

RNR Uniform & Equipment

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Skinner's Company of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment depicts the uniform and equipment of a line company in the regiment as it would have appeared during the War of 1812. For more information see [History and Uniform of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment of Fencible Infantry](#) by Jack L. Summers and Rene Chartrand.

Most of the items mentioned below can be obtained from purveyors of historical reproduction clothing, found online and at living history events. Where noted, the unit may have items to loan recruits until they are able to purchase their own.

Uniform (Duty)

Regimental Coat

The red-wool coat worn by the RNR is specific to the Regiment, as was the case with every British regiment. The tunic is made of wool cloth dyed with madder (which gives it a brick-red colour), and lined with either linen or wool serge. The facing colour of blue (signifying a Royal regiment) is used on the coat's collar, cuffs and epaulettes. The coat is trimmed at the collar, buttonholes and lower edge with wool worsted lace woven in the distinct regimental pattern (white lace featuring blue and red lines). The coat is fastened using both small and large size white metal (pewter) buttons featuring the regimental crest.

Made to measure by makers of reproduction garments. The unit has a few coats in limited sizes available for loan.



Trousers

In accordance with Clothing Orders of 1811, the RNR wears grey kersey wool trousers as its principle leg wear. These trousers are worn high in the waist, rise to just below the rib cage and are supported using period correct "breeches slings" (suspenders).

For more information see [Elegance or Comfort: Breeches and Trousers in the British Army, 1803-1815](#) by Robert Henderson.



Drawers

Long drawers were often worn under trousers for comfort and hygiene. Acquired by regimental or private purchase, drawers could be made of linen, or wool flannel.

The unit has a limited number of new muslin drawers for sale at cost.



Gaiters

Grey wool half-gaiters, buttoned up the outside with small pewter buttons, are worn over top of the boots and underneath the trousers, and secured by a strap at the instep. The purpose of these gaiters was to keep dirt and debris out of the soldiers' shoes.

Pattern available from the unit.



Foot Wear

Low, flat shoes or ankle boots, with square toes, black-dyed leather rough-side out (to take blacking). May have metal hobnails on the sole and horse shoe plates on the heels. While this style of footwear is more historically accurate, any black leather, squared toed type of shoe or boot will suffice.



Shirts

Shirts are made of linen, hemp, cotton, or wool flannel; usually white, but occasionally blue-chequered or other patterns. The period shirt has a long, pull-over "on-the-square" pattern with full sleeves, buttons at the collar and cuffs, and features a standing collar to accommodate the leather neck stock.

For more information see [British Army Shirts 1803-1815](#) by Robert Henderson.



Neck Stock

The soldier's neck is covered by a stiff leather neck stock, fastened at the back with a brass clasp. The purpose of the stock was to keep the soldier's chin up and to the front.



Uniform Cap

Cylindrical lacquered felt cap, with curved leather peak and linen drawstring liner. At the front of the cap is a large brass universal decorative plate, surmounted by a white-over-red wool tuft (colours signifying an infantry line unit). A black leather cockade with small regimental button covered the tuft attachment point.



For more information see [The Stovepipe Shako](#) on the Historical Twist web site.

Uniform (Fatigue)

Worn when off duty or performing work details.

Fatigue Jacket (period term: “sleeved waistcoat”)

White wool waist-length single-breasted jacket with standing collar, with the blue facing colour on the collar, cuffs and epaulettes. Fastened with ten small regimental pewter buttons.

Fatigue Cap:

The cap pattern was not standardized during this period, but the choice of the regimental colonel. The RNR wears a pattern commonly portrayed in period images, a blue “wedge” pattern trimmed in red.



Arms and Accoutrements

Musket & Sling:

The standard longarm of British infantry during the Napoleonic Wars was the India Pattern (“3rd pattern”) musket, nicknamed “Brown Bess”. This smoothbore, flintlock musket has a 39”, .75 caliber barrel, and fired a .71 caliber one-ounce lead ball. The musket has a whitened buffed-leather sling. The older and longer Short Land Pattern (“2nd pattern”) is also allowed.



The unit has several loaner muskets and bayonets.

Bayonet & Scabbard; Bayonet Strap:

A triangular shaped steel socket bayonet is attached to the muzzle of the musket as an edged weapon. When the bayonet is not in use, it is held in a black leather scabbard, which is carried in a whitened buffed-leather belt slung over the right shoulder to rest over the left hip. (Note: bayonets are never used in simulated combat, and are only fixed by express order during ceremonial occasions.)



Bayonet Strap Plate:

Brass rectangular plate with regimental design fastens the two sides of the bayonet belt over the cartridge pouch belt at the centre of the chest.



Pick and Wisk

The iron pin (for cleaning out musket touch-hole) and small brush (for cleaning pan of the musket lock) are attached to white leather strips which are suspended from a lug on the back of the bayonet belt plate.



Cartridge Pouch & Strap:

A black leather cartridge box to hold 60 rounds of ammunition for the musket, plus musket tools. The cartridge box is carried by a white buff leather belt suspended over the left shoulder, and rests on the right hip.



Blank Ammunition:

Not for sale commercially. Unit members roll paper tubes for blank cartridges using a period pattern.

Instructions for rolling blank cartridges, and a cartridge-paper template are available from the unit.



Black powder is available to members of the unit at cost.

“Necessaries” (other “required” items)

Greatcoat

Wool single-breasted overcoat, with standing collar and shoulder cape, the body lined with serge or wool flannel, closed by 8 regimental buttons. Marked on lining with “C” (for “Canada”), regiment, company, and soldier’s name.

For more information see [*“Not Merely an Article of Comfort” British Infantry Greatcoats During the War of 1812*](#) by Robert Henderson.



Straps for the Greatcoat (“greatcoat sling”)

Two white leather straps joined by a single longer strap. Used to secure the rolled greatcoat to the top of the knapsack in full marching order, or to carry the greatcoat alone, slung diagonally over the right shoulder, in light marching order.

[Pattern](#) available from the unit.



Knapsack

The soldier’s portmanteau, used to store and transport a soldier’s belongings on and off the field. Made of painted linen canvas, with white leather shoulder straps. Skinner’s Company uses the pre-1812 “envelope” style knapsack, the more likely available pattern.

Note: An optional item, as there are few local vendors currently supplying this item. Pattern available from the unit.



Camp and Field Equipment

Haversack

A linen canvas haversack meant to hold three days of food rations while on campaign. Bag is 15’ x 21”; strap is 2” wide, 33” long. Stamped on the back with “GR” and a broad arrow in black ink; no unit markings. Worn slung over the right shoulder, over the bayonet belt, to rest on the left hip.

Pattern and sewing instructions available from the unit.



Canteen

Wooden, barrel-style canteen, 7" x 4". Holds 3 pints water, and is supported by an unstained leather strap 68" long, 1" wide, with an iron buckle. Canteens are marked with a "GR" plus broad arrow brand on one side; no unit markings. Worn over the right shoulder, resting on top of the haversack at the left hip.



Reproduction canteens available from the unit at cost.

Tent

Reenactors use the "Common [wedge] Tent" which was obsolete at the time but still issued in Canada in 1812. Heavy canvas "A-frame" tent, approximately 7' x 7'. Essential for keeping you and your gear dry.



The unit has several tents available for loan.

For tips on wearing all this stuff see "[Wearing British Accoutrements](#)", available online or from the unit.



The above list is the minimum uniform and equipment required to participate as an infantryman at a reenactment event. Over time members will wish to acquire additional items for equipment maintenance, and for personal hygiene and comfort at an event.

RNR unit website: <https://www.rnrfi.com/>

Uniform and equipment research available from the unit:

[British Gaiter Pattern](#)

[Canteen Research for the RNR \(article\)](#)

[Haversack Sewing Recommendations \(article\)](#)

[Period Method for Rolling Cartridges \(article\)](#)

[The British Greatcoat Sling \(article plus appendices; slide presentation\)](#)

[Wearing British Accoutrements \(article; slide presentation\)](#)

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