FULL GAITERS - #212

Based on those in *Making a Continental Marine Uniform*. Washington, DC, US. Marine Corps, 1975.

BILL OF MATERIALS:

1 1/4 yards sturdy linen or cotton. Medium weight canvas is suitable in lieu
    of linen 'canvas-like "Russia Sheeting" or "Russia Duck".
2 black leather straps 1" wide and long enough to reach under the shoe
30 5/8" buttons
Zoes leather dye (for straps)
Black acrylic latex gloss paint

BASIC FIT AND COMMENTS:

    Fit as close to the leg as possible following the attached instructions. Sew on buttons and make button holes, keeping the button line straight. Put the gaiters on and make final adjustments from the side seam (and by taking tucks in the center back if needed), to make them fit snugly.

    Make sure gaiters do not rise higher than point where the shoe itself meets the heel of the shoe at the back and sides. While fitting gaiters use a piece of string in place of the leather strap under the foot. Gaiters should COMPLETELY cover the shoe lace area on 20th century shoes or the buckle on 18th century shoes—extending to the first bend in the shoe at the base of the toes.

    If gaiters are a bit too loose, try cutting the feet off heavy wool socks and wearing them over regular socks to fill out the gaiter without overfilling your shoes.

    Dye the straps before sewing them on. When gaiters are completed, paint with 3 coats of acrylic latex gloss.

FULL GAITERS

Gaiters are supposed to fit tightly and consequently, must be tailored. A button-hook should be required.

MAKING THE PATTERN:

First, take a pair of old trousers and cut off one leg above the knee. Cut a slit up the center of the front panel as far as the spot where the wearer's shin bone starts to straighten out. Put on the socks and/or stockings, plus the shoes it is planned to wear. Slip the pants leg on over these. Position the slit over the instep (at "C"). Take care to note that the profile of the shin is not straight up and down. Wrinkles will form in the shin area unless point "C" is cut high enough to allow the material to lie flat against the shin from "C" to "D".
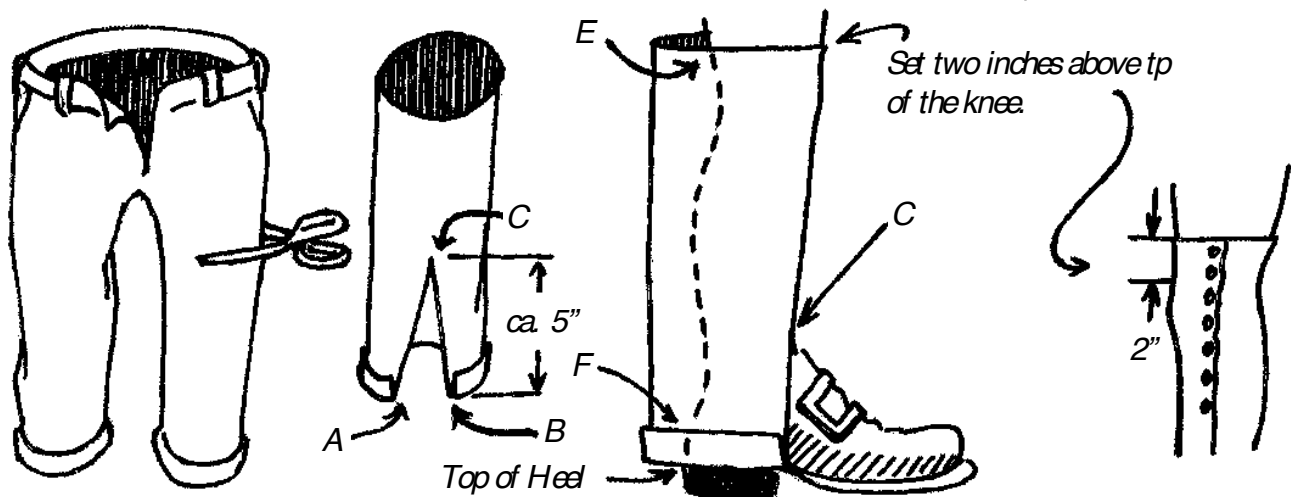

The bottom of the pants leg must line up with the top of the heel. If it is allowed to creep higher, the final result will be that shrinkage due to wetting, and tightening during construction, will cause the rear of the gaiter to catch on the top edge of the shoe at the heel.

Secure points "A" and "B" into position by sewing a piece of stout string from one corner to the other, passing under the instep. This will help when working on seams.

Grasp the seams of the pants leg with both hands at the same time. Pinch up the material until a tight fit is obtained at that point. Secure this fit with pins above and below the thumbs and fingers. This first pinching should be at the thinnest part of the ankle and knee. Take-up and pin a pinch at the Achilles tendon and rear of knee to get rid of wrinkles caused by the material bridging the curves of the leg between the rear of the knee (point "E") and the heel (point "F").

Continue pinching and pinning until a snug fit is established along entire inseam and outseam. At the same time, pinch and pin slack between points "E" and "F".

Mark a line from pin to pin on both sides of all pinched-up areas. Use white tailor's chalk or a thin piece of hard soap on dark pants leg, or a ball point pen on light colored material. Pull out pins; slip off the pants leg, and cut along lines to make a front and a rear pattern. Glue each pattern piece into the center of a piece of heavy paper, card stock or cardboard. Make sure the material lies flat and straight on each card. Draw a line on the card all around the fab-

String
knot at points "A" and "B".

Pin Line

E

F
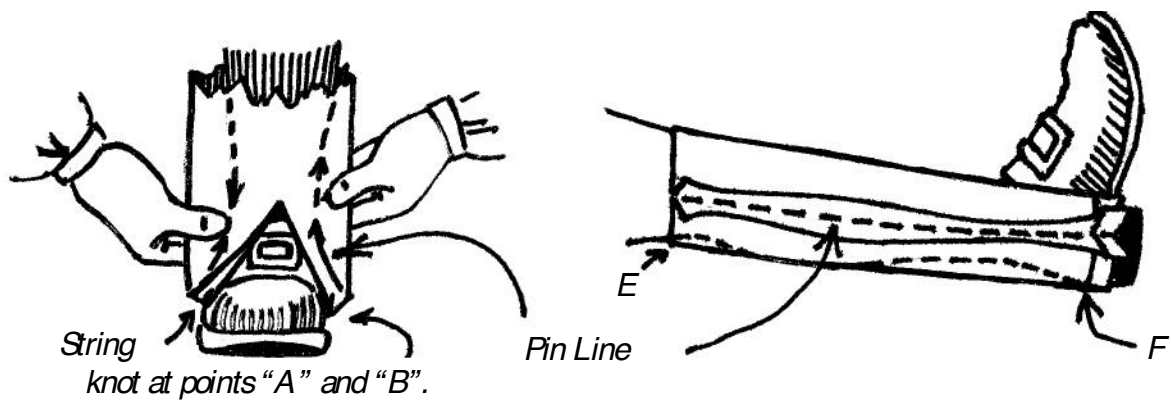
ric pattern, one (1) inch from the edge. From the OUTSIDE EDGE of the FRONT PANEL draw a second line two and one half (2 1/2) inches away. Cut the new, full sized patterns from the cards, including the long tear-drop shaped cutouts where material was pinched-up at the Achilles Tendon and the rear of the knee. Clip corners as shown to prevent bulky overlaps when the edges are hemmed.

Position the patterns lengthwise on the canvas so that they correspond to the direction of the strength-of-the-material; in other words, the longest threads in the fabric-part of the pattern lie in the same direction as the longest (warp) threads.


Right
Front
Pattern

Left
Front
Pattern

Fold Line

Cut Line
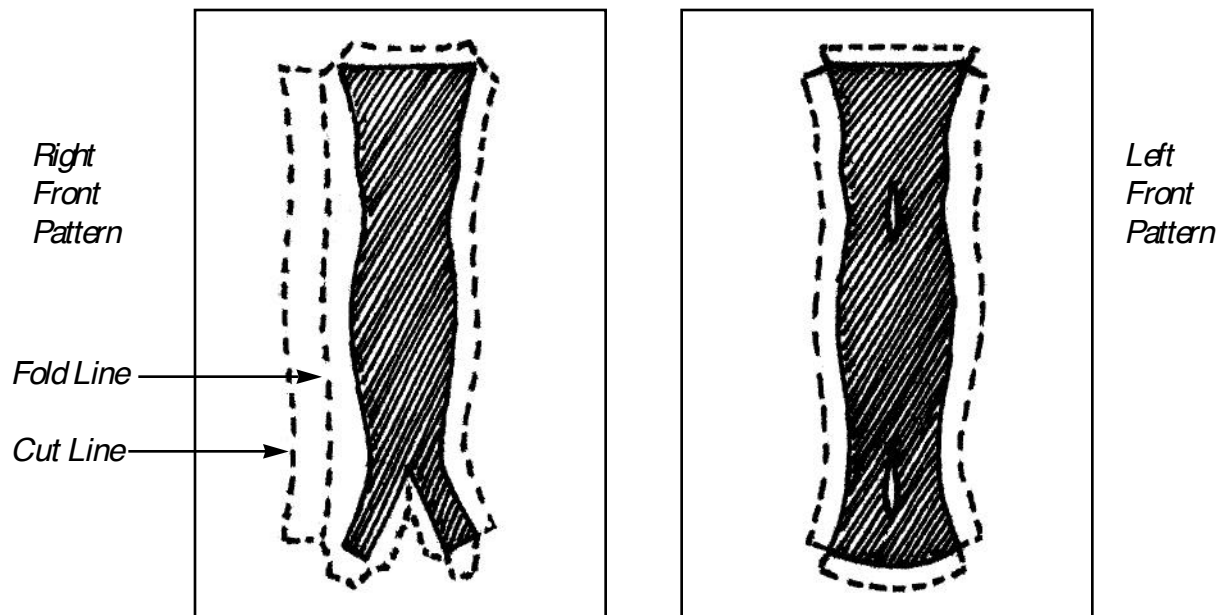
SEQUENCE OF CUTTING AND SEWING OPERATIONS

Operation 1. Mark around patterns with marker to produce two (2) fronts and two (2) rear pieces. Cut all four pieces out. Scribe fold-lines on the right (finished) side of both sets of panels.
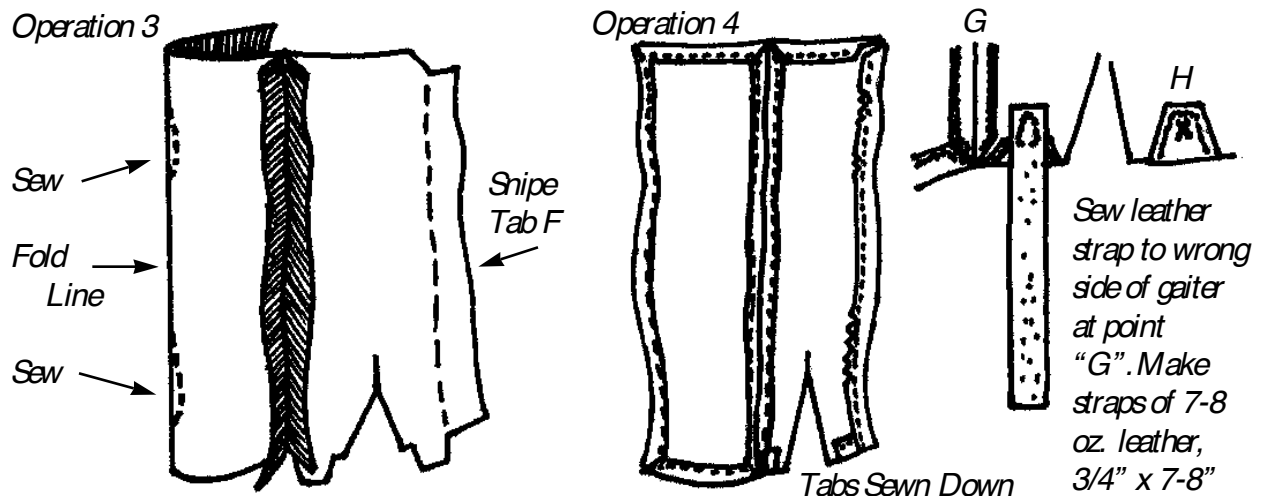
Cut off the paper tabs from the full size patterns. Follow the edge of the original fabric-pattern to produce a pattern for laying out the fold lines on the gaiter-parts. Save these fold-line patterns, with the full size patterns.

Operation 2. Pin front and rear panel of right gaiter along fold lines on inseams and sew. Use "whip-the-cat" stitch.

Operation 1

Operation 2

Inside Right Rear

Inside Left Rear
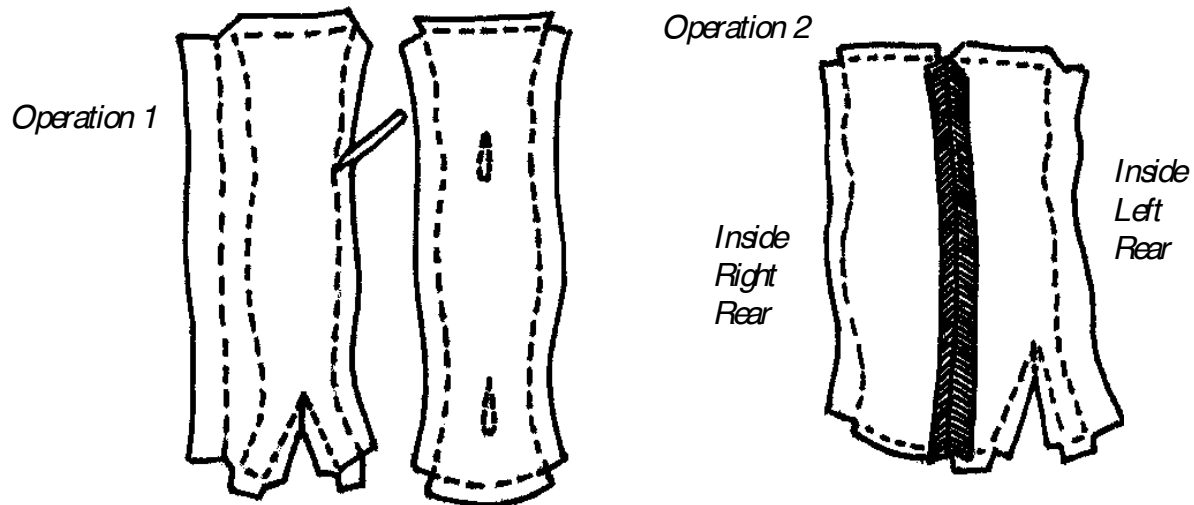
Operation 3. Locate fabric-faced pattern in true position on WRONG side of rear panel and mark teardrop shaped pinch outlines. Fold these outlines on center long-ways and sew together.

Operation 4. Turn all tabs and sew down flat. Fold button hole tab ("F") in half, length-wise, and snip the edge in about three or four places at the curves in the edge. Each snip should

Operation 3

Sew

Fold Line

Sew

Snipe Tab F

Operation 4

G

H

Tabs Sewn Down

Sew leather strap to wrong side of gaiter at point "G". Make straps of 7-8 oz. leather, 3/4" x 7-8"

be about one inch in depth. These snips allow folding this tab perfectly flat for sewing.

Operation 5. Put the gaiter on the proper leg. Secure it in correct position with heavy rubber bands or string. Bring strap down to point "G" under the instep. Insert free end of strap under gaiter at point "H".

Pull strap rather snugly into position, but not so tightly that the gaiter is drawn out of shape or placement. Mark the leather where it meets the canvas, and remove gaiter from leg. Lay leather strap on top of the canvas and stab a triangular pattern of holes through the leather and the canvas. It often helps to soak the area of leather with water before punching. Replace strap inside gaiter and line up punched holes. Sew securely with waxed linen thread as before.

Dotted line shows position of strap under point "H".
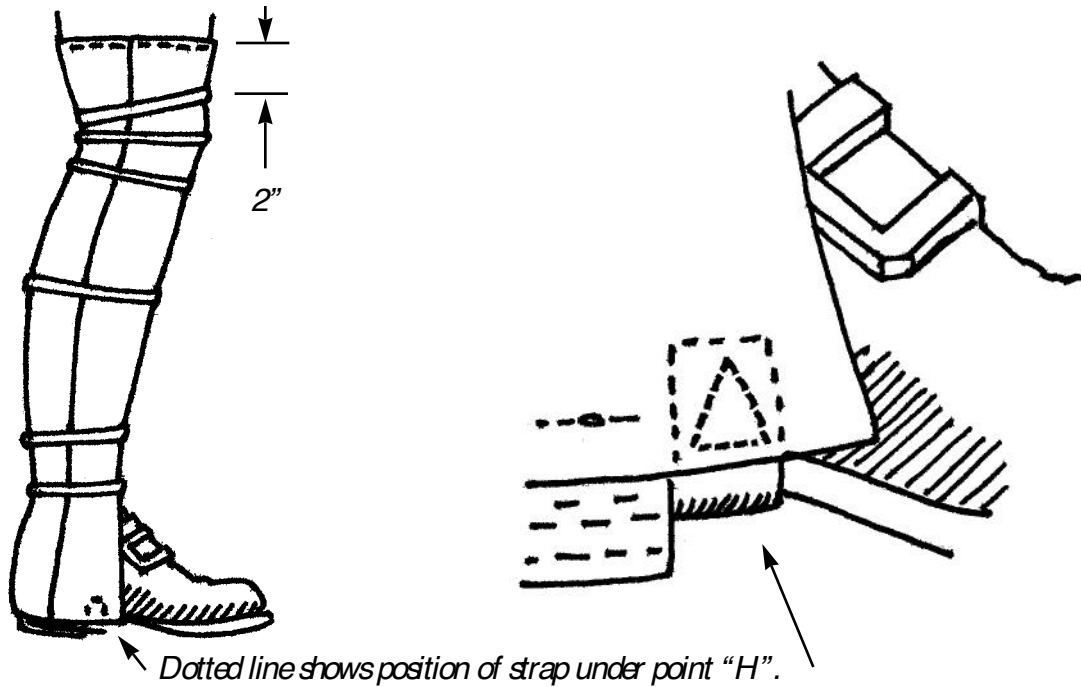
There should be no trouble slipping the gaiter on and off the shoe even though the strap is secured at both ends.

Operation 6. Making the button-holes: The topmost button-hole is located 3/4" below the upper edge of the gaiter. The lowest button-hole is 3/4" above the lower edge of the gaiter. The remaining button-holes are equally spaced in between.

Mark the location of each button-hole with a slit-line about 1/8'=' longer than the diameter of the button to be used. Buttons usually ranged from 9/16" to 1/~" in diameter. Button-holes end about 1/8" from the edge of the panel. Bind the button-hole using strong waxed linen thread.

3/4"

3/8" →

*Button hole length =
button diameter + 1/8"*

Operation 7. Sewing on the Buttons: Put on the gaiter again and fit it to the leg as it should be worn when finished. Secure the leg of the gaiter with strong rubber bands or string as before. Insert point of marker through each button hole at the rear-end of the slot and mark a button location point on the canvas beneath. Remove gaiter and sew a button at each mark. Use strong waxed linen thread to bind each button.

5/6

Operation 8. Making the Gaiter tongue: Turn under seam allowance from "A" to "C" and from "B" to "C"'. Pin or baste flat so folded edge is straight up and down.

Insert a 6"' X 6" canvas square under edges from "A" to "C" to "B", with one corner of square located at "C". Continue to tuck edges of square under gaiter until remainder of canvas lies flat against the shoe, covering the buckle.

Mark a match-line using sides "A-C" and "B-C" as guide. Mark a point on the tongue where the foot bends when walking. Mark corners on tongue where they match "A" and "B".

Remove canvas and mark a curved, symmetrical line from "A" through the toe-bend point to "B". Mark 1/2" seam allowance all around and clip all three corners. Cut out tongue, turn curved edge under. and sew flat.
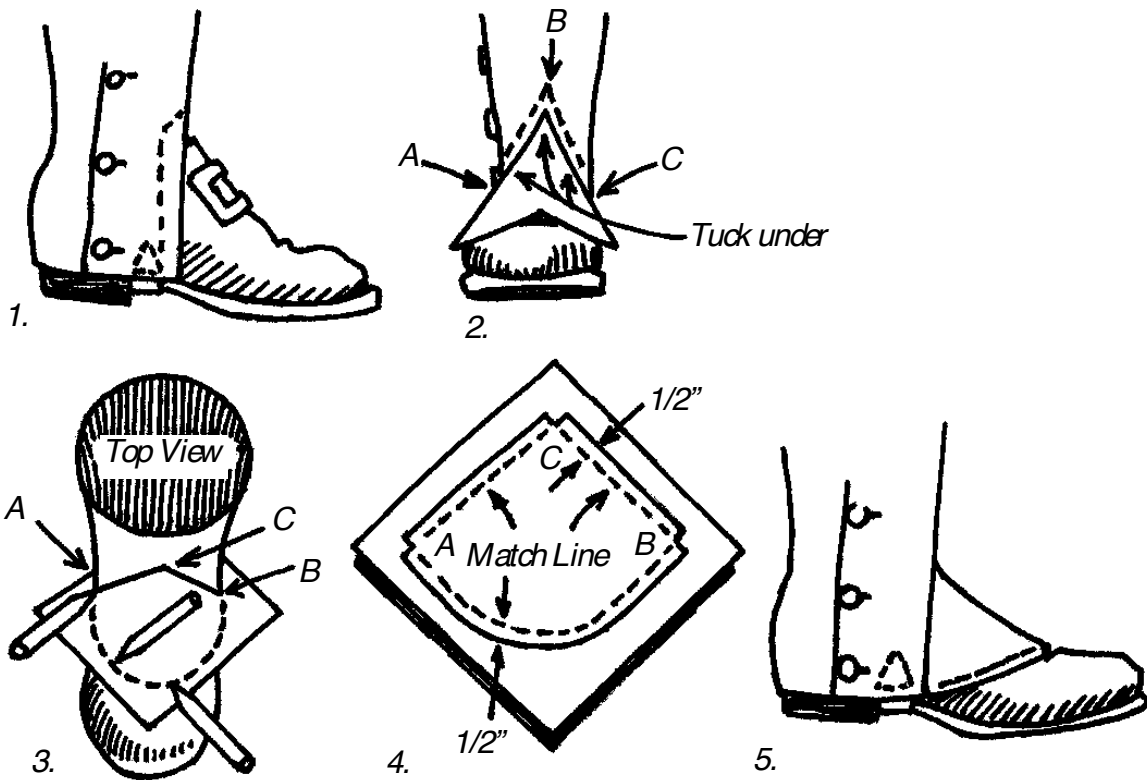
Remove gaiter and match lines "A-C" and "B-C" on tongue with edges "A-C" and "B-C" on gaiter. Sew together.

Operation 9. Painting the Gaiter: Once the tongue is secured in place, paint the entire gaiter with black acrylic paint — use two coats. Do not paint leather strap or buttons. Make sure to paint all visible folded edges and inside button-hole edge as far in as the button-holes go.

Operation 10. Shrinking the Gaiter: Dampen the gaiter thoroughly from the inside, and wear it until dry. The same results can be obtained by wearing the gaiter all day during rainy weather or marching through dewy grass. When the gaiters are dry they will have shrunk to form an even better fit than that which was obtained by careful tailoring.

Care of Gaiters: Paint leather straps with neatsfoot oil from time-to-time. Lexol is also good for preserving leather. Polish buttons with 00 grade steel wool, or equivalent. Repaint gaiters as required. Frayed edges must be reinforced by sewing, using a blanket binding stitch, or equivalent.