

Western Confederate Generic Impression

(Mid to Late War)

by KC MacDonald

Introduction

In the pendulum swing of opinion regarding the actual uniformity of Confederate dress, we find ourselves now on the outward arc from the 'armed tramp with a gun' look, swinging towards the 'depot uniformed soldier' look. As is usually the case with such issues, the reality almost certainly lies somewhere in-between. Indeed, in the West I fear that evidence points to 'irregular' appearance being far more common than in the East, thus making generic recommendations more difficult.

For any Theater of War, I believe ultimately one can have no fewer than three generic Confederate impressions: early war (pre-depot issues, 1861 to Autumn 1862), mid war (Autumn 1862 through Spring 1864), and late war (Spring 1864 through Spring 1865). By generic I mean a set of kit which could have been worn by any soldier, regardless of state. Generally it is a good idea to start with a mid-war impression as it is most frequently used, then continue with more specialized impressions that might take your fancy. Here I will only deal with Mid to Late War kit in the West, hoping at some time in the future to produce a more generalized article on Early War Confederate impression in all theaters.

Before proceeding to Lazy Jack standards for our Western kit, I will attempt to justify some of the decisions made by reference to available evidence.

Evidence from Contemporary Accounts

In 1863, at least two British observers made significant observations on the dress of the Confederate Army of Tennessee: Lt.Col. Arthur Freemantle and Mr. Henry Yates Thompson:

"The men were good-sized, healthy, and well-clothed, but without any attempt at uniformity in color or cut; but nearly all were dressed in either gray or brown coats and felt hats. I was told that even if a regiment was clothed in proper uniform by the Government, it would be parti-colored again in a week, as the soldiers preferred wearing the coarse home-spun jackets and trousers made by their mothers and sisters at home. The Generals very wisely allow them to please themselves in this respect, and insist only that their arms and accoutrements being kept in proper order."

(Freemantle, Three Months in the Southern States, 1864, pg. 155 -- referring to Liddell's Brigade of Arkansas Troops in June 1863)

"On the way we passed an open space where were congregated some fifty or sixty men in various faded shades of butternut. Dr. L. said they were Confederate prisoners ... Only one of the prisoners hail a uniform, an artillery man in a buff jacket with red facings: the mass of Rebels in the West fight in their common clothes."

(Yates Thompson, An Englishmen in the American Civil War, 1971: 136 -- Diary entry made at Nashville dated November 17, 1863)

"Very soon a batch of about 200 Rebel prisoners were brought in, rough and ragged men with no vestige of a uniform, but with good shoes and looking well fed."

(Yates Thompson, *An Englishmen in the American Civil War*, 1971: 136 -- Diary entry made during the Battle of Chattanooga, dated November 23, 1863)

"I saw three or four dead Rebels, lying as they had fallen. The first gave me quite a shock. I came on him quite suddenly, his butternut clothing being the same colour as the leaves he was lying on; his head and feet were bare ... The next man lay on his face, black hair, holes in his boots."

(Yates Thompson, *An Englishmen in the American Civil War*, 1971: 136 -- Diary entry made in the aftermath of the Battle of Chattanooga, dated November 27, 1863)

Evidence from Contemporary Photos

There are few photographs from the mid to late war period of Western Confederates 'in the field.' Most notable of the handful available are the series of photos taken of captured Rebels after the Battle of Chattanooga, awaiting transport northwards. There are at least three separate shots of all or part of this group of Circa. 100 men (see *The Photographic History of the Civil War, Volume IV 'Prisoners of War'* section, Larry Daniel's *Soldiering in the Army of the Tennessee* pg.33, and *Time Life 'The Civil War' The Fight for Chattanooga* volume, pg. 155). Although lacking up-close detail, a lack of standardization in form and shade of clothing is readily apparent from these photos. In the clearest of these images (that reproduced in the Time Life volume) shell jackets and civilian sack coats look to be equally numerous, with headwear being mainly of flat and round topped slouches with only a few kepi's in evidence.

In contrast to the foregoing, rare Mid to Late War individual portrait photos present a more homogeneous face for the Army of the Tennessee, showing a good deal of depot issue clothing. This inconsistency might be explained by the fact that such photos were taken in towns like Atlanta and Mobile far from the field and close to depots, by soldiers on furlough and freshly equipped. They do however, supply us with interesting data in that they verify a geographically wide distribution of Western Depot clothing issue (from Louisiana across to Georgia) from at least mid 1863 onwards.

Western Depot Clothing of the Mid to Late War Period

A number of standard pattern depot issue jackets are known to have been issued in the West, these include the Department of Alabama Jacket, the Atlanta Depot Jacket, the Mobile or Mystery Jacket, and the Columbus Depot jacket (see Leslie Jensen's now famous *Military Collector and Historian* articles of 1989). For the purposes of generic Western impression, we can dispense with the Atlanta and Mobile patterns which appear to have been of relatively localized issue, concentrating on the more widespread Columbus and Alabama patterns.

Columbus Depot Jackets

Columbus depot jackets are the most widely documented Western issue jackets. They saw use from Fall 1862 through to at least Winter 1864 in the Army of Tennessee, and also were extensively employed by Mississippi-based troops during this same period. There are even some indications that this style of shell jacket was worn in the mid to late war Louisiana campaigns (e.g. photo of Albert G. Rich, Co. A, 6th LA Cavalry, Mansfield State Commemorative Area, LA) and that some examples made their way back east with Longstreet's troops after the Chickamauga campaign. (see Geoff Walden's fantastic 'Columbus Depot Jacket' website which is continually updated with new data: www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Quarters/1864/cdjacket.htm). Despite being dubbed by Jensen, 'Columbus Depot', this style of jacket was made in a variety of depots, not just in Columbus, GA, but also in most Mississippi depots. See my Trans-Mississippi part III article on this website. Obviously this is a VERY useful jacket to own, but how should it be constructed?

In Les Jensen's original (1989) work on the subject, he suggested that there were two types, Type I being the earliest, (circa. Fall 1862-1863 issues) which lacked an exterior pocket, and Type II being the latest (1864 issues) with an exterior pocket. However, as more original jackets and images have come to light this neat division cannot be maintained. There are 8 known surviving jackets of the pattern, at least 3 dated images, and more than 10 further (un-dated) images. What all share in common is a main cloth of light grey to light tan wool jean (machine loomed with few slubs or inclusions), collar and cuff facings (exterior only) in medium to dark blue kersey, and cotton osnaburg lining. What differs are the number and types of buttons, the number and location of pockets, the cut of the front lower margins, the cut of the back, and the nature of top-stitching.

1) Number and Types of Buttons

By far the most common number of buttons for this jacket, regardless of period, is 6. Six of the surviving jackets have this number as do at least four images. The most famous surviving jacket (the Woodward 9th KY, Autumn 1862 issue or 'Orphan Brigade' jacket) has only five buttons, as do two images, including the A.G. Rich (6th LA cavalry) image. Only one jacket (the Randolph 6th KY, December 1864 issue jacket) is known to have had 7 buttons.

The type of buttons originally sewn onto the surviving coats is often difficult to determine, as many coats had post-war replacements sewn onto them (e.g. Kentucky state buttons). The following buttons are believed to have been placed on surviving jackets at issue or during the war;

US Enlisted	Jenkins, MS cavalry, 1863 issue and the Randolph jacket
MS state 'I' two-piece	McDonnell, Cowan's Bty, early 1863 issue
Script I two piece British import	Weller, 2nd KY 1864 issue
Block I cast one-piece	Unprovenanced jacket

2) Number and Location of Pockets

In terms of both surviving jackets and images, Columbus pattern jackets with an external pocket are slightly more common than those without. Only three surviving jackets lack an external pocket the Woodward Fall 1862 issue, the McDonnell 1863 issue and the Weller Spring 1864 issue. All of these jackets feature two internal pockets (one on each breast). Surviving jackets with an external pocket are of two varieties. A straight left breast pocket, which is positioned level with the third buttonhole from the top feature on the Jenkins early 1863 issue, the Atkins 49th TN 1864 issue and the non-provenanced jacket. A slanting left breast pocket, which is positioned level with the fourth button from the top, feature on the Jones, 1st MO, early 1863 issue and the Randolph, late 1864 issue. Of these five jackets which feature exterior pockets, only two have an interior pocket those being on the right breast, the others lack them entirely. Interestingly, the two having both interior and exterior pockets were probably Mississippi Depot issues in early 1863 (the Jones & Jenkins jackets). Eight confirmed images don't help matters much. Four have the standard straight third buttonhole level pocket one of which is dated early 1863, two have the slanted fourth buttonhole level pocket, and two lack pockets, both of which are dated early 1864. Clearly, the presence, absence, or orientation of pockets shows no clear temporal trend, so I think we can safely drop Jensen's initial 'Columbus I' & 'Columbus II' typology.

3) Cut of the Lower Front Margins

This *does* appear to be a time-sensitive trait. Of the surviving jackets, six have curved lower front margins. The two which have square cut lower front margins are the December 1864 issue Randolph jacket, and the unprovenanced or 'Oklahoma' coat which is believed to be a late war issue. So generic mid-war Columbus Depot jackets *should* have curved lower front margins.

4) Cut of the Back

Columbus pattern backs may be either cut straight across or have a mild "tail" in the back. There seems to be no pattern in the distribution of this trait. Two jackets have the rarer 'straight' back: the earliest (Woodward) and the latest (Randolph)! However, it is by far 'safest' and most generic to have a jacket with a slight 'tail'.

5) Nature of the Top Stitching

This appears to be another time sensitive trait. Surviving jackets dating to before mid-1864 have a standard single top stitching. One late-war Columbus jacket, the Randolph, has double top stitching lines, one at the normal location, and the other closer to the edge. Two jackets the Atkins and the Oklahoma, have a curious 'Tait-style' extra top-stitching line running to the inside of the buttons on the right side of the jacket.

Top-stitching on most surviving jackets was done with dark colour thread with medium brown being a common choice. On the Mississippi examples top-stitching as well as the setting of the lining and interior pocket(s) was done by machine at a fairly long stitch length (7-9 per inch). On one example, the Jones jacket, the thread used was dark brown. On another, the McDonnell jacket, the upper thread was a dark blue and the interior thread was a medium brown. In general, the surviving Columbus depot jackets were well sewn, with buttonholes being closely stitched, rounded, and sometimes corded.

Department of Alabama Jackets

~~The department of Alabama jacket is much less understood than the earlier and more numerous Columbus pattern. There are four convincing survivals;~~

Pvt. J.A. Dolan	Austin's LA Sharpshooters	Issued late 1864/early 1865	-
Pvt. T.J. Beck	Fenner's LA Battery	Issued early 1865	-
Pvt. or Sgt. J. McDonald	8th MO Infantry	Issued late 1864/early 1865	-
Pvt. A.J. Duncan	31st MS Infantry	Issued mid/late 1864	-

~~All of the four survivals appear to have been issued in Alabama to either local defense forces or to the Army of Tennessee in lulls during the Atlanta and Nashville campaigns. It is supposed by Jensen (1989) that the jackets were produced in Columbus, MS and/or Demopolis, Alabama from mid 1864 until the war's end. The survivals, a few possible late war images from Mobile (AL) photographers, and stylistic similarities with late Columbus jackets, all testify to this pattern being of a late war date. Its earliest possible use would have been in the Atlanta campaign, and it certainly would be a 'correct' jacket for Hood's Nashville campaign, the defense of Mobile, and the Army of Tennessee's death throes in the Carolinas.~~

~~Common elements of the Department of Alabama pattern jacket are: base material of light brown woolen jean, collar facings (exterior only) made in dark blue jeans with a brown cotton warp, cotton osnaburg lining, straight lower front margins, straight back margin, no interior pockets, and a five button front. Variations in the jackets include, location of the exterior pocket, presence or absence of a belt loop, and the type of buttons used.~~

1) Location of the Exterior Pocket

~~Take your pick on this one. Two of the surviving jackets have their exterior pocket on the right, the Duncan and McDonald jackets, and two have it on the left the Dolan and Beck jackets.~~

2) Presence or Absence of a Belt Loop

~~One of the four listed jackets has a single belt loop shaped like a shoulder strap on the left side. The others lack them.~~

3) Type of Buttons

~~Two of the surviving jackets the Duncan and Beck, feature identical wooden buttons with have a central concave depression and only two holes. These appear to have been issue buttons. The Dolan jacket has no surviving buttons, whilst the McDonald jacket features original local two piece Confederate staff buttons, this despite the fact that McDonald would have been an enlisted man.~~

Western Issue Trousers

Western issue trousers are a subject on which precious little has been written. *Echoes of Glory* features five pair of Western trousers (see pp.129, 131, 149, 153). They follow three basic patterns, which may be classed as either, Richmond Depot, Georgia Relief, or Other Issue.

1) The 'Richmond Depot' Style

The Richmond Depot style pair, worn by Pvt. J.B. Beck (25th AL Infantry) in the Battle for Atlanta, is of light brown homespun jean, white drill inner-facings and pockets, and has bone buttons. Though categorized by Jensen as 'Georgia Relief' style, these trousers are similar to this style only in terms of materials rather than style of construction. In style they correspond completely with those known from the Richmond Depot: mule ear pockets, top fly button hole on the outside (i.e. top button shows when buttoned), and a buckle on a rear adjuster belt. All of this is not to say that they were made in or near Richmond, indeed this is unlikely. Rather, they conform in style to trousers today called 'Richmond Depot'.

2) The 'Georgia Relief' Style

So called Georgia Relief and Hospital Association trousers (only one known pair is marked as such), have two principal features, side seam pockets and a reversed top button (so that no buttons show on the exterior when done-up). The 'Georgia Relief' marked pair were owned by Lt. Hamilton Branch of the 54th GA infantry, and are presumed to be mid to late war in date. They are of a light brown jean with white drill inner facings and pockets, and bone buttons. It is unclear whether or not they are of buckle or button rear belt adjuster type, so either may be correct. Neither of the other two pairs in this style are likely to have been depot or 'association' made (the famous eccentrically striped Schumpert trousers, and the early war Phillips, LA Crescent Regt trousers). Rather, I would argue that the 'Georgia Relief' style are a civilian pattern known to professional tailors of the period and made sporadically for various Western troops during the war.

3) The 'Other Issue' Style

A pair of Western enlisted man's trousers, as yet unillustrated by publication, is present in the collections of the National Park Service at Gettysburg (C. Childs pers.comm.). This pair accompanies a matching Mobile or 'Mystery' jacket and is supposed to be of late war date and probable Alabama origin. Like many Alabama products of this time, the trousers buttons are of wood, smaller versions of the famed Department of Alabama two-holed 'basin buttons'. Charlie Childs dubbed these trousers 'Other Issue' and the name has stuck, though they might just as well be called 'Mobile' or 'Mystery' Trousers (see the County Cloth website). He notes that their key characteristics are side seam pockets, a button fastened rear adjuster belt, top fly button hole on the outside (i.e. top button shows when buttoned), and the absence of a rear lower waistbelt lining or 'curtain' on the interior. A pair identical to the foregoing (except that it *does* have a rear waistbelt lining) is in *Echoes of Glory*. These trousers were worn by Pvt. J.M. Hazellhurst whilst serving with the Georgia Battalion of Cadets in 1864 and 1865 as home guardsmen. This pair features bone buttons and white drill linings, being of made of homespun light brown jeans cloth.

Six surviving pairs of soldier's trousers for an entire theater of war is a pretty meager haul. I have heard tell of other surviving examples, Georgia Relief trousers in particular, but these are the only Western examples of which I am certain. Also, contemporary portrait photos are of little use to us here, as trouser pockets are inevitably covered up by the wearer's jacket. Basically, the three foregoing styles are documented and any one is as likely as the other to be 'generic'. However side seam pocket styles seem to be more heavily documented in the West, so have become desirable for differentiating a Western impression.

Lazy Jacks Specifications

The following guidelines are to be used by Lazy Jack members when putting together a Confederate impression suitable for use in the West.

In the following specifications, each acceptable item is followed by a code prefixed by the letter M or L. M stands for Mid-War Impression, and L for Late-War Impression. The number which follows the prefix is the notional number we should have in any group of 10 men and so it is best to see what we already have in the mess before choosing a particular option. Effectively, if followed, this will give the right sort of blended effect for the relatively anarchic 'Western Confederate Impression'. For each item I specify what makes it 'right' followed by some suggested sutlers. Recommended sutlers are listed by name or abbreviation, with a full list at the end of the specifications. I have tried to keep these to a minimum for two reasons: certain members of the Mess are capable of making kit to the standard of the very best 'hardcore' sutlers and have good knowledge of original pieces, KC for all clothing, Davey for haversacks and Jon for haversacks and leather work, as well as some brasswork. By producing what we use, we not only assure quality, but also reasonable price and (relatively) timely delivery. However some items can still only be had from sutlers row.

So, for jackets, trousers, shirts, etc... our policy is to buy top quality, correct materials and patterns, and either have the mess tailor (KC) make them, or contract them out to your wife, 'granny', 'auntie', or a tame tailor, Alternatively learn to sew yourself, its good fun and honest work! Remember that it is essential on most jackets, save for the McDonnell and Jones style Columbus Depot jackets, and all trousers, that all visible stitching is done by hand.

Jackets

COLUMBUS DEPOT JACKET (M6/L2)

The best basic pattern for the Columbus can be obtained from *County Cloth*. This pattern is based on the Weller jacket which has no external pockets, is a Spring 1864 issue and is broadly similar to the McDonnell 1863 issue. However it can be modified using the pocket pattern from the CC Department of Alabama jacket pattern and some judicious redrawing, to virtually any Columbus style. For our purposes, style your jacket on either the Weller/McDonnell CC pattern or the Jones/Jenkins pattern (see above).

For materials I recommend that, the only acceptable main material for the jacket is the *County Cloth* no.9. It is dead on right in both colour and weave, and is without the over abundance of slubs seen in some current materials. For the collar use *Family Heirloom Weavers* Dark Blue 'Kersey' [sic] (actually medium blue flannel) this again is the proper medium shade between navy and sky blue. For linings use only osnaburg, again that produced by CC is your best choice. For top-stitching use either brown linen thread or follow the McDonnell and Jones lead and use heavy cotton quilting thread and a wide stitching hand-crank machine using either dark blue and/or brown. There are three types of buttons which are suitable. Standard US enlisted button, by far the best, with the correct Horstmann backmarks can be obtained from *Warhorse*. Cast block I's, "the western button" purchased from *Hanover Brass* are suitable, however remember to specify red brass. And script I's, purchased from *Ben Tart* are also acceptable, but only for Spring 1863 onwards.

CIVILIAN SACK COAT (M3/L4)

A good pattern (M-020) for this is available from Homespun Patterns/James County Mercantile marketed by *Fall Creek Sutlery*. Usually 'Homespun Patterns' tend to run about a size and a half small, and are usually a bit on the short side. Make appropriate adjustments. You can enhance this pattern with external pocket facings (borrow from the Dept. of Alabama Pattern). Unfortunately I know of no 'Confederate Issue' sack coat pattern copied from an original, so stick to the Civilian style with turn-down collar which has diverse uses anyhow.

In terms of materials, here is a good chance to get out that stubby homespun and other more eccentric satinettes, broadcloths, etc. Remember however, that these should look like poor farmers coats, not Sunday-go-to meeting gear! A good range of suitable cloth for Civilian Sack coats is available from *Family Heirloom Weavers*. For linings you can use osnaburg, or splash out on some Silesia (polished cotton), or patterned materials. Again *FHW* is your source. For top stitching stick to thicker threads (cotton or linen) in natural shades of brown, or blues. A good thread source is *CC*, also in the UK we can get two appropriate shades of 'Irish Linen' carpet thread which works well. Alternatively, I have picked up some amazing 'antique' thread (still in excellent shape) at antiques fairs. For buttons try to get brass coin buttons or cloth covered buttons from antique stores or *Zaharias*, who is an excellent button source. Warhorse from time to time has 2-piece brass dome buttons ('Zouave Buttons') which can be useful. I also here tell that someone in the States is now making repro coin buttons, but I have not yet identified the source.

MILITARY OR CIVILIAN FROCK COAT (M1/LO)

Again good patterns (M-004 civilian, M-021 Confederate single-breasted) are available from from Homespun Patterns marketed by *Fall Creek Sutlery*.

For materials information see 'Civilian Sack Coat' section above. For the Confederate issue single-breasted frock coat, I recommend Union Eagles (*Warhorse*) or Cast I's (*Hanover Brass*).

• Trousers

RICHMOND DEPOT STYLE (M3/L3)

The best Richmond Depot Trousers pattern is available from *County Cloth*. In terms of materials use regular jeans cloth in any shade from light blue to logwood blue to grey, to light brown to dark brown. Shades of brown, however, should be the most common. Jeans material may have either a homespun or more finished look. For interior facing materials normally use drill, perhaps augmented by osnaburg for the pockets (drill pockets were normal, but osnaburg was sometimes substituted). For fly facings use drill or Silesia (polished cotton), with the former being the more common. You may substitute some patterned material off-cuts for the rear curtain or even the waistbelt. The backbelt buckle should be sturdy brass and of correct pattern (available from *CC*). Buttons should be bone (*Zaharias*), japanned tin (*Sutlers Stores*), or blackened horn (*Sutlers Stores*). Top stitching thread as usual should be heavy cotton or linen.

OTHER ISSUE OR GEORGIA RELIEF STYLE (M7/L7)

The *County Cloth* Other Issue pattern is the very model for this style, and it may be adjusted with little effort to conform to Georgia Relief, simply change the top button hole and button location on the fly, add a rear curtain, which may be lifted from the RD pattern, and if you wish, substitute a back buckle belt for the button belt. The best material for these trousers are brownish homespun styles from *FHW* or *CC* no.4 or 4b. Surviving originals are almost all made in a light brown to brown jean and top-stitched with natural thread. Buttons should be bone (*Zaharias*) or of wood (only the correct, *CC* small two-holed variety). Otherwise, follow materials for RD trousers above.

• Headwear (Hats)

SLOUCHES (M8/L9)

A wide variety of styles saw use in the west. Flat and round crowned (including 'bee hives'), with narrow or broad brims. The only rules are as follows; ribbon finish to the brim edge, handsewn leather sweat band, a period lining, and a ribbon around the base of the crown. These days its hard to do better than the Clearwater Hats sold by *Sutlers Stores*. Dirty Billy hats which are also available from *S & S sutlery* are a budget alternative.

KEPIS (M2/L1)

Increasing scrutiny of period photos is slowly bringing the kepi back as a viable headwear alternative for Confederates. Not to say that it should ever be anywhere near as common as the slouch (in the extant Western prisoner photos they are worn by about 1 in 10), but one or two are good for any messes impression. Easiest source is still *Dirty Billy* and *Greg Starbuck*, or pick one up from a journeyman hardcore sutler in the States. Also, it appears that Roger (the ACWS Confederate C-in-C) is making some amazingly good pieces, see him at an event with your cloth and specifications.

• Shirts

There are a myriad of possibilities for shirts, but here are some general guidelines. All visible needlework on supposed 'homemade shirts' should be hand sewn, though Union Issue and British Import Shirts may feature some machine work. No Mother of Pearl buttons should be used as they were mainly just post-war. Use bone, glass, or antique metal or cloth-covered buttons. Cloth should be restricted to those that can be purchased through *Family Heirloom Weavers*, or *County Cloth*, or use a weave or print that Jon or KC has Okayed as correct from another dealer. Good patterns are available from Homespun Patterns, at *Fall Creek Sutlery*, or from *County Cloth*. Make them yourself, or get someone else to make them for you such as KC. Alternatively, if you are feeling rich, order some excellent products from *Handsewin Shirts*.

• Underdrawers

An essential and practical piece of kit as they avoid chafing. The best drawers I have seen are by Nancy *Eddins* which use the proper Canton Flannel, glass buttons, they have a good rise, drawstrings, etc. Otherwise, improve a pair from the sutlers stores by replacing tin buttons and hand-sewing buttonholes, or better yet make a pair yourself. Purchase the underdrawer pattern M-011 from Past Patterns (*Fall Creek Sutlery*) and use canton flannel from *FHW* or *CC*.

• Socks

Period Style, handsewn, cotton or wool. Get your Auntie to knit you a pair or contact Nancy *Eddins* or Mickey *Black* who produces a decent pair of cotton socks. Also available at some good US events and retail sutlers.

• Brogans

For Army of Tennessee impression 'Confederate made' pegged Brogans are probably best, or Brogans modeled on English imports. A few Federal Jefferson brogans are alright, but they should not dominate. Do not be lured into buying russet brogans, unless they are styled on English imports. There are plenty of contemporary references by Southern soldiers and citizens that non-blackened brogans were seen as 'slave shoes'.

In a 1999 review of available products, the Watchdog rated the products of *MJN Boot & Leather Shop* most highly, and they are worth a look. *Jarnigans* were seen as being 'acceptable', and certainly far ahead of most of the rest of

the competition. Here in Britain there is *Kevin Garlick*, who in the past has done an outstanding job with British export style brogans.

• Braces, Suspenders

No elastic and no chrome or stainless steel parts to be used. Cotton, Canvas, Knitted Wool, etc. are fine. Adjustable suspenders should use period two or three tine buckles, the two tine variety are available from *CC* or *Zaharias*. Leather buttonhole ends or simple turnbacked and buttonhole sewn ends are acceptable. It is probably best to make your own, as the mainstream sutlers suspenders are generally not suitable. Alternatively, try *Nancy Eddins*.

• Overcoats

These were never as widespread as Army of Tennessee soldiers wanted them to be. So, some of the hearty souls in the mess may just want to throw a blanket shawl about them, or some other contrivance and shiver a bit.

FEDERAL ISSUE OVERCOAT (M2/L3)

The best one of these you are likely to get is from *C.J. Daley Historical Reproductions*, or you could put a great deal of work into de-farbing the *Jarnigans* model of the same type, which is not bad, but needs some changes. If you already have one, KC will instruct.

CONFEDERATE 'ISSUE' OR CIVILIAN STYLE OVERCOAT (M3/L2)

A number of Confederate overcoat variants have been preserved or were featured in portrait photos. A particularly widespread example is of western provenance, the 'Shiloh' Hooded Overcoat. If you want this hooded model, get a 'hooded overcoat' kit from *CC* which is guaranteed to be right. Or alternatively make one of the 'caped versions' with the *Past Patterns* pattern M-0 13. based on another original, buy the pattern and study it, before you purchase the materials.

• Guns & Bayonets

The following numbers in Larry J. Daniel's, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee* are informative: "An April 1863 report revealed that 44% (16,570 or 37,232) of the arms in Bragg's Army were short range smoothbores. Fortunately, at least for the sake of ammunition supply, all were .69 percussion smoothbores, the old mainstay of the Army of Tennessee. Another 37% were Enfields, and 14% were [rifled] Springfields, the balance being of various calibers [and manufacturers]."

The same source goes on to relate that by Spring 1864, 55% of the Army of Tennessee carried Enfields or [rifled] Springfields, 32% had Austrian rifles, and 11% had .69 smoothbores.

This goes well with our general mess policy that the ideal is to have both a .69 smoothbore and an Enfield (or a rifled Springfield). Ultimately, we hope to go to events with the entire mess having the same ammo type weapon .69 or .577/.58 depending on the scenario.

For 'makes' there are several alternatives, all requiring some de-farbing.

World Wide Arms - .69 Smoothbore Springfield

The Indian-Made .69 Smoothbore Springfield, available from *World Wide Arms*, is an excellent new product as yet unknown in the States. Much less de-farbing than the Euroarms is required with this model but remember to request

an 'Antiqued' stock and Bright Barrel when ordering. Add a bayonet lug, remove the rear site and replace the rammer with a correct model from Dixie Gun Works.

Euroarms - .69 Smoothbore Springfield

The Euroarms .69 Smoothbore Springfield is a solid piece of work, but requires some difficult de-farbing. Brass coat the foresight, strip and refinish the stock with linseed oil, remove makers marks and replace the rammer with a correct model from Dixie gun works. The hammer is also 1/4" shorter than the original and the barrel mouth needs rounding out.

Euroarms or Parker Hale - .577 Enfield

A book has been written about de-farbing this piece by Geoff Walden,- you will need it! See KC for further information, as he has done his.

Indian Pattern Enfields

~~Indian Enfields are notoriously wonky, but (bizarrely) the most correct model going. Only a proper rear site needs putting on. The sling swivels and brass escutcheons are correct, as are the barrel bands. Even the finish is usually oiled rather than varnished (though this varies from gun to gun). Some lockplate engravings are also perfectly correct. If you get one that does not fall apart then you are onto a winner.~~

Euroarms - 1861 Springfield

The Euroarms 1861 Springfield is one of the best reproductions on the market. It only requires the stock stripping and refinishing with linseed oil and the Euroarms makers marks removed. Pity the Confederates could not get their hand on more of them!

• **Bayonet**

Original Enfield bayonets are not hard to come by in the UK, are not too costly, and hey, they are the real thing. Just make sure they fit (or have a hope of being made to fit) before you buy. Otherwise good reproduction bayonets for all guns mentioned above may be had through *Jarnigans*.

• **Bayonet Scabbard**

I have no idea what Army of Tennessee bayonet scabbards looked like, and I do not know anyone who does. A safe bet would be the early pattern (two rivet) US waist belt scabbard which is available from *Missouri Boot & Shoe* alternatively *Jarnigans* produce one which is acceptable. Be sure however to specify your gun type when ordering.

• **Waistbelt and Buckle**

Most waistbelts worn by the Army of Tennessee appear to have been unmarked black bridle leather, based on photos and survivals. Variants on this are possible but should be rare. Take care that the leather is not too thick as is often the case with 'blanks' bought in the UK and on some examples from *Jarnigans*, especially the Roller Belt. Another essential is that belts be handsewn with proper waxed linen thread.

GEORGIA FRAME (M6/L5)

The best buckles of this type can be obtained from *Hanover Brass* in either yellow or red brass. All are cast from molds made of originals. Alternatively, Jon sometimes has castings on hand made from his own original buckle. The actual belt can be purchased either from *Jarnigans* (the belts of this type purchased in the past have been good thin bridle leather) or from the *Trans-Mississippi Depot Company*.

ROLLER BUCKLE (M2/L3)

The only acceptable roller belt of which I know comes from *Trans-Mississippi Depot Company*. The *Jarnigans* model comes stamped 'Selma Arsenal' which is a rare late war marking, the leather is also way too thick and their buckle is nothing to write home about.

C.S.A. (RECTANGULAR) (M2/L2)

The "C.S.A." rectangular plate is by far the most common 'marked' battlefield recovery plate in the Western Theater, and merits representation. Here again I would recommend a buckle from *Hanover Brass*. Good western casting choices include; T43 which is copied from an original recovered from New Hope Church, GA. or T44 copied from an original recovered at Picket's Mill, GA. Either of the foregoing to be cast in yellow or red brass. G51 copied from an original recovered from Lookout Mountain and cast in pewter is also suitable. Find the best 'blank' belt possible to go with the buckle.

• Cartridge Box and Sling

There has been some controversy lately in the Watchdog about Jarnigans cartridge boxes. Someone has pointed out that stitching lines are pre-punched with a sewing machine and then hand sewn apparently making them unsuitable. However, a traditional leather worker was quick to point out in response that leather workers at the time pre-marked their stitch lines with mechanical stitch wheels and then punched the holes, therefore making no real difference between the Jarnigans and traditional method, just as long as the sewing machine does not leave track marks. The upshot is that Jarnigan's boxes, which are still the most varied and most available line today, can still be used in good conscience.

For Army of Tennessee purposes I would recommend the following cartridge box models; US Model 1839 .69 calibre box, US Model 1857 .69 calibre box, British Enfield box, James C. Roberts, Bivens, Shelbyville .69 calibre box, .58 calibre Baton Rouge belt suspended box (suitable for midwar impression only), and the John Morrow and Son .69 calibre box. Good straps come with most boxes. An alternative sling is the Blackened Linen sling also available from Jarnigans. Purchase those that come in a hand stitched versions.

It is recommended not to use Eagle Breast plates, or the hyper-rare CS accoutrement plate on any of your straps or boxes.

• Cap Pouch

The Same comments made above with Cartridge boxes apply to Cap pouches. I recommend the following from Jarnigans; US early-war shield front cap box, the US 1850 mid-war cap box, the British Enfield cap box, the Confederate single back strap 1850 style cap box, with no makers marks and the Baton Rouge shield front style cap pouch, again this particular box is suitable for mid-war use only. Purchase those that come in a hand stitched versions.

• Haversack

CONFEDERATE CANVAS OR LINEN (M8/L7)

I know of no provenanced tarred Confederate bags from the Western Theater, so better to stick with plain canvas or linen bags based upon patterns from surviving examples. All visible stitching should be by hand, closure buttons should be bone, japanned tin, or use tie closures. Either get *Dave Turpin* of our mess to make you one to your specifications, or purchase from *Trans-Mississippi Depot Company* or *Haversack Depot*.

CAPTURED FEDERAL TARRED HAVERSACK (M2/L3)

These are lovely bags to use, but we should not have too many of them for this impression. Most Reproductions from mainstream Sutlers are too large (including Jarnigans), being cut for modern appetites. Though some may not like the initial glossy finish, most authenticists praise the Federal Haversack from *Haversack Depot* -- as do I. Prowling the US authentic web pages, they are the single most recommended supplier for this item. The reasons are the proper dimensions and shape (slightly rounded bottom), painted black with correct oil-based paint, flat felled seams, correct buckle closure. Plus, once you break it in, the gloss finish fades. It is worth noting the many "glossy" haversacks in both Confederate and Federal contemporary photos.

• Knapsack

Knapsacks have long gotten a bad press with Confederate living historians, no doubt in part due to the insidious influence of Canton McCarthy's spurious Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life. The truth is, these items saw a lot of use, and anyone who has done a lot of all-weather campaigning who does not recognise the merits of the knapsack over the blanket roll causes me to scratch my head in wonder. An instructive example comes again from L.J. Daniel's Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee in the form of a June 1862 quartermasters return from A.P. Stewart's Brigade: Of the 1256 men in the brigade, 929 have knapsacks. By this standard, in a mid-war impression 7 out of 10 of us should be carrying knapsacks, and only 3 out of 10 blanket rolls.

The question then is, which knapsack to use? I know of no Army of Tennessee knapsack survivals, save for an early war battlefield find of an Isaac and Campbell knapsack, so there are several possibilities. The two best choices are probably either a Confederate Single Bag (*Jarnigans* does an acceptable one of these) or a Mexican War/Kibler style soft pack. Sadly Czekanski Leatherworks, our former supplier, is no more, however Jon, Davey and KC are currently conspiring on a Confederate knapsack project, which should see us manufacturing our own shortly. Another choice is an Issac Campbell import bag which can be purchased from *Jarnigans*. *Trans-Mississippi Depot Company* is also offering knapsacks and though we have not seen them, if they are up to standards of the rest of their products they should be excellent.

Finally, you could just use your Federal Double bag as a captured piece but this practice should be limited, probably no more than two at any one time in a group of 10. The *Sutlers Stores* does a good double bag at reasonable price copied from an original. Only a few minor changes are needed to turn this into a first class bag, mainly reducing the area covered by internal leather anchors which are over-generous. Otherwise there are the *Jarnigans* early and late war Federal knapsacks which are both acceptable, though I have yet to see any authoritative article substantiating early and late war Federal knapsack differences. Finally, yet again there is likely to be a Lazy Jack's Federal Knapsack project based on KC's original from Vicksburg.

• Canteen

I have not listed either of the two wooden canteen variants below (the Gardiner pattern, and the shaped wood Nuckolls pattern), since good examples are notoriously hard to find, and the sutlers who make them seem to arise and disappear quite quickly. If you come across a correct one while in the States, snap-it-up! It would be nice to have at least two good specimens in the mess.

DRUM CANTEEN (M6/L6)

This is by far the most common canteen find on Western Confederate campsites, and generally under-represented in re-enacting. Buy the *C&D Jarnigan* 6" Drum, and not the 8" Drum version. Also specify a brown leather 1" wide strap and a 1" wide japanned roller buckle, or alternatively make a webbing/cloth/ticking sling. Improve the canteen further by discarding the cork that comes with the canteen and replacing it with a corncob or wooden stopper and replace the brass buckle on the leather sling with the japanned roller buckle. You now have a first class canteen which only requires some time in the field to give it that period look.

DRUM VARIANTS (M2/L1)

A few acceptable Drum Canteen variants are available from *Jarnigans*, but remember these are all modeled on comparative rarities and we should keep them to a minimum. Acceptable variants recovered from Western sites are the single sided round drum convex face canteen, the round drum convex bullseye canteen and the oval drum canteen. A recent addition to the *Jarnigans* canteen range is the double sided round drum convex faced canteen which recently featured on the Authentic Campaigner website. Note that the same comments apply as for the common 6" drum model.

CAPTURED US SMOOTHSIDE OR BULLSEYE (M2/L3)

These must be constructed out of tin and not stainless steel! The bullseye model must definitely be without chain or drilled chain-hole in the strap guard, and should have the cork secured with coarse brown twine. The smoothside model may have a conventional chain arrangement (NY Depot), but the arrangement specified for the bullseye is preferred.

Chris Daley's well-known survey of surviving Federal canteens in the [Watchdog](#) a few years back, still supplies food for thought:

Canteen Covers: 20 Brown Jean, 6 Grey Jean, 5 Dk.Blue Kersey, 3 Lt.Blue Kersey, 2 Fed. Issue Blanket, 9 Other
Canteen Slings: 25 White Cloth, 8 Black Leather, 11 Other
Cork Attachment:: 15 Tin Chain; 4 Brass Chain; 2 Leather Shoelace; 11 Twine; 14 No attachment

With these guidelines in mind, please try to keep your Federal canteen as 'generic' as possible. Over the past couple of years *Jarnigans* has begun to get their act together with this one. Their Bullseye canteen is fine once you replace their white string used to attach the cork with some decent twine. The *Jarnigan* Smoothside may also be ordered without drilled strap guard hole and chain, though the chain is correct on some issues of this model. Brown and Grey Jean as well as Dark Blue, Sky Blue and Grey Kersey covers are available.

• **Cups**

The only real specification is that they must be of tin (there was a great deal of variation in these historically). *Jarnigans* makes a good range of period tin cups and boilers. The *Wisconsin Veterans Museum* makes some remarkable copies of actual soldiers cups, but they are often not available. *Warhorse's* regulation Federal cup is such a rough piece of work, that even US hardcores who have seen them covet them. It is also worth bearing in mind that regulation US tin cups double up as excellent boilers simply by adding a pail handle.

• **Blankets**

BRITISH IMPORTS

If you peruse blockade runner manifests, you will see that hundreds of thousands of wool blankets were imported from Britain by the Confederacy. It is hard to say how many of these made it to the Army of Tennessee, but chances

are there were a good many. The only 'copy' on the market today is the 'Blue-Grey Confederate Blanket' sold by *County Cloth*, its not cheap, but its well worth the financial outlay.

US ISSUE

Undoubtedly a popular captured item, but again we should not have too many, probably not more than a 3 in 10 ratio. The *Sutlers Store* sells a good example of the supposed 'emergency issue', light brown US blanket. All that remains is to sew a proper "US" in brown yarn in the proper style, in the proper place. See KC for a photocopy of instructions.

QUILTS

If made with proper materials and hand sewn in a period style they are striking. They are also prohibitively expensive unless you or a loved one makes it this way. There is a good book out on the subject of original Civil War quilts ([Southern Quilts: surviving relics of the Civil War](#) by B. Ramsey and M. Waldvogel), with plenty of colour photos for ideas. It is available via Amazon.com.

OTHER CIVILIAN

Family Heirloom Weavers is beginning to do an amazing range of jean and pure wool period style civilian blankets. It would be great if the mess could have one of each! The jeans blankets are lightweight and suitable for summer use only. Their double woven wool blankets are excellent, they are real heaters just ask Davey or Jon!

• Gum or Tarred 'Blankets'

As vital as they are in this cursed English climate, we should limit our use of Federal Rubber blankets to no more than a ratio of 3 in 10 for any Army of Tennessee Confederate impression. For rubber blankets there is only one acceptable source, which even the [Watchdog](#) agrees, an that is the one produced by *Jarnigans*. For Confederate 'Tarred' blankets, which most of us should have, there is the *Trans-Mississippi Depot Company*. Alternatively Gordon, Jon and Davey have all produced excellent examples.

• Approved Personal Effects

The following articles are some of the personnel belongings which could have been found in the knapsack of a Confederate soldier in the Armt of Tennessee; Candles; Period or Good Quality Reproduction works of fiction, newspapers or Bibles; Handsewn Night Caps in appropriate period materials; Period or Good Quality Reproduction glass, tin or CdV style photos; bone or wood toothbrushes with organic bristle; bar of lye soap, folding soldier knife in iron (never stainless steel); combs in wood, bone or horn; pipes (clay or wood with gutta percha in period appropriate styles, real antiques are best); tin or brass tobacco boxes; match safe to carry your 'strike anywhere' Swan Vesta matches; hand sewn housewives modeled on survivals (see *EOG* for examples) with period style spare buttons, needles, thread and beeswax; small ink bottles and period nib pens or plain (unpainted) pencils for writing; coarse paper or bound journals; never more than one pair of extra socks, shirt, and drawers.

The foregoing 'knapsack stuffers' should either be homemade, picked up in antique shops, or very carefully purchased from 'sutlers row' at events where you can inspect them. Remember: never pack more than you can comfortably carry on the march, so pick & choose well to suit your impression and scenario.