

## **You Think the Yorker Uniform Situation Was Bizarre?**

As Royal Yorker reenactors, we often get puzzled about the complications of uniforming the original regiment. When all the obvious methods about uniform and facing colour selection were proven incorrect, it was frustrating to discover that our first recruits were issued with green clothing kits with pre-cut red facings that had been sent out from Britain for French Canadians long before the KRR NY was founded. And, the unit continued to draw from that same source for four years until the British government decided to clothe Provincial regiments in red, just like Regulars. Whether Sir John or Major Gray discarded the pre-cut red facings that came with the kits and substituted blue remains an open question, but one would suspect not. There were simply far more important issues to address.

Further, there's every reason to believe that when we were sent red uniforms faced blue in 1779, that choice had nothing to do with the KRR being a "Royal" regiment. It seems to have simply been the luck of the draw. Just maybe, Sir John had some influence with the powers-that-be and requested and received blue facings, but diligent research has not proven this. How he managed to match up the raw uniforms with our exotic, regimentally-ciphered buttons is a mystery, as is how the officers' uniforms mounted even more exotic, gilt, bone-backed versions. Bottom line – for any of you who want to drown in research for a few years, there remains a great many unanswered questions about the original regiment. Don't for a second think that all has been done. Go to it.

In any event, during the KRR's relatively long history as one of the first loyalist regiments raised, the unit went through two distinct clothing issues. So, if you find that tough to swallow, just look at what the loyalist regiments in and about New York City experienced. Here are some details provided by Todd Braisted, NJV.

In 1777, all uniforms, for all the loyalist regiments being raised, were an identical green faced white.

In 1778, red coats with blue, green and white facings were sent for the loyalist regiments. As well, excess clothing was purchased from British regiments – the 10<sup>th</sup> (yellow), 28<sup>th</sup> (yellow), 45<sup>th</sup> (green), 52<sup>nd</sup> (buff) and the Loyal Irish Corps (?). How this mish-mash was distributed is unknown.

1779 saw a return to green uniforms, facing colours unknown.

In 1780, red clothing with green and blue facings arrived. The NJV, which was the largest loyalist regiment raised anywhere during the war, is known to have drawn blue-faced coats. (NB: there is no "Royal" in the NJV title) Also, this is the first year that "RP" ciphered buttons were part of the issue.

In 1781, red coats with multiple facing colours (white, buff, orange, black, green and blue) arrived. This last system of uniform colours continued till the end of the war. In 1781 and 82, the NJV drew blue-faced coats, so the regiment's appearance was consistent from 1780-82.

Those loyalist regiments that were raised to a special establishment in America had specially ciphered buttons, each with a different design. One assumes that their colonels were allowed to follow the British and Irish Establishment practices and ordered their regiments requirements directly through agents in Britain. So, they were able to obtain the same facings for every year. Two of them, the Queen's Rangers and the British Legion, wore unique, sleeved waistcoat-type jackets with very little facing colour showing. But, for that mass of loyalist regiments not favoured with being raised to the American Establishment, they must have faced constant change.

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