

GUARDSMAN'S MANIFESTO

Adapted from "*The Campaigner's Manifesto*" by Col. Nicky Hughes

We offer the following as our guide in presenting our impression of members of the 4th Company Brigade of Guards who served and fought during the time of the American Revolution. This "Manifesto" is adapted from a document written by Colonel Nicky Hughes of the Breckinridge Battalion, a Confederate States of America reenactment group. In the few years the original Manifesto has been available to reenactors, it has become one of the most widely adopted sets of standards for those whose primary motivation is authenticity in representing the lives of those long past. The members of the 4th Company Brigade of Guards wish to thank Colonel Hughes for granting us permission to post this revised document.

As with any broad statement of mission, we know that occasionally we will fall short of the mark we have set. We offer neither an excuse, nor apology, for this. We believe our personal failures do not negate the value of either our vision or our obligation to it, but serve as learning experiences. These experiences only serve to strengthen our resolve to fulfill of our goals.

The Guardsman's Manifesto follows:

1. I am committed to developing and practicing the most historically accurate portrayal of a Guardsman of the 4th Company, Brigade of Guards of the American War for Independence now possible. The only limitations I place upon the accuracy of my impression are due to a prudent concern for maintaining modern standards of health and safety, and those limitations naturally enforced by lack of information resulting from the passage of time since the War.
2. I obtain the most historically accurate clothing, equipment, and other relevant items available to me. I insist upon the use of proper materials and construction techniques in all reproduction items. I handle my finances in a manner that will prevent financial considerations from limiting the accuracy of my impression.
3. I recognize that many vital aspects of a Guardsman's life - terror and wounds in combat, death on the battlefield or in the hospital, camp diseases, and much else - cannot be re-created effectively in a living history context. I do not see this failing as an excuse to be lax about other aspects of my impression, but as a challenge to insure that all I can portray is presented as accurately as possible.
4. My impression is based upon serious research into and careful analysis of reliable sources of information about the experiences of soldiers assigned to the 4th Company and the Brigade of Guards. I recognize the need to employ the historian's skills, including the ability to evaluate possible sources of information. I place considerable reliance upon documented research conducted by others, but I do not base my impression upon the claims of those who

manufacture goods for the reenacting market, reenacting traditions and customs, superficial or outdated publications, entertainment media, or other suspect sources.

5. I am prepared to change my impression to incorporate improvements dictated by new historical information, as it becomes available to me. I recognize that our understanding of the details of history changes over time. I welcome constructive discussion of such matters, and I share information freely.

6. I portray a Guardsman assigned to the 4th Company, Brigade of Guards as my knowledge of history leads me to believe him to have been while on documented campaigns - unencumbered by unnecessary impedimenta. I limit the items I use when portraying soldiers to those items that I could reasonably expect to carry upon my person for extended periods of time under the harsh conditions experienced by the Brigade. (Exceptions for officers, and other specialized impressions are to be expected - within bounds set by historical information.) I use my research into period soldier practice to determine what equipment I should carry.

7. I usually portray the typical common soldiers who made up the great mass of men on both sides during the Revolutionary War. My impression reflects a Guardsman as he would have appeared during General Cornwallis' Southern Campaign in the latter stages of the War. I will avoid presenting exotic impressions such as riflemen, pioneers, gunners, and such.

8. Although my primary interest is in Brigade soldiers on campaign, I am able to portray a soldier in garrison when appropriate to a particular event, scenario, or historic site. I am willing to change my personal impression to fit various situations. I apply the same standards of historical accuracy to such portrayals that I apply to my campaign impression.

9. I maintain myself in a physical condition that allows me to portray Revolutionary War soldiers with realism. I keep my weight at a level that honestly represents men living on period food and performing period soldier and civilian duties. I am able to walk distances and perform chores required of me while depicting soldier life. I am willing to accept standards of personal hygiene and grooming consistent with soldier life in the field during the Revolutionary War.

10. I recognize that a successful impression cannot be superficial. My objective is not to conceal modern items but to re-create a historic time and place in detail. Therefore, my impression is as accurate and complete as I can make it on every level - including all of my clothing and the contents of my pockets, knapsack, and haversack. Further, I am familiar with the material culture of late-18th century England and the colonies, and not just with objects related directly to the military.

11. While portraying a Revolutionary War Guardsman, I eat food that simulates as closely as possible the rations available to the men in the situation being depicted. However, I do not endanger my health by consuming food known to be dangerous. I dispose of human waste in a safe manner.

12. I handle and maintain weapons in a manner intended to insure my safety and that of others around me, and which reflects period practices in a way consistent with modern safety requirements.

13. In pursuit of the complete Revolutionary War Guardsman experience, I am willing to take part in accurately staged re-creations of typical military activities including marching, drill practice, ceremonial duty, guard and picket duty, simulated combat, food preparation and other aspects of life on the march and in bivouac. I learn as much as I can about the details of these activities so that I can portray them realistically. If called upon to do so, I am willing to continue the living history experience around the clock during events.

14. I recognize that large-scale infantry maneuvering and combat were based upon battalion formations. For the purposes of participation at large events, whenever possible, I associate myself with a battalion run in a manner consistent with The Guardsman's Manifesto. I subject myself to the discipline inherent in such a military organization and participate fully in the battalion's activities during events.

15. I am committed to learning about colonial and wartime civilian life to better understand the historical context in which soldier experiences took place, and to permit realistic interaction with serious non-military civilian reenactors.

16. I employ first-person living history techniques whenever appropriate. I take great care to avoid behavior, language, and comments that might disrupt accurate living history activities. I strive to attain a mental attitude appropriate to the person I portray when in character.

17. I do not "hide my candle under a bushel." I take advantage of situations that allow me to share my knowledge of the realities of Revolutionary War soldier life with fellow living history enthusiasts and with the public. I participate in living history activities, especially at smaller events, and in educational programs.

18. I see "mainstream" reenactors as potential converts to living history at higher levels of historical accuracy, and I avoid conflict with them. I conduct my relations with them in a manner consistent with the behavior expected from late-18th century gentlemen. However, I do maintain my own high standards of excellence for portraying life as a Revolutionary War Guardsman.

19. I limit my discussion of, and participation in, politics at events to that appropriate to the event historical scenario. I leave my views on current events and modern-day reenacting politics at home.

20. The greatest pleasure I derive from Revolutionary War living history comes from the knowledge that I am re-creating the experiences of the soldiers who fought it with the greatest fidelity to history I can manage.

Colonel Hughes' preamble to the original "Campaigner's Manifesto:"

"I could not help but notice the effort underway to organize "campaigners" in the East. This led me to think about the nature of the campaigner (hardcore, serious, progressive, or whatever...) movement in general. It occurred to me that formulating a statement of principles upon which serious Civil War living history enthusiasts could agree might be productive. So I wrote *The Campaigner's Manifesto* as a draft of such a statement. I trust that it will provoke discussion. I hope that it will stimulate constructive thought. Perhaps it will help move living history to a more realistic and rewarding level. I will be pleased if people choose to adhere to it, and I challenge myself to do a better job of living up to this standard. Persons interested in the topic are free to distribute this document as they see fit. If the best use of it turns out to be as lining for birdcages - so be it."

Nicky Hughes, Colonel
The Breckinridge Battalion

