



## **HM 64th of Foot Distaff**

### ***Mission Statement***

The Women On-The-Ration of the 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot reaffirm the Mission statement of the 64<sup>th</sup> of Foot. Especially to faithfully recreate the 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot as it was during the period of the American Revolution and to build the finest recreated 18<sup>th</sup> century British Regiment possible. Our goal is the attainment of the highest level of accuracy possible in depicting the wives and children of British soldiers, and in presenting a steadfast interpretation of military camp life during the Revolutionary War in America

### ***Standards***

The 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot has established minimum standards for women's clothing, consisting of an authentically patterned and constructed cap shift, petticoats sleeved top, shoes and apron. Stays are a required item for women after their first year with the Regiment. Optional clothing and accessories will also be made to regimental specifications in fabrics, pattern and construction and may include, among other items, warm outer garments for cold weather, kerchief, bumroll and other items listed.

Women of the 64<sup>th</sup> Regiment portray the wives of soldiers, and any clothing and accessories must be appropriate to that role and station in life, and use approved patterns and materials. Patterns and materials beyond those published as pre-approved must be submitted to the regimental OTR committee with appropriate documentation. Only after approval can it be used.

### ***Goals of Women's Clothing Committee***

1. To have representation among all units in 64<sup>th</sup> of Foot to discuss standards, patterns and logistics concerning the portrayal of women in an 18<sup>th</sup> century Revolutionary War camp British Life.
2. Approved patterns to be made available to all 64<sup>th</sup> units.
3. Approved distaff at all Brigade and Regimental events with inspections to aid in endeavors at 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Authenticity.
4. An information packet to be given to all existing women in 64<sup>th</sup> of Foot and a revised one for newcomers joining. This is to illustrated.

5. A distaff page in the Black Knot and Distaff newsletters during intervals throughout the year. This would keep women up to date with the latest research and advice in the hobby. This page would also aid women in sources for material, and warning of common pitfalls.
6. A support system for distaff on a regimental and company level in implementing standards among women.
7. The 18<sup>th</sup> cent. “look” or shape is a goal to achieve, We hope to have others comment that we look like we walked out of a Hogarth print.
8. An increase of 18<sup>th</sup> cent. camp activities is an objective. This includes laundering, sewing and small scale marketing.
9. To eliminate anachronisms and achieve a higher degree of camp accoutrements.
10. To make available information, sources and help in obtaining accessories to consummate the 18<sup>th</sup> cent “look”. A “Clothing closed is to be started fro loaner wear. Women are encouraged to pursue bargains in fabric, accessories and especially shoes to be made available to new members and loaner gear.
11. To review new books and information and consult sources such as the onelists to update the bibliography periodically. Information would be of the current and existing exhibits in art galleries, museums and historical sites.\

## ***Membership***

1. Women desiring to join the 64<sup>th</sup> of Foot should apply for membership and have a sponsor for one year in that particular unit to assist in helping then with acceptable clothing and persona as a British soldier’s wife in a military camp.
2. During the sponsorship year there will be regular inspections of the women at events as they line up behind the troops during formation. Without exception, all women are to be in formation.
3. Two sources of documentation are required for garments made. One must be an original item, and the other can be a painting. If there is any question concerning the garment, two original sources must be obtained. There is also approval needed on it’s appropriateness to a British 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Military camp. For example; western frontier styles would not be used.
4. All stitching shown on the outside must be hand done. Inside seams may be machine made.
5. All women are to familiarize themselves with the 64<sup>th</sup> of Foot’s mission statement.

## ***Required Clothing Items***

**CAPS:** For centuries, even into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, women covered their heads for religious reasons, modesty and hygiene. Women should have their heads covered with caps even under straw or felt hats. Caps were and are to be, made of fine white linen or cotton. Acquire as fine a linen as possible. A wide variety of styles are known and acceptable. **NOT ALLOWED:** The round circular “mobcap” with a casing through it. (a 19<sup>th</sup> century servants cap) is not acceptable; nor a re pattern or colored caps. No lace

(eyelet or otherwise) is to be used on the edges unless the specific proposed pattern is documented to our class and approved. The small 1750's "butterfly" caps were outdated by the time of the Revolution.

**SHIFT:** Fabric is to be of linen, white or off-white only. Sleeves must cover the elbows with a banded or ruffled edge. Neckline to be low with adjustable drawstring gathers at the shoulders and permanent pleats in front and back. A complete drawstring neckline can be used.

**PETTICOATS:** 100% linen or wool, 108" in circumference or more, length to be between the lower calf and the ankle. At least two petticoats to be worn at a time. Fabrics to be plain colored, or large stripes. **NOT ALLOWED:** No checks, plaids, or prints.

**STOCKINGS:** Recommended. Heavy or this cotton, linen or wool. Stockings to reach above the knee and fasten with a leather or a ribbon garter just under the knee. The leather garter is like a man's (3/4") with a metal buckle. There are many colors but the most common are earthtones and blues. Avoid black. Consult OTR committee before buying striped stockings from settlers.

**GOWNS:** As we are committed to achieving as accurate a portrayal of camp life as possible, gowns seldom have a place in our military camp impression. No woman should make a gown until her approved Regimental Woman's kit is completed, sufficient tenure with the Regiment is achieved, familiarity with 18<sup>th</sup> Cent. look and style has been gained, and the proposed pattern and fabrics have been approved by the OTR Committee. Gowns are appropriate for special occasions and after hours. Gowns must be well fitted and must be worn with stays.

**CAPES and OUTERGARMENTS:** Wool capes, pelisses or cardinals of approved patterns and fabrics are encouraged for colder weather. They may be unlined, or lined with wool or linen, and closed with clasps or ties. Knitted shawls may be used (no crocheted shawls). A piece of wool wrapped as a shawl can be used. Wool kerchiefs can be used. **NOT ALLOWED:** Capotes for women.

**BASKETS:** Baskets of appropriate 18<sup>th</sup> century style are encouraged to keep gear (and anachronisms covered with a cloth).

**JEWELRY:** A small gold band is acceptable, although it would be uncommon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. No other jewelry to be worn. **AOT ALLOWED:** "Trade silver" made into earrings, etc.

## ***OPTIONAL CLOTHING ITEMS***

**HEAD KERCHIEFS:** Occasionally, kerchiefs were wrapped around the head and tied in back. Some were plain checks and stripes. This would be an extra kerchief; one still being needed for the bosom.

**HATS:** Recommended. Straw hats were widely used by all classes. Wear with the front brim down in a modest way. Hats must have low crowns and tight weave. Low brimmed felt hats are also correct. Ribbon: dyed cotton twill tape, natural grosgrain, and silk ribbons.

**KERCHIEF:** Or termed modesty pieces. Highly recommended. Made out of a triangular shaped or 36" square folded into a triangle of linen, cotton or wool. Can be white, striped or checked. No flowered or prints. Kerchiefs tucked into the bodice, pinned in front or tied behind in back of the waist (requires more material). A wife would use kerchiefs routinely even in warm weather, as the object was to remain as pale as possible and not tanned like a field laborer.

**STAYS:** Required after the first year in the regiment, and crucial for the goal of achieving a correct 18<sup>th</sup> cent shape. Tight weave linen and wool were most common. Natural linen was popular. Finished back edges should NOT touch; leave room. Shoulders on stays and jumps should be farther than your bra strap, on the shoulder. Boning was traditionally whalebone. Today metal strips, coiled metal, and wood caning are recommended. Natural fabrics such as twill tape should be hand sewed along all edges. Eyelet holes in back for lacing up should not be parallel, but in a zigzag design. If machine stitched, stays can be covered with a top material; otherwise stays should not be seen.. As 18<sup>th</sup> women portray soldier's wives in a military camp setting, a bodice should cover all stays at all times. Stays can be fully boned or half-boned, shoulderless or with straps. Boned jumps (much lighter than stays) may also be used. **NOT ALLOWED:** leather stays.

**POCKETS:** Recommended. This was the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Purse, ranging from simple scraps to elaborately embroidered. Make two and put the drawstring around the waist, positioning at each hip. They should be under the topmost layer. If three petticoats are worn, the pocket should be under the top petticoat.

**HIPS:** Bumrolls or small hoops. Bumrolls are recommended to promote the 18<sup>th</sup> century shape. Bum rolls are not to be worn without stays; this defeats the purpose of this article of clothing. Tape ties secure the roll in front. It is worn around the waist, not hips. The front of the bumroll is more flattened than the back. Small hoops may be used. These are to be secured around the waistline, not riding low on the hips. **NOT ALLOWED:** Large hoops were out of fashion earlier in the century, as were panniers.

**APRONS:** White, dyed solid color, striped or checked. Linen, heavy cotton or wool. Made as full as possible, and reaching to about 6" from the bottom of the petticoat. May have casing with drawstring at the waist, fitted pleats, or bib top, fastened with 18<sup>th</sup> cent. Style straight pins or hawthorn needles. The drawstring may be made long enough to wrap around the body and fasten in the front.

**BODICES:** a sleeved garment of approved pattern, which covers the elbows. Linen and wool are preferred, with cotton used only on approval by the OTR committee. Suggested attire are shortgowns, country woman's jacket, fitted bodice with sleeves, bedgown and caraco jacket. Consult distaff for acceptable variations on these. The shortgown and the bed gown are common working women's garments. Construction: Necklines are to be square or a wide scoop and LOW. The fitted bodice may have detachable sleeves with four worked holes on the shoulder back. NOT ALLOWED: So-called English or French bodices are entirely inauthentic and are not allowed in the 18<sup>th</sup> of Foot. No checks or plaids to be used, and prints used only if approved in advance and if pattern can be documented to our class. Men's waistcoat and fitted women's waistcoat would not be allowed.

**SHOES:** The most expensive item in the civilian starter kit. Preferred are square-toed black all-leather working shoes the same as a man's allowed for use are square-toed all leather black modern shoes of appropriate style, with two pieces of leather stitched over the ties to take a buckle. Wooden shoes with rounded toe and cut down sides and back are allowed. Barefoot, although authentic, are dangerous due to broken glass, bottle caps around the site, plus burns from campfire coals. NOT ALLOWED: moccasins are not allowed and would not be worn by a British soldier's wife. Absolutely NO Chinese (Mary Jane) slippers with strap, or hiking boots. No Dutch-style wooden shoes or clogs.

**HAIR:** Hair can show, but should be in appropriate 18 c. style such as pinned horizontal sausage curls or a bun at the nape of the neck. Ordinary braids can be looped on top of the head out of sight and under the cap. Careful research must be made for correctness before displaying hair in public. NOT ALLOWED: Bangs were worn by young children only, so pin them back please. French braids were not used. Braids should not be hanging down in back, nor should long hair. Short hair should not be exposed, and obviously dyed hair should also be covered.

**MAKEUP:** No visible makeup of any kind allowed.

**EYEGASSES:** If you need glasses, we recommend use of contact lenses, as glasses were considered very unattractive in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Members may use small wire frames or approved antique frames. NOT ALLOWED: Any 20<sup>th</sup> century modern frames

**FASTENERS:** Buttons are to be avoided, as they are rare for women. Ties, straight pins or hooks and eyes are to be used. Hawthorn needles can be used in lieu of pins for common dress. Ties should be ribbon or matching fabric.

**FABRICS:** 100% natural only! No Exceptions! Today we are very fortunate on the availability to obtain linen at very reasonable prices, negating the use of "acceptable" synthetic blends. Fabric content is listed on the end of the store bolt. Those in the hobby long can tell at a surprising distance a synthetic fabric. It is a waste of time and money to work with such a fabric.

This is a safety issue; being around campfire, candles, etc. a burn with synthetic fabric will melt and leave a scar. If there is a question concerning a material being natural there are tests to help determine the fiber content, the burn test being most feasible. Take long threads, pulling apart a swatch and burn. If it is a natural fiber, it will burn to an ash. Rayon may produce the same results so heedfulness is suggested.

Linen and wool are the choice materials to be used. They breathe easily and are the faithful fabrics to be worn in this particular era. The cotton industry had not established itself to any great degree in the south and almost all cottons were imported and thus expensive. Upper class and middle upper class would have worn it. If cotton is being used for a fancy special occasion gown/petticoat, check with distaff concerning the material. The tight weave, thin quilting cotton is not appropriate. Remember even T-shirts can be 100% cotton, and we would not wear the material.

Silk is for fancy gowns. Combinations of natural fabrics were used, however today's equivalent is a mix, whereas in the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. The warp would be of one material, and the weft of another.

Linen especially, frays very easily. Secure cut edges by flat fell seaming, French seaming, or strong overcasting. See illustrations.

18<sup>th</sup> cent. Looms were smaller than today's. The maximum width of a bolt would not be over 36". Piecing is therefore required to achieve a correct look.

Ask yourself if the garment to be sewn is appropriate for the fabric used. A fine silk would not be used in a shortgown, nor a fine print. Would our portrayal have us wear such a fabric? Consult distaff always before sewing a garment to avoid waste of time, money and making a garment that does not meet the standards of the 18<sup>th</sup> of Foot.

Velvet is a masculine fabric only worn by women in cuffs, lapels and collars in a riding habit-type garment. Riding habits were not made of velvet.

Checks were used on aprons and kerchiefs; not on petticoats. Do not use plaid. Stripes were popular. The larger stripe is better in a wool or linen

## ***Dyeing***

Silk and wool dye the best. Cotton, next, and linen last. Since dyes today are purer than years ago, it is suggested that you dye over natural colored linen. Use more than one color to dye material; 3 or 4 are recommended. Have on hand tans, golds, browns and grays to add to the dye bath.

Avoid pre-dyed store bought linen. This is bright and does not fade. A dye remover will give you a basis to re-dye the fabric, but keep in mind dye remover rots the fabric.

Consult distaff, natural dye charts and recommended dye book for a good 18<sup>th</sup> cent, color. Purples were not used, and Kelly green was incorrect. The yellow/pea green color was popular. All shades of golds, browns, and rust are good, and blue was a favorite. Madder and cochineal produced shades of red.

Colors not to be used are purple, Kelly Green, and “dusty” colors like pinkish mauve.

### ***Prints***

Solid colors are recommended as one has to be very knowledgeable to procure and accurate print and fabric. No small print calicos, paisleys or cabbage type roses. A vine-like look is good. Flowers should be larger than a quarter. If a print has green in it, it must have blue and yellow as well. The dye process for green was difficult and was obtained by overdyeing. It is better to avoid green altogether. A green and white print is inappropriate.

Waverly prints are not reliable for our time period, exclusively. Williamsburg replicas are good. Be sure you study the print well and consult distaff before purchasing a print. This is especially true when looking at garments at a sutler. Petticoats should not be prints unless for a fancy dress.