

# Confederate Army of Tennessee Uniform and Equipment Guidelines for Reenactors

Purpose: The purpose of the following guidelines is to assist the reenactor in selecting uniforms and equipment for a more authentic portrayal of a Confederate soldier serving in the Army of Tennessee during the mid to late war period of the Civil War. Reenacting is not inexpensive, but it is not necessary to buy everything at once. Prepare a budget, and buy a few items each year. The road to a more authentic kit is a journey and not a destination. Enjoy the journey, but buyers beware. Do your research.

## Jackets

1. Columbus Depot Jacket - The most common jacket worn by the AOT. It should be made of gray or grayish brown jeans. Jeans is a combination of cotton and wool, and is sometimes called jean wool. The jacket's collar and cuffs are trimmed in medium French blue. Buttons should be Block I, Script I or Wooden Dish. The jacket should be completely lined with cotton osnaburg.

2. Plain Shell Jacket - Plain and homespun shell jackets had some use in the AOT. These jackets were free of collar and cuff trim. Most were made of gray or brown jeans and lined with cotton osnaburg. Wooden dish, bone or block I buttons were used. Some of these could be a homemade sack coat (A little longer than a shell jacket) or civilian coat of the day sent from home.

3. Plain frock coat-Although by the time of our impression, frock coats would have been a bit rare in the ranks, it would probably be appropriate if we had a few. They would have been fairly non-descript and made of some form of jean cloth. We shouldn't see half the company wearing them but it wouldn't be incorrect to have two or three in the ranks.

Note 1: Cassimere or satinette could be substituted for jeans.

Note 2: Richmond Depot jackets were not AOT issue and should be avoided.

Note 3: All wool uniforms would have been extremely rare.

Note 4: Beware of sutler row jackets.

## Trousers

1. AOT military trousers - Surviving examples are rare. Patterns were similar to Richmond Depot trousers. Gray, grayish brown or brown jean with bone or tin buttons were common. Most had an adjustable back strap with a buckle or button closure device.

2. Civilian trousers - Usually work trousers made of gray or brown jeans, but cotton jeans was popular also. Wool would be limited. Bone and wooden buttons were common. These trousers were usually made at home and sent to the front. The pattern was similar to military trousers. They were loose fitting and straight legged with a back strap adjustment.

3. Richmond Depot Pattern Trousers – This pattern was common during the period and would have been worn by AOT troops. They were most commonly made of gray, gray brown or brown jeans. Cotton jeans were used also. Buttons were of bone or tin. A back strap with adjustable buckle was used for fitting the trousers.

Note 1: Trouser material and color do not have to match the uniform jacket.

Note 2: Sky blue Federal trousers should be avoided.

Note 3: Cassimere and satinette could be substituted for jeans.

Note 4: Gaudy plaids should not be used. Note 5: Beware of sutler row trousers.

**Shirt** - CS issue shirts were rare or non-existent in the AOT. Cotton civilian shirts of a pullover pattern with one to four buttons were very common in the AOT. Plain and small checked patterns of tan, brown, blue or gray were commonly used. Avoid the use of bright colors such as solid red. Buttons should be made of bone, glass, metal or shell. Cuffs should be closed with a single button. A single breast pocket would have been common. Shirts were often made at home and shipped to the front.

Note 1: The use of Federal issued shirts should be avoided.

Note 2: Beware of shirts sold on sutlers row.

Note 3: A woven cotton is more accurate.

**Under drawers** – They are highly recommended for comfort and protection. A light weight cotton/muslin pair of drawers would be accurate. They should have a button fly and ties on each leg.

**Hats** – Hats were important in projecting a soldier's individuality. With this in mind, take great care in selecting your hat. Both the civilian slouch hat and kepi were used by AOT troops; However the slouch was more popular during the mid to late war period.

1. Civilian slouch – A black or brown slouch would be a practical choice. A quality hat will be made of a wool felt or beaver fur felt. Beaver fur felt is the best. There should be a leather sweat band and a cotton liner. The hat band around the crown should be made of grosgrain. Period photographs and museum displays show what most slouches had the edge of the hat brim bound by sewing a grosgrain ribbon around the edge. The beehive, pork pie, and plug were common slouches.

2. Kepi – A kepi made of gray or grayish brown jeans with a leather or painted cloth brim was popular during the early war, but became less common as the war progressed. Most kepis had a leather or cloth sweat band and were lined with cotton.

Note 1: Slouches are better in the sun and rain.

Note 2: Hat brass was rarely used. Save your money.

Note 3: Animal parts, such as feathers and coon tails are not accurate and should be avoided.

Note 4: Black slouches can be used if you have to galvanize as a Yankee.

Note 5: Beware of sutler (skinner's row) hats.

Note 6: Hillbilly type slouches are not authentic .

**Suspenders (Braces)** – Suspenders were not an issue item in the AOT. They were often sent from home to the front.

1. Cotton braces with adjustable buckles and button holes were common.
2. Cotton braces with leather button downs were common, but became rarer in the later war period due to a shortage of leather.
3. Cotton braces without adjustable buckles were common.

Note 1: Beware of sutler row suspenders. Most are incorrect.

Note 2: Elastic and clip on suspenders should be avoided.

**Socks** – Military issue and civilian socks made of cotton or hand knitted wool were widely used by CS troops. Most socks were sent from home to the front.

1. Military issue cotton socks.
2. Civilian hand knitted wool socks.
3. Military issue hand knitted wool socks.
4. Civilian cotton socks.

Note 1: Wool socks are more durable.

Note 2: Wool socks will keep your feet warm when wet.

Note 3: Socks should have flat seams to reduce blisters.

Note 4: The extra thickness of wool socks may require a larger (about ½) size brogan than with cotton socks.

Note 5: Federal socks were similar to CS socks.

Note 6: Modern hunting socks and socks with elastic should be avoided.

**Shoes** – CS troops wore several types of shoes, but most were very similar to the Federal Jefferson brogan. Therefore, a Jefferson style brogan would be appropriate for an AOT impression.

1. Jefferson brogans – This brogan became the standard shoe for US troops in 1851. This brogan was made of black leather, rough side out with wood pegs in the soles, and made on right and left lasts.
2. CS issue brogans – Very few CS issue brogans are available to the reenactor. The most popular is the Paige Lapham CS oxford. This shoe is made of black leather rough side out with wood pegged soles. The shoe is made on right and left lasts and is very sturdy.

Note 1: Boots were rare for infantry troops and should not be seen in large numbers; however, pictorial references do show the occasional pair of boots on a confederate soldier.

Note 2: Proper shoe fit is critical for comfort and injury prevention.

**Canteens** – The most common canteen dug at Confederate campsites and battlefields is the round tin drum, however it is obvious through the study of period records and photographs that the Federal model 1858 smooth side and 1862 bulls eye canteens were prized by CS troops. Wooden canteens would have been used in the AOT as well.

1. CS Round Tin Drum Canteen – A round, flat sided, six inch canteen with a cotton or leather sling and a cork or wooden stopper would have been the most common canteen used by the CS. Most offered by sutlers are larger than originals.

2. Wooden Canteen – The Gardner pattern was the most common CS wooden canteen. They were most often made of cedar, but cherry and cypress were also used. Most surviving examples have a wooden spout or no spout at all. A cork or turned wooden stopper was used and attached with twine. Both cotton and leather slings were used.

3. Federal Smooth Side or Bulls Eye Canteen – These canteens should be made of tin with a cork stopper and covered with gray or brown jeans. The cork stopper should be attached with jute twine. The canteen sling can be cotton or leather. These should be seen in small quantities and are way overdone in many AOT impressions

Note 1: Stainless steel is not authentic.

Note 2: Canteens lined with beeswax can be a mess if the wax melts.

Note 3: Authentically made wooden canteens take extra care to prevent leaking, but are excellent additions to an impression.

Note 4: Beware of sutler row wooden canteens most are not accurate.

Note 5: Shorten canteen slings so the canteen rides about waist level. Don't tie a cotton knot to shorten sling. Cut the sling and sew it back together.

Note 6: If you are going to buy only one canteen, buy a CS round tin drum canteen.

Note 7: Don't buy a canteen with a sky blue cover.

Note 8: Tin drum canteens should not have a cover.

**Waist Belt** – Several waist belts and buckle types were used by AOT troops. The use of Federal belts and buckles such as the US oval would have been extremely rare and should not be used. The CS oval, that was popular with the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, would not have been very common in the AOT.

1. Georgia Frame Belt – This belt was very common in the AOT and ANV.

2. Roller Buckle Belt – Another very common waist belt used in the AOT.

3. CS or CSA Rectangular Plate – This was a common belt plate used in the AOT.

Note 1: Belts should be worn around the waist near the navel and not on the hips.

Note 2: Black and russet colored leather was used. Black was the most common.

Note 3: Painted cloth belts were common.

Note 4: Beware of skinner row belts and buckles.

**Haversack** – There are very few surviving examples of AOT issued haversacks. Most CS haversacks available to reenactors are of ANV provenance. Plain cotton duck or heavy cotton was the most common material used for CS haversacks. There are a few surviving examples of painted cloth and oil cloth haversacks used by CS troops. Federal tarred haversacks were prized by CS troops, but would have been rare in the AOT.

1. Plain Cotton Duck/Heavy Cotton Haversacks – The Moses Alexander haversack was a plain cotton haversack with a button closure. It did not have a liner. This style was very common with CS troops.

2. Painted Cloth/Oil Cloth Haversack – The A. H. Bayley haversack was made of oil cloth, but painted cotton cloth was used also in making haversacks. The sling was plain cotton drill. A button closure was used to secure the flap. There was no liner. This type of haversack had better waterproofing capabilities than the plain cotton types.

3. Federal Regulation Haversack – This haversack was made of canvas and tarred with a black weather proofing paint. The flap was closed with a leather strap and buckle. It had an inner liner bag that could be removed and washed. This haversack is a good choice for the reenactor who may have to galvanize, but again, it would be rare in the AOT ranks.

Note 1: The top of the haversack should be worn even with the waist belt. To shorten, cut the sling and re-sew where it attaches to the sack.

Note 2: Poke sacks should be used to separate rations.

Note 3: The haversack should hang freely and not be secured under the waist belt.

**Cap Box** – Most CS manufactured cap boxes were copies of the Federal 1850 cap box and shield-front cap box. They were most commonly made of either black leather or painted cloth. Enfield cap boxes would have had some use in the AOT. Federal cap boxes would have been rare.

1. CS unmarked shield-front cap box.

2. CS unmarked 1850 cap box.

3. Enfield cap box.

4. Federal shield-front cap box.

5. Federal 1850 cap box.

Note 1: The CS unmarked shield front cap box of black leather is the best choice. It will pass muster as a galvanized Yankee also .

**Cartridge Box** - Most CS manufactured cartridge boxes were copies of Federal cartridge boxes. CS manufactured cartridge boxes were made of leather or painted cloth. Black leather was the most common. Enfield cartridge boxes would have had some use in the AOT. Both .58 caliber and .69 caliber cartridge boxes were used in the AOT. Federal manufactured cartridge boxes would have been rare in the AOT ranks. Cartridge boxes could be worn on the waist belt or with a sling.

1. CS unmarked copy of the .58 caliber Federal 1857 or 1861 cartridge box.
2. Enfield .58 caliber cartridge box.
3. CS unmarked copy of the .69 caliber Federal 1839, 1857 or 1861 cartridge box.
4. Federal .58 caliber 1857 or 1861 cartridge box.

Note 1: Black leather unmarked CS copies of Federal cartridge boxes can pass muster for galvanized Yankees.

Note 2: Breast plates and cartridge box plates should not be used. Save your money.

Note 3: Wear the cartridge box high on the right hip just under the waist belt for comfort.

Note 4: Cartridge boxes must have tins.

Note 5: By 1863 leather would have been in shorter supply for AOT troops, so painted cloth straps for the cartridge boxes would have been common.

**Bayonet Scabbard** – A common CS manufactured scabbard was made of black leather and had sewn-in lead stud finial tip. The scabbard was sewn to the frog. The Enfield scabbard and frog would have also been used by AOT troops. Federal scabbards were riveted to the frog and had a pinned brass tip. Federal scabbards would have been rare in the AOT.

1. CS scabbard with sewn frog.
2. Enfield scabbard and frog.
3. Federal scabbard with a two rivet frog.

**Bayonets** – Most bayonets used during the war were socket style. Many bayonets used in reenacting are of poor quality and not accurate, i.e., made in India. Armisport makes an authentic reproduction bayonet for their 1842 Springfield and 1861 Springfield muskets. There are no quality made reproduction bayonets for the Enfield. Original Enfield bayonets can be purchased from Civil War relic dealers at a fairly reasonable price. The risk in buying an original is that it may not fit your musket, so be careful. Another option is to have a gunsmith bore out the socket on the Armisport 1861 Springfield bayonet to fit an Enfield.

1. Enfield Bayonet.
2. 1842 Springfield Bayonet.
3. 1861 Springfield Bayonet

Note 1: Remove the India marks.

Note 2: Invest in a quality bayonet.

**Blankets** – CS troops used a wide variety of blankets. Jean blankets, wool blankets, coverlets, quilts and even carpet were used by AOT soldiers. There are very few CS issue blankets available to reenactors. The best choice for a CS reenactor would be a civilian or period military blanket made of 100% wool. Wool is preferred by far. It is more durable and will keep you warmer, especially when wet. Although Federal blankets would have been rare in the AOT, a high quality reproduction of the Federal 1851 blanket would be an excellent choice for a reenactor wanting a period military blanket and unable to find a CS blanket.

1. Civilian wool blanket.
2. CS issue wool blanket.
3. Federal issue wool blanket.
4. Jeans blanket.
5. Coverlet.
6. Quilt.

Note 1: Wool is more practical than cotton.

Note 2: Modern military blankets should be avoided.

Note 3: Blankets should be of 100% natural fiber.

**Knapsacks** – Records show that knapsacks were common in the AOT. About 70% of AOT troops had knapsacks by some accounts. Knapsacks are very practical and waterproof. Some of the most common knapsacks used in the AOT were the CS copy of the US Mexican War pack, single bag soft knapsack, and Enfield pattern knapsack made by Isaac, Campbell & Company of London. Federal knapsacks would have been rare in the AOT ranks .

1. CS copy of US Mexican War knapsack (Kibbler).
2. CS single bag soft knapsack.
3. Enfield pattern knapsack (Isaac & Campbell).
4. US double bag knapsack.

Note 1: The total weight of the knapsack, blanket, ground cloth and other contents should be no more than 15 pounds.

Note 2: Carry an extra shirt and pair of socks in a poke sack. It makes a nice pillow also.

Note 3: Hard pack frames should be removed for weight and comfort.

**Mess Equipment** – A tin cup and spoon are basic items that every soldier should possess. The tin cup can be used for drinking and to boil rations. Quality made tin cups have the top lip rolled around a wire, and the bottom of the handle is riveted to the cup. A bail handle is sometimes attached to the cup to facilitate use as a boiler. Period knives and forks having wooden handles are available at antique stores and through sutlers. CS soldiers formed messes of about 4 soldiers and shared rations and cooking utensils such as frying pans and boilers. Reenactors commonly cook for themselves and carry their own rations, sheet iron frying pan and/or boiler. A period tin can with a bail makes an outstanding boiler. Some reenactors carry a tin plate. A canteen half from a Federal smooth side canteen makes an excellent frying pan. A handle for the canteen half can be made from a stick. Most soldiers also carried a pocket knife.

1. Tin cup.
2. Spoon.
3. Boiler.
4. Sheet steel frying pan.
5. 1858 canteen half.
6. Plate.
7. Pocket knife.

Note 1: Don't get weighed down with mess gear.

Note 2: Cast iron skillets should be avoided.

Note 3: Leave the Bowie knife at home. A pocket knife will do just fine.

**Eyewear** Period frames with untinted glass.

Note 1: Contacts may be used.

**Hygiene Kit** – A poke sack can be used to carry a period tooth brush, comb, soap and tin of baking soda for toothpaste. A large cotton handkerchief can be used for a towel.

**Housewife** – Soldiers carried a small cloth wallet that contained sewing needles, buttons, thread and cloth to make field repairs to clothing.

**Long arms** – The .69 caliber smoothbore musket was used throughout the war and was probably the most common weapon used by the AOT through 1863. The Springfield 1842 would be an outstanding .69 caliber musket choice. This weapon represents one of the most authentically reproduced out-of-the-box Civil War muskets available to reenactors today. The 1853 Enfield .58 caliber rifle became the most common long arm in the AOT during the mid to late war period. The Enfield is another outstanding choice for an AOT soldier; but would also be acceptable for galvanizing as a Yankee. The Springfield 1861 .58 caliber rifle was the most produced long arm during the war. However, it would have been rare in the AOT ranks.

1. 1853 Enfield.
2. Springfield 1842.
3. Springfield 1861.

Note 1: Lodgewood Manufacturing will remove modern markings and remark with period markings for a small fee.

Note 2: Two band muskets should be avoided. Some events prohibit them.

**Ground Cloth** – Ground clothes were very important to Civil War soldiers. Confederate soldiers prized Federal issued gum blankets. However, oil cloth, painted cloth, or plain canvas were the most common ground cloths used in the AOT. Plain canvas lacks good waterproofing qualities. Authentically reproduced oil cloth and painted canvas ground cloth are difficult to find in reenacting so if you can't find a quality one, a gum blanket is a good choice.

1. Oil cloth ground cloth.
2. Painted canvas ground cloth.
3. Gum blanket
4. Plain canvas ground cloth.