

# **Color Guard(s) for the NMSSAR and particularly for The Santa Fe and Albuquerque Chapters**

This report is presented to the Officers and members of the NMSSAR, the AZSSAR and the National SAR Color Guard Committee for consideration, comments and approval of a Plan to initiate a NMSSAR and Santa Fe and Albuquerque Chapters Color Guard(s).

Defining a Color Guard for the NMSSAR has required research and study to determine an appropriate uniform that depicts the Revolutionary Period in New Mexico (Northern New Spain) with consideration of the Spanish involvement in the war with England. The research and study has resulted in very specific information regarding (1) the uniforms worn by the Presidio soldiers during the period 1776 to 1784 and (2) their involvement in Spain's war with England that included support of the French direct involvement in our Revolution.

Also this project has taken into consideration the western migration of Anglo's into New Mexico and the make-up of the population of New Mexico at the present time. To that end it must be noted that New Mexico is nearly 50 percent Anglo and 50 percent Spanish and Hispanic (i.e. Native American/Spanish ancestry, Native Americans, and Central and South American including Mexican immigrants). The present make up of the population is important when we consider the impact of our Color Guard on the people of New Mexico, their heritage and particularly that of the

school children that the SAR wants to impact with its desire for Patriotism and historic accuracy as to New Mexico's involvement in the war with England by the French and Spanish during our fight to be free of English rule. Much of this history is unknown to the people of New Mexico.

At this time the NMSSAR has three members with Revolutionary period uniforms. All reside in Las Cruces and their uniforms are from various eastern states where they began their membership in the SAR. There are no uniformed SAR members in Santa Fe or in Albuquerque at this time. It also should be noted that Las Cruces is becoming more Anglo than Hispanic as a large migration of retirees are steadily increasing the Anglo population in that area.

In Santa Fe and Albuquerque there remains a large and influential Spanish and Hispanic population. Control of the government at all levels; major organizations and companies in Northern New Mexico are led by Spanish/Hispanic (bilingual) individuals. Thus, to relate to this population the Color Guard needs to be more in keeping with the Spanish History of this area than the uniforms worn by the soldiers of our original thirteen colonies.

This study has found that the majority of the population, particularly the children, do not, in general, recognize the American Revolution or even is some cases that New Mexico is a part of the United States. This area was Northern New Spain until the early 1800's and was a part of Mexico for about 25 years before being a US territory and finally a state of the union in 1912. Thus, it is understandable that the population relates more to the Spanish and Mexican history

then to our early US (eastern seaboard) history. However, this does not mean that they have not been loyal American citizens and ready and willing to defend our country when called upon. Indeed their service has been rather exceptional. It is, however, their desire to maintain their Spanish culture that we must consider when we approach them with our projects and our activities, i.e. our Color Guard.

To educate and to gain recognition and hence patriotic support for the United States based on historic events, the Color Guard for NMSSAR needs to directly relate to the people whose ancestors occupied this geographic area referred to as Northern New Spain and who, by their action of providing financial support to the King of Spain, qualify many of their descendents as applicants for membership in the SAR

Thus, the Spanish Presidio Soldier's uniform should relate to the period of time and hence to the descendents of the soldiers and settlers who lived here during the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> (late 1700's) just as our eastern uniforms relate to that of the Continental Army and militia's of that same period.

There were Spanish Presidio's in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Tucson, Arizona as well as in California. The uniform during the American Revolutionary period was standardized after 1772 for the men who were quartered in these Presidio's. Though there was some variations the soldiers and officers appeared to have dressed in this basic attire.

This project has researched the dress of the Spanish Soldier during the late 1700 and the attachments are detailed information from two sources that have

been used to define the proposed Color Guard uniform for the NMSSAR.

The uniform described in detail, below, is from one of two sources. Rick Collins is a rein-actor at the Tucson Presidio and provided the detailed information presented. A second reference substantiates this uniform (see attachment) and come from a very reputable source in Canada..

### **1772 Regulation of instruction for the presidios that form the frontier line of New Spain**

#### **Title 3 Uniforms (translated from the Spanish)**

1. The uniform of the presidia soldiers is to be the same for all, and will consist of a short jacket (fatigue jacket) of heavy plush wool or wool broadcloth in blue (the reglamentos preferred the more durable cloth, but offered a choice), with a small cuff and collar of red, breeches of heavy blue wool, a wool broadcloth cape of the same color, a cartridge box, a leather jacket, and bandoleer of buckskin (deer hide), as is presently in use and the bandoleer to be embroidered with the name of the presidio in order to distinguish one from another, a black neck stock, hat shoes and leggings.

A black hat with a brim from 4-5" (there is variation) and might have a red ribbon on it.

A coat Blue with red (scarlet) trim with lapels. Either 10 or 7 buttons – yellow brass would be suitable  
Breeches Blue in color

Leather garters

A white shirt

White stockings (not footless)

1 9ft long lance

1 adarga, painted on the surface

and backed with deerskin  
(the adarga is rawhide, not leather)  
Sword optional (that is good since  
there are no correct swords)  
It should NOT be a short sword.  
A belly cartridge box



Rick Collins from the Tucson Presidio

**A more defined listing of the Uniform that relates to the Presidio Soldier in the 1776 to 1780's**

1. 1 black hat with red ribbon (Miller hats makes a reasonably good hat for about

\$80.00). Get your hat from Miller Hat Company...gaucho hat. Punch out the drawstring holes and replace the drawstring with a 1.5-inch wide flat, shiny black ribbon. It should reach to mid sternum. Use a glass bead or brass bead or bone for slide. The black hat ribbon should be replaced with red ribbon. Most hat stores charge about \$10.00 to do this.

2. A cravat in black (not a scarf). The cravat is 4" wide and 1.5 to 2 yards long (use Chinese faux silk and point the ends)-seamstress

3. 1 chupa corta (coat) of the 1772 model - seamstress or Jarnagins. As for Patterns request an 18th century work mans coat. (Coats, Jackets, and Regimentals JP Ryan Waistcoat.) (Specify chest size 40-48, with one size per pattern.) \$18.00. For reference see C&D Jarnagin. They have a picture of workman's coat. All you do is add the collar and cuffs. Jarnagin's (<http://www.jarnaginco.com/revwarframe.html>) have made them for Tucson, but they had better quality and reliability with the local seamstress. Jarnagin's can be the cheapest, but not necessarily correct, when ordering wool. The people in Fla-- St. Augustine Textiles who supplies the Castillo de San Marcos have the right wool color and weight.

4. 1 pair breeches (drop front or French fly-this is a transition period). Seamstress or Jarnagins. Patterns for breeches are available everywhere.

5. 1 white cotton shirt (Townsend for about \$35.00-buy 1 size up) Order your shirt from Townsend...just a normal cotton or linen pullover work shirt. They also can provide the stockings or purchase 2 five square feet chamois at Target for about \$18.00 (Rick Collins will send us directions on how to sew

them, or use stockings (heavy cotton) if you are doing a foot impression.

6. 1 pair rough out shoes (decorative buckles are okay (some may prefer to buy fancy buckles, not used on the frontier - Fugawee shoes -Ft. Ligonier model with either the cheap brass buckle or the fancy basket weave or celtic knot (Tucson has samples of these buckles from Terrenate Presidio at the AZ Historical Society- they have a lot of copper in them and were cheaply made regionally and sold to the soldiers for about \$115-\$126.00). Well made shoes! (since Color Guards will be parading and want to be comfortable).

7. Use the Pedersoli Charleville musket or Pedersoli carbine (It is suggested that we not buy the Canadian made gun-ask Dr. Byrd, AZSSAR). Rick Collins notes that the musket is as common as the carbine or escopeta. Remember the Bourbon influence on Spain.

If a cartridge box is required, then Godwin again, but ask for it in natural leather - . Dragoon Cartridge Box with Belt [#417]: Black leather, 14" long x 3 3/4" high. Twelve round capacity. Tin holders are made so box conforms to body contour when worn. Buckles in back, box has 2 beltloops. Hand sewn. Belt NOT included. Price: \$115.00

8. Since you won't have adargas might I respectfully suggest you buy this sword from this guy in NM. Bladeseller.com You won't find a better price. Practical Cup-hilt Rapier (SH2261). Ken is outstanding. This has a blunt fencing tip, but the hilt is perfect. If someone is willing to spend more then buy Taza" Cup Hilt Rapier (SH2035). A little fancy but okay. For the baldric go to . Gedney Godwin.

<http://www.gggodwin.com/bo.htm>,

British Officer Shoulder Carriage [#BO]: White frog. Price: \$51.50

(Rick Collins notes that we won't find swords available at this time. Don't buy an infantry hanger--they look like infantry hangers-if you have an NCO then use the British or French NCO sword for parade-they look just like the Spanish ones in the Arizona Historical Society collections. People always buy the French briquette but it isn't in the Spanish army till 1807 and it just looks bad.)

9. Lances: Crazy Crow makes a reasonable point for \$27.50. Jim Thornton has one of his relatives willing to make the lance points for us. We will then need an 8 foot ash pole-(good luck on finding this)-so use a 1" 8ft long dowel from Home Depot.

10. Rick suggests we shouldn't try for a cuera or adarga. (the cost to have Bob Stevens or Rick Collins can make a cuera for about \$2,000 or a proper adarga for about \$400.00. The leather sash would be a nice compliment to the outfit.

One total outfit would cost about:

Hat, ribbon and drawstring:	\$100.00
Black Silk Cravat	30.00
Coat	200.00
Breeches	150.00
Shirt and socks	50.00
Shoes	120.00
Sword and shoulder Carriage	300.00
Lance	<u>50.00</u>

The estimated cost can be as high as \$1,000 or half that if much of the uniform is made by seamstresses and local leather smiths. Further cost studies remain to be done.

Attachment from René Chartrand  
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The troops in New Mexico at the time of the American Revolution were the presidial cavalry companies that were posted in the line of "Presidios" established along the bordelands of Mexico (or Northern New Spain) from Texas to California. They are often nicknamed the "Cuera" dragoons or cavalry.

Please see below extracts from two articles I wrote which appeared in "Military Illustrated", a British journal in about 1990. They were illustrated with coloured plates by David Rickman, the renowned American artist of Indians and early Spanish colonial life and troops.

"The number of Presidios varied greatly during the 17th century but the companies grew to about 30 men each and by the 1690's, the establishment stood at about 600 cavalymen. The 18th century saw considerable increases in the strength of these troops. In 1701, there were fifteen companies for a total of 562 troops. In 1729, nineteen companies totaling 734 men. In 1764, twenty-three companies making 1,271. In 1777, there were 1,907 soldiers and 280 Indian scouts which maintained a herd of over 14,000 horses and 1,700 mules for their service. In 1783, the number of soldiers in the "Internal provinces" spread in twenty-two Presidios was 2,840 which increased to 3,087 by 1787 (in twenty-four Presidios) and remained thereafter fairly stable

into the first decade of the 19th century with 3,030 reported in 1803.

Up to 1776, the "Internal Provinces" were under the direct authority of the Viceroy of Mexico but thereafter, they were set up as an independent and separate Commandancy General for better management. But this meant little change for the soldiers. The cuera cavalry carried on with basically the same organization and duties. The independence of Mexico in 1821 did not mean much change at first but the increasing influx of Americans into Texas eventually led to its independence in 1836. The war between Mexico and the United States between 1846 and 1848 sealed the fate of the old Provincias Internas, part of which became American territories. As for the presidial troops, they were ordered disbanded by Mexico on 1 December 1847 bringing to an end, after nearly three centuries, a proud and unique military corps.

The arms and equipment, and eventually, uniforms of these troops are among the most unusual to be found in the annals of military history. The influences of the pre-columbian Indians, the North African Moors, as well as the peculiar Iberian features and even those of Louis XIV's Bourbon family were all to be found if one looked at fully equipped soldier. It was as if they were immune to the usual fashions and influences which prevailed in most western armies. For instance, in Europe lances and shields for cavalry went out of style by the early 17th century and lances only made a come back thanks to Napoleon. But the presidial cavalry had their lances and shield, from the 16th to the middle of the 19th century.

The genesis of much of the above goes back to the soldiers of the 16th century who were fighting the Chichimeca Indians. During the first punitive expedition in 1551, one notes the wearing of Aztec-inspired cotton padded armour. During the 1580's, in order to receive pay a soldier had to own two horses, buckskin thigh pieces, a coat of mail and a helmet with beaver. To this was added a leather jacket (the cuera) of several thicknesses of layered buckskin considered the best protection against arrows, long heavy boots, a sword, and either an arquebuss or, more commonly, a lance with a bull-hide leather shield called an adarga. When not expecting a battle, a lighter quilted cotton coat might be worn and a broad-brimmed hat.

As the 17th century passed, there was an evolution in the equipment of the presidial soldiers. The steel helmet and beaver, buckskin thigh pieces, cotton padded coats and heavy boots were abandoned in favour of the hat and the knee-long cuera leather jacket. An inspection of troops at El Paso in October 1684 revealed a certain variety.

The captain is the only one reported with a "morrión" helmet and an ensign is the sole owner of a coat of mail, all others having a variety of shields, swords, arquebuss, some with leather jackets, some without. An ensign had "an armoured horse" - presumably with leather - but most soldiers at El Paso simply had "a saddled horse and three bareback". Lances were not counted but it is obvious they had them. A traveller in 1697 mentions that "these soldiers are armed with a shield, a musket and a half-pike".

As the 18th century dawned, considerable events were taking place in Spain

which would have a profound effect on the Spanish armies. In 1700, a grandson of King Louis XIV was crowned as Felipe V of Spain, an event which caused the long and costly War of Spanish Succession or "Queen Anne's War".

One of the immediate effects of the coming of the Bourbons on the throne of Spain was a complete reform of the antiquated army. French officers poured into Spain to bring the forces up to date and by 1710, regimental organization, standard arms, drills and uniforms were in use.

At first, the cuera cavalry was not much affected by all this. The armament, equipment, duties and tactics remained the same. But two important interrelated areas were affected: the command which introduced a system of inspections by a high ranking officer reporting to the Viceroy. The first large scale inspection by Brigadier de Rivera started in 1724 and lasted over three and a half years. This resulted in the 1729 publication of "Regulation for the best administrative conduct and discipline" of the presidial system. At first these inspections were not frequent, the next important one being during the 1760's by the Marquis de Rubi which resulted in the important 1772 regulations.

That everyone was in uniform on the frontier was certainly not the case as was noted by the Marquis de Rubi during his inspection. At El Paso in May 1766, the clothing was somewhat uniform being blue with scarlet breeches adorned with silver and gold lace or embroidery but the muskets were deemed useless. At Guajoquilla in late May 1766, each soldier dressed to his own

taste or means. At El Paso in July 1766, he noted that the calibres of the muskets were not standard, that the clothing was in "a deplorable state and not uniform", the leather jackets too thin and thus useless against arrows.

Moving on to Janos in October 1766, the Marquis again found some equipment wanting, notably the leather jackets being made poorly, "the costumes were not uniform for all the clothing of the company" but scarlet cloth was mentioned for lapels and blue cloth for breeches.

At Monclova in June 1767, the Marquis finally saw what he considered to be a well clothed company, all wearing a short blue coat with scarlet cuffs with silver buttons and a scarlet waistcoat with white metal buttons.

At this point, the leather jacket, or cuera, should be described. It went down to the knees having "the shape of a coat without sleeves...made of seven plies of white tanned deerskin, which protects against the arrows of the Indians except at a very short range" according to a 1769 account.

Supposed to be bleached white, the outer hides might sometime have another hue. In March 1767, the Marquis de Rubi found the leather jackets dyed yellow at Buenavista and of a cinnamon colour at Coahuila. The artwork of the period usually shows the cuera as a long sleeveless garment which appears often to have decorative work - in Sonora, seams and pockets decorated with a lining of filigreed leather and red cloth was popular. Soldier Amador recalled the leather jacket was made in three sections "like a vest", held together with buckskin straps under the arms, coming down to

the knees. A shorter and simpler version of the leather jacket may have evolved in the late 18th century as such a jacket is shown in illustrations.

The first commandant-general of the provinces, Teodoro de Croix, did not think much of the leather jacket finding it too bulky and impairing rapid movement. It is one reason he created the "Light troops" or light cavalry companies in 1778, which had no such jackets or shields. But governor Cabello of Texas felt, only a year later, that ten cuera soldiers were worth twenty of the light troops. His colleague, governor Ugalde of Coahuila felt much the same, also having a preference for cinnamon coloured cueras in 1782. After de Croix's departure in 1783, the "Light troops" gradually vanished.

Probably the best known document on the cuera cavalry is the regulation of 1772 concerning presidial troops, a result of the Marquis de Rubi's inspection. It was the first document signed by royal authority to specify in some details the arms, uniform and equipment for these troops. Each soldier was to wear a blue short jacket with a red collar and red cuffs, a pair of blue breeches, a blue cloak. A black cravat or neckerchief was to be worn around the neck. There was also a hat, dragoon style leggings and boots. A buckskin bandoleer with the name of the company's Presidio embroidered into it was also to be worn. And the leather jacket, which, along with lances and shields, made these troops so distinctive in their appearance.

There is evidence suggesting that this simple "blue short jacket with a red collar and red cuffs" may have had red lapels in some cases. In 1779, the

uniform and equipment of the troops at San Antonio [Texas] was considered good and described in detail in an account of the inspection. Each soldier had a blue short jacket with red collar, cuffs and lapels; a red vest; blue breeches; 48 large gilt buttons for the jacket and breeches; 18 small gilt buttons for the vest; a cape; a hat; a black cravat; shirts; drawers; dragoon style gaiters and boots. Regarding the lapels, we might add that a 1778 report on the militia of New Vizcaya also mentioned lapels on a similar uniform as above except for silver buttons for militiamen.

Armament consisted of a type of musket called an escopeta, a pair of pistols, a sword with a sword-knot and sword-belt, a lance, a shield, a leather jacket, a cartridge box holding 24 rounds and a bandoleer - presumably embroidered with the name "San Antonio". A very complete set of horse equipment was listed along with seven horses (including presumably a colt) and a mule.

Orders issued on 21 September 1780 by the Comandant-General of the Provincias Internas left no doubt as to lapels and other details. The uniform of the enlisted men was to be a blue short coat with scarlet collar, cuffs and lapels and gold buttons, vest of linen or of chamois, blue breeches, black narrow-brimmed hat with the brim turned up on the left side, and held with a loop, "to handle the musket with ease", and a red wool plume; cape of blue cloth, with a poncho also allowed to cover the soldier and his weapons against the hot sun and the rains. The sword was not to vary in length and be carried by a sword-belt around the waist, when mounted. On foot, the belt was worn diagonally over the right shoulder. Cueras, shields and other equipments were retained but the bandoleer was not to be supplied

in the future as it was considered useless.

Officers had two types of uniforms according to these 1780 orders. All officers were to have a dress uniform, consisting of a blue coat with scarlet collar, cuffs and lapels, laced with two narrow gold laces of three threads each edging the collar, blue breeches, buff waistcoat, with gold lace slightly wider than two fingers wide, gold buttons, and a tricorne hat laced with gold. The undress uniform of the officers consisted of a blue short coat with the same facings as on the dress uniform, having on both types of coat the epaulettes to distinguish their rank, a short waistcoat of linen, chamois or buff cloth with a narrow lace, breeches of cloth or chamois, black brimmed hat with the brim turned up on one side and laced with gold, and a cape of blue cloth. The undress uniform was always to be worn in the field, and during the summer, it could be made of light material in the colours described above. Other items included optional use of a protective hair net - the *redecilla* - chamois leggings and boots, considered the best with the *vaquero* horse equipment and blue or scarlet ponchos laced at the openings. The arms of the officers were the same as that of the troops and of the same calibre and size, but of better quality and manufacture. Officers also had the leather jacket and shield.

The Light troops raised in 1778 had the same uniform, equipment and weapons but without the leather jacket, shield or lance. According to the 1780 orders, they were to have a white hat instead of a black one, presumably for further distinction.

But the orders of the commandant-general were not applied everywhere and

only a year later, in 1781, we find the uniforms intended for the "California peninsula" without lapels and with the bandoleers bearing the embroidered name of the Presidio exactly as specified in 1772. The uniform of the Non Commissioned Officers and privates was officially modified in December 1794: in future the jackets were ordered to be made "with scarlet cuffs and collars only" and to "omit the lapels." But it did not, obviously, affect the dress uniform of the officers although the undress also lost its lapels but not the two gold laces on the collar, which became a standing collar in the last years of the 18th century. The buff waistcoat in the 1780 regulations does not seem to have caught on - at least not in California. There, we read of scarlet or blue waistcoats."

There is more, but much of the above is abstracted from the Archives of the Indies in Sevilla (Spain), the Bancroft Library (Sacramento, CA) and the National archives of Mexico.

With regards to New Mexico, insofar as documents that I have found, the closest would be the clothing bill regardin San Antonio. I would have to check my files (now stored in the basement) for NM, but I am sure there is not a uniform's invoice although there may be some data on other aspects.

.With kind regards, Rene' Chartrand

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