

Wearing British Accoutrements

Greg Renault

British army weapons accoutrements for line units were, for most of the 18th and the 19th centuries, primarily carried on shoulder belts of whitened buff leather. Although the weapons and accoutrements remained property of the Crown, for which the unit commander had to account in regular ordnance returns, the accoutrement sets were intended to be fitted to each individual soldier to match up with the regimental coat (which was also individually fitted by the regimental tailor). The coat-plus-accoutrements comprised an integrated system for carrying equipment in the field.

The military “Look”

Period images of soldiers, such as those by Charles Hamilton Smith below, consistently show accoutrement belts fitting snugly at the front, with the accoutrements well behind. These images also suggest some means of fastening the accoutrements at the soldier's back. Such consistent portrayal across numerous regiments and various geographic locations strongly suggests this was a widespread Army practice. Here are some of Charles Hamilton Smith's representative images:¹



The elite



On foreign service



Colonial



Marines

Below are some additional period images from four other illustrators of the manual of arms, from the late 1790s to 1830. Accoutrements are snugly worn in the same manner as portrayed by Charles Hamilton Smith—again, suggesting consistent and widespread Army practice.²



1790



1798



1799



1812



1825

How do we reproduce this effect? Here are a few ways that we can move towards a more uniform unit appearance by utilizing period practices to standardize the way that we wear our accoutrements:

- *Fit accoutrements to the same relative height on each soldier.*
- *Fasten the cartridge box and the bayonet belt behind the soldier by either (1) attaching the belts to the coat hip buttons, (2) attaching the belts to each other via an accoutrement strap, or (3) using a waist belt (if light infantry).*
- *Put our accoutrements on in the same order.*
- *Place the bayonet scabbard in the belt frog so that the shank curves down and to the right.*
- *Wear the canteen and haversack at or above the waistline.*

Accoutrement height

Some things that we know were done in the 1812 period were so common that they are rarely mentioned in period documents. One such practice was the fitting of accoutrements to the individual soldier. Bennett Cuthbertson provides us with a guide to accoutrement height in his 1779 treatise on battalion management:

*The Pouches...should always be buckled up so short, that the upper part of them, may in general rise to **the hip-button of the coat**, and be thereby not only tighter, and more convenient for marching, but also readier for the Soldier to take out his Cartridges, without being obliged to bend his body...³*

He provides similar directions for fastening the bayonet belt:

*...its length should be, the upper part of the Carriage for receiving the Bayonet, to rise just to **the hip-button of the coat**⁴*

We find more detailed instructions on how to fit infantry accoutrements in an 1852 handbook on generic regimental standing orders by Anthony Walshe. While this book is several decades past our period, the fact that infantry accoutrements remained largely unchanged during the first half of the 19th century (with the exception of a shift to a smaller cartridge pouch due to the use of a smaller-caliber round) suggests that these instructions likely reflect earlier Army practice. As we will see, following the instructions found in this handbook results in accoutrements being positioned in a way that replicates the look found in common 1812 period images. To fit accoutrement belts:

The Pouch is to be fitted so as to hang horizontally, and the distance between the Pouch and the man's right elbow, when bent, to be the breadth of two fingers. The Pouch being thus placed, the Bayonet-belt is to be so fitted as that the angle of the Belt be in line with the top of the Pouch, and the handle of the Bayonet not to be seen from the front. Thus the Bayonet will be entirely free from contact with the left, and the Pouch from contact with the right elbow.

The Bayonet-belt is to be then fitted in Front, and wherever it crosses the Pouch-belt, there the Breast-plate is to be placed.⁵

Incorporating Cuthbertson's directions, here is my reading of the above:

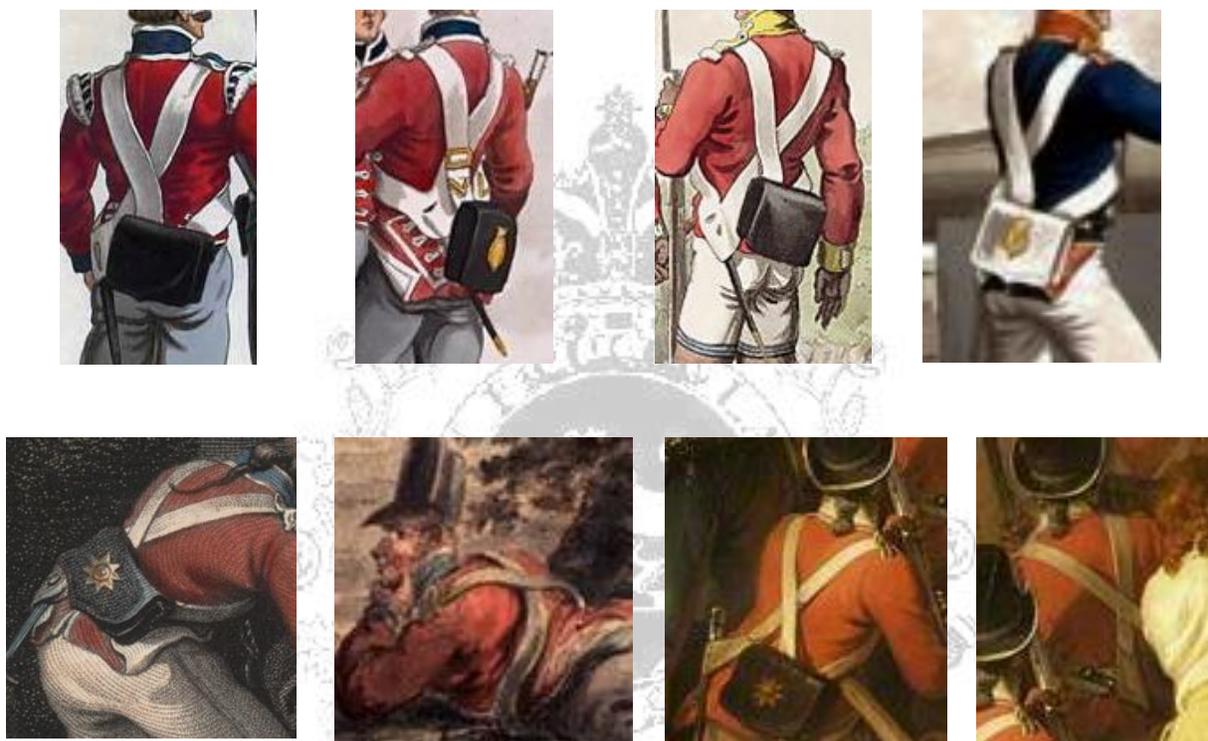
- Adjust the **cartridge pouch belt** so that the pouch rides on your right hip, the pouch button tab near the right hip coat button (about where the hip pocket is on modern trousers), the top of the pouch at approximately waist level, two fingers' distance from the right arm, when the elbow is bent. The side of the pouch should be far enough back to allow the right elbow to move freely.
- Position the **bayonet belt** relative to the cartridge box. Place the frog over the left hip pocket area, near the left hip coat button, the bottom of the "V" at the same level as the top of the cartridge box. It should be far enough back so that the bayonet socket is not visible from the front, and the left elbow can move freely.
- Loop the long portion of the bayonet belt over the right shoulder to cross the chest. The short portion is brought up to meet it; the **belt plate** is then placed where the bayonet and cartridge pouch belts cross.

Sequence for putting on the accoutrements

The above procedure has us start with the cartridge pouch belt when *fitting* accoutrements. However, period sources indicate that *when putting the accoutrements on, we should start with the bayonet belt*. Captain George Thomas, in his 1812 *Local Militia Paymaster*, notes the following as part of the company inspection prior to battalion parade:

On this private parade the captain and his subaltern will attend, and minutely (after the serjeant has examined the company) inspect the arms and accoutrements, and see that the latter are properly adjusted. **The bayonet-belt to be under that of the pouch;** the pouch buttoned to the strop that is fixed to the bayonet belt.⁶

“...the bayonet-belt to be under that of the pouch...” seems a clear direction that the bayonet belt would go on first, with the pouch belt worn over it. Indeed, a number of period images show the bayonet belt worn under the cartridge pouch belt when the accoutrements are viewed from behind—which could only occur if the bayonet belt went on the soldier first.⁷



Note also that (except for those of the man in the fifth image, who is in bivouac) all of these accoutrements are portrayed in the same positions described by Cuthbertson and Walshe.

An aside: Cuthbertson, Nathaniel Hood, and a number of regimental standing orders observe that soldiers should not appear in public without a side arm.⁸ This is easily done if the bayonet belt is worn underneath the pouch belt, so that it will remain when all other accoutrements are removed.

From this, it appears that the historically correct way to wear accoutrements is to first put on the bayonet belt, then the cartridge pouch, afterwards re-buckling the bayonet belt plate over the cartridge pouch belt.



Detail from period image, showing the bayonet belt fastened over cartridge pouch belt.⁹

Fastening accoutrements in the rear

At this point the two belts are fastened together at the chest, with the bayonet belt under the belt of the heavier cartridge pouch at the back. Once the epaulets are buttoned, both belts are secured at the shoulders as well. Last step is to fasten the accoutrements at the soldier's back.

Period images such as those by Hamilton Smith of the KGL, Guards, EIC armies and RA above consistently show the cartridge pouch and bayonet close together, behind the soldier. This is an artificial position, as gravity would tend to pull accoutrements down to rest at the lowest point permitted by the belts, which would naturally be at a soldier's side (a common sight among reenactors). The period images thus strongly suggest that the accoutrements must be somehow fastened, to stay in place behind the soldier's back.

(1) Button the accoutrements to the coat

Accoutrements are worn more comfortably on shoulder straps than on waist belts, but if unrestrained they tend to bounce around with the wearer's movement. The British uniform coat has two features that are intended to hold the accoutrements in place: epaulettes on the shoulders, and buttons at the small of the back. While most military reenactors properly fasten their epaulettes over their accoutrement belts, many neglect to secure their accoutrements behind the coat. One way of doing so is to button them to the coat's hip buttons.

There are frequently found, corresponding to the coat hip buttons, small flaps with buttonholes located on the back of the cartridge box and on the back of the bayonet strap frog, whose apparent purpose is to button these accoutrements to the back of the uniform

coat. Fastening the accoutrements in this manner not only holds them in place; it also ensures they are placed at a uniform height.

Bennett Cuthbertson notes this in his treatise on battalion management:

*...the Pouches...must also be worn so much back, that when the Soldier's right hand is hanging in its proper position, down his side, the front corner of the Pouch may just touch the elbow, and by that means, be entirely out of the way, in the performance of his Exercise...and to prevent their shifting forward, in the motions of grounding the Firelock, and to keep them always steady in their proper place, a small leather loop must be fixed to the inside of the front Buckle of the Belt, to fasten on the right hip button of the coat.*¹⁰

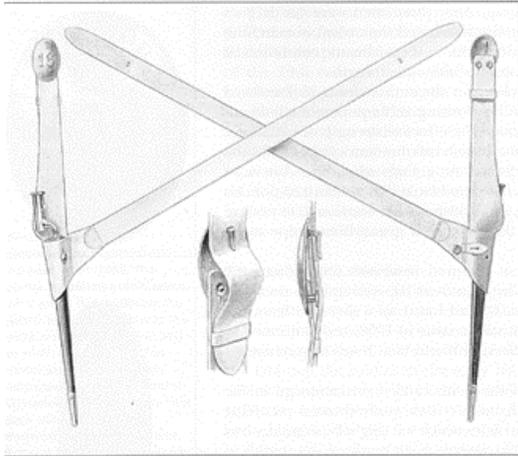
His directions for placement of the bayonet belt are similar:

*...the Bayonet to be thrown so back, as not to interfere with the Firelock, when shouldered; and to keep it in such a position, a loop should be fixed to the hook [shank] of the Bayonet, to fasten on the left hip button...*¹¹

Note how, in the images below, the soldiers' accoutrements remain in place, defying gravity as the soldiers bend over, and step or lean forward-- strongly suggesting that the accoutrements are fastened in the manner Cuthbertson describes.¹²



Below are some modern illustrations of these accoutrement fastening tabs.



Left is an illustration by Mike Chappell that shows a typical bayonet belt from the front and back. Note the buttonhole tab sewn to the rear of the belt, behind the bayonet frog.¹⁴

Right is an illustration by Pierre Turner of the 1789 pouch.¹³ This was later modified in 1805 to carry 60 rounds by replacing the wooden block with a tin tray divided into four compartments. Note the buttonhole tab on the back of the pouch, below the loops for the shoulder belt. (See below for pictures of the buttonhole tab on several original cartridge pouches.)



Pictures of original cartridge pouches with button tabs

Four original cartridge pouches can be seen below. The buttonhole tab is clearly visible on all four pouches.¹⁵



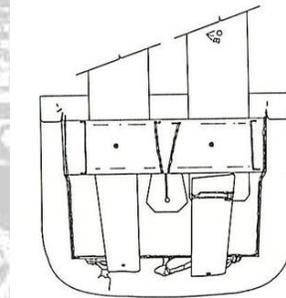
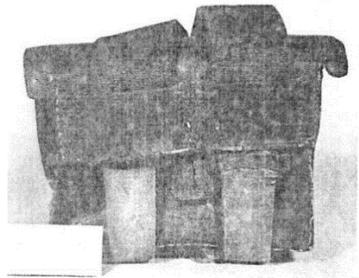
NAM. 1970-09-22-5
Associated with Royal Carmarthen Militia
(Fusiliers)



Royal Armouries, Leeds
Acc No. XIII.154



Don Troiani collection



Reserve collection of Heritage Toronto, at Historic Fort York, Toronto, Canada. Photo Toronto Historical Board, from Bruce E. Cane, "Early 19th Century Ammunition Pouch," *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, 67 (1989) 122-124; drawing J. Williams, Dec 1966.

While reenactors almost universally fasten their epaulettes over their shoulder straps, they often do not secure their accoutrements to the back of their coats. The bayonet and cartridge pouch are occasionally seen slung low and at the wearer's side, where they bounce around during vigorous motion, and can interfere with both weapon handling and with movement.

If the accoutrements are fastened to the uniform coat however, they will ride above the wearer's buttocks, and be back out of the way. Thus fastened, the shoulder straps will be pulled snug across the chest, producing that distinctly "fitted" appearance consistently portrayed in period images.

Period Images of fastened accoutrements

Below are contemporary illustrations by Charles Hamilton Smith which show how accoutrements ride when they are fastened to the rear of the coat.¹⁶ Note that the

accoutrement placement illustrated by these images is consistent with Cuthbertson's and Walshe's directions: the pouch and the frog of the bayonet belt rest approximately where the coat hip buttons would be, the "V" of the bayonet belt at approximately the same level as the top of the cartridge pouch. Thus worn, the bayonet scabbard points diagonally across the wearer's hips, rather than front-to-rear (as it would if worn at the side).



The image below is a detail of original items in the Musee de l'Emperi, which clearly shows a cartridge pouch buttoned to the uniform coat hip button via a tab of buff leather sewn to the pouch.¹⁷



When worn in this manner, accoutrements are securely and uniformly fastened to the wearer's uniform.

(2) Use a strap to connect the accoutrement belts

Another option for fastening accoutrements in the rear is to connect the pouch and bayonet belt to each other instead of to the coat, via a short leather strap with buttons at

each end. This method is described in Walshe's *Catechism* cited above, and also in Thomas' 1812 work:

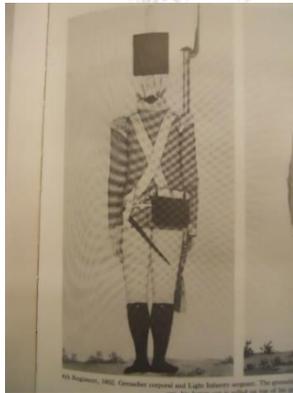
*The bayonet-belt to be under that of the pouch; the pouch buttoned to the strop that is fixed to the bayonet belt.*¹⁸

And from the detailed description "Inspection of a Company" in the 1812 Standing Orders of the Archenfield Local Militia we have

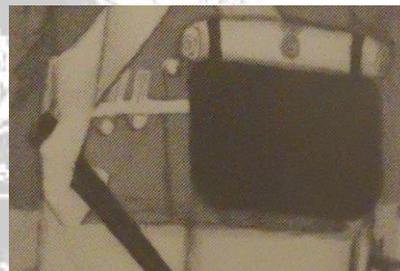
*...then he will see that his belts are of a good colour, and well put on, and such a length as to allow the elbow to ply clear of the cartouch-box; that the breast-plate is exactly on the centre of the chest, and that the accoutrements are so secured behind with straps, as to prevent them moving out of their proper situation.....*¹⁹

"...the pouch buttoned to the strop that is fixed to the bayonet-belt." also seems straightforward.²⁰

Below is a period image of a grenadier corporal that shows just such a strap, followed by a photo of a reenactor wearing a reproduction strap.



Period image showing connecting strap.²¹



My reconstruction of such a strap uses a 1" strip of buff leather, with the buttons placed at approximately the same distance from each other as the hip buttons on the coat. This fastens the accoutrements to each other in the same relative position they would be in if they were directly fastened to the coat.



Reenactor with accoutrement strap²²

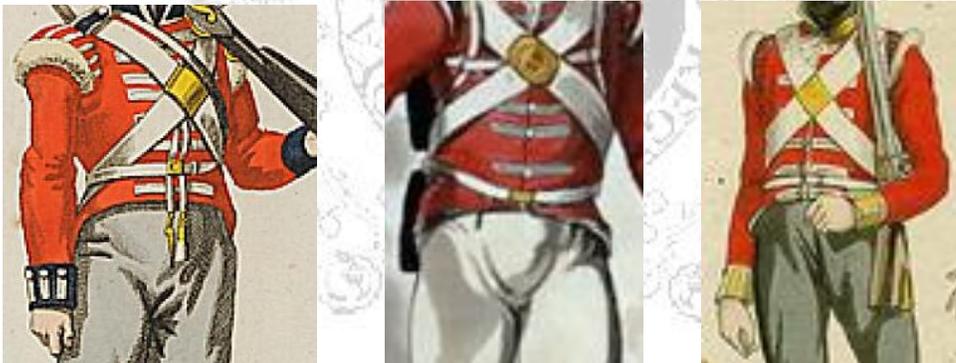


Reproduction accoutrement strap

I find this arrangement much easier to get into and out of, compared to the method of buttoning the accoutrements directly to the coat. It also reduces wear on the coat's hip buttons. An added advantage is that the connecting strap can also be used without adjustment on other uniform coats, which may have hip buttons placed slightly differently.

(3) Use a waist belt (light infantry)

We also have period images of soldiers from light infantry units with thin, non-regulation waist belts. These belts, perhaps a widespread improvisation, would also serve to secure accoutrements in the proper position.²³



Note, that whichever means of securing accoutrements is used, the accoutrements are always consistently held in the same position—high and to the rear of the soldier.

Bayonet shank to the right

It appears that many reenactors wear their bayonets with the shank and socket facing up and to the left, so that it protrudes from the wearer's side. As we've already seen, in the course of recommending a move from waist to shoulder belt to support the bayonet, Cuthbertson also recommends the use of a loop around the bayonet shank, attached to

the left hip button in order to keep the bayonet “so back, as not to interfere with the Firelock, when shouldered, and to keep it in such a position...”²⁴ He further notes that

...the Bayonets are to be put in the Belts, with the hooks [shanks] downwards...²⁵

That is, with the shank and socket facing down and towards the wearer’s right. While Turner’s study of British Army accoutrements illustrates examples of bayonet belts with frogs that allow the shanks to face either direction (he depicts belts with openings for the scabbard throat button on both the front and back sides of the frog), period illustrations of the manual and platoon exercises exclusively show the bayonet shank facing to the right. I have yet to see a period image depicting the bayonet shank facing up and towards the wearer’s left.

Below are details from period illustrations that clearly show the bayonet shank orientation—well to the rear, shank inwards and to the right. The first is by Edward Dayes, ca. 1792. The second detail, from a 1799 Rowlandson print, is quite similar. The third detail, from an 1806 Louthembourg painting, clearly shows the bayonet shank curving right.²⁶



The fourth image illustrates a detail from “Fix bayonets”, Plate VI, from the 1798 *Military Instructions*.²⁷ Note the bayonet scabbard is well behind the wearer, suggesting that it is buttoned to the coat. Left hand is reversed, prior to drawing the bayonet. The curve of the shank clearly shows that the direction of the socket is towards the wearer’s right.

Below we see three period images which illustrate the direction of the bayonet shank as the bayonet is placed in its scabbard. The first image illustrates a detail of the third motion of “Unfix bayonets” from plate 23 of the 1799 *Loyal Volunteers of London & Environs*. The second image is a detail of the same movement from James’ 1813 *Military Costume of India*. The third image is a detail of the same movement from Plate XIX of Mitchell’s 1825 illustrations of the manual and platoon exercise.²⁸



1799



1813



1825

In the illustrations above the right hand returns the bayonet, while the left hand holds the scabbard (necessary in order to locate the scabbard throat, if the frog is fastened at the wearer's back). In these illustrations the bayonet socket is clearly portrayed curving down and towards the wearer's right.

This is eminently practical. When the bayonet shank curves to the left, the socket sticks out from the wearer's body, which makes it easier to snag on adjacent objects (like the guy to your left) or interfere with movements of the manual of arms. When the shank curves to the right, it follows the curve of the wearer's torso, and places the socket close in.²⁹

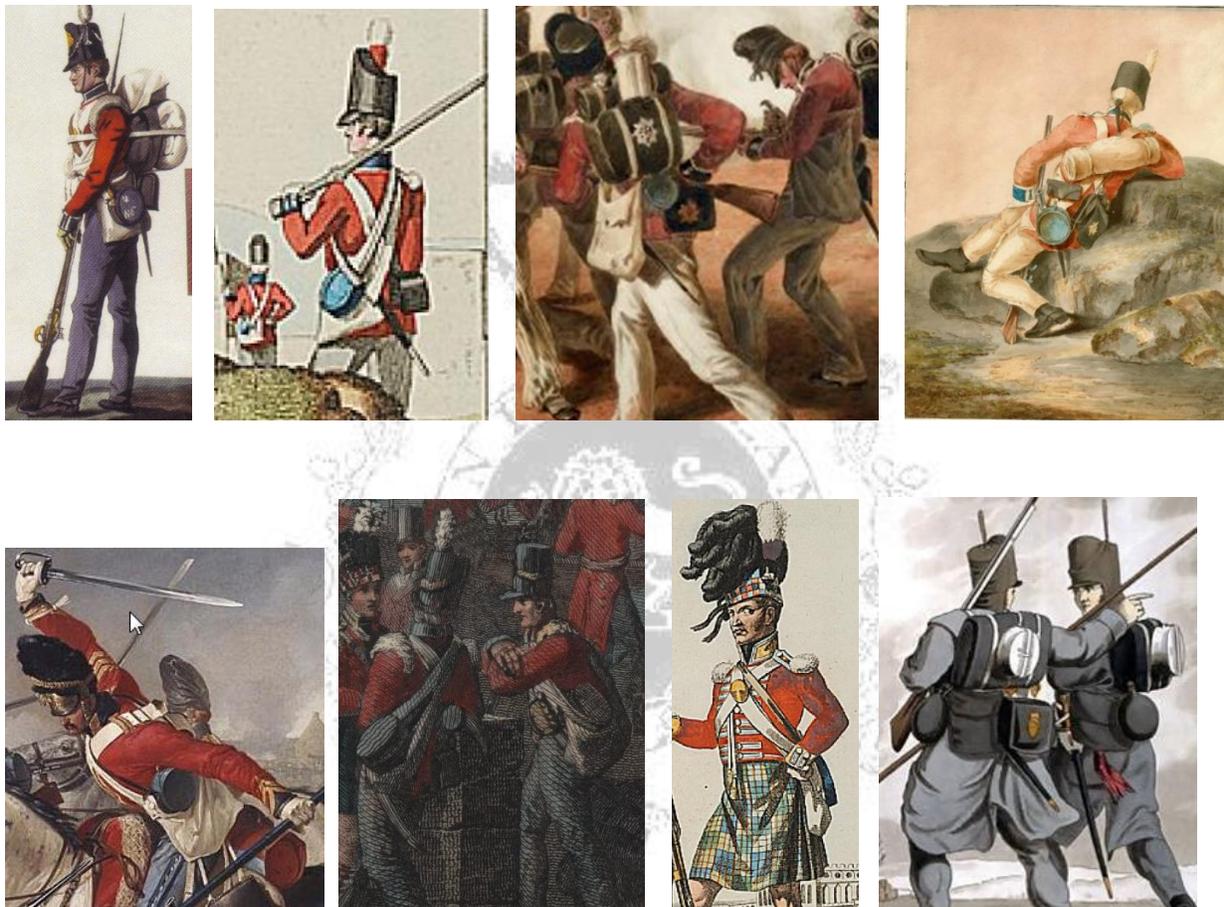
Hoist your gear up

Finally, a word about wearing the haversack and canteen. Although they are not accoutrements (which, as part of the "stand of arms", stayed with a soldier and his weapon long-term), the haversack and canteen--camp equipage issued "temporarily" to units in the field by the Commissary or Storekeeper General departments--still comprise an everyday part of an 1812 campaign reenacting impression. Outside of barracks and camp setting, they will be part of our usual equipment (as knapsacks or slung greatcoats should be, but that is a different topic). As such, the same considerations regarding accoutrement appearance and placement apply to these items.

We noted that buttoning our accoutrements at the rear of the coat brings the tops of the cartridge pouch and the bayonet scabbard to where the bottom of a waist belt would be, were you to be wearing one. Period illustrations indicate that canteens and haversacks were similarly worn high up on the wearer's body, and for the same practical reason--so your own stuff doesn't bash you or your mates when you move about.

Accounts from the Commissary General's office indicate that the strap for the haversack was 35 inches long (prior to attaching to the haversack), and the strap for the canteen 68 inches when unbuckled.³⁰ If we adhere to these specifications (reproduction straps are often longer), then our gear should ride where it is supposed to—high up, and out of the way.

Below is an assortment of period images which illustrate the canteen and haversack were historically worn at approximately the same height as the accoutrements.³¹



Summary

During the period of linear warfare a soldier's dress uniform was his duty uniform. His uniform coat was fitted to provide a proper appearance according to the aesthetics of the time. His accoutrements, which also comprised part of his uniform when on duty under arms, were similarly fitted to the soldier, resulting in those snugly fitting accoutrement belts so commonly seen in period images of soldiers.

Practitioners of living history can reproduce this appearance by following period practices for wearing accoutrements:

- ***Fit accoutrements to the same relative height on each soldier.*** Match up the button tabs on the back of the cartridge pouch and the bayonet belt frog with the hip buttons of the coat. This places the accoutrements at the back hips, just below the waist.
- ***Fasten the cartridge box and the bayonet belt behind the soldier.*** Fasten the coat epaulettes over the accoutrement belts. Attach the accoutrements to the coat by buttoning them to the hip buttons, or to each other by using a connecting strap (light infantry may use a waist belt). This will keep the accoutrements back and out of the way, not visible from the front.
- ***Put our accoutrements on in the same order.*** When wearing the accoutrements, put on the bayonet belt first, then the cartridge pouch, re-buckling the bayonet belt plate over the cartridge box belt.
- ***Place the bayonet scabbard in the belt frog so that the shank curves down and to the right.*** This places the bayonet socket close to the soldier, so it does not protrude and interfere with musket movement.
- ***Wear the canteen and haversack at or above the waist.*** Fit these items with straps of correct length (68" strap for canteen, 35" strap for haversack). Wearing them at the same relative height as the accoutrements will reduce interference with movement, and the reproduce the period appearance of a soldier in the field.

Many [cartridge pouches] have a white buff tab with a button hole to fasten into the hip button of the coat to keep it from flopping about, the bayonet belt usually has one on the inside also. Something most reenactors haven't caught onto yet. In addition, a properly worn cartridge pouch should have the top about even with the hip button and about level with the elbow of the soldier. I always hate to see reenactors with their boxes worn so low they are slapping on their behinds!"
— Don Trioni³²

Greg Renault
Toronto
June 2011, revised June 2018

Notes

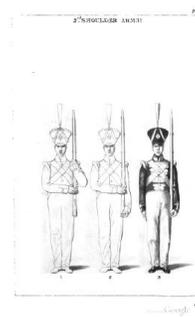
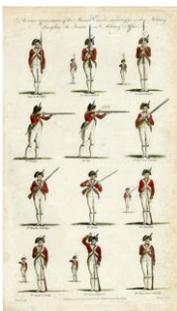
¹ Images are details from the plates of Charles Hamilton Smith, *Costumes of the Army of the British Empire, according to the last regulations 1812*, engraved by J.C. Stadler (London: Colnaghi and Co., 1812-15). Reprinted as *Wellington's Army: The Uniforms of the British Soldier, 1812-1815*. Plates by Charles Hamilton Smith. Text by Philip J. Haythornwaite (London: Greenhill Books, 2002). Plates in the reprint can be found in the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library.

1. The elite: "Grenadiers of the Foot Guards in full dress."
2. On foreign service: "Battalion Infantry 6th Regiment and 23rd or Royal Welsh Fusiliers."
3. Colonial: "A Private of the 5th West India Regiment."
4. Marines: "A Private of the Royal Marines"

² Images:

1. Detail, "Dress to the Right," drawing and engraving by W. Grainger, "An exact representation of the Manual Exercises according to modern Military Discipline, see Treatise on Military Affairs," (London, W. Cooke, 1790), Plate I. Non-tinted reprint 1795.
2. David Roberts, *Military Instructions: Including Each Particular Motion of the Manual and Platoon Exercises* (London: T. Egerton, 1798), Plate IV.
3. Detail, Thomas Rowlandson, "St. Georges Hanover Sq. Volunteer; Charge Bayonet, 2nd Motion," *Loyal Volunteers of London & Environs, Infantry and Cavalry, in their respective Uniforms* (London: Ackermans, 1799), Plate 11.
4. Detail, Charles Hamilton Smith, "Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the 29th or Worcestershire Regiment of Infantry on Duty at Home [1812]," *op. cit.*
5. Thomas Mitchell, *A Series of Figures Shewing all the Motions in the Manual and Platoon Exercises, and the Different Firings, According to His Majesty's Regulations* (London: William Clowes, 1830), Plate II.

Full images, Grainger, Rowlandson, Smith and Mitchell:



³ Bennett Cuthbertson, *A System for the Complete Interior Management and Oeconomy of a Battalion of Infantry*, 2nd edition (London: J. Millan, 1779), 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵ Anthony Walshe, *A Catechism and Hand-Book on Regimental Standing Orders* (1852), p. 22. Walshe served in at least two regular units, so presumably describes Army practice. Note the similar statement that the cartouche box is to be free of the elbow in the 1812 militia standing orders cited in note 18 below, and in the following:

The pouch is to rest on the right hip, hanging so that the elbow, when bent, may be within one finger's breadth of it, and thrown back so far as will allow the arm to play clear of it. If appointments are uniformly put on, (as they must be) and the men correctly sized, every thing will be in line.

Wearing of accoutrements.

Standing Orders for the Second Battalion of the Fifty-sixth Regiment of the Line (London: T. Egerton, 1805), 31-2

black and polished: then he will see that his belts are of a good colour, and well put on, and such a length as to allow the elbow to ply clear of the cartouch-box; that the breast-plate is exactly on the centre of the chest, and that the accoutrements are so secured behind with straps, as to prevent them moving out of their proper situation; that the breast-plate is perfectly bright,

Lieut.-Col Sir Hungerford Hoskins, *Standing Orders of the Archenfield Local Militia* ([London:] Thomas Davies, 1812), 9-10.

⁶ Captain George Thomas, *The Local Militia Paymaster, or Military Friend* (London: Marchant and Galabrin, 1812), 122.

⁷ Details from the following by Charles Hamilton Smith, *op. cit.*:

1. "3rd Hussars, Infantry and Light Infantry, Kings German Legion."
2. "Privates of the First Regiment of Foot Guards on Service."
3. "Native Troops in the East India Companys Service; a Sergeant of Light Infantry and a Private of the Madras Sepoys."
4. "Royal Artillery."
5. Detail, "Battle of Maida the 4th of July 1806," Philip James de Louthembourg. Color stipple engraving by Anthony Cardon after de Louthembourg; 01-01-1810 Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection.
6. Detail, "A Bivouac of British Infantry in the Southern Netherlands," by Jan A Langendijk, ca. 1812-16

7. Detail, "The cutting out of the corvette La Chevrette (From the bay of Camaret on the night of July 21, 1801)", Phillip James de Louthembourg [1802]. Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Acquisition number K264
<https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-cutting-out-of-the-french-corvette-la-chevrette-188756#>
8. Ibid.

Full images:



⁸ Sources stipulating the wearing side arms (bayonet & belt) with the regimental coat:

"A Non-commission-officer, Drummer, Fifer, or private Man should never appear abroad, without having his Sword, or Bayonet properly fixed in his Belt...."
 Cuthbertson, 82.

"Soldiers are always to appear regimentally dressed, wearing side arms. Working parties otherwise...."

Nathaniel Hood, *Elements of War: or, Rules and Regulations of the Army, in Mineature; Shewing the duty of a Regiment in Every Situation* (London: J. Debrett, 1803), 100-101.

XXXII. Non-commissioned Officers and Soldiers are at all Times to appear in their Regimentals and Side-Arms, perfectly neat and clean; their Hair well tied, and their Caps put on in a Military Manner. They are not to take off

Standing Orders of the First Wiltshire Regiment of Militia (Newport: J. Albin, 1803), 13.

The men are never to appear out of their quarters dressed otherwise than regimentally, and in the most perfect and clean manner, and are always to wear their side arms:

King, Col Nevile, *Standing Orders for the Third Royal Lincoln Militia* (Kingston upon Hull: T. Johnston, 1805), 20.

No soldier, however, is to be ever seen beyond the barrack-yard or his immediate encampment, irregularly dressed, or without side-arms when in regimentals ; nor are the distinguishing dresses,

Standing Orders and Regulations for the 85th Light Infantry (London: T. Egerton, 1813), 89.

⁹ Detail, "Napoleon Bonaparte on Board the Bellerophon in Plymouth Sound" by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, oil on canvas, 1815. Thanks to Ewan Wardle for pointing this out. Full image:



¹⁰ Cuthbertson, 70. By the “front buckle of the Belt” Cuthbertson likely means the foremost of the two buckles used to attach the belt to the pouch, as he recommends the use of two small adjusting buckles sewn on the pouch, instead of a single one on the belt. By our period these larger adjusting buckles were for the most part no longer in use, and the tab was sewn directly to the pouch. See the pouch examples in the Appendix.

¹¹ Cuthbertson, 70. Note that at the time of writing Cuthbertson is advocating for the bayonet to be suspended from a shoulder belt rather than a waist belt (the practice at the time he wrote). So his “loop” is a recommendation—it did not yet exist. There is a marginal note on the scanned original second edition (1779) of his treatise at the section on the bayonet belt (ch. XII, para. XXII): “*Since the publication of this book the bayonet belts are worn in the manner recommended, by His Majesty’s command.*” This appears to be a scan of Cuthbertson’s personal copy; it is signed on the title page, and contains a number of marginalia in the same handwriting. (Available at the Gale Eighteenth Century Collections Online.) We can see that once the bayonet shoulder belt became standard, a button-tab was sometimes attached to the belt so it could be fastened to the coat.

* Since the publication of this book, the bayonet
is now worn in the manner recommended,
by His Majesty's command.

Wm. Cuthbertson.

¹² Left: Detail, "Battle of Maida the 4th of July 1806," Philip James de Loutherbourg, *op.cit.*

Centre: Detail, "Fulham Volunteer; Ground Arms, 2nd motion," Thomas Rowlandson, *op. cit.*, Plate 27.

Right: Detail, "Battalion Infantry 6th Regiment and 23rd or Royal Welsh Fusiliers," Charles Hamilton Smith, *op. cit.* (See note 6 for left full image; p. 1 for right full image.) Centre full image:



¹³ "Pouch and shoulder belt, infantry, circa 1805. *Private collection*," Pierre Turner, *Soldiers' Accoutrements of the British Army, 1750-1900* (Ramsbury: The Crowood Press, 2006), 59. Note that Turner's second example from our period, "Pouch and shoulder belt, infantry, circa 1805. (2) *National Army Museum*", (p.60), does not feature a rear button tab. All Turner's illustrations are of original items.

¹⁴ Mike Chappell, *British Infantry Equipments (1), 1808-1908*. (NY: Osprey, 1999), 8. Note that none of the bayonet belts illustrated by Turner, 46, feature button tabs.

¹⁵ All images posted to the cartridge pouch location discussion thread on the 2nd/95th Forum (http://2nd95thrifles.myfastforum.org/Cartridge_Pouches_locations_about981.html).

¹⁶ Charles Hamilton Smith, *op. cit.* Details of the four images cited in note 7 above, plus "Grenadiers of the Foot Guards, in full Dress." Full image of the latter:



¹⁷ Detail of illustration In G.A. Stepler, "Redcoat: The Regimental Coat of the British Infantryman, c 1808-1815 (2)", *Military Illustrated*, 21, p. 13.

(<http://www.scribd.com/doc/76590100/Redcoat-01>) Full image:



¹⁸ Thomas, 122. Walshe indicates that he is citing the Regulations. He states:

The Accoutrements in order to be kept steady, and in their proper places, are to be connected by two straps....(22)

¹⁹ Lieut.-Col Sir Hungerford Hoskins, *Standing Orders of the Archenfield Local Militia* ([London:] Thomas Davies, 1812), 9-10.

²⁰ Although his work is intended for militia, Thomas states that accoutrements are to be made following Army patterns located at the Comptroller-General's office (p. 20). This is consistent with the 1804 directive that Volunteer commanders must have the same pouch as regular infantry (WO3/152, 208). This suggests wide Army use of such a "strop".

At the reenactment commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, our unit shared the defense of Hougoumont with members of the Coldstream Guards reenacting their unit's history, all of whom had whitened buff leather straps connecting their accoutrements in back. When I asked a sergeant about them, he replied in a matter-of-fact tone that they are a regular part of the equipment. He seemed mildly surprised that I would need to ask.

²¹ Grenadier corporal, 6th Regiment, in Michael Barthorp, *British Infantry Uniforms since 1660*. Illustrated by Pierre Turner (New Orchard Editions, 1982), 55. Image attributed to Victoria and Albert Museum.

²² Radford Polinsky, posted to (<http://2nd95thrifles.myfastforum.org/ftopic1197-0-asc-0.php>)

²³ Left: Detail, "Infanterie, 28th Regiment", Genty, *Troupes Anglaises* No. 4, 1815.

Centre: Detail, "Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the 29th or, Worcestershire Regiment of Infantry on Duty at Home." Charles Hamilton Smith, *op. cit.*

Right: Detail, "English and Scotch Soldiers", Aquatint print numbered 1,1815. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection (<https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:228969/>).

Full images:



24 Cuthbertson, 70.

25 Cuthbertson, 70.

26 Louthembourg, Philip James de, "Fragment of Egyptian architecture bearing medallions with portraits of the generals commanding the British Army in Egypt and otherwise illustrative of the ever memorable conquest of that country" (1806). *Prints, Drawings and Watercolors from the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection*. Brown Digital Repository. Brown University Library. <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:247726/> Full image:



27 Left: Detail, "Seventh Regiment of Foot (or Royal Fuzileers), 1685 [ca. 1792]: (sergeant and soldier)," Charles Hodges, after Edward Dayes. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection.

Centre: Detail, "Lambeth Volunteer, Prime & Load, 3rd loading motion," Thomas Rowlandson, *op. cit.*, Plate No. 41.

Right: Detail, David Roberts, *Military Instructions*, Plate VI. Full images:



²⁸Left: Detail, "Covent Garden Volunteers, Unfix bayonets, 3rd motion," Thomas Rowlandson, *op. cit.*, Plate 23.

Centre: Detail, Cap'n. James, *The Military Costume of India, in an Exemplification of the Manual & Platoon Exercises for the use of the Native Troops and the British Army in General* (London: T. Goddard, 1813), Plate 28.

Right: Detail, Thomas Mitchell, *op. cit.*, Plate XIX. Larger details:



²⁹ The socket-to-the-right orientation also appears to be the accurate one for U.S. military accoutrements for this period: "The bayonet was worn with its socket facing out until some time during the War of 1812, when the Army began issuing bayonet scabbards with the hooks made so that the bayonet sockets faced inwards." Philip Katcher, *U.S. Infantry Equipments, 1775-1910* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1989), 24.

³⁰ Specifications for canteen straps and haversacks can be found in an 8 December 1810 account from the Commissary General's Office (WO60/51) under the section "Conditions under which the Contracts for Haversacks, Wooden Canteen & Straps, and Blanket Valices are to be entered into" p. 68-9. Post by Frank Packer (<http://2nd95thrifles.myfastforum.org/ftopic389-0-asc-30.php>):

Canteen straps:

10,000 Canteens & Straps

Each Wooden Canteen to Contain three pints and to be in every respect, as to formation, quality, and dimensions, conformable to pattern now established at this Office. --**The Leather Strap to be 5 feet 8 inches long and one inch broad** [68- 69]

Cf. Turner, 11.

Haversacks:

10,000 Haversacks, Viz

In width one foot nine Inches

" Depth at back one foot three Inches

" Ditto at front one foot.

and lap over, to be 5 Inches with two Buttons & holes. **The Sling to be in length 2 feet 11 Inches & in width 2 inches** [raw length, prior to doubling the ends for sewing to the bag], And the Haversacks to be in quality of Cloth and every other respect equal to pattern" [68].

Thus total internal circumference (strap plus haversack length, minus strap width and strap attachment length) is approximately 48". Below is an original haversack made to Commissary specifications. Note the relatively short strap.



"Haversack, other ranks", Royal Carmarthen Fusiliers, 1810 (c). NAM. 1970-09-22-11.

Cf. the illustration and description of this item in Turner, 23.

³¹ Images:

1. Detail, *Artilleur et Chasseur Anglais*, Bance occupation print. Full image:



2. Detail, "Infanterie, 28th Regiment," Genty, *Troupes Anglaises* No. 4, 1815. Full image;



3. Detail, *Defence of the Chateau de Hougoumont by the flank Company, Coldstream Guards, 1815*. Denis Dighton. NAM. Full image:



4. *Private, 3rd Foot Guards, c. 1800 (Rear View)*. Watercolor on canvas, John Atkinson. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library.

5. Detail, *The Battle of Waterloo: The Charge of the Second Brigade of Cavalry*, Denis Dighton, 1815-17 Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2016. Full image:



Additional details from the painting showing similar haversack and canteen placement:



6. Detail, *The Landing of the British Army at Mondego Bay*, engraved by J. Vendraiai. London: H. L'Eveque, April 2, 1812. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University. Full image; additional detail from painting showing haversack and canteen:



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7. Detail, "Ecoissais Regiment d'Infanterie," Genty, *Troupes Anglaises* No. 5, 1815. Full image:



8. Detail, Charles Hamilton Smith, "Soldiers of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards in Marching Order," from *Costumes of the Army of the British Empire, according to the last regulations 1812*, engraved by J.C. Stadler (Colnaghi and Co. 1812-15). Full image:



This private and sergeant of the 1st Guards are portrayed with the older mess tin, water bottle instead of canteen, and the (approved but never-issued) waterproof haversack. Nevertheless, they wear their gear at waist-height.

³² Don Trioni, Nov 25, 2011 post to cartridge pouch location discussion thread. (http://2nd95thrifles.myfastforum.org/archive/cartridge-pouches-locations_o_t_t_981.html)