

## **Roy P. Najecki**

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*Articifer and Merchant of Revolutionary War Reproductions*

# Plating

24kt Gold, Sterling Silver, and Brass plating is available on many of my pewter and brass items. I can also plate items that you provide, such as buttons, buckles, gorgets and badges. The cost to plate a button is \$1 and approx \$5 for larger items such as gorgets.

If you have item that you wished to be plated, it must be clean and polished (no tarnish) down to the bare metal. The item cannot have any coating, such as paint, lacquer, fabric, or leather. If it has old plating that is cracking or flaking you must remove all the old plating. All items must have a hole or hook so the item can be suspended.

The rack electroplating process is used, as opposed to barrel plating. In rack plating, all items are suspended from a metal frame or rack with fine copper wire. The rack is submerged in a chemical bath that contains the desired precious metal. An electric charge is applied to the rack, and to the items via the copper wire. An opposite polarity electrical charge is present in the chemical bath. This causes an even but thin layer of the precious metal in the chemical bath to bond to the item. The longer an item is in the bath, the thicker the plating.

In barrel plating, items are tumbled in the chemical bath. This often leaves uneven plating where items rest against each other or don't receive the electrical charge. For items without a hole or hook, such as replica coins, this is the only way they can be plated.

Sterling silver plated items will tarnish. This can be remedied by placing a piece of aluminum in a plastic bowl. Place your item on the aluminum and pour enough white vinegar into the bowl so that all items are submerged. In a few hours the chemical reaction of vinegar to aluminum will brighten the silver.

Brass items often come out of the plating process with a dull finish. Common liquid brass polish will bring up the shine.

Plating is done in batches, generally when I have at least 50 items to do. Thus it often three months between batches of gold plating. There is much less demand for silver plating, so that is generally done twice a year, and brass plating is rarely done. So keep this in mind when placing an order. If you really want a few items plated, and can't wait until I have a 50 piece batch assembled, it can be done, but the cost will be \$50.