

Leggings

The first reference to leggings for the British troops in the Bouquet papers is found in his proposals for a winter expedition.

November 5, 1758

(Bouquet Papers series 21643)

Proposals Concerning a Winter Expedition

...7. Equip each soldier, besides his uniform, with an overcoat, made from a blanket, or at least with a flannel jacket, two pairs of good stockings, two pairs of new shoes, some prepared skins to supply the "woodsmen" with moccasins, a pair of leggings, a cap made of blanketing and some mittens.

Just over a month later John Knox a Lieutenant in the 43rd foot gives a long description of the leggings made for the troops.

December 12, 1758

(*Knox's Journal Page 220)

Leggers, Leggings, or Indian spatterdashes, are usually made of frieze, or other coarse woolen cloth; they should be at least three quarters of a yard in length; each Legging about three quarters wide (which is three by three) then double it, and sew it together from end to end, within four, five, or six inches of the outside selvages, fitting this long, narrow bag to the shape of the leg; the flaps to be on the outside, which serve to wrap over the skin, or fore-part of the leg, tied round under the knee, and above the ankle, with garters of the same colour by which the legs are preserved from many fatal accidents, that may happen by briars, stumps of trees, or under-wood, Etc. in marching through a close, woody country. The army have made an ingenious addition to them, by putting a tongue, or sloped piece before, as there is in the lower part of a spatterdash; and a strap fixed to it under the heart of the foot, which fastens under the outside ankle with a button. By these improvements they cover part of the instep below the shoe-buckle, and the quarters all round; the Indians generally ornament the flaps with beads of various colours, as they do their Moccasin, or slipper; for my part, I think them clumsy, and not at all military; yet I confess they are highly necessary in North America ; nevertheless, if they were made without the flap, and to button on the outside of the leg, in like manner as a spatterdash, they would answer full as well: but this is matter of opinion.

It appears that some note was taken of Knox's opinion on how the leggings could be improved (or other officers had similar opinions) and by May of 1759 a few months later we find this description of leggings adopted by the Rangers.

1759 May 5th

(*Knox's Journal Page 238)

(Describing the Rangers new dress.) ...a pair of leggings of the same colour with their coat, which reach up to the middle of their thighs (without flaps) and, from the calf of the leg downwards, they button like spatterdashes...

I chose to make my first pair of leggings after this description. As a tailor I appreciate the clean lines and fit of wool gaiters. However descriptions of leggings used by the 60th seem to indicate that the broad style with flaps remained the norm.

Tullekin to Bouquet March 1st 1760

(Bouquet Papers series 21645)

...As to the Leggings we are of opinion here, if it is agreeable to you, that Blue will be the best Colour because when the Campaign is over, And if they are made properly large, they make good breeches, and uniform with the Clothing, and Breeches is what the men mostly want at the end of Campaign and the cloth had better be pretty good, though it may cost a little more. Those six companies will take eighty pair each for the people we have here; the recruits will of course be supplied below. They tell me here that it will take three quarters of yard for a pair of Breeches, or perhaps a little more...

If the gaiters were made according to Knox's ranger's leggings description there would not be enough cloth to refashion them into breeches.

Tullekin to Bouquet March 5, 1759

(Bouquet Papers series 21644 Pt1)

...Our People have Leggings. I intended always that these should have been blue, but we could not have blue at Albany, so that we have green, tied with a red garter;

Although Blue was the favored choice, the troops in General Stanwix's Battalion had green in 1759.

Captain Schlosser to Henry Bouquet 23rd April 1760

(Bouquet Papers series 21645)

My Colonel:

I have the honor to inform you of receiving the camp equipment with cloth for the leggings, the red garters, the cockades, and etc., but the buckles have not yet arrived. I have had all the things distributed among the companies except the camp equipment, which I am holding in reserve until we receive orders to march. I shall be glad to know how you want the leggings made; if they are to be trimmed in red as our green ones were, or if they are to be made of the same shade of red as the garters. I should like to know if, at the first opportunity, I am to send everything intended for Bedford and Pittsburgh, or if we are to take them with us when we go up.

It is unclear if in 1760 the companies in General Stanwix's Battalion (of which John Schlosser's was one) replaced their green leggings with ones made of blue cloth or if the cloth was red.

We are going to assume that the leggings were made of blue cloth since that was definitely the intention of the officer purchasing the cloth. (Unless we are reenacting the 1759 capture of Fort Ticonderoga. In which case we will use green.) For reenacting campaigns before 1759 we will use gaiters.

*AN HISTORICAL JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGNS in NORTH-AMERICA, FOR THE YEARS 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760: VOL 1