

# The Tyrants' Foe

## The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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### In This Issue

- [Commanders Dispatch](#)
  - [Liendo Plantation](#)
  - [Top Me Off: The Texas Brigade and Slouch Hats](#)
  - [Confederate uniforms \(Part I\)](#)
  - [Frank Marek is a little "sew and sew"!](#)
  - [IMPROVING THE MAN IN THE UNIFORM](#)
  - [Manassas Wrap-up](#)
  - [Richmond Depot II Jacket Status:](#)
  - [Recon II Description <http://www.recon2.org/>](#)
  - [SOMETHING OLD; SOMETHING NEW](#)
  - [THE BRITISH "D" MESS TIN](#)
  - [Sutler Row](#)
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### Captain's Dispatch

With the exception of Manassas, our usual summer slow down is now over. The cooler temperatures this fall bring us to a welcomed relief from the heat of this past summer. Those of us at Manassas can attest to the extreme heat we felt in Virginia. Of course we can also remember the cold and wet Liendo from last fall. Hopefully this fall will be more in the middle of those two extremes!

By the time this newsletter is published our first fall event will over. John Bonin arranged for the TR locals to come to the George Ranch for a workday September 29th. We helped prepare the site for Texian Market Days. See the related articles inside about TMD. Later this fall we will take part in the Liendo Plantation event in Hempstead. This event offers the Houston public a chance to come out and see a reenactment. Recruiting a member or two for the Rifles is my biggest goal during that event. I hope to see a large turnout of our members to help make that possible. Finally the Brigade will host the Dickens on the Strand event. Last year about five or six of us attended. Again this is a great chance to recruit. Although the holiday season makes it difficult to find the time to participate, I hope to see many of you in Galveston.

Our year will wind down ( or wind up) with our company muster at Winedale, Texas. I would like to attempt a few new things this year at Winedale. Provided the weather and our Winedale hosts cooperate, I would like to do some Friday night outdoor activities. Some of you may be aware of an upcoming event called Recon II. It will be held in Virginia in early May. If there is enough interest, I have offered to raise one company from our regiment and attend the event. Recon II is a lot like Red River campaign, but only lasts one weekend. The R II event proposes to test a company's ability to fight and maneuver for 36, night and day. So it will be physically tough. With that in mind, I would like to use Friday night as a learning time for functioning as a company in less than ideal conditions. Stay tuned !

The big event push for 2002 will be Sharpsburg. At a meeting with the regiment this week, I was informed that 3 additional companies from Arkansas have agreed to join Hood's Texas Brigade. They will become the base of the 3rd Arkansas. More information on this will be coming to you in the regimental newsletter. This additional strength could prove to be a nice addition to our battalion at Sharpsburg. Keep your fingers crossed!

See you this fall!

**Captain Chris Strzelecki**

## Texas Rifles

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### Liendo Plantation

#### Liendo Plantation : November 16 – 18 Hempstead, Tx.

The Texas Rifles will participate in the action at Liendo Plantation this November. I hope the weather will be a bit dryer than last year. It is hard to imagine the weather could be any worse, but many of us have great imaginations!

I would ask that you arrive Friday night , November 16th. The company will need to drill before we fall in with the battalion. It is really hard for the company to drill if there are only three or four of us there. If you arrive Friday evening, that will give us that much more time to visit and catch up with all that has happened since we were last in the field in Virginia. The regiment will not provide rations so bring your own rations. I would encourage you to form messes with the men from your area, and plan your meals in advance. Even though this is a static event, we should come as if we were on campaign. If you can't carry it on your back, don't bring it!

It is also important for you to attend this event because at Liendo. You will elect the leadership for Company G, Reagan Guards. The names of the company commander, and nco's will then be forwarded to the corporation, Nineteenth Century Living History Association. In other words we must have our 1st Texas election at Liendo to make everything legal for the contract. I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

It is very likely that the 1st Texas will be the largest Confederate unit on the field at Liendo. Jack King will be the overall Confederate commander. Our company has a chance to show the regiment our skills and the level of our impression. This is just the kind of event to which you should bring that new recruit. Last year Matt Rechtien got his first real taste of reenacting at Liendo, and he has shown a great commitment to our company ever since. Considering the weather last year, Matt's continued presence at events is miraculous.

#### Chris Strzelecki

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### Top Me Off: The Texas Brigade and Slouch Hats

Nothing quite captures the image of the Civil War soldier as did the kepi and forage cap. We see through pictures and writings, however that the good old American slouch of felt brimmed hat was by far the most preferred by the men.

On two separate occasions the Texas boys of Hood's Brigade "issued" themselves new hats by stealing them from train passengers! The first time occurred near Richmond during the winter of 1862-1863. The hat needy Texans along with the properly "hatted" were camped along the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad. The tracks ran over a bridge on the deep and steeply banked Falling Creek. This dangerous crossing and the poor quality of Confederate rolling stock caused the trains to slow down for a safe crossing of the creek. The Texans would hide by the bridge and when the trains slowed; they would fire their rifles into the air and raise the rebel yell. Curiosity caused passengers to poke their heads out of the windows. At that point with the help of long switches, the Texans simply knocked the prized hats from the passengers heads as the train slowly pulled away. This was done until almost the whole brigade had new hats. Both J. B. Polley and William Fletcher remembered this event.

The next "hat issue" happened during Operation Westward Ho. "A Sketch of Hood's Texas Brigade" by Joskins says that he Texans were enroute by train to Bragg's army during the summer of 1863. On this rail movement the troop trains had the right of way. Civilian trains pulled onto a siding to allow the army train to pass. The civilians would customarily stick their heads out of the windows and cheer on the army. On several occasions the Texans took full advantage of the passing to snatch hats from unsuspecting well wishers!

It appears that the Texans of Hood's Brigade could not resist the opportunity to snatch a fancy hat.

Since I was thirteen years old and the Urban Cowboy craze was in full swing, I have appreciated the value of a good hat. Back then everyone has his own style of hat. There were various styles and shapes that let a modern day “dance hall cowboy” personalize his hat. Today the young sons of those Urban Cowboys all look like George Strait clones wearing cookie cutter black hats. No personality what-so –ever!

Today thanks to reenacting, I once again get to admire fine hats, and cast my eyes away from lots of lousy ones. Like everything on our arms and equipment list, there are degrees of quality in the hats we can buy. Felt hats are available for as little as twenty dollars. However if you’ve spent forty dollars or less, you probably don’t have an authentic hat. An authentic hat should be made of beaver for fur felt and not of wool which shrinks too much and offers less protection from the rain. You also want a ribbon sewn to the brim edge and either a ribbon hatband or no band at all. Seventeen of the twenty slouch hats in Echoes of Glory C.S. have this ribbon on the brim’s edge. There are a variety of styles to choose from today. The most common crown shapes are rounded, flat topped and bell crowned.

A new recruit or veteran, who wishes to improve his impression, would do well to buy a “fancy” hat. Your best bet is one of two choices. Tim Allen makes fine hats and comes recommended by Rob Hodge and Don Troiani. He has six styles from which to choose, but he is willing to make variations. My favorite hat company is the Clearwater Hat Company. They have a great variety of styles and colors. Both Tim Allen and Clearwater come period correct: fur felt, brim ribbon and band, quality linings with period maker marks. Everything you should look for in a hat.

As with most things in life, you get what you pay for. You will pay about one hundred dollars for a good hat, but there is not arguing the looks, durability, and overall quality that they provide over the “cheapos”. My advice is to go for the quality. Buy a good forage cap or kepi if you can’t afford a good felt hat yet. It will be much better than a crappy felt hat from Wal-Mart.

A good hat is more than just protection from the elements. It creates your character, describes your personality, and sets you apart from the crowd. Tim Allen says, “ your impression is only as good as your hat.” How good is your impression?

**Faithfully submitted**  
**Frank J. Marek**  
**Texas Rifles**

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## **Confederate Uniforms**

The study of American military uniforms has been pursued with increasing sophistication over the past forty-odd years, with the result that today we are light years ahead of our predecessors in nearly every period of our history. One area, however, remains only sparsely covered, and often is so dominated by the mythology of the past that the historical truth is difficult to discern.

The question of what type of uniforms the Confederate States of America issued to its troops has been of considerable interest for sometime, but to date little concrete evidence has surfaced that would allow us to differentiate between uniforms issued by the central government, those issued by the states, private or foreign purchases, and home made items. Despite some truly important work by members of the Company and others, we still remain ignorant of much of the inner workings of the Confederacy's supply system and clothing procurement practices.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, too, we are still too easily lulled by an appealing image of the "ragged rebel," and therefore naively accept the concept of Johnny Reb being supplied indefinitely by the folks at home, conveniently ignoring the fact that no army, however resourceful, wages war very long if it doesn't develop a workable supply system.

Part of the problem in this area has been that what work that has been done, particularly by Company members, has concentrated on the distinctive uniforms worn by particular units, almost always from early in the war.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of good reasons for this. First, if any information on a distinctive uniform exists, it is usually fairly easy to find in period newspapers, letters, diaries or photographs. Second, the information is usually specific enough to allow reconstruction of the uniform, and the reconstruction conveniently fits a format such as Military Uniforms in America. Finally, most of these early war uniforms were sufficiently different from one another to illustrate unit distinctions and, therefore, are fit subjects for a plate series.

This type of research is important and badly needed. It helps to fill gaps in our knowledge and hopefully we will see even more of it in the future. It has helped us to learn a great deal about the uniforms of southern volunteers as they marched to war in 1861. What it has not done, however, is to help us learn much very specific about what the majority of Confederates were wearing for most of the conflict.

In this latter area, we have instead developed a body of knowledge of what we believe the "typical" Confederate looked like. The best of this provides us only a rough outline, while much of it is often nothing more than loose guesswork.<sup>3</sup> There are a number of reasons why nothing more concrete has been worked out to date. First, the destruction, or at least the apparent destruction, of much of the Confederacy's Quartermaster records at the end of the war was a heavy blow to researchers. Compared to the massive Federal records, what has survived is a pittance. At the same time, much of what has survived has not been properly utilized. A great deal of useful information still exists, but it is scattered, and it takes dedicated work to retrieve it.

Second, research in this area has been affected by a school of thought that contends that Confederate resources, across the board, were uniformly inadequate to supply the army's needs, and that what Johnny Reb did receive in the way of clothing came overwhelmingly from the home folks. Obviously, in such a situation, there were no uniforms. Therefore, there's no point in looking for them.

Certainly, this school of thought was spawned and influenced by post-war Southern historical writing, much of which was directed towards justifying the Confederacy's efforts. Out of this school came the emphasis on the "ragged rebel." While certainly truthful at times, such as during the Sharpsburg campaign, the "ragged rebel" came to personify the Confederate soldier for the whole war. For southern apologists, it was a perfect image. Not only was the "ragged rebel" appealing as a staunch individualist fighting for his independence despite a lack of almost everything with which to do it, he also served as a plausible explanation for Confederate defeat. The more ragged and lacking he was in basic equipment, the more glorious his victories and the easier to accept his defeat. Other factors, such as unequal heavy industry, railroads, armament production and naval power were certainly far more powerful in their effects on the war effort than the clothing on the soldier's back, but the "ragged rebel" stood as a convenient symbol that has unfortunately obscured much of what the Confederacy accomplished, and has even diverted attention from some of the other things that went wrong."<sup>4</sup> Strangely enough, much of the legend-building was accomplished by a limited number of individuals, many of them the sons and daughters of the veterans.<sup>5</sup> Most of the veterans themselves, in their reminiscences, never addressed the problems of supply at all, and of those that did, a surprising number challenged the prevailing view. As an example, W.W. Blackford, who served on General J.E.B. Stuart's staff, noted:

"...In books written since the war, it seems to be the thing to represent the Confederate soldier as being in a chronic state of starvation and nakedness. During the last year of the war this was partially true, but previous to that time it was not any more than falls to the lot of all soldiers in an active campaign. Thriftless men would get barefooted and ragged and waste their rations to some extent anywhere, and thriftlessness is found in armies as well as at home. When the men came to houses, the tale of starvation, often told, was the surest way to succeed in foraging..."<sup>6</sup> A close look at contemporary Confederate records, including those for the blackest period of the war, reveal some startling statistics. For example, during the last six months of 1864 and including to 31 January 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia alone was issued the following:

104,199 Jackets 140,570 Pairs of Trousers 167,862 Pairs of Shoes  
157,727 Cotton Shirts 170,139 Pairs of Drawers 146,136 Pairs of Shoes  
74,851 Blankets 27,011 Hats and Caps 21,063 Flannel Shirts  
4,861 Overcoats

These were field issues only, and did not include issues to men on furlough, detailed at posts, paroled and exchanged prisoners or any other issues. Moreover, these were over-whelmingly central government issues, and did not include issues by any states except part of North Carolina's. During this same period, Georgia provided to the Confederate Army as a whole, over and above the figures quoted above:

26,795 Jackets 28,808 Pairs of Trousers 37,657 Pairs of Shoes  
24,952 Shirts 24,168 Pairs of Drawers 23,024 Pairs of Socks  
7,504 Blankets 7

At this same time, field returns showed the Army of Northern Virginia with a maximum strength of 66,533, including 4,297 officers. 8 Obviously, because of personnel turnover, the actual number of people in the army was somewhat greater; but at the same time it is obvious that with the exception of overcoats, hats and caps, and flannel shirts, many of which had already been provided, the Army of Northern Virginia was not only well supplied, but in some cases extravagantly so. Moreover, while the statistics quoted above are from the records of the Quartermaster General, there is evidence that at troop unit level, the material was being received and there was a perception of abundant supplies. On 3 October 1864, a board of officers was convened in Corse's Brigade, Pickett's Division, to examine a lot of 226 jean jackets to determine whether they were fit for issue. If unfit, the jackets would have been condemned and more requisitioned. This quantity would have outfitted nearly a fourth of the brigade, and is highly doubtful that experienced officers would have even considered condemnation of such a large amount of clothing had it been difficult to obtain. Obviously, it wasn't. 9 This same brigade announced in February, 1865 that officers could buy shoes from the brigade quartermaster, "...the immediate wants of the troops ...being supplied..." 10

Within the Confederacy's other armies, the same basic story seems to hold true, although some were not as well supplied as Lee's men. 11 Still, if scarcity was in fact not a problem, it stands to reason that at least some of this material ought to survive, and ought to be identifiable as Quartermaster products. Indeed, it can be, but not before one has a thorough understanding of the Confederate clothing procurement system.

The Confederate Quartermaster's Department was organized by Act of Congress 26 February 1861. This act, along with one passed 6 March, established the Confederate Regular Army, an organization with a paper strength of about 6,000 men. As finally organized, the Department was authorized one Quartermaster General with the rank of colonel, an Assistant Quartermaster General ranked as a lieutenant colonel, four Assistant Quartermasters graded as majors, and as many Assistant Quartermasters (AQMs) ranked as captains as the service might require. 12

At the same time, a second series of acts established the Provisional Army of the Confederate States (PACS) and authorized the President to accept up to 100,000 volunteers for 12 months to man it. 13 The Quartermaster's Department, by law was responsible for clothing only the Regular Army. The volunteers of the Provisional Army were to provide their own clothing, for the use of which the government would pay each man equivalent of the cost of clothing for an NCO or private in the Regular Army, generally \$25.00 for each six months. This was the Commutation System. Initially it seems to have been intended to provide a means of clothing the troops without having to build government facilities to do it, to take advantage of the easiest way to clothe the army, and to avoid the risk of stockpiling mountains of material that might become useless surplus if there was no war. 14

In the meantime, however, there was the Regular Army to supply. In April, 1861, the Quartermaster General, Col. A.C. Myers, ordered Capt. John M. Galt, AQM in New Orleans, to let contracts for 5,000 uniforms for Regular Army recruits. These uniforms were to consist of a blue flannel shirt to be worn as a blouse, steel gray woolen trousers, red or white flannel shirts, plus drawers, socks, bootees, blankets and leather stocks. 15 Caps were added later. 16 On 24 May, Galt was sent a memo detailing the new regulation uniform that became official 6 June, and which is well known through the published uniform regulations. It is important to keep in mind that at this time these were Regular Army regulations. He was told to receive propositions from contractors for 10,000 suits of this new uniform and to advise the Quartermaster General as to price and quantity that could be obtained in New Orleans. 17 Before he could respond, Galt received a flurry of correspondence from Richmond. On 31 May he was told to have suits of gray made up as fast as possible, and to let Myers know how fast clothing could be furnished. 18 Galt's reply that he could furnish 1500 full suits per week resulted in an order for 5000 gray jackets and pants, "...or any color you can get ...." 19 On 4 June, Galt was asked if he could supply 50,000 men from the resources of the city, 20 and the next day he was told to have "...clothing of every description, jackets, pants, shoes, drawers, shirts, flannels, socks..." made up as quickly as possible and sent to Richmond. At the same time he was told to stop the manufacture of the recruit clothing since the recruiting service was being discontinued. Once again, he was told to keep up the manufacture of the 1500 suits per week, although they were now to include "jackets" instead of the "tunics" prescribed in the regulations. 21 Unfortunately, Galt misunderstood his orders. In response to the question of whether he could supply 50,000 men, he contracted with B.W. Woodlief for 50,000 uniforms. This committed the Quartermaster's Department far beyond its resources, and on 12 June Myers responded to word of Galt being ill by replacing him with Major Isaac T. Winnemore. 22 Winnemore was told to stop all work on clothing, and to cancel the Woodlief contract. Therefore, very few, if any, of the uniforms prescribed by the 6 June regulations were produced. Myers' concern was not only with his budget, but with the quality and price of the New Orleans product and with the unauthorized contract with Woodlief. 23 More important, Myers was increasingly faced with the need to provide clothing on a far larger scale than had been envisioned or provided by law. On 5 June he had told Galt:

"... the mean description of cloth that the volunteers have been provided with is almost entirely worn out, and in a few weeks they will be destitute of most of the articles of clothing. The law requires volunteers to furnish themselves but as they cannot do so in the field, we must look after their comfort in this respect..."  
24

What Myers was announcing to Galt was nothing less than a radical new element in the Quartermaster mission. Whereas by law the Department was responsible only for clothing the roughly 6000 regulars, now it was taking on the open-ended responsibility of supplying some of the 100,000 volunteers as well. By mid-July, the new policy was in effect, with Congressional sanction, and the Department was beginning to supply those volunteer troops in need, the most destitute being supplied first. 25 A letter to Captain J.A. Johnston at Norfolk explained the new system:

"...if the Captains of Companies can make an arrangement to obtain clothing to be paid for out of the \$21 due for the next six months, after the Commuta-tion has been paid for the first six months, it would be better than to issue Government clothing to the Volunteers. If that cannot be done such articles of Clothing as are absolutely necessary may be issued to the Captains of Companies for their men, with in-structions that the value of the Clothing is to be charged and deducted from the \$21 allowed for the next six months..." 26

Despite the Department's good intentions, however, it was still only issuing clothing to needy volunteers, and then only when it had it In response to his requests for clothing, General John B. Floyd was told that the law required volun-teers to supply themselves, but when the government had clothing it was issued. At that time (July, 1861) the supply on hand was not sufficient to fill his requisition 27

By 6 September, a Clothing Bureau had been set up in Richmond to manufacture clothing, one of several that would eventually supply the armies across the Confederacy. 28 This Clothing Bureau had two branches: the Shoe Manufactory under Captain Stephen Putney and the Clothing Manufactory under O.F. Weisiger. Weisiger, a former Richmond dry goods merchant, ran the Manufactory as a civilian until he was commissioned a Quartermaster Captain in 1863. 29 Other manufactories were eventually established in Nash-ville, Tennessee; Athens, Atlanta and Columbus, Georgia; Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and Marion, Alabama; Jackson and Enterprise, Mississippi; Shreveport, Louisiana and else-where. Not all of the manufactories operated throughout the war, and by the latter half of the conflict the major centers were in Richmond, Athens, Atlanta and Columbus. 30

These Clothing Bureaus operated in much the same way as the U.S. Army's Schuylkill Arsenal. A limited number of tailors in each manufactory cut out the pieces of each uniform. The pieces were bundled, and with the necessary trim, buttons and thread, were issued to seamstresses who sewed them together and were paid by the completed piece. A typical operation was that at Atlanta. In April, 1863 it employed a total of twenty-seven men in-house: a Superin-tendent, two clerks, two inspectors, two trimmers and twenty tailors. These men cut and packaged the uniform pieces, while about 3,000 seamstresses in Atlanta did the actual sewing in their homes. With this force, the Atlanta operation manufac-tured, in the three months ending 31 December 1862:

37,150 Jackets 13,430 Pairs of Pants 13,700 Cotton Drawers  
10,475 Cotton Shirts 500 Flannel Shirts

Projections for the next year (March 1863-April 1864), if the material could continue to be supplied, were:

130,000 Jackets 130,000 Pants 175,000 Pairs of Drawers  
175,000 Cotton Shirts 130,000 Shoes 31

The Richmond Manufactory was similar in size and scope, as were Athens and Columbus. Quartermasters contracted with various mills for finished woolen and cotton goods, in many cases supplying the raw material. 32 At the same time, agents were dispatched overseas to procure materials, and in some cases finished products. Major J.B. Ferguson, who had been a purchasing agent for the Confederacy early in the war, was sent to England in Septem-ber, 1862 as the official Quartermaster purchasing agent there. He took over procurement of Quartermaster material from Major Caleb Huse, the Ordnance agent. These efforts began to yield large quantities of English Army shoes in 1863 as well as bulk woolen cloth. Although a good deal of this material was received in 1863, by 1864 the quantities were truly staggering. 33 On 10 June 1864, Captain Weisiger received 4574 yards of English gray cloth, followed by 4983 more yards on 13 June and 2983 yards of blue English cloth on 16 June. During the same period he logged in 8425 yards of domestic woolen goods from four different manufacturers, for a total of 20,966 yards

received in one week. This was a rather typical week, and although there were periods of lesser amounts, the overall volume remained roughly the same until the end of the war. 34 At the same time, a number of contracts were let with speculators for uniforms and cloth to be run through the blockade. Perhaps the biggest of these was let on 12 January 1864 with Haiman and Brother and David Rosenburg of Columbus, Georgia, for 100,000 uniforms. Delivery was to be in Liverpool, England in three batches, due on 1 May, 1 July and 1 October 1864. Initially to be procured in Prussia, the contract was later amended to allow purchase anywhere in Europe and extending the initial delivery date to 1 July and termination to 1 November 1864. A large portion of the contract had been received by July, 1864. 35

In addition to central government operations, the states procured considerable quantities of clothing. In many cases these items came from Ladies Aid Societies, 36 but several of the states, notably Georgia and North Carolina, ran their own Quartermaster operations similar to those of the central government. In the case of the latter two states, the Confederate Quartermaster's Department made loose agreements that those states would continue to supply their own troops, with the overage going for general distribution. 37 Longstreet's Corps, for example, received 14,000 uniforms from the state of North Carolina during the winter of 1863-64 38

By 8 October 1862, the issue system was considered to be strong enough that the old commutation system was officially ended. 39 Some troops, of course, had been on the issue system as early as the summer of 1861, while others did not get on it until late 1862 or early 1863. There is evidence that some troops in the west did not get off the commutation system until 1864 40 Still, in the main armies, the issue system was pretty much in place and functioning by 1863. The issue system provided a table of allowances for specific types of clothing as well as prices that were to be charged for that clothing. If the soldier underdrew the allowance, he was paid the difference. If he overdrew, the difference was taken out of his pay. Prices gradually crept upward as the war went on, but the basic allowance and prices as of October, 1862 were as follows:

CLOTHING ALLOWANCE FOR FOR THREE YEARS 41 Clothing Cap, complete Cover Jacket  
Trousers Shirt Drawers Shoes, pairs Socks, pairs Leather stock Great-coat Stable-frock (mounted) Fatigue  
overall Blanket 1st 2123334411111 2nd 1112324400100 3rd 1112324400111 Price  
\$.00.3812.009.003.003.006.001.00.2525.002.003.007.50

It was under this system, with clothing supplied primarily by the various clothing manufactories, and supplemented by state issues, contract clothing and foreign imports, that the Confederate soldier was supplied. Of course, captured Federal clothing and items supplied by the soldiers' families also played a part, but the extent of it is hard to gauge, because this clothing generally does not appear on the official issue records, or when it is, is not delineated as such. 42 The important thing to keep in mind about the Clothing Manufactories is that, in common with the decentralized nature of the war and the overall Confederate policy of each army supplying itself from its own departmental resources, the products of each depot varied depending on local resources. The patterns of the uniforms themselves also varied. Despite the fact that the Regulations called for "tunics" in 1861 and "frock coats" thereafter, the uniform prescribed by the 1862 issue system was the "jacket." There is no evidence that any of the central government depots produced frock coats in any numbers, although apparently some of the state operations did. 43 More importantly, at no time did the Quartermaster General detail to any of the depots exactly how the jackets were to be made. Thus, materials, cut, number of buttons, pockets and the presence or absence of trim were determined by each depot on its own, and probably changed as circumstances dictated. Materials used could vary depending on what was available at any given time. The Richmond manufactory, for example, dealt mainly with four textile mills. 44 Of these, the Crenshaw Woolen Mills of Richmond was capable of producing all-wool material as well as woolen goods on a cotton warp. 45 Kelly, Tackett & Ford of Manchester, Virginia produced a variety, including red flannel and some sky blue cloth. 46 Bonsack & Whitmore of Bonsack's Depot, Virginia also produced only woolen jeans while the Scottsville Manufacturing Company of Scottsville, Virginia apparently did the same. 47 In addition, the Richmond Depot also received a considerable quantity of imported English cloth. Lining material was almost entirely unbleached cotton osnaburg, produced mainly by the Matoaca Manufacturing Company, the Battersea Mills and the Etrick Manufacturing Company. These mills also produced shirting. 48 Despite the variety of materials, the patterns used for cutting the garments appear to have remained consistent over time.

What was true for Richmond was true for the other depots as well. Therefore, if today we find a group of uniforms with histories that indicate issue to a given army, and if those uniforms are consistent in cut, if not always in materials, they can usually be attributed to the main depot supplying the army.

Following are some tentative attributions of various uniform types to certain of the Quartermaster Depots. The term "tentative" must be emphasized here, for in over fifteen years of research and the examination of nearly 150 original Confederate enlisted men's uniforms, not one has yet been found with a depot marking, and none of those produced domestically even have a size mark.

Two basic rules of thumb in these attributions have been that there must be at least three surviving uniforms of a given type to constitute a pattern, and those uniforms should each have histories that indicate a common source. Moreover, if a uniform survives today and if the soldier who wore it was still in service in 1865, and unless there is evidence to the contrary, the uniform is considered to be the last one he was issued.

**There is a part two to this article lots more information (pictures) than can be fit in this newsletter. If interested in viewing this, please contact me or Chris and we can e-mail you the word document.**

**Rob Williamson**

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**Frank Marek is a little "sew and sew"!**

If you're looking for our new Richmond Depot II jacket, civilian or Richmond Depot trousers, kepis or suspenders, give Frank a call at (936) 257-1323. Or email him at ammarek/@juno.com He will be happy to accommodate you!

A note on suspenders: Until recently there has not been much research into suspenders or braces. That is with the exception of John Keahey's, the braces you find on sutlers row are just junk! "You've tried the best, now try the rest".

**Homer Simpson**

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## **IMPROVING THE MAN IN THE UNIFORM**

The Texas Rifles has been the premier reenacting group in Texas for many years. To be the best, you must constantly improve. We have done a lot of work lately to improve our outer appearance, but it feels as if we have been ignoring the "inner man". This means that although we may look a lot like confederate soldiers, we don't conduct ourselves the way that the Boys of '61 would have. I believe to get a better understanding of life in the Southern army we should act more like soldiers. What to do to improve? First, let's remember military decorum and rank structure. Our present Capitan, Chris Strzelecki, is a great guy and fun to be around and kid around with, but he also represents our commanding officer. Call him sir or capitan when we are at an event and especially if we are on duty. If you are called to report to him, salute him as you greet him and when he dismisses you. The same courtesies should be shown our lieutenant. Common soldiers of the 1860's were expected to show proper courtesy to their officers, and they were insubordinate, and were dealt with harshly if they did not.

A second thing we can do to improve our inner impression is to watch our language. I don't mean profanity, certainly soldiers cursed. The language we need to watch is the modern topics we discuss in camp. This includes reciting lines from our favorite movies and Monty Python skits, and dare I point fingers in my own face, those funny, funny Simpsons. We should also avoid reenactor politics. To improve our language we might discuss drill instead, or we can brag on our own military abilities. Maybe someone can bring a copy of a period newspaper to camp. By reading aloud to a couple of your chums, you will find all sorts of topics to discuss. Sharpen your first person skills by telling your friends about your life back home. What did you do? What was your family like? Is this war is the reason you left your hometown for the first time? Religion was a popular subject among the soldiers too.

The inner man can be improved when we go into battle too. What I notice occassionally and drives batty is when I hear someone break character and try to discuss maneuvering with an officer or first sargeant after the fight was started. I may come across as blunt here, but information the privates and corporals in the line have two jobs. Be quite and follow orders. Once the firing has started it is too late to discuss drill. It is up to the officers and sargeants to get us where they want us, and they don't have time to discuss technique on an individual basis with someone who

has a question. This also forces the officer or sargeant out of character. Save your question for later and do what you are told. If an officer makes a mistake, it is up to them to correct themselves and each other.

Another thing we can do before and during the fight requires more of a sense of imagination. Quite simply, the thing to do is to "just go with it". Listen to the cannon and musketry in the distance and let the anticipation build up within in. If one of the big guns go off near by and gives you a start, don't try to hide it. Let yourself be jolted. Grab your hat and duck your head. When we actually get into the fight, try to hear the rounds zipping over our heads. Try to feel the desperation and determination that the soldiers we represent must have felt. If you don't have such a sense of imagination, at least try not to ruin someone else's impression by starting conversations or laughing at someone else who is in their moment.

In conclusion I would like to remind you what shouldn't need to be reminded. The Texas Rifles are the best, but to stay the best requires hard work. It is work that, I believe, we are up to and will pay off ten-fold. We are improving on the outside every day. Let's continue that and also try to improve our inner impression. A great man once said "If you are not moving forward, you are falling backwards." Texas Rifles, let's move forward and NEVER YIELD!

**FJM**

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### **Manassas Wrap-up**

Well, the last national event of the year has concluded for the Rifles and we look forward to Texian Market Days in October, Liendo Plantation in November and Dickens on the Strand in December. Just a reminder, your web leaders will be checking in with you in the next week or so to see who is willing to help dig breast works for TMD. This will be a really cool experience and we are not going to require that you dig with your bayonet or cup like our brothers had to in former times.

For those of you who missed the First Manassas event, sorry; it was great fun. The Friday event involved fighting several skirmishes and a little bit of marching. I missed this part of the event so I don't have many memories of it. Our group portrayed an early war Louisiana regiment and hence havelocks and gaiters were the order of the day. We soon learned why havelocks disappeared from the scene in later war years, since they seem to cut off all air circulation. We spent most of the time wearing them in a ball on top of our hats. Several members with stiffer cloth havelocks put them up so that they looked like a group of flying nuns. Coronal Mount commanded after a long hiatus, but this time he was on the same level as the troops; no horse. We plotted for the right time when we could make horse clopping sounds as he walked up to address the troops.

Back to the event. The first major battle found us in support, but soon heavily engaged head to head with the Yankees, only yards away. A slug fest. With the enemy and our support regiments in all directions and milling around, the battle appeared to be as confusing for us and the event planners as it was likely confusing for the untrained troops in 1861. Continuous changing fronts, advancing and withdrawing. The good news is that we finally drove the enemy back, although several of us, including myself and Matt R. were killed. Not to mention names, but information obtained from other supporting troops confirms that Mike Lucas and Frank Merek were seen running from the enemy; or looking for shade?. Many others succumbed to the heat and not bullets. The news later reported that over two-hundred people (spectators and reenactors) were seriously affected with the heat. Ambulances were a continual sight on the battlefield.

The second day of battle found the Rifles in Stonewall's Brigade. Prior to the battle, Coronal Mount taught us how to form squares against calvary. Cool! We had an opportunity to do it during the day's battle. I'm sure we impressed even the Yankees with that maneuver. As always, our beloved Captain Strzelecki commanded with precision, forming a trapezoid (Polish Square) when a square was called for. Toward the end of the battle when the color guard was shot up, our own Robert S. ran forward to secure the colors. He then lead our portion of the Stonewall Brigade forward on a glorious charge; and the rest is history.

John Keahey and Pellum served with the regimental staff. Pellum kept us on step during drill and John continued to push us toward excellence. This involved introducing the regiment to THE FINAL PROPER manual of arms. If you missed this instruction, please get with someone who went so you can learn THE LATEST. Rob Williamson showed

up after several months out fooling around at work. It was great to see him again. FYI, his pants held up well this time. He was the usual pain in the butt as all sergeants are.

### **Trust and Go Forward. See you at Liendo.**

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#### **Richmond Depot II Jacket Status:**

At Winedale last year, many of us paid for cloth for a new jacket. I know that many of you have made your own jacket or have paid someone to make one for you. John Keahey has just about used up the 50 yards of cloth that the Texas Rifles have purchased. In addition he has purchased another 50 yards with his own money. If you have paid for cloth, please contact John and either have him make you a coat, or have John ship you the cloth so you can make your coat. With 50 yards due to arrive, John's sewing room is getting quite full.

If you haven't yet gotten a new coat, and you would like to order one, John Keahey has the cloth. There is sutler that makes our coat. You can make it, John can make it, or you can get Phil or Frank to make one for you. Of course our old coat is still grandfathered, and you are not obligated to buy a new coat until you decide that you want or need one.

After wearing my coat at Manassas, I can attest to the quality and the comfort of the coat. It was very nice. If you don't have one yet, you should seriously think about it!

#### **Chris Strzelecki**

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#### **Recon II Description <http://www.recon2.org/>**

Recon II is a campaign-style event at brigade level, involving combined arms (infantry, cavalry, artillery, and supporting troops), conducted under realistic conditions, using accurate organizations and procedures, and observed and evaluated by a corps of trained referees. Participating units will spend over a year in preparing for this exercise, using their own resources and those provided by the organizers.

We are seeking roughly equal forces of two or more battalions of 250-350 men, plus cavalry and horse-drawn artillery. Forces of other support arms (signal, engineer, etc.) may be accepted if the scenario allows. Depending on the scenario, there may be a limited role for stationary artillery in small numbers.

The scenario will be an adaptation of a historical situation – not a reenactment of an actual battle, but an event that might have happened, providing historical accuracy without making commanders try to follow a “script.” Both forces will be organized as brigades, with 2-4 regimental maneuver units of 250-350 men, plus supporting elements. Participants will include all commanders and staffs at brigade level and below, and the troops themselves; higher headquarters will be on site, but these will be used for maneuver control, providing orders and receiving and sending communications. Every aspect of operations, including supply, will be kept as realistic as possible within the limits of safety and practicality.

Like Recon 2000, this is an event for reenactors – there will be a limited (but realistic) sutler presence by invitation for purchase of last-minute items like ammunition and non-issue provender. There will be no spectators. The entire event will be funded by registration fee.

There will be a limited role for civilians; however, all these will be invited role-players. Like the Reconnaissance on the Rappahannock in May 2000, this event will be conducted under strict campaign conditions, with maximum safe and practical realism used throughout. Pay particular attention to these points:

- Recon II is not a reenactment, and it is not a “tactical” as the reenacting hobby has come to understand these terms. Like ROTR in 2000, this is a training exercise designed to improve the hobby's understanding of military operations from brigade commander down to the privates in the ranks. The old assumptions of the hobby are worthless for this event. You must think a new way – like soldiers.

Why are we doing this? Because reenactors who learned their “trade” in the hobby can never reach their full potential as interpreters of actual and living history if they stay within the boundaries of the hobby. Those who prepare for eighteen months and fight their way through the Recon exercise will be soldiers for a short moment. And when they go back to the familiar hobby, they will be better at it than ever before.

- Recon II will require extensive preparation by individuals and units that wish to participate and test their skill and determination. This is why we are getting your attention now – you have over a year to prepare. To help you prepare, we will provide you with training objectives (what you should be able to do as units and as individuals, the conditions under which you will have to demonstrate that knowledge, skill, and attitude, and how well you must be able to perform). Along with the objectives, we will give you “training tips,” as well as help in building a library of the best references to help you learn your trade.

- Recon II tests more than marching, firing and loading, more than the contents of Casey or Hardee – it extends the concepts of drill to the concept of war fighting. This includes the bread-and-butter camp and comfort skills of shelter and sustenance, but goes far beyond that – in essence, it goes a step farther than “campaigning” as we have come to know it.

- Recon II is not designed for campaigners only. Interested individuals and units from across the hobby should consider this test if they are required to do the work of preparing. This is a chance for everybody to learn new things over the next year, and to prove that new knowledge and skill in a challenging and realistic setting.

- Recon II will require organizational changes and compromises. Traditional reenactments are organized by affiliations of various sizes, operating in “scale.” This will not be the case at the Recon. Companies, regiments, and the maneuver brigades will be at strengths appropriate for the scenario – generally, a company will have a minimum size of 25-35 men, a battalion 250-350. This will require some new approaches, and it will sometimes by necessity cut across affiliations. In addition, this event will require the highest level of preparation by commanders. The people paying registration deserve the best possible chain of command for this kind of challenge.

- Units participating in Recon II will be assigned and organized at the discretion of the maneuver director and staff. If possible, battalions participating will be designated as historical units, and all soldiers assigned to a battalion will be part of that historical unit in spirit and in impression. We expect all participants to understand this, and to integrate it into the later training in the months leading up to the Recon. As registration stabilizes, unit POCs will be informed of their battalion designation, and given a historical sketch of their regiment and brigade. This information should be a part of unit and individual training. When you leave the registration points and join your regiments, we expect you to leave the 21st Century behind, and we will do everything we can to make this idea work.

- Opposing forces will be carefully balanced as to size and composition, and the organizations and historical context will be provided as it was in Reconnaissance on the Rappahannock.

We expect – in fact, we insist – that participating units maintain communication with the event staff. As soon as you decide to participate – and this should be as soon as possible, in order to allow for proper training and preparation – you will be contacted by a POC on the event staff, who will assist in your efforts, provide training material and advice, and keep you up to date on the development of the event. We cannot accept “walk-on” units or units that do not cooperate in the lead-up. If we let unprepared units “play,” we would be setting them up for failure. The point of this exercise is to be challenged and to succeed. During this exercise, you will be required to perform a variety of missions that are not part of traditional reenactments, and you will be expected to perform them properly. For example, out-posts will be established – but not simply a few soldiers thrown forward. Procedures described in Mahan and Butterfield and the Recon Manual will be demanded, along with offensive and defensive patrols. Contrary to what we experience at most tacticals and “campaigner friendly” reenactments, the small-unit missions are just as complex and demanding as the large-unit maneuvers from Hardee and Casey.

But you will also have to perform large-unit evolutions, and there will be more than one intense stand-up fight. Each battalion must be able to perform certain basic maneuvers; we will tell you what those are so you can practice them as the event approaches.

To do this, we must train carefully and over a long period of time until we are all familiar, literally, with the drill. This is at once simpler and more complicated than it seems.

First, when will we find the time? In a year and a half there should be ample opportunity. But a year can get crowded with events, and it's hard to get everybody together for special drills. My own unit holds a winter drill in February or March every year, and during that two-day period we tackle some of the less familiar operations. But one weekend won't be enough. The best approach is to set aside training time at all your scheduled events – reenactments, living histories – every time you take the “field” in your uniforms. One problem I noticed almost as soon as I took up the hobby was the huge amount of good training time wasted whenever we got together. Getting something useful done isn't always that hard, and it can be accomplished efficiently enough to have plenty of time left over to hang with pards if it is properly planned. Eventually, we started using a training schedule. It worked.

At larger events, there is always time to try out unfamiliar skills. If you are manning a picket line, either as part of a campaigner unit or just because your outfit wants to try it, don't just slouch your way through it. Set your company as pickets, put out grand-guards and outposts at proper distances. Go through the drill of relieving sentinels; run defensive patrols at night. Get the watchword procedures down perfectly. Fuss about coordinating with other units. It works! But you have to practice it before the great gettin' up morning.

The second problem is much more difficult to solve, and it is much more important and it pervades the entire hobby. The problem is, the Army was organized by regiment; we're organized by separate companies. Companies don't do things their way; they do them the regimental (and sometimes the brigade) way. These uniform procedures are called SOPs nowadays (standing operating procedures).

When a battalion gathers for an event, there tends to be confusion because the companies, like so many weekend militia outfits, have their own way of doing things. We try to solve this problem at the affiliation level, but affiliations don't have nearly as much time together as the companies do. Getting this mess ironed out is one of the most important tasks you will have to perform. Command and staff functions are actually the greatest challenge. This is because, though staffs tend to be more stable than agglomerations of companies (affiliations and battalions within affiliations tend to have an established staff system), those staffs seldom function the way real staffs do. The need isn't there at most events. As long as we have hay and water, all we have to do is run a dress parade, do a little drill, march out and fight a scripted battle, then sit around the fire. At the Recon, this won't work. We're going to have to be ready to go almost on arrival, there is only Friday set aside for organization and preparation, and the action will run continuously for 32 hours from “go.” The staffs will have to work. Not only that, but the operational authenticity requirements that generally apply only to the line will now be imposed on the staffs as well – and the staffs will be evaluated against fair but demanding criteria just as the battalions and companies will.

There will be (based on current plans) battalion and brigade staffs. Each side will have a brigade-equivalent with some reinforcing cavalry and artillery, and battalion and brigade staffs will function under sustained conditions for the entire tactical period. This isn't easy – nor is the execution of formal staff function, with its heavy requirements for formal, redundant documentation. Each side will also have a “division staff” with which it will have to interact (this is so everyone, including the force commanders, will have a realistic tactical environment to survive).

But all staff functions will be exercised. Each side will have a small train element of wagons and pack horses/mules carrying limited resupply. Rations will have to be broken down and issued. Orders will have to be written, logs of messages and actions maintained, headquarters security seen to 24 hours a day, communications maintained in both directions. People have to work together.

How will the staffs manage to transform themselves? The easiest way, actually, is just do it. Whenever a staff assembles for an event of any kind, make every effort to gather the people who will compose the field staffs for the Recon. And then – command and staff. Even if the event does not require it, go tactical. Go through the paper SOPs (we'll provide you the basic standards, and you can consult Kautz and other sources for the details).

As the months pass, you will be participating in the organization of your battalion or of the brigade from scattered companies and small groups of interested pards. Get started early. Help in organizing full companies, get to know those who will command, make sure they learn the procedures they will have to follow in interacting with their headquarters. A lot of it is more or less automatic, but it's the part that isn't that will cause the problems! Make every event a practice run for some set of procedures. Get involved! You can't get organized on the Friday before the Day of Jubilee.

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## **SOMETHING OLD; SOMETHING NEW**

The news reporters are right; the world changed Tuesday morning. Or more correctly the United States changed. And our country has been forcibly moved back into the mainstream of our times. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the citizens of the United States have leaned back, put-up our collective feet and devoted ourselves to... us. We felt that the world's many problems were not our problems and that no external threats existed to our country. We were wrong. I believe that the analogy with America's mental attitude prior to Pearl Harbor is striking.

Now we are faced with the greatest terror our country has faced since the Japanese kamikaze pilots of World War II. An enemy who is willing to die in order to kill Americans is something old. What is something new is that these enemies are no longer simply a direct threat to sailors on naval ships in a distant ocean. Not that the Japanese would have restrained from attacking civilians in the United States; they simply lacked the opportunity. Recent research has shown that Japan was developing long-range trans-Pacific bombers and biologic weapons with which to attack West Coast cities. The plagues these bombs carried had already been tested on Chinese towns. That is what one does in total war; strike the enemy as hard as you can in any manner you can. Unlike the Japanese, the new enemy can strike Americans anywhere, at any time. An infant is just as likely a target as the soldier is. And the cruel irony is that this enemy believes that he will go directly to paradise for murdering innocent people. God must be weeping in frustration.

Why are we targeted? I could say our fellow Americans died on Tuesday because of America's support of Israel. Or because our country has troops in Saudi Arabia, or because we bombed a chemical factory in Sudan. But the real reason is that radical fundamentalist Islam fears and hates us is for being what we are. They hate our music, they hate our politics, they hate our power, they hate our freedom and they hate our wealth. They hate and fear all these things about us because it is attractive to the people they seek to control. In short, they hate who we are because their followers might decide, for themselves, that the U. S. Constitution and popular music might have something to say to them as well as the Koran. We could all convert to Islam tomorrow and our planes would still fall from the sky, because America would never become what they are; narrow bigoted people seeking power through violence, using religion as a means.

How do we defeat such people? Regrettably the Houston protesters, calling for America to renounce violence, are wrong. Turning the other cheek will only result in more horror. Defeat them we must. We defeat them the same way we defeated the kamikaze pilots. Killing the kamikaze pilots as they attack is only a tactical response. The kamikaze threat was ended only after their political center capitulated; encouraged to do so by two atomic bombs. To stop the terrorist we must eliminate the political centers that spawn and nurture them. It is now a time of choosing. In Arthurian terms, the fellowship of the Round Table is broken; you are for Arthur and the light, or for Mordred and darkness. There is no compromise or middle ground. Every citizen, and every nation, in the world must choose the side on which they stand. They are for the light of civilized life, or they support the darkness that would murder the innocent.

Do we have the strength? Yes! As living historians we emulate the brave men and women caught-up in our nation's greatest tragedy, the Civil War. We can not open a book without being awed by the sacrifices made by what I consider to be America's greatest generation (not that the WWII generation wasn't great). Yet, think about our fellow Americans on the plane that cashed into the Pennsylvania woods rather than a building in Washington, D.C. An average cross-section of the American flying public, but when confronted with the intentions of the hijackers, these average unarmed Americans voted, in the face of certain death, to attack their tormenters and deny them the ability to hurt others on the ground. Classic American volunteerism! This is the kind of courage of which the average American is capable. It is why an American Naval officer in World War II said after a fight against an overwhelming Japanese fleet, "No higher honor can be conceived than to command such men." That kind of courage is what made the Civil War and World War II generations great and that kind of courage will guide this generation through to victory, if given the leadership it deserves.

I guarantee that Mr. Ben Laden, hiding in an Afghanistan cave rendered putrid by his presence, could not have conceived of that kind of response from Americans! It is beyond his understanding of us. He is an intelligent man who is knowledgeable about terrorism and the Koran, but he doesn't know crap about history and he is doomed to repeat it. He just made the same mistake that Mr. Hitler and Mr. Tojo made sixty years ago. You can needle America, you can insult America, and you can even kill Americans, but never attack America and present it with a clear moral mission. Do that and you have "awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with a terrible resolve." As you may recall from history, less than four years after Pearl Harbor Mr. Hitler's empire had shrunk to a small room

in a bunker. He committed suicide to avoid capture. The Japanese admiral who ordered the Pearl Harbor attack burned to death when American aircraft shot down his plane. And Mr. Tojo was hanged by us, a nation he despised.

And Mr. Ben Laben will end-up the same way they did!

**John M. Keahey, 9/15/01**

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### **THE BRITISH “D” MESS TIN**

How would you measure the effectiveness of an item of equipment? One way to measure the success of an item of military issue is how long it was issued until it was replaced. Now this is not always an accurate measurement device. For example, the British Army’s Trotter Knapsack. This knapsack was initially issued during the Napoleonic Wars in 1805. It was used by British foot soldiers until 1871. Under ordinary circumstances longevity of 66 years would indicate a useful knapsack design. However, in the case of the Trotter Knapsack, the reverse is true. The Trotter was a rotten design. Its primary virtue was that the Trotter looked great on parade. It was a frame knapsack with white buff leather straps. It held it’s shape and made the soldier look... well, soldierly. But, the carrying straps were intentionally so short that the Trotter had to be worn high and tight on the back. It could actually hurt to wear it and many British soldiers suffered from chronic back pain and/or numbness, what was called at the time “Pack Palsy.” The design was so bad that some British regiments went to great effort not to wear it. Regiments are shown in period illustrations wearing the pre-Trotter knapsack ten years after the Trotter became regulation. One regiment used captured French knapsacks for years. As the supply of French knapsacks dwindled, the still serviceable ones were passed-on to the regiment’s Light and Grenadier companies. The whole regiment therefore put-off using the Trotters for over a decade! In the United States some examples of military usefulness might include the M1816 Musket used in three wars over 49 years, the M1903 Springfield Rifle that fought through two world wars, or the M1840 Infantry NCO Sword that was issued for 54 years.

So, longevity can be an accurate measurement of design success. My favorite example of a successful piece of military issue was the British Army’s “D” Mess Tin. It was called the “D” tin due to its shape. The tin is formed like a capital letter “D” in its horizontal cross-section. It was constructed of heavy weight soldered tin with a copper wire bail (handle). The taller bottom portion was a boiler and the small top was the lid. Since the 1800’s version was of soldered tin, it could not be used to fry foods without melting the solder. During the time of the Civil War in the United States, the D tin was issued with a combination plate/bowl that nested inside the bottom when not in use. This nice little item had a copper wire handle that folded into the bowl when stowed. Nifty! When not in use the D tin fitted into a painted canvas case. The case had leather loops on its sides so that the case and tin could be strapped to the back or top of the knapsack.

In the United States Regular Army the D tin was never a regulation item of issue, but was recognized as a superior item of mess gear by militia and some states. Many knapsacks utilized by these troops had special straps in place on the back of the knapsack to carry the D tin. It was often termed the “Meat Can.” This name referred to the fact that the D tin made a handy way to carry the typical meat ration of salt pork. Salt pork was issued raw and therefore was greasy. One method of keeping the grease out of your haversack was to carry your meat rations in the D tin. By the way, in case you were wondering what the US Army issued as personal cooking gear during this time, it didn’t. The first US Army mess tin wasn’t issued until seven years after the Civil War ended, in 1872. Civil War era, and earlier, US soldiers were expected to purchase their own personal cooking equipment. The US Army issued personal eating gear such as a knife, fork, spoon, cup and plate, but all issue cooking gear was large capacity and suitable only for company messes. On campaign, the soldier was on his own for cooking gear. That is one reason why so many soldiers used old tin cans and canteen halves for cooking gear; the army didn’t issue them anything with which to cook!

All of this non-effort on the part of the US authorities to supply the troops with adequate cooking gear made the foreign British D tin look even better to American soldiers. The Confederates imported British military goods, including D tins, through the Federal blockade. They fit very nicely on top of the Issac & Campbell Knapsacks, in the iron loops made to receive the D tin case and its strap. The US Government never did catch on to the fact that the soldier might want to cook his food until, as mentioned above, 1872. Large wartime importation of British D tins into the North, if any were done, was by state and not Federal authorities.

So, how long did the D Mess Tin remain a regulation item of issue in the British Army? The D tin first became regulation issue to the British soldier in 1814, during the Napoleonic Wars. It remained an item of issue in the British Army until after World War II! For over 130 years the British soldier cooked his rations in, and ate from, his D tin. When the D tin was first issued, the British soldier wore a red coat and carried a flintlock smoothbore Brown Bess musket. The D tin was finally phased-out in the era of jet aircraft and missiles. The first D tin I owned was made of stamped aluminum and was dated 1943. It is identical in shape and function to Civil War era reproduction I now carry. The British D Mess Tin is my favorite example of longevity of a successful design.

**John M. Keahey, 8/31/01**

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## **SUTLER ROW**

The following contacts produce or sell goods of the finest quality. They are the recommended source of supply for members of the Texas Rifles.

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