

Uniforms of the Continental Army



With the unexpected start to the war with the battle of Lexington and Concord, the Continental Congress moved quickly to determine a uniform color. The color they chose was brown, but the color brown was never really embraced by the troops. Officers preferred blue for uniforms and by 1778 the entire army agreed. The Continental Congress gave George Washington the privilege of creating the first "official" Continental Army uniform, and in 1779 the Continental Army accepted the design for its national uniform.

First Official Uniform



First Official Uniform: The uniform designed by General Washington included a blue coat lined with either red or white fabric. The color of the lining depended on the branch of service. Infantry soldiers wore uniforms lined with white while those who served with artillery units wore uniforms lined with red. Even though official uniforms were agreed to and adopted by the Continental Congress, not every soldier of the Continental Army owned one as fabric supplies were scarce

Evolution of the Continental Uniform



1775



1776



1777



1778



1779



1780

While the official color was blue, other colors of uniforms were still in use. In fact, in July of 1778 a lottery was held to decide how the latest shipment of uniforms would be distributed among the infantry. The lottery was held in two parts and conducted by Washington's aides. This shipment included brown or blue uniforms and the lottery helped to decide who received which uniform. These uniforms became known as “Lottery Coats”.

Lottery Coats



Distribution of the Lottery Coats were as follows:

Blue Uniforms • North Carolina • Maryland • New Jersey • New York

Brown Uniforms • Virginia • Delaware • Pennsylvania • Massachusetts • New Hampshire

Continental Soldier 1778



Tri Corn Hat



Regimental Lottery Coat



Canteen



Haversack or Knapsack



Bayonet Sling



Brown Bess Musket



Bayonet



Shirt & Waistcoat



Cartridge Box



Breeches or Overalls



Buckle Shoes

