted in
New Strachan, British Military Uniforms, 1768–1796 (London: Arms
2. The original drawings are evidently lost. Our thanks to Lt. Col. Uwe Peter
Boehm, German Army, Retired, for going to Darmstadt to search for
them. Cecil C. P. Lawson’s sketches are in Notebook Number 650345-8,
Lawson published some of these in black and white in his A History of
the Uniforms of the British Army (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1974),
3: 50–56 (henceforth cited as Lawson). Another Darmstadt figure of a
Third Guards grenadier appears in F. Maurice, The History of the Scots
Guards (London: Chatto & Windus, 1934), 2: 272A (henceforth cited as
Maurice).
3. The authors examined two of these coats. One of them is depicted in
graphs appear in the following: Philip R. N. Katcher, Encyclopedia of
British, Provincial, and German Army Units, 1775–1783 (Harrisburg,
in Virginia: A Reappraisal,” MC&H, 37, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 123; R. J.
Wilkinson-Latham, Collecting Militaria (New York: Arco Publishing,
1975), plate 33.
4. Unless otherwise noted, details in the description of the Guards uni-
form in England are from the Guards Warrants, the Darmstadt figures,
or the existing coats.
4. Atalanta Clifford, Charlotte Walpole: The True Pimpernel (London: The
Barclay Press, n.d.), cover, 3. The original oil painting is in the Guards
Museum (London).
5. The Warrants call for scarlet coats and Percy Sumner in “Uniforms of
the Foot Guards, 1768–74,” Journal of the Society for Army Historical
Research, 22 (1943/1944): 56 refers to the coats in the National Army
Museum as a “poor tint of scarlet” (henceforth cited as Sumner).
6. A photograph of a Coldstream Guards buckle appears in William L.
Calver and Reginald P. Bolton, History Written with Pick and Shovel
cited as Calver). The others are illustrated in the Darmstadt figures.
The design of the Third Guards buckle was recently confirmed in an
archeological find by Company Fellow Don Troiani. The artifact is the
same shape as the Coldstream buckle, but open in the center. “Girt”
is engraved on the top arm and “3” on the lower arm.
8. Orders of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, London, 29 January 1776,
manuscript in Regimental Headquarters, Grenadier Guards, Wellington
Barracks, London, reprinted courtesy of the Lt. Colonel commanding
(henceforth cited as Regimental Orders, First Guards). The Coldstream
Guards lost black stocks in a fire at the Savoy Barracks in March 1776
according to a Treasury Warrant, 14 May 1776, Great Britain, Public
Record Office, Treasury Papers, Class 52, vol. 64, 317 (henceforth cited
as PRO T).
9. Strachan, page 134, transcribed the warrant to have turn backs pointed
at one end. Lawson, page 53, and Sumner, page 54, correctly transcribe
it as pointed on both ends. Corporal Cartouche wears a turn back with
two points.
10. First Guards cap plates had black backgrounds. Those of the Coldstream
Guards were red, and those of the Third Guards were white. Lawson,
54.
11. Long Land Pattern Muskets were ordered for all three regiments of
Guards for use in both England and America from 1776 through 1781.
Charles Jenkinson, Secretary at War, to Viscount Weymouth, Secretary
for State for the Southern Department, 16 March, 23 April, 18 November
1779, Great Britain, Public Record Office, War Office, Class 4, 105: 330,
106: 22, 108: 202 (henceforth cited as PRO WO); Jenkinson to the Earl
of Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 22,
12. Orders of the Brigade of Foot Guards, London, 13, 17, 18 February 1776,
Order Books of the First, Coldstream, and Third Guards, manuscripts in
Regimental Headquarters, Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, and
Scots Guards, Wellington Barracks, London, reprinted courtesy of the
Lt. Colonels Commanding the Regiments (henceforth cited as Brigade
Orders). Viscount Barrington, Secretary at War, to Richard Rigby, Pay-
13. Brigade Orders, 15 February 1776. Mathew is referred to as Captain
and Lieutenant Colonel because Guards officers above the rank of
ensign enjoyed the privilege of double-rank, which had been bestowed
by King James II. A lieutenant in the Guards held the rank of captain
in the Army; Guards captains held the rank of Army lieutenant colonel.
They were most frequently referred to by the higher rank. Maurice, 1:
57–58, 82–84.
15. Brigade Order, 7 March 1776. “Return of the Number of Effective Private Men belonging to the Detachmt. from the Brigade of Guards ... 25 March 1776,” Orders, Returns, Morning Reports, and Accounts of British Troops 1776–1781, National Archives Microfilm Publication 922 (henceforth cited as National Archives Microfilm 922).


17. During the Seven Years' War, Loudoun was Commander in Chief in North America and had experience with non-standard uniforms in some regiments. The Royal Americans (62d and later 60th Foot), of which he was Colonel in Chief, had no lace on their coasts. Gage's Light Infantry (60th Foot) wore “jackets” with no lace. The lace is discussed in a letter from Robert Napier, Adj.-General, to an unknown recipient, 6 November 1758; quoted in S. M. Milne and Astley Terry, The Annals of the King's Rifle Corps: Appendix Dealing with Uniform, Armament and Equipment (London: Smith, Elder &amp; Co., 1913), 1. Jackets are mentioned in A List of His Majesty's Forces in North America ... 1761 (New York: Hugh Gaine, 1761); quoted in René Chartrand, “Uniforms of the British Army in North America, 1761,” MC&amp;H, 34, no. 2, (Summer 1972): 58.


20. Brigade Orders, 12 March 1776; Detachment Orders, 17 March 1776.

21. Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 16 to Tuesday, March 19, 1776.

22. Loudoun to Barrington, 28 February 1776, PRO WO 1/992; Brigade Orders, London, 12 March 1776.

23. Detachment Orders, 20, 24 March 1776. It is interesting to note that both orders refer to the officers having “Regimental Swords,” indicating that they were to carry the approved regimental design rather than their personal weapons.

24. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 16 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6510, Huntington. This idea was not carried out. The “second Clothing” was the 1774 issue.


27. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 16 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6510, Huntington.


29. Loudoun to Mathew, 29 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6518, Huntington.

30. Brigade Orders, 3 March, 1776. The men did not alter the cocked hats they were wearing. Instead, the new 1776 clothing included “Hart Caps” instead of hats. These were probably delivered in March (see notes 38 and 39).

31. Brigade Orders, 12 March 1776. This did not apply to the new 1776 clothing issue, but only to the 1775 clothing which they were wearing.


33. Barrington to John Boddington, Secretary to the Board of Ordnance, 26 February 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 177; Loudoun to Barrington, 28 February 1776, PRO WO 1/992.

34. Since the remainder of the Guards in America and England were issued Long Land Pattern Muskets through 1781, these must be Short Land Pattern Firelocks since they were not fusilis (see note 11).

35. On 26 February, Barrington wrote to Boddington ordering him to supply “Light Firelocks with Steel Ramrods with Bayonets and scabbards” for the Guards light infantry (PRO WO 4/96, 177). Two days later, on 28 February, Loudoun requested Barrington to provide “Light Infantry Musquets, Bayonets, with Scabbards & Cartouch Boxes” (PRO WO 1/992). The muskets, bayonets, and scabbards had already been ordered. There is no evidence that any special cartridge pouches were ever provided. The light infantry probably got new battalion company style pouches which had been ordered for the augmentation (see notes 70, 71).

36. Detachment Orders, 23 March 1776.

37. Brigade Orders, 2 March 1776.

38. Brigade Orders, 11 March 1776. The new 1776 clothing would ordinarily have been issued in London in June. With the exception of the hat caps, it was not issued to the men who went to America until late December.

39. Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 23 to Tuesday, March 26, 1776.

40. John Andre, “Attack of an advanced Corps of the Rebels, the 6th Dec., 1777,” map, 1777, as reproduced in John Andre, Andre's Journal: An Authentic Record of the Movements and Engagements of the British Army ... ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1903), vol. I, inserted at 126–127. (Although the text has been reprinted, the maps appear only in this edition.)

41. Philip J. de Loutherbourg sketched a very similar cap worn by the Glamorganshire Militia Light Infantry at Warley Camp in 1778. Philip J. de Loutherbourg, “Sketches of Infantry,” 1778, as reproduced in W. Y. Carman, British Military Uniforms From Contemporary Pictures (New York: Arco Publishing, 1957), plate 44. If the flank companies received their new 1776 issue hat caps in England, they did not receive new caps until the 1777 clothing was delivered to the men in April of 1778.

42. Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 23 to Tuesday, March 26, 1776.

43. Brigade Orders, 13 March 1776. The prices that appear to be fractions of a pence, such as ½ d., are not. The first number represents shillings, and the second represents pence. The only exception to this is the socks, which are priced at 7¼ pence per pair.

44. Ibid.


46. “Report of the review of Necessaries from the Detachment from the Brigade of Guards Commanded by Colo Mathew,” 21 or 27 March 1776, National Archives Microfilm 922.

47. Detachment Orders, 26, 28 March 1776.

48. Regimental Orders, First Guards, 23 March 1776. In addition, Craig directed that in future when the men’s linen was marked, “a date be put on each shirt.”

49. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 28 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6515, Huntington.

50. Detachment Orders, 28 April 1776; the Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 16 to Tuesday, March 19, 1776 reported that the soldiers in the detachment had been provided with “towers ... to wear during the voyage ... .”

51. Detachment Orders, First Battalion, 3 July 1777.

52. Barrington to Loudoun, 7 February 1776, PRO WO 4196, 45.

53. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 28 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6515, Huntington; Brigade Orders, 13 March 1776.


56. Regimental Orders, First Guards, 7 March 1776; a similar order was
issued by the Coldstream Guards on 8 March.
57. Barrington to Loudoun, 7 February 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 45.
58. Barrington to Loudoun, 29 February 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 205. Loudoun to Mathew, 29 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6518, Huntington, specifies that the items referred to were “wooden Tubs” rather than “Tin Water Flasks.”
60. Treasury Warrant for “Camp Necessaries for a detachment of ye Guards,” 30 April 1776, PRO T 52/64, 301.
61. Loudoun to Barrington, 24 February 1776, PRO WO 1/992; “[ ] (illegible) Mr. Trotter,” no date, Loudoun Papers, f. 236, British Library.
62. Mathew Lewis, Deputy Secretary at War, to John Robinson, 7 February 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 39; “[ ] (illegible) Mr. Trotter,” no date, Loudoun Papers, f. 236, British Library; Brigade Orders, 26 February 1776.
63. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 28 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6515, Huntington.
64. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 16 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6510, Huntington.
65. Memorandum, Mathew to Loudoun, 28 February 1776, Loudoun Papers, LO 6515, Huntington.
66. Brigade Orders, 13 March 1776, from the Orderly Book of the Scots Guards.
68. Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 16 to Tuesday, March 19, 1776.
70. Brigade Orders, 6 March 1776. The light infantrymen received a special order of Short Land Pattern Muskets (see notes 33 and 34).
71. Barrington to Weymouth, 29 January 1776, PRO WO 4/95, 486. Barrington requested “Firelocks,” “Cartouche boxes with Straps,” and “Bayonets with Scabbards” for the augmentation. Loudoun’s order of 6 March was for the men to receive “the new arms ordered for the augmentation.” If by “arms” he meant the entire stand of musket, bayonet, scabbard, and cartridge pouch, then the old pouches stayed behind for the augmentation.
72. The Middlesex Journal, Saturday, March 16 to Tuesday, March 19, 1776 reported that during the review for the King on 19 March, each man of the detachment expended 32 rounds of powder. Detachment Orders, 3 April 1776 indicated Mathew’s desire to “Fire at a Mark with Ball.”
73. Loudoun to Barrington, 26 March 1776, PRO WO 1/992. Lewis to Mathew, 6 April 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 467 refers to a letter from Mathew to Lewis written 3 April.
74. Lewis to Mathew, 6 April 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 467.
75. Detachment Orders, 28 April 1776.
76. Detachment Orders, 25 April 1776. Additional camp equipage not referred to in the article included 22 bell tents at 2 pounds 12 shillings each, 13 “Silk Camp Colours poles & Tickg. Cases” at 1 pound 8 shillings each, 20 drum cases at 10 shillings each, 224 “Tin Kettles with Slewpan Covers & Bags” (the bags were canvas) at 5 shillings each, 448 hand hatchets (2 per tent) at 2 shillings each, 10 powder bags at 7 shillings each, and 1120 blankets. Barrington to Loudoun, 7 Feb. 1776, PRO WO 4/96, 45; Treasury Warrant for “Blankets sent to America,” 1 May 1776, PRO T 52/64, 304; Treasury Warrant for “Camp Necessaries for a detachment of ye Guards,” 30 April 1776, PRO T 52/64, 301. The detailed information about the camp colour cases, etc. appears in the Treasury Warrant.
77. Thomas Glyn, “Ensign Glyn’s Journal on the American Service with the Detachment of 1,000 Men of the Guards commanded by Brigadier General Mathew in 1776,” Manuscript Department, Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ (henceforth cited as Glyn).
78. Detachment Orders, 16 August, 1776. The 1st, 2d, and 3d Infantry Companies were composed of men and officers from First Guards. The 4th or Brigade Company had men from all three regiments, but officers from First Guards. Companies 5 and 6 were composed of men and officers from Third Guards, while Companies 7 and 8 had men and officers from Coldstream Guards. The Light Infantry and Grenadier Companies were composite, made up of men and officers from all three regiments.
79. A letter from Barrington to Mathew on 11 March 1776 confirmed his rank as Brigadier General dating from the 14th of February. The new rank was not generally used, however, until it was announced in orders in America on 18 August.
80. See note 17.
81. Brigade Orders, 14 August 1776. Beginning 14 August orders issued by Mathew to the detachment are titled “Brigade Orders” in the Orderly Book. Those issued by one of the Battalions are called “Regimental Orders.” Footnotes will henceforth be consistent with that practice.
82. Brigade Orders, 16 August 1776. According to Florence M. Montgomery, Textiles in America, 1650–1870 (New York: W. W. Norton, n. d.), 237, ferret was “a tape, ribbon or binding.” Montgomery cites eighteenth-century sources referring to “round” and “flat ferret Laces,” which could be cotton or silk.

Although the portrait is dated 1776, the authors believe it was painted after Dowdeswell’s return to England in 1777. The artist is not believed to have been in America in 1776. Since the cocked hats were not converted until August, the portrait could not have been done in early 1776 before the Brigade’s departure. The coat is piped in gold and is, therefore, not the private’s coat worn by officers in 1776. Many have speculated that Dowdeswell was in the Light Infantry Company. In fact, his entire American service was in the First Company.
84. Brigade Orders, 17 August 1776.
85. Regimental Orders (First Battalion), 18 August 1776.
86. Brigade Morning Orders, 18 August 1776.
87. Brigade Morning Orders 18 August 1776.
88. Brigade Morning Orders, 17 August 1776. The waistbelts were returned to service on 11 March 1777, when they were worn across the shoulder and once again used to hold the bayonets.
89. Glyn, 17 August 1776.
90. Brigade Orders, 20 August 1776.
91. Brigade Orders, 14 August 1776.
92. Brigade Orders, 17 August 1776.
93. Brigade Orders, 18 August 1776.
94. Brigade Morning Orders, 17 August 1776.
95. General (Army) Orders, 20 August 1776.
96. Brigade Orders, 19 August 1776. A gill is ½ cup.
97. Brigade Orders, 19 August 1776.
98. Glyn, 19 August 1776. The knapsacks were left aboard ship with a careful man to guard them, Brigade Orders 19 August 1776.

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