

18th Century Material Culture The British Army Cloth or “Fatigue” Caps



Introduction



During the American War for Independence, the soldier serving His Majesty, King George III, was often issued a cloth cap of red and Regimental facing color wool lined with coarse linen. Often, but not necessarily always, made from recycled Regimental coats that were no longer servicable, these “Fatigue” or “Forage” caps were a means for the army to preserve its more expensive headgear. Through period accounts and illustrations, we can determine that these caps were often worn while the troops were sleeping, doing fatigue duties, and possibly foraging for supplies.

Although no extant cloth cap has survived the annals of time, their likely construction can be evaluated through a number of sources which we now present to the reader. We hope you enjoy this document.

Early Cloth Caps



Red Cloth Cap Faced with Blue
"Scenes of the Camp on Hampton Green 1731"



Red Cloth Caps Faced with Blue
“Scenes of the Camp on Hampton Green 1731”



Blue, Faced with Red, Cloth Caps Worn at the Woolwich Arsenal: Molding Powder Pellets c. 1750
(National Maritime Museum)



Blue, Faced with Red, Cloth Cap Worn at the Woolwich Arsenal : The Pumps c. 1750
(National Maritime Museum)



A Red, Faced with Blue, Hanging Tail Cloth Cap, Possibly a "Pioneer" Cap
"The March of the Guard to Finchley" by William Hogarth c. 1750
(The Foundling Museum)



A Red, Faced with Blue, Hanging Tail Cloth Cap, Possibly a "Pioneer" Cap
"The March of the Guard to Finchley" by William Hogarth c. 1750
(The Foundling Museum)



Quelle profondeur a cette latrine - la ?
Vingt-cinq puds. M. le General
Quoi ? Un poud par homme ? Pas assez ! Nous serons
encombrés la premiere décharge. Crèvez !

A (Possible) Hanging Tail Cloth Cap Worn by a Soldier Digging a Latrine
"General James Wolfe at Quebec" by George Townshend 1759
(McCord Museum)

Cloth Caps
of the
1770S

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XXIII.

Every Soldier should be provided with a red cap, lined with coarse linen, and turned up in the front, by a small, stiff flap of the facings of the Regiment, with an occasional falling cape; to defend and cover the neck from the extremities of violent weather: when the cloathing is entirely finished every year, they can be easily made up from the remains of the old cloth, and will be found of infinite use, on all Night-duties, and those of fatigue, besides many other occasions, when the hats must otherwise be worn, and considerably damaged.

XXIV.



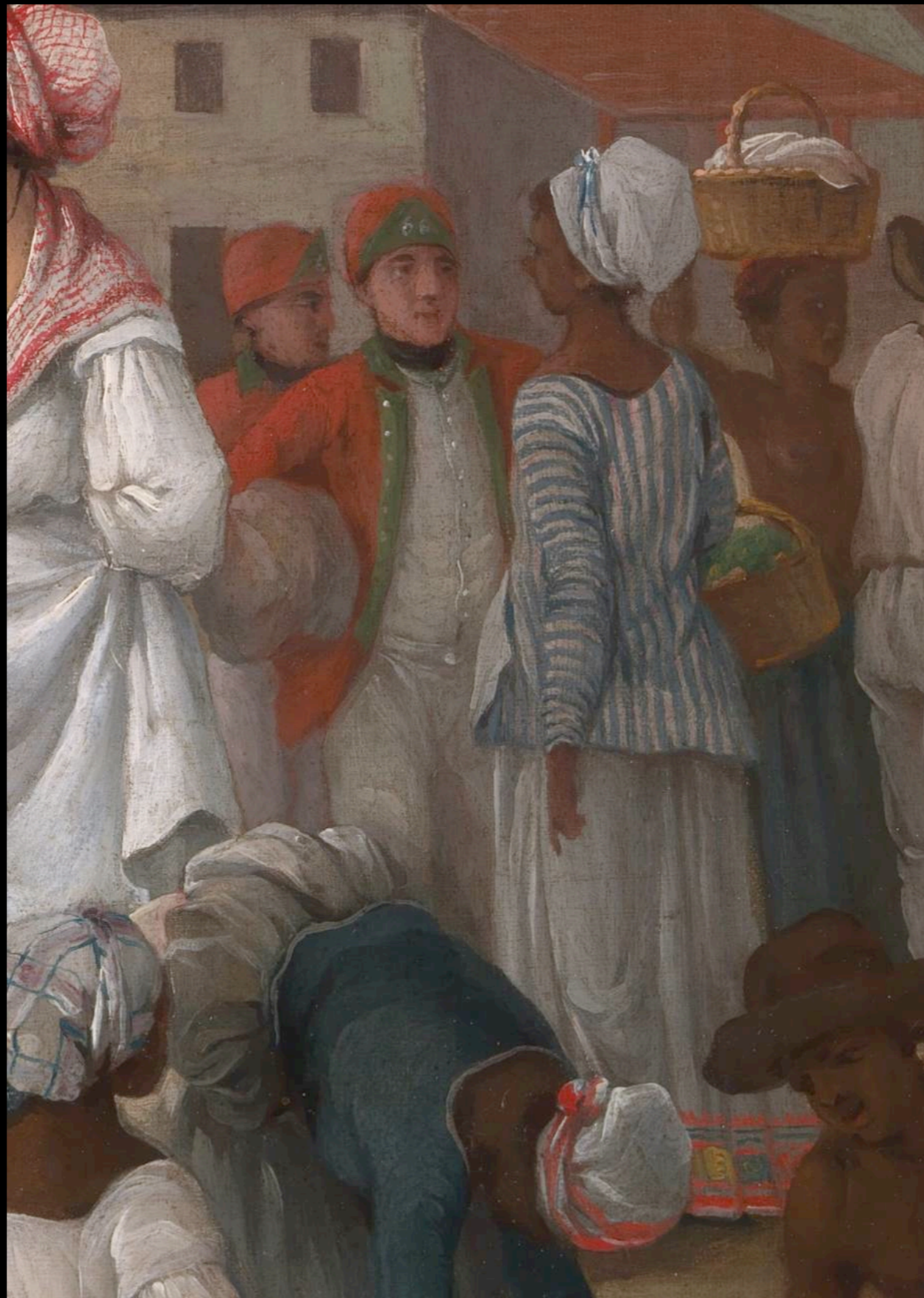
A Linen Market in the West Indies
by Agostino Brunias, Italian. Active in Britain (1758-1770; 1777-1780s)
(Yale Center for British Art)



A Linen Market in the West Indies
by Agostino Brunias, Italian. Active in Britain (1758-1770; 1777-1780s)
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A Linen Market in the West Indies - H.M. 66th Regiment of Foot
by Agostino Brunias, Italian. Active in Britain (1758-1770; 1777-1780s)
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Standing Orders 1775

H.M. 37th Regiment of Foot

“The necessary’s every soldier is expected to have constantly are as follows: four ruffled shirts, one black stock, four pairs of good white thread stockings (not ribb’d). Two pairs of shoes, one pair of long and one pair of short gaiters, with tops. One pair of buckle garters of the proper regimental breadth. One pair of regimental buckles. One stock clasp. And fatigue cap...”



Other Ranks Button
H.M. 37th Regiment of Foot
(Don Troiani)

Memoirs of Captain Alexander Graydon

3rd Pennsylvania Battalion

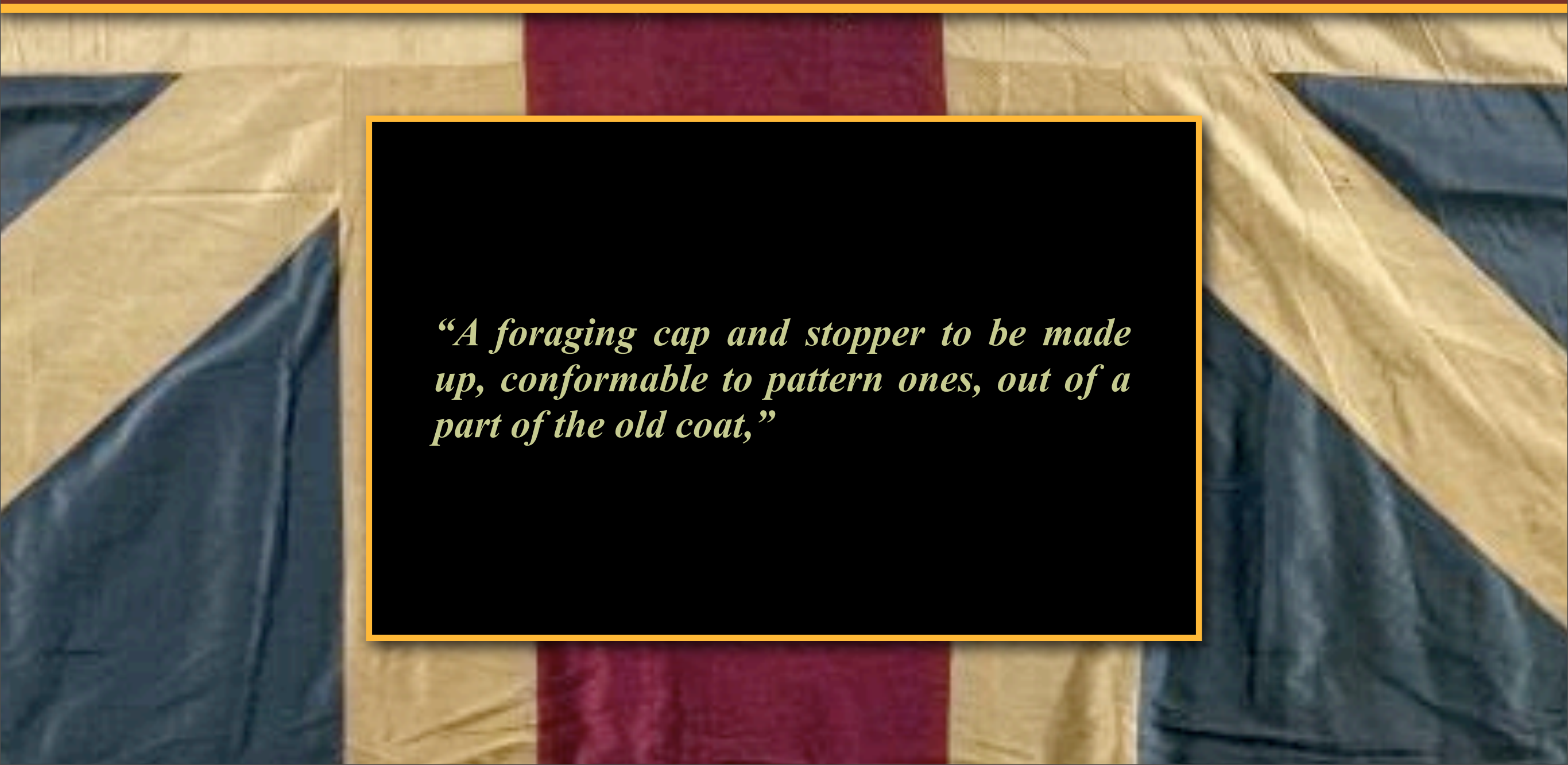
("Memoirs of My Own Times" - Philadelphia 1848)

After his capture at Fort Mifflin in November of 1776:

*"The (British) soldiers were chatting and cracking their jokes on each other while we breakfasted; and I was surprised at the easy familiarity which seemed to prevail between them and their officer. But it appeared to be perfectly understood between them, that their coteries, though so near each other, as that every word from either might be heard by both, were yet entirely distinct, and that each had an exclusive right to its own conversation ... The fact was, that Mr. Becket [their lieutenant, of either the 27th or 37th Regiment] was the darling of his soldiers; and one of them told us, that we should find few men like him. I had here an opportunity to observe, the striking difference between their appointments and ours. While our poor fellows, were some of them already ragged, and even the best of them, clad in flimsy, threadbare clothes, with worse stockings and shoes, these were tight and comfortable in body and limbs; and every soldier was accommodated with a **woollen night cap**, which most of them had yet on."*



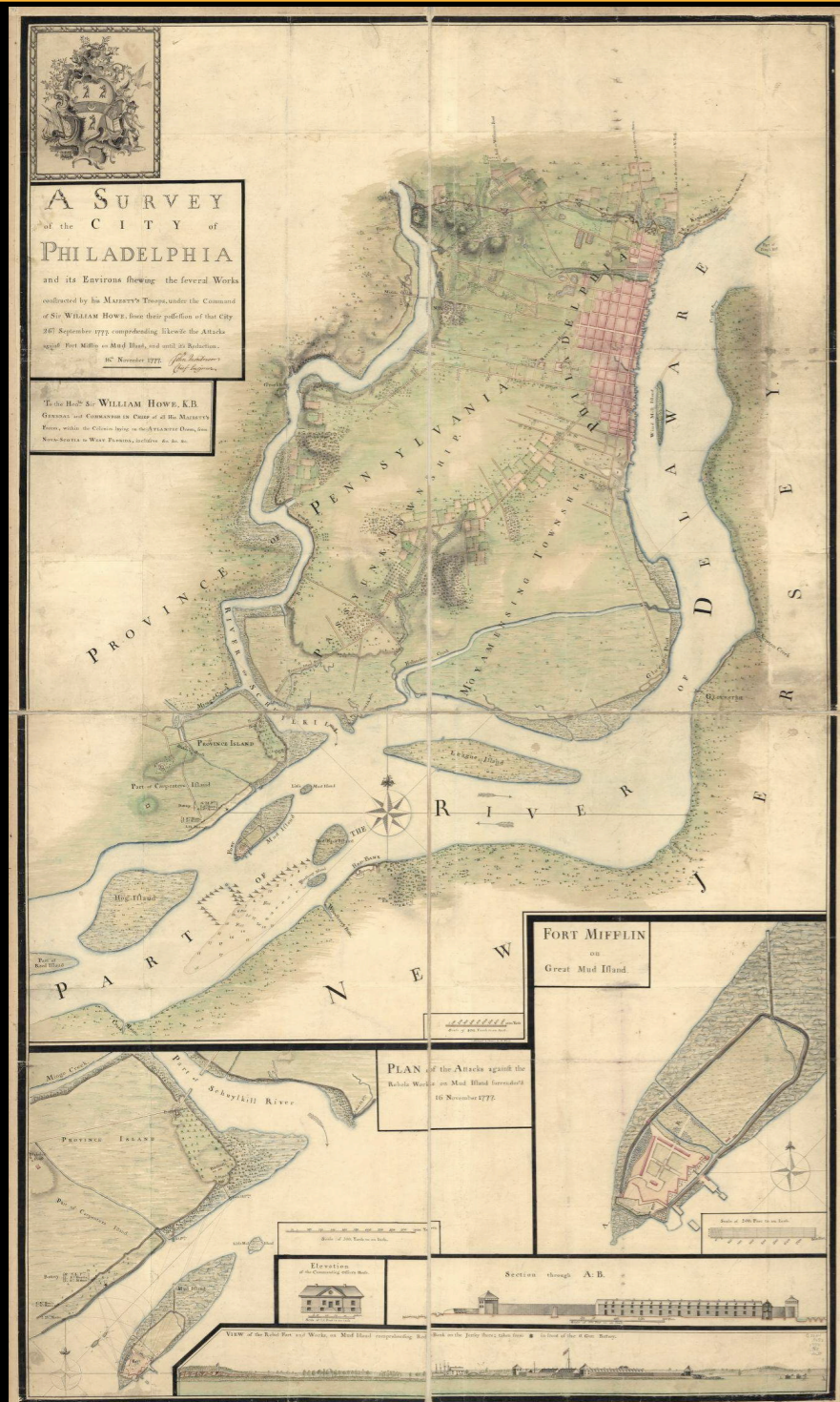
“A military course for the government and conduct of a battalion, designed for their regulations in quarter, camp, or Garrison; with useful observations and instructions for their manner of attack and defence. : Ornamented with a frontispiece and twenty copper-plate plans. By Thomas Simes, Esq. late of the Queen's Royal Regiment, author of the military guide, &c. Governor of the Hibernian Society for the orphans and children of soldiers.” 1777



“A foraging cap and stopper to be made up, conformable to pattern ones, out of a part of the old coat,”

Papers of Brigadier General James Pattison

Royal Artillery



"Brigade Orders

Philadelphia 9th February 1778...

...All Guards and Detachments are to take with them their Linnen Frocks and Foraging Caps—The Frocks are to be Roll'd up with the Blankets, and every man who mounts with the Town Guard is to the parade with his Cloth Caps in his Pocket which the orderlies of the Companies will be answerable for, and the Serjeant of the Guard will see that they wear them when they lay down on the Guard Bed The Centrys may wear them on their Posts during the night and the Reliefs may March off with them from the beating of the taptoo to the beating of the Reveille. All working parties and men employ'd by the Quarter Master or Laboratory are to constantly wear their Linnen Frocks and Cloth Caps."

Pattison Papers, Film 1, Reel 1 1777-1781

The David Library of American Revolution

Transcribed 6/29/12 by Andrew Watson Kirk

“The Military Instructor, for the Non-commissioned Officers and Private Men of the Infantry: Containing Every Thing Necessary to be Understood by the Independent Companies of Volunteers Now Raised, Or Raising, in Great-Britain and Ireland: Such as the Manual Exercise, Use of Arms, Manuvres, &c. &c. By Thomas Simes, Esq. Late of the Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot, and Author of The Military Guide, &c” 1778

“Complement of necessaries, etc., for the soldier.

1 coat, 1 waistcoat, 1 pair of cloth breeches, and another of ticking, 1 hat and cockade, 3 shirts, 2 white stocks and 1 black, 1 forage cap, a ball of pipeclay....”



Two Crippled Veterans with a Cocked Hat and (possible) Foraging Cap Playing in a Street Band
"The Asylum for the Deaf" by Paul Sandby
(Victoria & Albert)



Royal South Gloucestershire Militia Drilling on College Green, Gloucester Cathedral
English School c. 1778
(Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)



Royal South Gloucestershire Militia Drilling on College Green, Gloucester Cathedral
English School c. 1778
(Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)



The Gunsmith on Blackheath 1780 .

After the Art. drawn by P. Sandby. Engraved by G. Kneller.

X

“The Gunsmith on Blackheath 1780”
by Paul Sandby
(The British Museum)



The Gunsmith on Blackheath 1780 .

X

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“The Gunsmith on Blackheath 1780”
by Paul Sandby
(The British Museum)



Detail: "The Gunsmith on Blackheath 1780"
by Paul Sandby
(The British Museum)



“THE ENCAMPMENT AT BLACKHEATH 1780”

by Paul Sandby
(The British Museum)



"THE ENCAMPMENT AT BLACKHEATH 1780"
by Paul Sandby
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“THE ENCAMPMENT AT BLACKHEATH 1780”
by Paul Sandby
(The British Museum)



“THE ENCAMPMENT in HYDE PARK MDCCLXXX”
by Paul Sandby 1780
(Ann S.K. Brown Collection)



“THE ENCAMPMENT in HYDE PARK MDCCLXXX”
by Paul Sandby 1780
(Ann S.K. Brown Collection)



“View of the Encampment in Hyde Park, 1780”
by Paul Sandby
(Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery)



“View of the Encampment in Hyde Park, 1780”
by Paul Sandby
(Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery)



The Blacksmith and Knife Grider with a distant of
Sir Ricd Worsleys Pavilion &c in Hyde Park 1780

The Anonymous Engraver of the South Hampshire Regiment

“The Blacksmith and Knife Grider with a distant of Sir Ricd Worsleys Pavilion &c in Hyde Park 1780”
by Paul Sandby



The Blacksmith and Knife Grider with a distant of
Sir Ric^d Worsleys Pavilion &c in Hyde Park 1780.

Annoucers Page of the South Hampshire Regiment

“The Blacksmith and Knife Grider with a distant of Sir Ricd Worsleys Pavilion &c in Hyde Park 1780”
by Paul Sandby

Orderly Book

General Sir Guy Carleton

22 November, 1782

“A Board of General and Field Officers having been directed to consider what supplies were necessary to the prisoners in Pensylvania, Maryland and Virginia, have pointed out the following articles to be furnished by the Regiments to each British and Provincial soldier, two shirts..... one woolen night cap....”



General Sir Guy Carleton
(National Archives Canada)

Headquarter Records

British Army in North America

5 August, 1783

H.M. 7th Regiment of Foot to Carleton

“Coats, waistcoats, breeches, hats, shirts, rollers, shoes, stockings, shoe soles, thread, black stocks, mitts and night caps.”



An Officer's Gilt Gorget
H.M. 7th Regiment of Foot - "The Royal Fuzileers"
(Don Troiani)

A British Cloth Cap Recreated



**Every Soldier should be provided with a red cap,
lined with coarse linen, and turned up in the front,
by a small, stiff flap of the facings of the Regiment,**

“Cuthbertson’s System for the Complete Interior Management and Economy of a Battalion of Infantry”
by Bennett Cuthbertson 1776



**with an occasional falling cape; to defend and cover
the neck from the extremities of violent weather :**



Every Soldier should be provided with a red cap, lined with coarse linen, and turned up in the front, by a small, stiff flap of the facings of the Regiment, with an occasional falling cape; to defend and cover the neck from the extremities of violent weather :

The Cloth Cap Recreated - Construction by Joel Bohy
(H.M. 63rd Regiment of Foot, Recreated)



The Cloth Cap Recreated - Construction by Joel Bohy
(H.M. 63rd Regiment of Foot, Recreated)



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(H.M. 63rd Regiment of Foot, Recreated)



The Cloth Cap Recreated
(H.M. 7th Regiment of Foot, Recreated)



The Cloth Cap Recreated
(H.M. 26th Regiment of Foot, Recreated, at Fort Ticonderoga / Drifting Focus Photography)



The Cloth Cap Recreated
(H.M. 17th Regiment of Foot, Recreated / Photograph Courtesy Joshua Blessing)



The Cloth Cap Recreated
(H.M. 17th Regiment of Foot, Recreated / Photograph Courtesy Joshua Blessing)

Acknowledgements



This presentation could not have been made possible without the many contributions from our colleagues Jason Melius of the recreated 7th Regiment of Foot, Andrew Watson Kirk of the recreated 43rd Regiment of Foot, Joel Bohy and Greg Theberge from the recreated 63rd Regiment of Foot, Stephen Rayner and John U. Rees. Thank you gentlemen! The 18th Century Material Culture community owes you all an enormous debt of gratitude!

Acknowledgements

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