

King's Royal Yorkers Light Infantry Coy. Primer

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Light Infantry Coy. Primer

1. CAPTAIN STEPHEN WATTS' LIGHT COY. 1ST BATT. KRRNY 1777 AN INTRODUCTION

Dear new member...

Please take the time to read this information kit! If you have any questions, ask them. Everyone in this unit started at some point and you'll find everyone remembers exactly what that felt like. No one expects you to know anything about the 18th century or the regiment or reenacting. Go slowly and carefully. Check out what you are doing, don't put lots of time, money and effort into things you "think " are right – Be cautious, be enthusiastic, and check things out.

1.1. Your Job is to have fun

This is a volunteer-driven hobby. You are a volunteer, not a real soldier regardless of what it looks like. Our goal is to have a company of happy people. The company has room for everybody – serious historians, genealogists, party animals, history buffs, families and friends. Our intent is to make it easy for those people who are not hardcore keepers to maintain a minimum standard of authenticity and those people who are serious about reenacting history to achieve a maximum standard and the fullest possible authentic experience. Everybody should be content; we want you to be comfortable with your portrayal and happy within the company.

1.2. Our Base Portrayal

Later in this primer there's a bunch of stuff regarding what makes us Lights so special so we won't go into great detail about this here. Suffice to say that we are one of two "elite" flank companies within the King's Royal Yorkers and within that role you will have particular duties and responsibilities.

In a short summation, we are recreating a regiment of Loyalist soldiers from New York, raised in Canada to fight for the British Crown against the American rebellion to the

south. The general period we re-enact is the duration of the American War of Independence, 1775 to 1783. The official name of the regiment is the King's Royal Regiment of New York or KRR NY for short, although we like to go by the more common name of the King's Royal Yorkers.

Within the regimental organisation; we are re-enacting the 1st. Battalion Light Company, in and around the significant year of 1777, under the command of Captain Stephen Watts.

More detailed information about who we are and what we do, including some further history is reviewed later in the primer.

It should be established right out of the gate that in recreating this regiment we are pressing towards a historical portrayal of the company as it would have been under combat and campaign conditions. This is the appearance we are going for and you'll find throughout this little manual references to this concept. There will also be lots of stuff your officers, NCOs and senior musketeers will speak to you regarding this within your first year.

2. YOUR FIRST PROJECT! YOUR KIT!

There are several standard questions that new recruits often ask. You should note that every item of the Light Infantry Uniform has been documented to the best of our ability and can usually be supplied through the organisation.

Considering this one costs you money, we are not going to be economical with the truth, (no pun intended). Kit building is the most expensive part of the hobby. Luckily, it's usually the only real hurdle in getting to enjoy one of the most inexpensive and fulfilling hobbies around. Don't be scared to commit to this. A lot can be accomplished if you take little steps at a time. Things are available for loan and new folks are encouraged to take advantage of the credit system offered by the regiment. This means the regiment can fit an interest free debt to the unit for kit and you can pay it off in comfortable instalments.

Before we get into the details of what you need to get for yourself there are a couple of important concepts to bear in mind.

2.1. There Is A Standard

As mentioned, the KRRNY is a historical re-enactment organisation. No matter what or why you're joining the organisation one must always keep this point in mind. It is the single fundamental *raison d'être* and carries enormous public service obligations.

We strive to only portray the Light Company of the KRRNY in and around the year 1777. We are not "Sharpe's Rifles", a sports team or some "water buffalo" drinking club, nor do we cater to changes or assumptions about our uniform unless they have been thoroughly researched and discussed. This hobby is first and foremost, **about history**.

You must be prepared to EMBRACE CHANGE when necessary. We mold our portrayal based on historical research NOT on the way we think history should have been or what looks cool. Historical research is an ongoing project that often requires changes to the uniform and kit based on newly discovered or rediscovered research about the unit.

A sign of a first class living history organisation is their ability to accept changes and swallow new research. Often these changes are not welcome and they can be expensive but as we improve ourselves by getting closer to the historical truth, change we must and change we do.

Having stated this, you are expected to keep the standard by owning, caring for, and wearing our documented uniform at our minimum standard of authenticity.

2.2. Ask your Officers

Do not trust people who say things like “They NEVER did blah blah in the 18th century”, or “I’m an expert at 18th century blah, I know everything there is to know” or “They ALWAYS did blah blah blah in the 18th century.”

The time machine of history is often a big fat mystery. We know very little and our portrayal is based on a delicate balance of experiment dosed heavily with primary documentation and humility. It’s often joked about that we today know more about the Roman Legionaire than the soldier of the 18th century. Food for thought.

New folks naturally have a desire and tendency to ask a lot of questions. It is vastly important that the right people answer these questions. Experienced people who are not afraid to tell you they don’t know it all are often a credible source of information. These folks can also often offer you some solid reasoning behind what they think they do know.

Choose your sources carefully and start with your NCOs and officers first. These are the old guard and often have been around long enough and earned their places via a passion for the regiment and history. They won’t lie to you and if they don’t know something, they’ll probably know someone who does. They will also save you money by preventing you from purchasing some expensive piece of kit that you will later discover is just wrong.

2.3. Getting Started

You build your kit to the comfort level that you like. No one expects you to spend a million dollars all at once. There is a bare minimum you will need and it is listed here. Your first step is to prioritise what you need and start getting stuff bit by bit.

The KRRNY is part of a larger administrative organisation of other like-minded re-enactment units, all of which need supply. This grouping is called the Northern Brigade or Norbde for short. It is interesting to note that the KRRNY is the founding and senior unit in the Norbde.

2.3.1. Regimental Kit Support

Via Gavin Watt of the Norbde administration one can usually get the majority of your basic kit right out of storage. Because the initial costs of a new kit are daunting, the organisation provides support and credit for new members who require it.

Under this program, a new member can draw upon regimental stores and pay their “regimental debt” in instalments. The only thing we ask in return is that you HONOUR this obligation! We do not like waiting for you to save lumps of money, we prefer you

send post dated cheques at whatever amount you are comfortable with and keep honest with your commitment.

The Norbde is not interested in making a profit but is interested in seeing new members kitted out and having fun so there is no interest on the payments. The only catch is you must remain in good standing with the treasurer (i.e. keep up payments) and agree to sell your kit back if ever you choose to leave the regiment.

2.3.2.

What is it,
Where do I get it,
and how much does it cost?

For the most part new members can get the majority of their stuff via the Norbde support program and regimental stores. However, there is really no single source for all the stuff you may want or need in your kit. One might need some piece of clothing custom made by a tailor; other things are only available from “sutlers”.

By striking up contact with Gavin Watt of the Norbde HQ, one can quite often be directed to a good source that you may have to follow-up with on your own.

Below is a basic list of stuff broken down into three categories. (Clothing, Accoutrements, and Extras) Accompanying the list are brief descriptions on what the item is, where one can get it, and other tips.

If you require more advice on building your kit, talk to your officers.

2.3.2.1. KIT LIST – CLOTHING

Linen Shirt(s)

WHAT IS IT?: Men’s fine white shirt worn under small cloathes (weskit and coat.)

WHERE DO I GET IT?: Various sulters or used out of Norbde HQ. If you are handy with a thread and needle they are easy enough to make.

TIPs: The quintessential underwear of the 18th century. This is the layer that touches 80% of your skin so although you might think it’s a good idea and save money by getting a cheap cotton shirt, you really want to go authentic and do a nice clean linen for practical purposes. Linen was the most common material of the 18th century as is a durable, comfortable and breathable material well suited for roughing it. Once you’ve worn a nice linen shirt, you will not want to go back. Most guys start with one but eventually as money permits get two or three extras for obvious reasons.

Cravat or Neck Stock

WHAT IS IT?: Dashing shirt accessory that binds the shirt collar around the neck.

WHERE DO I GET IT?: Talk to Steve Sandford. They can also be hand made by hemming a black 'china' silk scarf.

TIPs: The dreadfully uncomfortable hair stock was what was issued by the Crown but everybody knows that any soldier with sense upgraded with a more comfortable silk roller from the sutler. Black was the colour of the military. Silk rollers and horse hair stocks are both acceptable in the light company.

Breeches

WHAT IS IT?: Short knee pants buttoned at the knee.

WHERE DO I GET IT?: Self made, Regimental tailor or used out of Norbde HQ

TIPs: Arguably the one thing you want to have custom made as they are tricky to fit. If you are really lucky you can get them used. The best ones are made out of stuff called Hemp Drilling. Raw white Hemp Drilling although expensive is extremely durable and comfortable. Breeches can also be made from white linen canvas, or wool.

Stockings

WHAT IS IT?: White, grey, or brown cotton over the knee socks.

WHERE DO I GET IT?: You get these from women's stockings shops. Ask for cotton in opaque colours. Most people get these from Sutlers. Richardson's Tartan Shop in Toronto sells over the knee wool stockings.

TIPs: If they ask stupid questions say you are playing Hamlet in a play ☺

Waistcoat (Weskit)

DESCRIPTION: Short **green** wool vest-like garment.

SOURCE: Self made, Regimental tailor or used out of Norbde HQ

TIPs: spend the extra and get them with pockets. Life will be sooooo much easier. Also note that the light company has a different colour and style of waistcoat than other companies in the regiment. Ours is green. Theirs is white. Ours is also a different style and information on the differences can be got from your officers.

Cap

DESCRIPTION: Cool little black felt soldiers' hat

SOURCE: Steve Sandford

TIPs: accessorize with a really cool red horse hair cockade from your officer.

Regimental Coat

WHAT IS IT?: THE UNIFORM!

WHERE DO I GET IT?: Regimental seamstress or used out of Norbde HQ

TIPs: The most important piece of your cloathing. It's the thing that makes you a Yorker! Green wool, blue facings, standard short coat pattern.

Shoes

WHAT IS IT?: You have 2 choices, boot-like shoe called a hi-low or buckled shoes

WHERE DO I GET THEM?: Hi-lows from Nick's Shoes (Toronto) Buckled shoes from: Boulet Boots Quebec

TIPs: Nick takes time and money for the hi-lows but folks who get them love them and they last. The buckled shoes are cheaper and more common. If shoes are out of your budget range for the first year you can wear black oxfords or black desert boots cut down.

UPDATE winter 2005 – Robert Land out of Stratford is selling Hi-Lows for cheap \$170! Talk to your officers for more info.

2.3.2.2. KIT LIST – ACCOUTREMENTS

Musket

WHAT IS IT?: You're not a soldier until you have your gun.

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Norbde HQ

TIPs: The hardware of the hobby is the most expensive thing there is but it's also the most important thing. The regiment helps you with your purchase. You are not expected to cough up the bucks up front to buy one. The best way to get a musket is to arrange the deal with Gavin Watt one on one.

COST NOTES: average: \$800

Bayonet

WHAT IS IT?: 17 inches of cold steel you affix to the barrel of your musket

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Norbde HQ

TIPs: Gavin usually gets you a bayonet along with your musket. This is the item of honour for every British soldier. You are looked down upon if you don't have one. Keep it shiny.

Cartridge box

WHAT IS IT?: Box that holds your rounds so that your gun goes bang.

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Norbde HQ

TIPs: As Lights you have a couple of choices. You can wear the cheaper belly box that holds 14 to 18 rounds. You can wear the more expensive but highly preferable "Rawles" pouch with 36 rounds. Or you can arm yourself to the teeth and wear both.

Belts / Carriage / Double Frog /

WHAT IS IT?: Leather belt that one should technically be able to wear around your shoulder and around your waist.

SOURCE: Norbde HQ

TIPs: You will need 2, one for your cartridge box and one with a double hole (double frog) to carry your bayonet and belt axe together.

Belt Axe / Tomahawk / Fascine Knife

WHAT IS IT?: small wooden-handled axe worn beside your bayonet.

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Various sutlers (recommend Beaver Trading co.), Norbde HQ,

TIPs: Very handy tool for chopping wood and scalping enemies. Seriously, it's more for wood chopping and pioneering than anything else.

The belt axe is a unique piece of kit that separates a flank coy. man from the Line Infantry. In addition there are a variety of styles from functional forged axes to attractive pipe tomahawks suitable more as a pure weapon or ceremonial item. The most correct type for a light is a plain, soldiers axe, preferably a forged axe appropriate for honest pioneering work.

In addition to the axe, one can also opt for a wide bladed fascine knife. Designed to cut small brush for the use of its fortification namesake, "fascine". This is a purely functional tool has a wicked curved blade and cutting edge. They tend to be forged and a little more pricey than an axe, but those that have them, like them a lot.

Haversack

WHAT IS IT?: medium sized linen bag worn over your shoulder

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Self made kits are available from some sutlers, Regimental tailor or used out of Norbde HQ

TIPs: holds, wallet, rum flask, sunscreen, deet, mess kit, and condoms!

Canteen

WHAT IS IT?: holds water

WHERE DO I GET ONE?: Norbde HQ

TIPs: A MUST HAVE! For safety purposes on hot days. If you don't have one you won't be able to fight.

2.3.2.3. KIT LIST – EXTRAS, OTHER ESSENTIALS, SKILLS

Tent

WHAT IS IT?: British Army issue canvas shelter

WHERE DO I GET ONE: www.tentsmiths.com Ashley Grange Traders, talk to Gavin first before you buy.

TIPs: You are going to want one eventually. After a guy has typically gathered the first stage of his kit, he then looks towards getting a tent. Often a couple of guys will share one and split the costs. One is urged to think about a tent as quickly as possible as it takes a load of effort to make sure you are comfortable and under canvas at your first few events.

Bedding / Blankets

WHAT IS IT?: Warm soft, mmmmmm

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Typically old surplus stores will sell "white with pale blue stripe" blankets. These are worth their weight in gold so if you find em, grab em. There are other sources of good quality wool blankets. Talk to the officers.

TIPs: Nothing but wool is acceptable. Ideally you want the white with blue stripe but plain grey will do to. Often centre seam antique blankets fit the bill.

For general bedding there are a couple of options. Some guys make a cotton ticking and stuff it with straw to make a mattress. Others just sleep on straw raw. Overall, nights at events can sometimes be very cold. In the late season you are going to want at least 3 good thick blankets. There are also less accurate options such as sleeping bags and air mattresses. The important thing at your first few events is you are warm and healthy.

Musket Cleaning Kit

WHAT IS IT?: authentic 18th century tools for keeping the musket clean and working in the field.

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Sutlers, antique shops

TIPs: The musket cleaning kit consists of materials one must purchase or collect over time. Most of the items are available from sutlers. The things one should generally have in the kit are:

- Worm
- Tow
- Oil bottle
- Brick dust
- Lock vice
- Rags

- Extra flints
- Wood snapper
- Lock cover

It's a good idea to apprentice with one of the more experienced guys and get familiar with the tools before you go and collect your kit. There is a fine art to keeping it clean.

Sewing Kit

WHAT IS IT?: Tools for keeping your kit mended in the field

WHERE DO I GET ONE: sutlers

TIPs: Soldiers of the 18th century often lived hard and dangerous lives and like the modern military, keeping kit and gear in good order required some speciality skills. Sewing is one of those essential skills that every soldier should know. One should strive to learn the basic hand stitches of the period and know at the very least how to mend a patch and sew on a button. A basic soldier's sewing kit or "house wife" as they were called consists loosely of:

- Beeswax
- Linen thread
- Extra buttons
- Needles
- Flat pins
- Patch material
- Thimble
- Leather thong
- awl

Work Shirt

WHAT IS IT?: linen over shirt

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Self made, or sutlers.

TIPs: Life in the ranks often calls for duties such as firewood collection, fortification construction and other manual labour. In order to keep small clothes clean, soldiers often wore a rough smock. The work shirt is also ideal for extra warmth and at times, worn in combat for stealth purposes. It's a great piece of clothing that you can get dirty and not worry about it.

Back pack / Knapsack

WHAT IS IT?: Carries bedding and extra kit

WHERE DO I GET ONE: via Nordbe HQ

TIPs: HQ now carries packs at a reasonable price. This is not a need to have but our Lieutenant would like it very much if you would eventually consider adding this to your impression. There are some events from time to time that we will do a hard 'campaign' impression and you will need to carry our bedding and supplies on your body. If you are considering historical trekking you will for sure want to get your hands on one.

Capote

WHAT IS IT?: Warm wool overcoat.

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Regimental Seamstress, sutlers or sometimes used via Nordbe HQ

TIPs: Seasoned veterans can often be seen walking around camp in warm looking white blanket coats with the signature blue stripe. These coats are British military issue capotes and a dear friend for those who hate being cold. The trick to getting one of these fabulous coats is finding oneself "two" matching white with blue stripe blankets. No easy task but with these in hand a seamstress can often whip one up for you. Other sutlers on the market sell civilian capotes but these are often pricey and the military ones are the thing you should strive for. The Capote was pretty much the national coat of the early French Canadian. They were warm and practical and some argue still the warmest coat around in -40 below weather. As a result the British quickly adopted the style as winter wear for their soldiers.

Rain shirt / tarp

WHAT IS IT?: Water proof.

WHERE DO I GET ONE: www.tentsmiths.com

TIPS: Those that are considering trekking (more on that later), may want to invest in some sort of water proof garment or tarp. The Royal Navy used an oilskin cloth called a “slicker” to clothe things that needed some protection from the elements. The shirt is basically a waterproofed work shirt. The tarp is a large piece of water proofed canvas you can make shelters from.

Mess Kit

WHAT IS IT?: Bowl, spoon, knife, mug

WHERE DO I GET ONE: sutlers and antique shops

TIPS: So you get to your first event and the serjeant has cooked you up a nice hot bowl of pease soup. Hungrily you lick your lips in vain as you realise you have not brought any sort of container to eat from, let alone wash it down with a nice cold ale. Any sort of primitive wood, cockery or tinware will suffice. These are generally carried in your haversack. At bare minimum you want a spoon and a camp knife for food preparing. Forks are not so important as everyone knows only frenchified dandies used them.

Camp hat

WHAT IS IT?: There are a variety of camp hats to choose from.

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Various, ask your officer

TIPS: In the eighteenth century, people wore hats – they did not leave their heads uncovered except when bowing as a sign of respect. A hat was used for warmth, to proclaim status or to show what activity you were engaged in. As a result things like head coverings are essential, Aside from your regimental cap, it's acceptable to keep a more casual cap in your haversack. Types of hats to choose from include:

- Canadian winter hat
- Scots Bonnet
- Diderot cap
- Soldier's hat

Ask your officer about where to find these types of hats.

Luxuries

WHAT IS IT?: Pipe, Tobacco, snuff, chocolate, green coffee, tea etc.

WHERE DO I GET ONE: Various

TIPS: Everyone has their little extras and the haversack always has room for period items that one might enjoy for themselves. Again chat with a vet about what they pack.

2.4. Other Kit Notes

2.4.1. Sewing is Power

A lot of this stuff is hand made so it only makes sense that any sort of handy skill can go a long way to helping out. Sewing is primarily one of the foundation skills that can truly make a difference. In the 18th century sewing was such a facet of life that every young boy was taught basic ‘stitches’ and every common man had the basis to ‘mend’ his own clothes. Women and professionally trained ‘tailors’ were the true masters of the needle and thread but nearly everyone sewed and a soldier was known to be quite the skilled tailor.

If you have any sewing skills now you can ostensibly construct pieces of your own kit. At the very least, having enough hand sewing skill to mend patches and tack buttons is very useful.

2.4.2. New vs. Used

The Norbde attempts to keep a fair inventory of new and used goods for issue. Those who want to save on start up are encouraged to seek out used goods. Quite often recruits can outfit themselves with quality kit from stores and upgrade as time and money permit.

2.4.3. Next question, what the heck is a sutler?

The hobby is big enough to support craftspeople and merchants who supply and cater directly to re-enactors. At many of the larger events held in the U.S.A. whole markets of these people are set up to sell you goods. Many of these folks also operate in the off season with online stores and mail order catalogues. While many sutlers are very good and offer rare and needed items a word of warning to the new recruit, there are more than a few merchants out there that offer crap (in fact, nearly all) and even the best merchants have some product they sell that does not meet our standards. Be careful, seek advice from the learned and bring an old guard with you on your first hundred sutler-shopping sprees.

During your first year of campaign you will want to save some bucks and attend a couple of the larger events in the U.S. so you can take advantage of seeking out sutlers.

2.4.4. Responsibility

As a new person you may not realise it but it takes a lot of work to supply and outfit you. For every new member there is a person organising supply, making new kit to order and helping you get along.

The best thing you could possibly do to help this process is to be responsible for gathering and arranging your kit. Ask for help where help is needed and then go for it. Take the time to make a few phone calls and make sure whomever you owe gets post-dated cheques if you are paying via the support program. Manage your own time expectations and arrange the dates when you can pick up stuff. Try not to use your officers as middlemen unless they themselves are supplying you stuff. If you have a contact name, check with that person.

3. BEING A LIGHT

3.1. Your Portrayal

As you stand at attention for your first parade, one thing you will be sure to notice is the striking collection of uniforms, troop types and units that form both the Regiment and to the extended family of the Northern Brigade.

There will be drums, guns, different companies' etc. each one with specific roles and uniform distinctions. There will be officers who wear shiny lace, feathers and swords. There will be serjeants with halberds and colourful sashes. It will quickly become apparent that there is a rather complex rank structure that makes the system work the way it does.

Within this machine you, as with all new recruits, will be representing a private soldier.

Your duties will be simple. You are the fighting backbone of the regiment and thus required to execute and support the commands you are given.

That's pretty much your single responsibility from a historical aspect. From an organisational aspect your job is even simpler, have fun and enjoy yourself.

There will be times when you will be required to work as a team doing manual labour and specific duties but overall a private's life is pretty easy.

As we go up the ladder on the rank structure, the responsibility and workload rise. It's not as easy as wearing lace and a sword. Officers are the element of the hobby that bring you organised events, car-pooling, food supply, kit building and who attend to the general monotony of meetings, politics and other yawns. Be warned now, if you think their life is easy, pinch yourself. Theirs is a thankless job....honestly.

3.1.1. Structure of the Company

Ideally a full sized 18th century company consists of approximately 50 men give or take as sickness, furlough and other strains often made this number fluctuate.

Companies were further sub-divided into four platoons with each platoon having two sections. In the recreated company we tend to split into two sections if we have enough for 8 men for each section and a suitable compliment of NCOs.

Each section would also divide further into three or four man squads, known as "squads of inspection".

The men in a squad of inspection and their families (women and children) operated as a family unit. They would share shelter, draw rations and shared equipment together and be responsible for dividing these items up equally.

At this time it would be a good idea to explain the basic rank structure of the company. The core of the company is made up of private soldiers. The job of keeping the mob of privates under control is left up to the Serjeant (sic). The Serjeant is the most visible figure of authority to a company. He is expected to keep them trim and be available to lead them at all times. On the battlefield his job is to tactically support the orders of officers.

Keeping control of a company of men is very hard work and as a result the recreated light company usually has one or two corporals. Corporals are select men whose job it is to directly support the Serjeant in his tasks.

Leading the company is an officer who directs overall company policy and is the strategic link to army command in the field.

It often gets fuzzy as the officer of a company has core control of the company both on and off the field but as duties often beckon him away, the Serjeant is there to fill the gap and make sure things are running smoothly.

During the shock and confusion of battle, often a company can get really confused as multiple officers bellow orders and strain is put on the command chain. It is during this time that privates will be tested for patience and performance. The ladder works both ways and as commands come down from the top they pass through the command structure. Pre-emptive commands and miscommunication can screw things up but the best way to battle confusion is to be mindful and just go with the flow. Don't worry about SNAFU, it's a fact of life in an action.

If you ever have any questions or concerns either, the corporals, Serjeant, or officer are your best source of answers.

3.2. Drill

3.2.1. The Manual of Arms

The KRRNY and for that matter the Norbde have a training syllabus based on historical examples. This is called drill.

With overall tactical scale exercises, new recruits often request a codex of orders and commands so that they can get up to speed as quickly as they can.

However, the Norbde does not have a firm document to support the documentable research that supports our "light Infantry" drill style.

The reason for this is because the drill is under constant historical scrutiny and tactical challenges are an ever- changing element of re-enacting.

Those who are so inclined are free to pursue their own research on the numerous contemporary drill manuals in existence. Your officer can help you with the sources.

On the other hand a guide to drill known as “The Manual of Arms 1769” which elucidates the basic parade drill exercises is readily available in a handy booklet at various sutlers and is even available for free of the British Brigade’s website at www.britishbrigade.org

New recruits are encouraged to review this document.

3.2.1.1. BE PERFECT, BUT NOT TOO PERFECT

Parade drill is very much the basics and as an elite company any form of ceremonial or formal parade should be delivered with an elan and precision that characterises the elite flank Company of the regiment.

Often as time goes on and the Light Infantrymen grows used to operating at the looser and more practical field drill, many members feel that precision parade drill is beyond them, or worse, dismissed to the realm of battalion soldiers.

This belief is incorrect. The Lights should be among the most crisp and attentive companies when delivering the manual of arms.

Having said that, there is also a temptation to go the other way. In other words, in the field where tactical superiority over the enemy is paramount, there are often those who feel they need to maintain a strict attention to the details of parade and foot drill. For example, when marching over a rough track in Indian files, many men pay attention to the cadence of march. What really should be done is the cadence should be ignored and the soldier should be paying attention to enemy movement and the tactical situation at hand.

3.2.2. The File is Sacred

With the training of a soldier one will learn both loose and crisp parade drill. Some drill is so loose that men move as mobs throughout the battlefield.

No matter what mode of drill you are engaged in, it is important that file pairs always stay together. This is mostly the responsibility of the rear rank file, but both pairs should be constantly aware of the issue.

In short a file pair are two men (preferably consistent buddies) who stay together at all times, covering each other and working as a mini-team.

3.2.3. The Herd Factor

There's a thing called cohesion in a unit that should be given particular attention to by a soldier. Unit cohesion is crucial to keeping a unit or body of men in order and ready to react to the tactical demands of a battle. Unit cohesion is lost when a body of men start to move and the sign of a good unit is a body that does not lose their unit cohesion when being put through fluid exercises in the field.

Again, staying with your file partner is the first step to keeping the unit cohesive but another trick is to avoid the instinctive desire to bunch up. Humans seek safety in numbers and will herd together (making a nice big incohesive target) when they are in danger, even if it's only simulated danger.

3.2.4. You are Elite

The Light Company was considered superior. In 1777 Sir John and Major James Gray pretty much hand picked each Light with the intention of making them the premium-fighting arm of the regiment.

Their training was constant and hard. They were picked for their talents at marksmanship and trained with live ball on exercise. Indeed, the company is often referred to as "select " or "picked marksmen" in the orderly books which leads us to believe they were called "select marksmen" in the field.

One can imagine that these guys were sharp on parade, complete and efficient in their equipment and spirited when in actual combat.

In the recreated regiment you are expected to keep this pride and spirit alive. Try not to goof around during serious or solemn situations such as the heat of battle or ceremonies.

4. EVENTS

4.1.1. Camp Responsibilities

We work as a team and within an encampment there are a number of duties that everyone pitches into to make life easier. These include, food preparation, shelter building, fire building, fortifications, guard duty and drill.

There is also plenty of free time to rest, mend equipment, or visit the sutlers. Please mind the event schedule and inform a NCO when you are leaving the main camp. Nothing is more inconvenient than being late for an important task.

4.1.2. Inspections

At least once per event, usually on the Saturday morning, your NCOs will put you through an inspection where your musket and equipment will be examined in close detail. This is also an opportunity for the command section to communicate to the troops the orders of the day and divide duties. Being late or absent for an inspection is a disadvantage for everyone as it makes communication and planning difficult for your officers.

During an inspection you should have all of your combat kit in good order. Your musket should be field clean, and if you have a pack it should be available. Your canteen should be full of water, and your cartridge pouch full of ammunition. You should also have your musket tool ready. Often we parade in front of our tents, which should also be clean and in good order with all 20th century items hidden from the public view.

4.1.2.1. FAILED INSPECTION

The masochists among us will be disappointed to hear that we really don't run any kind of punishment parade for a failed inspection. Your NCO's and officers will give you the royal gears about slovenliness, and heaven forbid the Sergeant Major ever see those scuffed cartouches! In all seriousness, you are responsible for the care of your kit and as a result the pride of the company.

The only area where any sort of tracking will take place is on the cleanliness of muskets, and water. These areas are safety areas and there are consequences for failing to keep the standard.

A dirty musket is an unsafe musket and if one consistently turns out for inspection with a musket that is not adequate and clean, the soldier will be taken aside at some point and made to clean their piece under supervision from an NCO. This will happen on top of other duties such as mess duties and can be a real pain in the butt for all involved. The

lesson here is that you are on your own to keep your musket clean. If you can keep it clean on your own, you won't be humiliated with extra cleaning duty.

Water is the other area and has already been mentioned in the kit section. It's hot out there. Hydration is very important. We run hard. If you don't have a canteen with water you can't play. Nuff said.

4.1.3. Muskets

A reproduction musket is a real firearm and should always be treated as such. Like a real firearm improper handling can lead to serious injury. Fortunately In the forty year history of the re-enactment hobby serious injuries have been extremely few and far between. Regardless, one should never cease to be diligent when handling a musket and especially alert to where that muzzle is pointing!

Event staff will almost always perform a safety parade and check the lock of each musket to make sure they are clean and oiled, have a hammer-stall or cap, have a flash guard and make sure cartridges are properly rolled and stored in the cartridge box. If one fails this parade they will not be allowed to participate in battles.

During an action, the musket can quickly become 'fouled' with dirty powder residue. Soldiers should plan on adding to their kit, a whisk a pick, and musket tool. A rag in the haversack is also very handy.

4.1.3.1. POWDER

In the old days the company would roll powder communally at a 'rolling bee'. At over \$25 a pound for powder this option has quickly become economically difficult for the company to maintain without charging membership dues. (which we don't!)

Each man is responsible for making sure he has enough powder for an event. This means he is responsible for purchasing and rolling his own cartridges. A pound of powder can yield over a hundred cartridges at 100 grains per cartridge.

Note that 100 grain cartridges is the standard BAR and various parks service safety threshold. Packing a cartridge with significantly more than this runs the risk of event expulsion. You are responsible for cartridge safety.

All cartridges should be pre rolled in plain paper (not newspaper, tin foil, etc.) before the event. Cartridges should be closed by twisting the excess paper, never ever staple a cartridge for obvious reasons. Cartridge rolling at an event is strictly forbidden. Lead ball ammunition is strictly forbidden at all times. Storing powder in horns is often forbidden at most events and one should check with event organisers before doing this. It's advised to be safe and not do it at all.

NCO's and officers can often supply you with a source of powder at cost, and are always on hand to help teach the ancient art of cartridge rolling.

4.1.4. Mess

With the diminished Canadian loonie, the Lights have moved towards more in camp food and provision preparations.

This results in the company operating in “mess”

Each section leader is also a mess leader who is responsible for dividing up duties for their slotted meal and making sure food gets prepared and fed to the section. Duties include, fire watch, water and wood fetchers, cooks, and cleaners. When the whole section pitches in the duties go by quickly and easily.

Many units count on their women to tend fires and make food. As this is historically inaccurate – a woman would be part of the mess just like any other person – we do not organize ourselves this way. The women of the Light Company are not your keepers. Quite often woman pitch in to help, especially at busy events, but it should be well known among the soldiery that women are not obligated to lead with the camp duties and soldiers are ultimately responsible for themselves and their accompanying families.

In addition to the mess system it should also be stressed that often the food served at events is basic staples like peas, rice, beef, and vegetables cooked in period stews etc. Many folks are so used to a modern diet that this kind of fare is too rustic.

Regardless, everyone is expected to pitch in and help, as well as eat. The hobby is an extremely physically demanding one, and basic daily nourishment can help with common problems such as fatigue and dehydration.

4.1.5. Taking Care of your Kit

It's been mentioned before but here it is again! Your kit is an investment and should be appreciated as such. Kit is often hand made using rare and hard-worked craftsmanship. Kit is not a disposable commodity and should not be treated badly.

You are responsible for keeping your uniform, clean, clipped and mended. Your leather should be well blackened and polished. Your musket will retain a market resale price that increases in value so long as it is taken care of.

You can't go to the store and buy a lot of this stuff off the shelf so don't treat it that way.

Yadda yadda, we know you've read this before. Maybe it's important?

4.1.6. Historical Trekking

Got all your kit? Think you're ready for the big time? Once a year the Norbde organises a historical trek, usually in the Adirondack area of New York State. The trek is a week long exercise where trekkers operate and live with exclusively 18th century equipment.

Trekking is physically demanding, but an awesome experience both for the camaraderie and the historical experience. You will need almost all of the kit listed above if you are interested in historical trekking.

4.1.7. Health & Safety

Participating at a weekend event can often be demanding. One is outdoors for the whole time experiencing a range of weather and temperature variability. Time is often short due to military schedules and physical demands are more strenuous compared to sitting at the office all day.

The sun is hot, the nights are cold, people skip breakfast for battles, get drunk at night and fail to keep hydrated until it's too late.

We ask that one always remember their own limits. In particular we want people to eat sleep and hydrate properly.

Our camp appearance should at all times be 100% accurate. However, if you have a special diet, or you are concerned about food or sleep, modern mini-coolers with snacks, and modern sleeping bags are not scorned. The lights are an "inclusive" company. We're not hard core chicken killers, nor are we lawn furniture re-enactors. Again, our outward appearance is 100% accurate. What we have in our tents, put in our bodies and do to keep safe, comfortable and healthy is no one else's business to critique so long as it is not seen.

Don't be ashamed if you need to knock back a Gatorade, or Powerbar to stave off the hunger but please also be very careful not to let any modern packaging see the light of day. Families have special needs and should pack accordingly. Likewise, it's also a good idea to keep some 'period' snacks in your haversack such as cheese, sausage, dried corn, dried fruit etc.

Most guys get along with totally period sleeping gear and food for the weekend. However, there is an art to it and if you are suffering to keep up with this pace you should check yourself.

Again, we are not a company of 'hardcores' We expect a standard to be kept in appearance and encourage people to pursue 'period' solutions, but we also will not admonish people who are putting health, safety and comfort first nor should we feel compelled by others to do so.

4.1.7.1. SLEEPING – TIPS AND TRICKS

Often one of the first areas a new recruit realises he's not prepared properly is when he's lying awake at 3am shivering with hypothermia in his tent.

The following are tried and tested ways of keeping warm and cosy with 'period' materials.

The first tip is in how one you dress for bed. Mistake number one is going to bed with all of your clothes on as you would wear them in the day. One still has to sleep with clothes on but here's the trick.

1, loosen off all buttoned and tied articles. This means undoing your breeches buckles, knee garters, waistcoat etc. and loosening your neck roller. This allows circulation flow in the body while you sleep.

2, layer your shirts by first pulling out your linen shirt so that it hangs over your breeches, and then putting on another layer in the form of your work shirt. Often this combo alone is enough to keep you warm even at really cold events, however, some do prefer to wear their coat and waistcoat over this combo.

3, Don't wear shoes and layer up your socks. For even more warmth pull down your wool Indian leggings so they hang loose around your feet.

4, Cover your head.

5, put down a substantial foundation of straw for bedding. This straw settles over the night to a surprisingly flat bed so the more straw means more bedding. The more bedding you have the more you are insulated from the cold ground. One combination that has proven to be extremely comfortable is a raw straw foundation, a bag mattress filled again with even more straw and a couple of sheep skins on top of that. The result is bedding fit for a princess.

6, Three blankets is the magic number. One is not enough. One blanket on the bottom and two on top can get you through most campaign season events.

7, Additional tricks include closing your tent, heated rocks, and buddy systems for body warmth.

4.1.8. Rides to Events

It is your responsibility to get yourself a ride to an event. Often NCO's and Officers will assist you in finding a ride or organising a car pool. However, you should not assume this is being done for you.

If you don't have a vehicle of your own you are encouraged to hook up with a friend in your locality. If you are a 'guest' in the vehicle you should be thinking about rides

waaaaay ahead of time. Don't call a friend or your NCO the night before. Start a couple of weeks ahead of the game and if you have not secured wheels within a week of the event, call your NCO and explain your situation. Above all, take the initiative in getting your own ride.

Those with cars; although it's not a responsibility, we encourage anyone with a set of wheels and free space to be willing to double or triple up with a few lads and help get as many bodies to an event.

4.1.9. When you Arrive

Early arrivals should get settled as quickly as possible and than be willing to help others as they come in. The lesson here is to always use the golden rule and think of others. Help get tents up and if you are really clever, dig company fire pits and light fires. People will be your friend.

5. HISTORY

5.1.A Brief History of the Regiment

5.1.1.Origins

It is unfortunate that Canadians have forgotten their colonial history. While many are familiar with rebellious Americans like George Washington and Paul Revere, most are completely unaware of the loyal men and women who opposed those notorious Americans. Those Loyal Americans with their ideals, their values and their shattered dreams built early Canada and the foundations of our existing government.

In 1775, Canada was part of an area known as British North America. The history of the King's Royal Yorkers starts well before the American Revolution and goes back to a time when New York was a province of British North America and Six Nations territory.

In the early eighteenth century, a lone Irish fur trader emigrated to an area known as the Mohawk Valley in New York Province. This region was considered at the time to be the frontier with a few white settlements of Palatine Germans and Dutch. These settlements bordered on the fearsome tribes of the Six Nations Native peoples. The Irishman, named William Johnson, settled in the Mohawk Valley and became very good friends with the Mohawk Indians, one of the 'Elder Brothers' of the Iroquois Confederacy. In fact, he was so close to the Natives that the Government had little choice but to name him official Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The natives would only accept Johnson!

Many of the other settlers of the Mohawk valley were jealous of the lands the Mohawks were giving to William Johnson. The Dutch settlers had been there since the seventeenth century and did not have a good relationship with the Mohawks with whom they had numerous land disputes. William Johnson's position assisted the Indians with their land disputes. As a result he became widely accepted by many Native nations, but made a few white enemies, who were jealous of his growing wealth and influence. William Johnson became famous for his leadership in the Seven Years War in America for which he was knighted and granted a Baronetcy. As a result of the War, Britain conquered all the North American holdings formerly claimed by France.

Before and after the war, Sir William had been settling his lands with immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Scotland and other places. The majority of these people adored Sir William for his generosity and sense of fun. The new settlers got along surprisingly well with Sir William's Native neighbours. However, because of both ethnic and religious divisions the old settlers did not like the newcomers to the area but, they did not make any moves against them for they feared Sir William and his Mohawks. As Sir William's importation of immigrants continued, by 1770 the Mohawk valley was no longer a frontier but a thriving agricultural community.

In 1774, Sir William died. The enemies of Sir William did not fear the son as they had his father and, with the support of Congress, began making life difficult for Sir William's people.

5.1.2. Hostilities

Sir John Johnson, who had inherited his father's title had to go as far as fortifying his home and arming both white tenants and Native allies as a bodyguard. Fearing for their lives, many loyal settlers were beginning to flee to Canada. The rebels were becoming bolder and began to commit offences including arresting loyalists for simply supporting their true and lawful government. Many of the influential families close to the Johnson's had left. At the same time, Congress had formed an army and invaded Canada.

At Quebec City, the army was defeated in disgrace over the winter of 1775-76 by an enthusiastic mix of Loyalist Americans, French Militia, loyal English, some loyal Canada Natives, British sailors and few companies of British soldiers. The invasion of Canada caused tensions to rise in the Mohawk valley. As Congress's army struggled in the north, the rebels in the valley made their move against the Johnson house. First, the authorities disarmed Sir John's tenants. As a result of this measure, Sir John knew he could not mount a defence of his home or property. Soon after, he was warned that the rebels were coming to arrest him and he had no choice but to flee and leave his pregnant wife, Lady Mary (Polly) Johnson behind with the household. With only a few hours notice, he gathered up two hundred of his followers. Guided by Mohawks, they began the march to Canada.

With few weapons, provisions, and unsuitable clothing, the march through the swampy Adirondack mountain range was arduous. In the spring of 1776, Johnson's starving, weakened band finally made it to Montreal just (hours? a day?) too late to help rout the American invasion. Obviously thirsty for revenge, one of the first things Johnson did was seek out the Governor to approve his wish to raise a regiment. From this day forward, Johnson lived up to his family name and became one of the most active and able Tory leaders during the war.

Governor Carleton approved the beating order to raise Johnson's regiment and shortly afterwards at Chambly, Quebec, the King's Royal Regiment of New York began recruiting. Most of the soldiers came from Johnson's followers but with the general mood of the Province others readily volunteered.

5.1.3. The Light Infantry

After the beating order was issued, a Light Infantry Company was immediately established with Sir John's brother-in-law, Stephen Watts named as the captain.

As was the case with British regiments, much care was taken to keep the company at full strength by selecting the most athletic and intelligent of the younger recruits, who were able to demonstrate skill with a firelock.

When the bateaux brigades left Lachine on the St. Leger expedition against Fort Stanwix and the Mohawk Valley, the Lights were immediately given a prominent role as convoy guards. Days later, St. Leger himself chose the Lights as part of his planned commando-style raid called an "alert," which he intended to cut-off communications to the fort from the Valley below.

When the "alert" was aborted due to St. Leger's miscalculations, Watts' Lights were again chosen for a key role as the van- and rear-guards for the expedition's combat advance through Indian Territory to the walls of the fort. These selections of the Royal Yorker Lights recognized its status as an elite formation capable of specialist tasks.

5.1.4. 1777 - The Battle of Oriskany

St. Leger's Advance had no sooner arrived at Stanwix when word arrived on August 5 from the lower Mohawk Valley that the Tryon County Militia Brigade had assembled 1,000 strong and were marching to relieve the fort before St. Leger had even begun the rudiments of a siege.

In fact, his siege supplies were still with the tail of his little army and it was fortuitous that his second-in-command, LCol Sir John Johnson, who was responsible for bringing the equipment forward, had come into the camp outside Stanwix. Sir John volunteered to lead a blocking force to prevent the Tryon Brigade from making a relief and immediately selected Watts' 55-man Light Infantry Company to accompany him.

Major John Butler of the Six Nations' Indian Department was instructed to gather as many Indians as possible and follow Sir John. Joseph Brant volunteered for the mission and his 300 native and white volunteers joined Watts' Lights.

Without further ado, Johnson left the camp with the Lights and Brant and marched down the road on his mission. By the following morning, the Seneca Grand War Captains, who had arrived with Butler in the late evening, had selected an ambush site and plans had been made for the disposition of the various elements of the blocking force.

Significantly, Watts' Light Infantry Company was given the critical task of blocking the roadway and preventing the Tryon militiamen from making any further movement forward once the ambush was sprung.

Just as the various elements took up their positions, a platoon of Hessian riflemen, called Jaegers, reinforced Watts' position. The plan had been to open the ambush by Watts' Lights and the Jaegers firing a volley into the faces of militia's vanguard, this was preempted by a militia scout spotting Indians lying in ambush in the woods that bordered the roadway.

Their position given away, the Indians rushed forward with spear and hatchet and created carnage amongst the trapped column. Sir John had posted himself with his Lights, and when the plan went awry, he ordered Watts and the Jaegers to move forward to engage the enemy.

Both the Lights and Jaegers were green troops, and this was their first action of the war. Moving quickly in extended order, the Light and Jaegers swept forward through the mature woods to close with the enemy. When in range, the men began firing on the spot, unfortunately not always taking due care to avoid firing into their native allies who were darting in and out hacking and slashing at the startled militia.

In the event of an enemy attack, the Tryon militia had been ordered to form on the road and commence platoon firing. This tactic served them well for a brief period when they caught a body of Seneca warriors charging towards them on the roadway. The militia volleys cut down a large number of overeager warriors in mid-flight. But, standing on the road fumbling to load their firelocks and stumbling to maintain their depleting ranks was not sustainable. They were being sniped at by Indian Department rangers, native marksmen and Lights and Jaegers, and at the same time cut to pieces by darting warriors who plied their edged weapons with great skill.

The militia broke ranks and took cover in the trees where the Indians and rangers had difficulty engaging them. Sir John had moved forward with the troops and observed this alteration in militia tactics. He ordered Watts to have his company fix bayonets and break the militiamen's defensive screen.

This bayonet charge was quite different than those practised in the open field with a long, meticulously-dressed rank of gleaming steel. Undoubtedly, the Light Bobs attempted to maintain a rough dressing as they advanced through the woods, as they wanted to fall upon the militiamen in a single shock wave.

Johnson most likely hoped that the militiamen would hastily surrender or scamper off deeper into the woods. Whichever the case, their fragile cohesion would be broken and the Indians and rangers would be able to follow in close pursuit. However, the militia stood ground to receive the charge, discharging their muskets and clubbing them to defend themselves. Their defence wavered and partially collapsed, but it didn't crumble.

The charge had failed and Lieutenant George Singleton of the Lights was carried off badly wounded, his fusil abandoned and collected by a militia officer as a trophy. It should be a great source of pride to all Royal Yorker Lights reenactors to recognize that this bayonet charge by the original KRR Lights is the only documented charge made by the regiment in its eight year history.

A violent rainstorm brought the battle to an abrupt halt and it was an hour before the action resumed. During the halt, the militia regrouped into a rough circle in a natural fortress created by a recent tornado's blow-down in which the trunks and branches of massive trees were interlocked. Groupings of exhausted men hunched in this cover to hold out against anticipated fresh assaults.

Although the will of the militia had so far withstood the shock of ambush and the drive of a bayonet charge, it was clear to Sir John that their forward momentum had been blunted and he concluded that they weren't about to go anywhere, so he left the battlefield under the command of the Seneca War Captains and Major John Butler and returned to Stanwix with prisoners, captured dispatches and the wounded including Lieutenant Singleton.

On arrival, he reported the morning's success to Brigadier St. Leger and received permission to send a reinforcement to the ambush site to finish the job. The Colonel's Company of the Royal Yorkers were on duty in the camp. Its commander, Captain-Lieutenant John McDonell added men from various companies who had been working in the area, and then set off down the road toward Oriskany.

As the reinforced company marched into sight, Major Butler conceived a brilliant ruse de guerre and he explained his idea to Captain Watts. Watts halted McDonell's column and explained Butler's scheme which was to have the men crudely disguise themselves to look like a Continental relief coming from the fort.

That done, McDonell boldly marched his men up to the militia perimeter with their firelocks unloaded and bayonets fixed. The stressed militiamen fell for the ploy and shouted for joy that help had arrived. Only one of the militia captains saw through the trick and McDonell rushed forward to subdue his resistance, losing his life in consequence.

Nonetheless, the Yorker column punched through the militia cordon and went to work inside the position with their bayonets. This cracking of the defensive shell was exactly what the War Captains, Butler and Watts had been waiting for and they moved their men forward to force the perimeter while the militiamen scrambled to defend the core of their position. In the brutal hand-to-hand combat that ensued, Captain Watts, was stalking a militia regimental commander, when a rebel private stepped from behind a tree and shot him down. A number of militiamen rushed at Watts, slashing him and bayonetting him through his throat. He was left for dead.

While the battle raged at Oriskany, LCol Willett, 3rd New York Continental Line, led a large sortie of New York and Massachusetts' regulars out of the fort and fell upon the empty camps of the Yorkers and Senecas. After driving off Sir John and his family across the river, the Continentals had a field day looting and destroying and returned to the fort unscathed loaded with plunder and Lieutenant George Singleton as their prisoner.

Word of this sally against the camps was carried by runner to the Indians at Oriskany and they abandoned the fight to rush back to save their families and goods. The Royal Yorkers and Jaegers quickly followed and the battle ended.

Of the 860 who had blindly stumbled into the ambush, about 100 of the rearguard escaped when the ambush commenced prematurely. A number of men exfiltrated through the surrounding woods and made it to safety - say 100 and 30 prisoners were taken by the loyal natives and troops.

When the firing had stopped, only 150 men were able to walk out on their own power and they carried 50 men who were grievously wounded. The Tryon Brigade had been utterly shattered and it never fully recovered from the blow during the following five years of war.

A direct comparison of casualties cannot be made for the Light Company, as statistics were gathered for the whole campaign, not just the battle.

In early 1778 when the regiment was in winter quarters in lower Quebec, a return of the Light Company showed that Captain Watts was wounded and recovering and Lieutenant Singleton was wounded and a prisoner of war. Two Privates were dead, two more were prisoners and three had somehow disappeared from the records, as had a Corporal. Seven men had been transferred to other companies, probably to recover from wounds or illnesses. Of the original 55 men, 39 continued in the Lights.

William Byrne, who had shown his mettle as an Ensign in the Colonel's Company during the campaign, entered the Light Company as its 2nd Lieutenant. Eleven men transferred from other companies and four were newly enlisted. In keeping with contemporary policy, this elite company was back at full strength, 55 all ranks.

5.1.5. 1778 - Recovery

For the Royal Yorkers in their garrison in lower Quebec, 1778 was a quiet year. The British administration had to absorb the loss of Burgoyne's Grand Army and adjust to the French declaration of war which brought open support of the American rebellion in the form of troops and ships. Naturally, there was fear that Quebec would be invaded by an Franco-American expedition and many tense moments resulted.

Nonetheless, the petit guerre on the New York and Pennsylvania frontiers gained momentum. Small bodies of troops and natives were sent from lower Quebec into New York and many Royal Yorkers were chosen for these scouts.

From Fort Niagara, John Butler's newly formed regiment, Butler's Rangers, in combination with the Six Nations and allied Indians struck terror in the borderlands.

The core Royal Yorker recruitment area was the Mohawk region, in particular, the area around Johnstown where Johnson Hall, Sir John's family home, was located. It was critical that the loyalists in this area be kept informed of British accounts of the war and parties were often sent to gain local intelligence and carry news from the fathers, sons and brothers exiled in Quebec.

Once again, a detachment of the elite Light Infantry Company was selected for a hazardous mission. The Lights, led by 2nd Lieutenant Byrne, were supported by 25 Mohawks and five rangers under the management of Lieutenant Crawford, who had been seconded from the Royal Yorkers to the Quebec Indian Department.

The detachment left Sorel, travelled south on the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain and then cut overland to Johnson Hall. They shared news with the locals, collected intelligence about military activities in the Valley and dug up Sir John Johnson's personal papers which had been buried when he left the Hall for the trek through the Adirondacks to Canada.

Johnson noted that his papers were found in ruins, as the chest had not been shut properly. He estimated his loss at an incredible 20,000 pounds. While in the area, the Indians took six prisoners which were taken back to Canada. The venture had taken a month to complete.

As Captain Watts leg had been amputated, he chose to buy a captaincy in the 8th Regiment and accepted duties administering the hospital in Montreal. His company was given to Captain Samuel Anderson, an accomplished veteran officer of the 60th Royal Americans.

Anderson had been unable to join the regiment for the St. Leger expedition and instead had served with a sister regiment, the Loyal Volunteers, which was heavily engaged in Burgoyne's army. Samuel was to lead the Light Company on several expeditions for the next five years.

5.1.6. 1779 – Sullivan's Campaign

This campaign was equally slow in starting, as Governor Haldimand continued to anticipate a French invasion and he was loath to release troops from lower Quebec to mount expeditions against the rebel frontiers.

Early in the summer, intelligence poured into the Canadian headquarters about a rebel expedition against the Six Nations and their allies. At first, Haldimand discounted the possibility of the rebels assembling a major force to enter into the wilderness and he took no action to assist.

Unfortunately for the Indians, the threat was very real and the Sullivan-Clinton expedition moved through Indian Territory destroying scores of villages and their rich fields of corn and squash and orchards of fruit.

As pressure mounted and pleas for assistance from Major Butler were received at headquarters, Haldimand finally relented and allowed Sir John Johnson to mount a relief expedition. This opportunity gave Sir John his baptism of leading mixed expeditions of British and German Regulars, loyal Provincials and natives.

Of no surprise, Samuel Anderson's Lights were amongst the Royal Yorker companies chosen and sent 47 effectives into Indian Territory. Sadly, the governor had waited too long to put a force into action, that when Sir John reached Seneca country, he was disappointed to conclude that the season was too advanced to strike a blow.

In any event, the damage to the Iroquois had been done and the rebels were at that moment withdrawing from Indian Territory leaving smoking ruins behind them. It was a chimerical victory, for although the natives' settlements and crops were destroyed, the warriors and their families were very much alive and raging for revenge.

The majority of Sir John's expedition returned to their garrisons in lower Quebec, except for the Light Infantry Company which was left at Fort Haldimand on Carleton Island to provide a body of select marksmen to prevent rebel Oneida Indians from annoying the garrison.

5.1.7. 1780 - The Burning of the Valleys

Governor Haldimand's concerns about a Franco-American invasion of his province had subsided and, in May, Sir John was given permission to mount a major expedition of British, German and loyalist troops to relieve the persecuted loyalists in the Johnstown region. By now, a second flank company had been established in the regiment, and both Lights and Grenadiers were chosen to participate along with the Colonel's own line company and that of Captain Richard Duncan's.

The Lights fielded 49 all ranks, the Grenadiers 29, the Colonel's 39 and Duncan's 45. This raid was immensely successful. A great swath of rebel farms, houses and mills were destroyed, several militia officers killed and wounded, and 143 recruits were brought off to Canada which allowed Johnson to bring the 1st battalion up to full strength and gave him a strong start for forming a 2nd battalion.

A rebel officer who had been taken prisoner was released after promising that Lieutenant Singleton would be exchanged in his place. In the fall of the year, Sir John led a second large expedition into the Mohawk region. Once again, the Lights were selected for service and fielded 49 all ranks. The Grenadiers were again short of men and fielded 36. Duncan's mustered 42; the Major's 39 and Captain Angus McDonell's sent three sections totalling 26.

Two other KRR companies were involved in a simultaneous strike to the east against Ballstown. This combined effort put the record number of Royal Yorkers into the field that occurred during the war.

5.1.8. 1781 & 1782 – The Last Raid

The combat role for the regiment now passed to the newly established 2nd battalion. George Singleton had returned from captivity and was promoted to the captain of the 2nd's Light Infantry Company, although he had to spend considerable time in the Montreal area recuperating from his ordeal.

A major raid was led by the 2nd battalion's Major Ross in November, but it is unknown whether the Light Company participated or not. Of course, both 1st and 2nd battalion men were dispatched on scouting missions to the Upper Hudson and Mohawk region.

The Parker brothers, both Light Bobs of the 1st battalion, were favourite scouts and performed some amazing feats of daring. Unfortunately, John Parker ran out of luck early in 1782 and was captured and hanged as a spy.

In July 1782, Captain Singleton's Light Company joined a large raid led by Captain Joseph Brant against German Flats on the Mohawk River. This effort was a substantial success and again proved that the loyal forces had the upper hand on the New York frontiers; however, it was the last raid of the war.

It was quite remarkable that Singleton, who saw his first action at Oriskany, was once again joined under arms with Joseph Brant who had signaled himself in that same famous ambush.

5.1.9. 1783 & 1784 – The End

The year 1783 must have dragged on interminably for the defeated loyalists. They had ventured their all, fought valiantly and lost, yet they were still in uniform and under military discipline.

At last, Anderson's Light Company was discharged on Christmas eve in 1783, but for Singleton's, another half year of duty had to be endured before disbandment came on the 24th of June 1784.

By October 1784, most of Anderson's Lights has settled in Royal Township No.2 on the St. Lawrence River, at the time called New Johnstown and presently known as Cornwall.

Now they faced another ordeal, that of starting all over again in a wilderness. And, with great courage, they prevailed.

5.2. Historical Notes on the Light Infantry Company

There is no doubt that in the North American wars the Light Infantry played a very important role. One might even go as far as saying the Light Infantry as we know it in the period was perfected in America. Certainly troop types such as “rangers” were developed under the American condition, and the importance of ‘partisan’ troop types the world over (light infantry, hussars, marksmen, rifles, etc.) can be traced to at least some influences in the American 18th century wars.

To this degree, in 1777, there is no doubt that there was a great emphasis on Captain Stephen Watt’s Light Infantry Company. Their performance and the almost preferred treatment they received during the Stanwix campaign is a tribute to expectations of ‘light’ tactics in this theatre.

5.3. Further reading

Rather than list a big long list of recommended books, it’s probably better to emphasise the importance of reading and learning more about the company via individual research.

The best place to start is the works of our very own Colonel, Gavin K. Watt. In particular his books, Burning of the Valleys, and The Siege of Fort Stanwix. The latter in particular can give one a very detailed window on what the 1st Battalion Light Infantry Company was doing in the early war.

In addition, past newsletters are a good source of interesting, easy to read tidbits of info. Also Nancy Watt’s distaff primers are among the best sources of general information and answer basic questions, such as ethnic breakdowns of the regiment, culture, health, conditions and material considerations. Nancy Watt is also an invaluable source of info on fashion, the refugee experience and music.

Furthermore, the best thing to do is simply ask the old guard. After folks tell you to read Gavin’s books, everyone has a favourite article, journal or book they can recommend. It’s amazing the selection one can find at Canadian Libraries, especially the Toronto Reference Library in downtown Toronto.

I guess the main message here is to check it out.

6. WELCOME TO THE LIGHTS!

That concludes the all-inclusive introduction to the Light Company. Take pride in the company and remember that the health and honour of the company requires hard work and enthusiasm.

To close, one more thing should be mentioned. Recruiting and keeping the lifeblood of the company is essential. Everyone should be on the look out for new people so that we can operate at acceptable field strength. In short, the larger the company, the more fun people will have and the easier duties are.

That's it, the only final word of advice is to keep asking questions and keep exploring!

See you on the battlefield!

Lieutenant Sandford.