



The American Soldier, 1781

The troops in this painting wear the uniforms prescribed in the regulations of 1779 and supplied at the time of the Yorktown campaign -- blue coats with distinctive facings for the infantry regiments from four groups of states: New England; New York and New Jersey; Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia; and the Carolinas and Georgia. All of the infantry coats were lined with white and had white buttons. All troops wore white overalls and waistcoats.

A lieutenant in the right foreground is recognizable by the epaulette on his left shoulder. He is in the uniform worn by the troops from New York and New Jersey, blue faced with buff. On his cocked hat he wears the black and white "Union" cockade introduced by General Washington in July 1780, emblematic of the union of the American and French Armies. He holds an espontoon, the weapon carried by all company officers and sergeants in addition to their swords.

To the left of the lieutenant stands a private of artillery in the blue coat faced with red and lined with red, trimmed with yellow of the artillery.

In the background, from left to right, are the New England troops from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut in blue faced with white, and a drummer in the reversed colors (behind the espontoon). Then come musicians in red faced with blue, the reversed colors of the units from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. At the far right are two field officers from these same states in blue coats faced with red, with epaulettes on both shoulders; the one on horseback wears a gorget, an officer's insignia worn in most European armies of the period.