

Uniform and Authenticity Guidelines for Reenacting the 30th MS Infantry, Co. K "The Dixie Boys"



Purchasing Clothing and Equipment.

The first rule is to buy good stuff. Don't waste your money by getting all fired up and purchasing hundreds of dollars worth of junk. **RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY!!** Do your research, shop around, and buy one time. Otherwise, you run out and get something, then as you learn more about what the real/authentic stuff looked like, you wind up going back and buying all over again. You'll have plenty of loaner gear, but the costs of putting your kit together are doubled or tripled.

Don't confuse low-quality, junk loaner clothing or equipment with items from approved vendors. Most of the loaner items are our earlier mistakes, and we'd be glad to point out and explain our mistakes. These guidelines recommend vendors for specific items based on the quality and historical authenticity of the specific goods offered. While we're not prohibiting you from running out and buying your uniform from C&C Sutlery, for example, you'll be happier and a lot better served buying from one of the recommended vendors.

Buy your shoes first. We will rarely have loaner shoes that will properly fit you. Don't buy cheap or unapproved shoes just to get on the field. Make sure they fit you, then break them in. The next items you'll need are your shirt, trousers, drawers (if worn), suspenders and socks. Buy your mess equipment at or before your first event. Some of the recommended vendors have long delivery times. Don't order at the last minute. Plan ahead. Some of the recommended vendors do not travel to local events. Don't expect that you'll always be able to buy appropriate items from event sutlers. You'll have to purchase a good bit of your gear by mail-order.

General Appearance.

Hair. The military regulations of both sides required that the soldier's hair and beard be short. Study period photographs to determine how well you'd fit in. The Revised Regulations for the United States Army (1861) and the Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, (1863) both state: "The hair to be worn short; the beard at the pleasure of the individual; but when worn, to be kept short and neatly trimmed." Accordingly, hair styles outside the period norm are not negotiable. Women in the ranks must disguise their feminine qualities just as women in the ranks then disguised theirs; e.g. you must be indistinguishable from a male during in-ranks inspection.

Jewelry. A private soldier of the War rarely wore any jewelry beyond a simple wedding band. No wristwatches. Wristwatches did not exist (these were popularized during the First World War). They must be removed during events in order to make a more effective impression. This is not negotiable.

Spectacles. Period eyeglasses are required. Contact lenses are an excellent option, or you might consider going without your glasses when in formation (part of what all that insistence on "touching elbows" in company and battalion drill is about.) Eyeglasses are custom made, so you won't be able to use someone else's anyway. Besides, nothing ruins a meticulously assembled impression more than a pair of modern eyeglasses! Period eyeglass frames can be found at many flea markets or auction (farm) sales. Look though the antique and junk tables for the small, all steel or gold wire frames. They should be oval or rectangular. Frames of this type were used almost continuously throughout the 19th century. Round frame ("Hippie style") glasses were popular during the 18th century and were definitely out of date by the Civil War, so don't buy them! Once you get your frames the optometrist should be able to grind some new lenses for anywhere from \$40 to \$70, depending on the prescription you require.

Condition of clothing. With the exception of memorial and commemorative services, we typically portray an army on the march. Your clothing should not be pristinely clean when you arrive at an event. (In other words, leave the mud on it and look like you have been in the field for weeks, not minutes.) General Wm. T. Sherman's remark about his troops applied equally to Confederates, and should be your guide: "The longer these men are in the service, the more they look like day laborers than soldiers."

UNIFORMS

A. HEADGEAR

Hats are probably one of the biggest sore points among veterans, and can be the crowning glory or the peak of farbiness, depending on what is done to them and how they look. However, minor changes can often transform a farby piece of headgear into a perfectly authentic item. (And conversely, it doesn't take much to "farb up" a perfectly authentic hat.)

What to Look For: The most popular headgear was a civilian style "beehive" hat in light color. [EOG/CS -pages 166-169]. Types of headgear acceptable are listed here in order of prevalence:

- Civilian style "beehive" slouch hat;
- Wide brimmed, generally dark-colored wool felt slouch hat;
- Cap/Kepi - Jean weave material or wool, usually WITHOUT trim, but trim is acceptable;
- U.S. Army dress ("Hardee") hat with no added trim;
- Straw/plant fiber hat - period style only; or Mexican War period military hat.

Slouch hats should have the edge of the brim rimmed with grosgrain ribbon. Trim should be limited and NO hat brass (beyond that of a company letter - maybe) should be worn. The slouch hat is one of the most visible parts of a person's attire, and therefore should be of the highest quality. Black is the traditional color, but shades of beige, gray and brown add a nice touch of diversity to the ranks. It also allows for personal taste. The edge of the brim as well as hat band should be bound with grosgrain or silk ribbon.

Once a hat has been selected you may wish to make some changes to it. However, don't feel obligated to do so. Some folks will buy perfectly good hats, and then spoil them by loading them up with brass insignia, badges, pins, cords, plumes, and assorted animal parts (coon bones and or tails, feathers, etc.). There are documented ornate hats in existence, but keep in mind that you are trying to portray the common, not the unusual, soldier. A search through period photographs of Confederate soldiers will turn up very few men wearing fancy or overly decorated hats. Evidence suggests that most hats were brought directly from civilian life with very few changes made to them.

One of the most popular styles of the time was the round crowned, blocked woolen felt hat. The brims were kept curved up, especially on the sides. They were often edged with silk tape. The "Stetson" style cowboy hat, the direct descendant of the Confederate slouch hat, did not exist yet (contrary to Hollywood's persistent portrayal of the Civil War). Very few men wore "droopy" hats if they could at all help it. In fact, if the brim drooped down they would pin it up in front to get it to dry in that position and keep it out of their eyes. They would not leave it permanently pinned there however, but only until it assumed the correct shape.

B. SHIRTS:

What to Look For: Documented civilian or military pattern in 100% cotton, wool, or domet flannel. Look for small woven checks or stripes.

Shirts should be made of 100% natural fibers, e.g., cotton or wool. Plaids and checks should be woven, rarely printed on the cloth. Avoid the pure white "boiled" shirt, or be derided as a dandy. Basic assembly may be machine sewn, but exterior details and buttonholes shall be handsewn. Buttons shall be of appropriate size and made of glass, bone, agate or wood. (EOG/US - page 126, EOG/CS - pages 154 & 155). Shirts may have pockets as soldiers frequently requested the folks at home to add a pocket or two when making shirts.

C. JACKETS:

Jackets are where you typically learn that being an authentic Confederate reenactor can quickly get Expens\$ive. While shirt and trouser styles remained fairly constant (primarily civilian patterns) throughout the Confederacy, jackets varied widely from region to region and over time. (NOTE: The text below talks about a number of different jacket patterns and their usage by western Confederates; refer to Volume II of the Camp of Instruction for more detailed information and photographs of these jacket styles.)

Ideally, we should all be wearing the same or similar type of jacket, with differing degrees of wear and tear depending upon the age of the garment. A few scattered through the ranks may be wearing an older-issue jacket or a civilian jacket, but by and large the majority of the men in ranks should look somewhat alike. (That's why they're called "uniforms.")

Jackets should be of wool jean material and of documented construction and pattern. Jackets should be fully lined. When rank insignia is worn (and many Confederate NCOs did not wear stripes), only cotton or woolen tape trim should be used, and stripes should be individually sewn directly onto the jacket sleeve. Bars and stars for officers were typically sewn directly onto the collar, not on some sort of colored backing.

Pre-war Mississippi militia units typically wore an overshirt or a 9-button front shell jacket made of gray kersey, satinette, or jean wool. The Richmond Depot Type II jacket (in jean wool or blue-gray kersey; EOG/CS pp.134-135) is characteristic of this style, and is the closest thing there is to a "universal" Confederate jacket. This jacket was worn by the Army of Northern Virginia from early 1862 until the end of the war, and jackets of a similar, if not identical pattern were worn by Trans-Mississippi Confederates early and late in the war. If the budget will allow only one jacket for all your reenacting needs, a museum-quality RD2 is an excellent choice.

Beginning in November, 1862, the Army of Tennessee and Army of Mississippi were apparently issued jackets and trousers of what has become to be known as the "Columbus Depot" pattern (EOG/CS p. 143). The Army of Tennessee continued with wide use of the Columbus Depot jacket for the next two years. The army was issued new uniforms at Demopolis, Alabama in October 1864, shortly before the beginning of the 1864 Tennessee campaign. These jackets were likely jean shell jackets of what is called the Alabama, or "Mystery Jacket" patterns (EOG/CS p. 140). These jackets were worn at Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville, as well as the 1865 Carolinas Campaign, and many AoT Confederates wore them home after the War.

What to Look For: The most common jackets for Arkansas troops in the Army of Tennessee were as follow in order of their commonality/importance:

- Columbus Depot pattern shell jacket. Used from October 1862 through end of War.
- Enlisted man's single-breasted frock coat (State commutation uniform) Used from Autumn, 1861 until December, 1862.
- Civilian sack coat. Commonly used throughout the War.
- Department of Alabama pattern shell jacket. Used from October, 1864 until April, 1865.
- 9-button shell jacket, in gray jean-wool or English "army cloth". (The Richmond Depot Type II ("RD2") jacket in jeans or English or undyed kersey is a close replica and suitable substitute for this jacket.) Used from Spring 1861 to end of War. More common in early part of war (1861-1862).
- Civilian sack coat (EOG/CS pp. 146). Common throughout the War.

As a fresh fish, (or a veteran volunteer) your first (next) jacket purchase should be the Columbus Depot pattern. The Columbus Arsenal stayed in operation through April 1865, and when they finally closed down they still had a little over 13,000 uniforms in stock. See Geoff Walden's web page for details on this jacket type.

If your reenacting budget allows a second jacket, you should choose from one of the patterns listed above. Particularly recommended are a museum-quality RD2 jacket, or the jean frock coat.

One final note of caution. Many sutlers sell jackets which they claim are based on the "XX depot" style. They make extraordinary claims that are basically a lot of hype. Before you buy, please consult with one of the authenticity committee members about sources for the best made and least expensive jackets.

BUTTONS:

"Block I" or "Script I" on the Columbus Depot and Richmond Depot pattern jackets, wooden on the Alabama jackets. The large Union eagle coat buttons are okay, too. State and "CSA" button use should be very limited.

For the Columbus Depot jackets, Block I buttons, or in some cases soldiers transferred the state seal buttons from their old militia or commutation jackets to their new issue stuff. (or maybe they simply saved their old buttons for future use, and used them as replacements when a button was pulled or popped off.)

Ignore the urban legend about soaking your buttons in certain body fluids in order to "age" them. Portraying a Civil War soldier, your buttons would be issued shiny new, and should appear to be no more than four years old - not 135 years! Normal wear over a couple of events will give them the appropriate appearance.

D. TROUSERS:

Military issue style (gray, brown, or blue-gray jean cloth weave is preferable); limited use of civilian trousers is acceptable as well. Federal-sky blue in a limited form is acceptable for newbies.

We do not prescribe any specific or standard trousers, but we would like to urge members to stick to a Richmond depot style foot pattern. Typically these were made with mule-ear pockets and a belt-back. They are not the same pattern or material as Federal government type sky-blue kersey trousers!

Guidelines for trousers are much more liberal than with other uniform parts, and here especially is where personal taste is allowed to influence attire. Nevertheless, any and all trousers should be made of:

- wool/cotton jean cloth; or all wool twill or kersey material; or heavy 100% cotton drill (nearly the same grade as tent canvas); or all cotton jean cloth (similar to denim); or linen/wool or linen/cotton mix.
- Trousers colors should be dull. Woolens may be cadet gray, gray, blue, brown or black. White cotton trousers should be dyed blue, to reproduce the color of indigo, the most popular dye for cotton trousers at the time and still used in modern denim jeans.

Trousers should not have belt loops or leg creases. There should be no stripes or piping of any kind except on officers trousers (with the exception of trousers from the Houston Depot, which often had a half-inch stripe of tape down the outer leg seams). The pockets should be side-slit or especially mule-ear. Trousers must have button flies. Either tie-backs or belt backs are acceptable, but belt back trousers are preferred. Buttons should be made of either bone, pewter or lacquered metal. No zippers, back pockets, and especially no trousers "converted" from modern pants, please!

What to Look For:

- Military Issue - Richmond Depot style - Mule ear pockets, no yoke. Back belt with buckle. Made from jeans or cassimere for time period of Spring '62 through Winter '64. Wool kersey of the proper weight may be used for Spring '64 through Appomattox. Buttons may be bone, composition, or japanned tin of the proper style. Confederate issue wooden trowser buttons are acceptable in limited numbers after Spring '64.
- Military Issue - Other Depot Styles. Side seam pockets, no yoke. Back belt with buckle, and made from jeans or cassimere. Buttons may be bone, composition, or japanned tin of the proper style. Confederate issue wooden trowser buttons are acceptable in limited numbers after Spring '64.
- Civilian jean - Original patterns in gray, blue, brown or black. Hand top stitching, with hand-sewn button holes [EOG/CS - pages 125, 145, 146, 149, 152 & 153]. Buttons of bone, composition or stamped tin.
- Civilian wool - Identified style and pattern, hand-sewn button holes. [EOG/CS - page 152].

E. SOCKS:

What to Look For: Civilian socks, particularly hand-knitted cotton or wool [EOG/CS - page 175].

Plain gray rag wool socks are acceptable and most sutlers sell these at a reasonable price. However, knitted socks are really more accurate (these can be purchased at a very reasonable cost from Michael Black, Boyd Miles, etc.- see Sutler list). Wool for the winter months and cooler weather, and cotton for the warmer part of the year. They should be white, dull blue, gray, brownish-red, or brown. Also, a number of new, very authentic sutleries are selling well made, inexpensive, knitted woolen socks. Check with the unit "old hands" for sources of these. For marches, be sure to wear only woolen socks, not cotton!

F. SHOES:

("Brogans" was a period term; however, period documents consistently list them as "Shoes.")

For adults, period boots or brogans are the only acceptable footwear. Brogans are more comfortable for walking, and cooler, although some Confederate soldiers did prefer to wear boots. Metal heel-plates will extend their life and prevent excessive wear on the leather heels. Also, cork insoles increase their comfort. Custom-made boots are an option, however due to cost they are not recommended for new re-enactors (or poverty stricken veterans!).

Some re-enactors say that period shoes did not have grommets or metal eyelets. This is not true. Some period shoes did have metal grommets, metal eyelets and buckles. Most of these were manufactured in England and supplied to the Confederate Army through the blockade. However, they do not look like modern work shoes or work boots. Please do not buy modern shoes that look "old" and assume they are acceptable!

Going barefoot is an acceptable practice, however, shoes and/or boots should be worn during drill and battle, both for correct uniform requirements, liability issues, and reasons of basic safety.

What to Look For: All the above being said, the first purchase should be the Federal 1855 Jefferson bootie. [EOG/US - page 191]. Either smooth or rough side out is acceptable. Then when you are able, you should consider purchasing one of the specifically Confederate types listed below.

- Confederate Issue Shoes - Confederate issue. [EOG/CS - pages 174-175].
- English shoes or boots - Military or civilian styles. [EOG/CS - page 174].
- Identified civilian boots - Wellington boots have been identified. [EOG/US - page 172].

VESTS:

Vests were not issued by the quartermaster system of either side, but were privately purchased or sent from home. Wear by most enlisted men is probably not appropriate (unless you're not wearing a jacket); and is customary for officers.

What to Look For: Period civilian or military styles. Jean, linsey-woolsey, or cotton, made of period pattern, style and construction. [EOG/CS - pages 101, 106, 113 & 114].

ACCOUTERMENTS

A. HAVERSACKS:

Haversacks are for rations (food) and your mess gear only. After you carry salt pork, coffee beans, sugar, and your bread ration in there and march with it for a couple of days, you don't want to put anything delicate in your haversack. What the Skinners sell as "haversack stuffers" (housewife, toothbrush, comb, testaments, etc., really belong in your pockets or your knapsack. The haversack should hold only rations, your tin plate or canteen half, eating utensils, maybe a matchesafe. Strap or tie your tin dipper to the outside.

Also, fold and sew up your haversack strap until the top of the bag rides at or just above your waist belt (which should be at the level of your belly-button, while we're at it). It will ride a whole lot more comfortably that way.

What to Look For:

- C.S. Issue - Bag of identified C.S. pattern. Button or buckle closure.
- U.S. Issue - Bag of identified U.S. pattern. Tarred type with buckle and inner bag. [EOG/US - pages 199, 210 & 211].

B. CANTEENS:

What to Look For:

- **Wooden style - Specifically, the Gardner Pattern, made of cedar/cypress/cherry wood/etc. Various styles. [EOG/CS - page 209].**
- **C.S. Tin Drum style - Various sizes and styles, try to find a commonly identified type. [EOG/CS - pages 210 & 211].**
- **U.S. Issue (M1858 Smooth-Sided) - With or without jean or wool cover. If a U.S. canteen is chosen, select a tin, not stainless steel, smoothsided canteen. [EOG/US - pages 199, 206, 207 & 208]. Strip the sutler-supplied cover off and recover the canteen with gray or brown jean-wool.**

C. CARTRIDGE BOXES:

What to Look For:

- **Pattern of 1857 or 1861 .58 cartridge box and tins;**
- **Documented Confederate manufactured pattern box of leather or painted canvas and tins;**
- **Enfield cartridge box and tins (IF you are armed with an Enfield);**
- **Pattern of 1839 Box for .69 caliber weapons and tins. (This type uses the sling only; it doesn't have belt loops on the back. This is the main distinction between the M1861 pattern .69 cal. Box, which could be carried on either a sling or a belt.)**

Cartridge boxes will have the cartridge box tins appropriate for that box. Extra ammunition should be wrapped in proper packages.

D. CAP POUCHES:

What to Look For:

- **M1850 .58 pattern with regulation or shield front.**
- **Documented Confederate manufactured pattern of leather or painted canvas.**
- **Enfield style (IF you are armed with an Enfield and have the Enfield belt, cartridge box, and bayonet frog & scabbard).**

E. BELT PLATES/FRAMES & WAIST BELTS

Belts and belt buckles are available in many styles. Most are acceptable, but limit your impression to those readily available and documented. Black, two inch leather belts fitted with a simple roller buckle [EOG/CS - pages 192 & 195] or "Georgia frame" [EOG/CS - page 190 & 195] are excellent choices. State Issue are acceptable and CS or CSA but limited to Western pattern.

All waist belt plates are to have proper period construction (e.g. a brass stamping with lead filling, or cast brass). Use of an upside down US should be VERY limited. Waist belts should be black, russet or buff leather or painted canvas and appropriate to the buckle.

Many reenactors are beginning to use "tarred" or painted canvas belts and slings which are perfectly acceptable, especially when fitted with a roller buckle. However, if you purchase one of these items remember that tarred canvas was meant to be temporary. They never last as long as their leather equivalents. Interestingly, they cost almost as much as leather belts. Therefore, equip yourself first with a well made leather belt.

What to Look For:

- **Frame buckle. brass, either forked-tongue or the "Georgia frame" straight-tongued model;**
- **Atlanta Arsenal rectangular "C.S.A", brass or copper, solid cast (with the letters slightly off-center to the left) [EOG/CS - page 195].;**
- **Oval CSA belt plate (in limited use) is acceptable for new people**
- **Oval Mississippi belt plate, solid-cast brass (these were issued to early-war companies; they should become scarcer and scarcer as we portray events after the summer of 1862).**
- **British-import "Snake" buckle. (If you have an Enfield as well as the special Enfield cartridge box and bayonet frog and scabbard, you would have gotten this type of belt issued with them.)**

F. BAYONET SCABBARDS:

The Bayonet should fit its matched weapon. The standard Confederate bayonet would be the Gaylord pattern, which hangs diagonally off your left belt. Enfield scabbards should be matched with Enfield rifles, and with Enfield leather gear.

G. KNAPSACKS (Optional):

Many people are making knapsacks, so it is easy to become confused about what to buy. For comfort, the "soft-pack" knapsack is the preferred item. Federal knapsacks of the 1853/55 pattern are acceptable, but specifically Confederate knapsacks are highly encouraged. As an alternative to a knapsack, you can make and use a blanket roll or bedroll.

What to Look For:

- Federal double-bag knapsack (EOG/US - pages 212 & 213).
- CS Knapsack: Either a "Kibbler" pack (EOG/CS - page 202), hardpack (EOG/CS - page 205) or S. Isaac & Campbell, Co knapsack (EOG/CS - page 207).
- Mexican War Pattern. [EOG/CS - page 205].

WEAPONS

For new reenactors, the choice of a musket is an important decision. While our unit does not require the purchase and use of Enfields, we strongly recommend it for several reasons. First, it is the least expensive of currently manufactured Civil War long arms. Coming in around \$380-\$400, the Enfield is at least thirty dollars cheaper than the next most popular rifle, the Springfield. Second, it is much easier to keep clean than the brightly burnished Springfields and somewhat more reliable in my experience. Springfields, if not kept scrupulously dry or clean, tend to misfire. I have never had any of these problems with my Enfield. Third, it is historically accurate. The Army of Northern Virginia was predominately armed with Enfields from start to finish, and the number of Enfields in the ranks of the Army of Tennessee and the Trans-Mississippi troops steadily increased after the autumn of 1862 as captured Federal weapons became available from Bragg's Kentucky campaign and 2nd Manassas, and Enfield rifles started coming through the Gulf ports. However, if you have your heart set on a Springfield, by all means go for it! Confederate soldiers often scavenged M1861, or the newer 1863 Springfields from dead Yankees or abandoned baggage wagons when their own rifle failed for whatever reason.

When purchasing a musket, please be advised that most of the large reenacting organizations, require the use of 3-banded longarms in their sponsored events. This is for safety reasons! 2-band rifle muzzles are closer to the face and also very inconvenient to your file partner when firing in line. So, the Mississippi and Zouave type rifles are out except for very specific events.

All original muskets must look new and be in proper working order. Proper modifications of reproduction weapons should include removal of all anachronistic markings, burnishing of questionable parts, replacement of barrel bands, and stamping of correct markings.

What to Look For:

- P1853 Enfield Rifle-musket, .577 cal. Oil-finished stock. Blued finish on barrel. (ArmiSport is recommended brand. Euroarms, Navy Arms, and Parker Hale reproductions are more expensive but we would not discourage you from purchasing one.)
- US M1861 Rifled Musket .58 cal. Springfield. Stock finished in boiled linseed oil. Burnished finish. (Euroarms is the recommended brand for the government-issue Springfield. Better reproductions are available for the M1861 Colt Contract Special (from Colt Blackpowder Firearms, Signature Series) and the Amoskeag or L.G. & Y. contract versions (from Chattahoochie Black Powder Arms) which don't have the misfire problem which is common to the basic Springfield rifle, but these are significantly more expensive than the Euroarms. Avoid the ArmiSport M1861 if possible.)

AMMUNITION (BLANK CARTRIDGES)

Each soldier shall carry forty rounds in his cartridge box when the Company falls in at the beginning of each battle unless told otherwise. Each cartridge for .58 cal. rifled muskets will have no more than 70 grains of black powder; cartridges for .69 cal. muskets will contain no more than 80 grains of black powder. No Pyrodex or smokeless powder will be used. Officer's revolvers will contain appropriate charges for the weapon. No "wonder wads" are permitted.

Each soldier is responsible for providing his own caps and cartridges. (Steve Shore of the Capitol Guards produces period cartridges for company events, with the proceeds being applied to acquiring additional loaner equipment for the Company. Steve's prices are \$3.00 per arsenal pack of 10 cartridges.)

Blank cartridges should not be carried loose in the cartridge box. Proper tins or labeled packages of cartridges are required. This is a safety issue.

Each soldier will have at least enough caps to fire the required 40 rounds in his cartridge box.