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Uniform of the 15th United States Infantry Regiment, 1812

Marko Zlatich

WHILE on his way to Albany, New York, to take command of the 15th Infantry Regiment, Col. Zebulon Pike stopped in Philadelphia to take care of some important matters relative to his command. Writing to Thomas H. Cushing, Adjutant General of the United States Army, Colonel Pike informed him on 13 July 1812:

I have found it will be to the interest of the service and of my Corps in particular for me to remain for three or four Days, by which means I am in hopes to obtain a report from my Lt Col of what clothing has been recieved with the strength of the Regt in order for me to be enable to make my requisition — and Cause to be forwarded the balance due — Shall also get my standard & Battalion Flags with other arrangements of importance.... They are making up a suit of Coats sufficient for a Regt of Drab turn'd up with Green, and of Gray turn'd up with black — probably I shall take the latter.

Zn Pike Col 15th Reg.¹

On 20 July, Colonel Pike wrote to Callender Irvine, Superintendent of Military Stores, presenting a return of the clothing needed for the 15th Infantry for the year 1812 and a return for "colours, drums and fifes.... I wish not a moment lost in my being furnis'd with the Standard and Battallion Flag as I desire to teach my troops the veneration due to so sacred an object previous to our approaching the Enemy."² In fact, on the same day Pike was writing to Irvine about the timely need for regimental colors, the materials to make the regiment's stand of colors were in the process of being sent to a Miss Leslie, one of the many flag makers then resident in Philadelphia. Benjamin Mifflin, Deputy Commissary of Military Stores, had ordered George Ingels, Military Store Keeper, to send a quantity of chenille cloth, consisting of six pieces of white, six pieces of black, and three of lilac, "To furnish a Standard for the 15th Regiment Infantry, Col. Pike."³

Taking a personal interest in Pike's requisition, Callender Irvine told Ingels on 13 August to set aside for the 15th "the light grey Coats, Infantry, [that] are intended for Col. Pikes Regmt," and urged him as soon as enough coats were assembled to fill Pike's order and send them on "immediately."⁴ In addition to the coats, Ingels was also ordered to pack for forwarding to the 15th Infantry and to Colonel Pike's attention in Albany, 74 pairs of epaulets: 40 for sergeants, 1 for the sergeant major, 1 for the quartermaster sergeant, 2 for senior musicians, and 30 for the corporals.⁵

Acting on information Ingels must have provided as follow-up to the foregoing orders, on 25 August Irvine sent to Ingels a comprehensive order to pack for transport to Albany by William Linnard, Deputy Quartermaster, clothing and accouterments for Col. Peter P. Schuyler's 13th Regiment, a quantity of all types of clothing to serve as a deposit in Albany,



Contemporary engraving of "General Pike Late of the United States Army." This portrait shows the probable distribution of lace or black trim on the gray regimental coats of the 15th Regiment. Smithsonian Institution.

and what had been ordered for the 15th on 22 July. Designated specifically for the 15th Regiment were 44 watch coats; 1,024 brushes and wires; 300 screw drivers; 300 gun worms; and "the 661 coats that are finished with black binding sufficient to trim them also 42 Sergts & 944 priv. Vests & 1024 woollen Overalls (mixed). Let Plates for the Caps for Colo. Pikes regt. be sent if possible."⁶

To confirm that the clothing and accouterments ordered on 25 August had been sent to George Merchant, Military Store Keeper in Albany, Ingels reported to Irvine on 7 September, that Colonel Pike's Regiment was sent "635 Privts Coats Drab, 42 Sergts do 42 [Sergeants'] Vests, 1020 Colo. [and] 1020 White Wool Overalls." As valuable and informative as is this report, Ingels introduces the color drab for the uniforms of Colonel Pike's regiment. Also, no mention is made in either this report or Irvine's 25 August order of the regimental colors for the 15th.⁷ Whether these colors were ultimately delivered to the regiment is unknown to this writer.

An additional indication of the true uniform of the 15th for 1812 is contained in a list of the clothing needed for recruits enlisted for the regiment during 1812 and in an order of

clothing to be addressed to Maj. E.L. Whitlock at Trenton: 100 "Coats such as were issued to the 15th Regt. [Grey]," 200 wool vests, 200 pairs of wool overalls, 200 pairs of stockings, 200 blankets, 150 pairs of socks, 100 roundabout linen jackets, 100 pairs of drilling overalls, 20 fatigue frocks and trousers, 200 stocks and clasps, 400 shirts, 200 "Infantry Caps complete [Say bands & Cockades & Eagles]," 200 pairs of shoes, 100 pairs of gaiters and buttons, 200 knapsacks, 200 canteens, 2 "Recruiting flags," 2 "Drums complete," and 2 fifes.⁸ The italicized words in brackets were added to the list by another hand, possibly that of George Ingels.

The use of both drab and gray in the above correspondence relating to the clothing of the 15th Infantry is indeed confusing. However, in all likelihood the 7 September 1812 response to questions put by Irvine to Ingels is in error because it lists only drab and brown coats being sent to George Merchant in Albany. But by 16 September the coats sent to recruits of the 15th were gray. Thus, based on the official correspondence of the Quartermasters involved in clothing procurement and issuance, the uniform of the 15th Infantry, commanded by Col. Zebulon Pike, was gray coats with black trim on the collar, cuffs, and button holes.

Notes

1. Zebulon Pike to Thomas H. Cushing, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1805-1821, Records of the Adjutant General, Microcopy 856, roll 1, Record Group 95, National Archives, Washington, DC.
2. Entry 2118, Pike to Callender Irvine, Philadelphia, 20 July 1812, Cox and Irvine Papers, Green Box 63, Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, NA.
3. Order from the Deputy Commissary's Office, 20 July 1812, Commissary General of Military Stores Fragment Order Book, Consolidated Correspondence File, Old Brown Box 1002, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA. In the original document, lilac is rendered "lalact."
4. Irvine to George Ingels Superintendent's Office, 13 August 1812, Cox and Irvine papers, Green Box 133, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA.
5. Irvine to Ingels, Superintendent's Office, Philadelphia, 21 August 1812, Cox and Irvine Papers, Green Box 133, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA.
6. Irvine to Ingels, Superintendent's Office, Philadelphia, 23 August 1812, Cox and Irvine Papers, Green Box 23, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA.
7. Answers to the Questions put by Capt. Callender Irvine, U.S. Arsenal, 7 September 1812, Cox and Irvine Papers, Green Box 78, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA. In addition to the clothing for the 15th Regiment, on the road to Merchant were 2,000 drab coats, 44 "Music do.," 88 sergeants' coats, 798 privates' vests, and 4,000 colored woollen overalls. Packed but not yet sent to Merchant were 1,922 brown coats, 1,000 drab coats, and 2,000 infantry hats. Colors and standards in Ingels' store consisted of embroidered regimental colors for the 1st Regiment of Light Artillery and 1st Infantry Regiment; embroidered standards for the 1st Regiment of Light Dragoons, Rifle Regiment, and 5th Infantry; painted colors for the 7th Infantry; and painted standards for the 1st, 2d, 7th, 11th, 12th, 14th, and 20th Infantry.
8. William Duncan to Ingels, Cox and Irvine Papers, Green Box 46, Records of the QMG, RG 92, NA.

Selecting a Sutler for the 102d Regiment, U.S.C.T., 1864

Lt. Col. Edward S. Milligan, AUS (Ret.)

SO #41 Beaufort S.C. July 6 1864
Council of Administration
Major N. Clark, Captain D.C. Benjamin, Captain A.E. Lindsay
SO #92 Headquarters 102 USCT
Beaufort, S.C. Nov 15, 1864

A regimental council of Administration composed of Major N. Clark, Captain John Bradley and Captain Arad E. Lindsay will meet at the quarters of Major Clark on the 18th instant at ten o'clock AM or as soon thereafter as practicable

to take in consideration the appointment of a sutler for the regiment and recommend a suitable person for the place and to transact such other business as may be brought before it.

[Signed] Edward Cahill
1st Lt & Act Adj.

By Order of
Col. H. T. Chipman¹

Note

1. Records of the Adjutant General, Records Relating to Volunteers 1846-1902, Entry 113, Order Books of Volunteer Organizations: Civil War 1861-1865, Book of the 102d USCT, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, DC.