



## More Than Uniformity: 18<sup>th</sup> Century Uniforms as Protection



### When is a uniform worn for more than just looking uniform?

Take a look at the image on the left of the mannequin. Can you see anything that might serve as protection?

Soldiers during the American Revolution, like this Continental from Maryland, wore uniforms for several reasons. One such reason was protection from sharp objects (weapons) and environmental hazards.

### Tricorn Hats



Tricorns were three-cornered or cocked hats often made of wool felt or beaver fur. This type of hat was worn by soldiers and civilians for the same purpose. The hat shaped like a triangle with the corners or points facing the left, right, and front.

The tricorn was designed so that the hat did not obstruct use of the rifle or musket. The tricorn also protected the soldier from environmental factors from rain, snow, and sun-related issues such as sunburn and heatsroke. (Image from [amhistory.si.edu](http://amhistory.si.edu))

### Neckstock

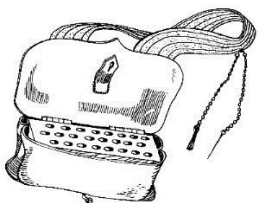


Soldiers wore neckstocks, just as civilians. Civilian neckstocks were made of white or black linen, cotton, or silk. Military neckstocks were made out of woven horsehair or leather around the neck. It was often worn under the collar and attached behind the neck with ties or a buckle.

The stock to civilians was proper social attire but to the soldier it helped guard the neck and throat from sharp objects like bayonets. (Left image by [jastownsend.com](http://jastownsend.com), below by [militaryheritage.com](http://militaryheritage.com)).



### Cartridge Box



Cartridges boxes were carried by soldiers during service. It was wooden block with holes drilled inside to hold ammunition (cartridges). The block was fitted inside a leather pouch with a flap that could be opened and closed. Usually there was a pocket or area underneath the block for musket tools or other supplies.

This piece of uniform equipment was especially important because it kept the ammunition safe and dry. Black powder was made unusable if it was exposed to too much moisture. (Drawing from Klinger's *Sketch Book 76*.)

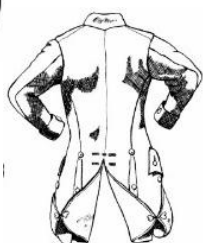
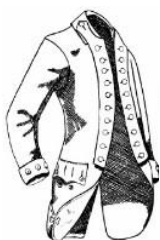
### Shoes



Shoes were made of leather, straight lasted (no left or right shoe), and stiched together. They were tied (laced) or buckled. Most shoes had rounded toes. Boots were also worn, particularly by mounted troops or officers.

Shoes protected the feet from sharp objects and extreme weather conditions. However, soldiers were forced to sacrifice comfort for function as the leather offered little cushion or support.

### Regimental Coat



Regimental coats and each piece worn under it was made from natural fibers like wool and linen. The coat's visual appearance focused on regimental identification, however it held practical use too.

Natural cloth was breathable and moisture-wicking which helped keep soldiers comfortable during all seasons. Natural fibers are more fire-resistant than present day synthetics and prevented soldiers from getting burned badly. (Drawings from Klinger's *Sketch Book 76*.)

### What do you think?

Take a minute to reflect on how soldier's uniforms and components protected them during the American Revolution.

Can you think of any other jobs that might require protection? Why? How do clothes protect you?

Check out our mannequins on exhibit to see if there are other pieces that served as protection.



## More Than Uniformity: 18<sup>th</sup> Century Uniforms as Identification

**What does the clothing shown here tell you about this individual's job?**

Take a look at the picture to the right. Study the uniform on this Loyalist soldier of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, DeLancey's Brigade.

Revolutionary War soldiers wore uniforms for recognition or identification. Uniforms provided clues indicating loyalties, regiments or units, and an individual's rank.



NPS

### Hat & Cockade

Look at the hat. The tricorn brim is lined with white edging. There is also a flower-like ribbon attached called a cockade. These are components that identify the soldier. The cockade and edging indicated alliance and rank.



NPS

### Buttons



NPS

NPS

Take a closer look at the buttons. Many types of buttons were used on regimental coats.

The buttons on the above soldier's coat were stamped with the British Crown and the letters RP for Royal Provincial. That means this soldier was a loyalist. The buttons are placed in singular spacing indicating that it is the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

Other units wore buttons on their coats such as 1MR – for 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland Regiment as seen here.

### Cartridge Box

While cartridge boxes protected a soldier's ammunition and accoutrements, it often was decorated with a cartridge box badge. Badges indicated allegiance and unit or regiment. Usually the badge was made of iron or brass. The badge pictured here features a "GR" inside a circle with the British crown. Historically, it was used by the Grenadier Guards.



NPS



NPS

### Regimental Coat

Regimental coats were the most distinctive feature of the uniform. Colors varied between regiments and helped differential between them. This coat tells us that the soldier pictured here was a member of a loyalist unit known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, DeLancey's Brigade.

Look at people around you. What do their clothes say about them? What does your clothing say about you?



NPS