

Trans-Mississippi Confederate Uniforms

by K.C. MacDonald

(Part I -- introduction)

If (as Ron Field in his 1998 history of Confederate uniforms suggests) the study of the Eastern and Western Confederate Depot systems is still in an embryonic stage, then the study of the Trans-Mississippi Depots may justly be said to be at the point of conception. Indeed, within the re-enacting community there is at present no portrayal of this important theatre in Britain, and only a few units doing 'make-shift' Trans-Mississippi impressions in the United States. Over the past few years I have been accumulating data on the uniforms and accoutrements of Trans-Miss Texas and Louisiana units from contemporary newspaper articles, photos and museum visits. More recently I have been in contact with, and have received valuable information from Frederick Adolphus, - one of the best authorities on the Trans-Mississippi Depot Systems. Taking all this together I can now make a report on my findings.

Strictly speaking, the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Theatre states were Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, and the Indian Territory (Oklahoma). However for much of the Civil War, Mississippi was in a sub-theatre termed the Department of Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana. Since this department was usually occupied by Trans-Miss units, and as Trans-Mississippi forces such as the Army of the West sometimes crossed over into the state, its uniforms and depots are also considered here. The short-lived armies of the Trans-Miss Dept. of Miss. and Eastern Louisiana included: the Army of the West (commanded by Van Dorn in 1862, veterans of the Pea Ridge and Corinth Campaigns), the Army of New Mexico (commanded by Sibley in 1861-62), the Army of the Department of the Mississippi (a.k.a. the Army of Vicksburg; commanded by Pemberton in 1863), and the numerous *ad hoc* forces put together to meet threats to Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas in 1863-65. Sterling 'Pap' Price also commanded various organizations composed principally of Missourians who conducted offensive operations in 1861 and 1864.

The most important land battles in the Trans-Mississippi included: Wilson's Creek (MO, 1861), Pea Ridge (AR, 1862), Valverde & Glorieta (NM, 1862), Prairie Grove (AR, 1862), Arkansas Post (AR, 1863), Milliken's Bend (LA, 1863), Honey Springs (OK,

1863), Bayou Fourche (AR, 1863), Mansfield & Pleasant Hill (LA, 1864), Poison Spring & Jenkin's Ferry (AR, 1864), and Westport (MO, 1864). It is also worth noting that Shiloh (TN, 1862), Corinth (MS, 1862), Baton Rouge (LA, 1862), Champion Hill (MS, 1863), Vicksburg (MS, 1863), Port Hudson (LA, 1863), Holly Springs (MS, 1862), and Chickasaw Bluffs (MS, 1862), though technically 'Western Theater' battles, involved a good number of troops which did not subsequently serve in the Army of Tennessee, but returned to the Trans-Miss.

Good uniform information is not available for all Confederate units that fought in the Trans-Miss. Photographic coverage and personal accounts mentioning uniforms are better for some units than others. Missouri troops, like those of Kentucky, were 'orphans' very early in the war and either dressed in make-shift civilian uniforms or received issues from depots where they found themselves. The principal depots which concern this study were those of Houston (Texas), Shreveport (Louisiana), Jackson & Enterprise (Mississippi), and Little Rock (Arkansas). The cut and cloth of uniforms and the types of accoutrements manufactured by these depots have, to some extent, been documented and will be discussed in coming articles. As in the Eastern and Western theatres idiosyncratic company uniforms and civilian dress began to be replaced by state depot issues as early as the Autumn of 1861. But the issue of formal uniforms was slow in coming. As examples of this: the 3rd Louisiana received its first state uniform issue from contractors in Baton Rouge in September 1861, the 2nd Texas Infantry received their first uniform issue in March 1862 from New Orleans via private contract, Waul's Texas Legion got theirs in November 1862 from a Mississippi depot (probably Jackson), and many Texas and Louisiana units in the west had to wait until sometime in 1863 for their first issue uniform. The Confederate States Quartermaster Trans-Mississippi Depots were operational by the end of 1862 and continued until the end of the war, although their output was constrained and often interrupted by shortages of cloth and other raw materials. Also of interest is the relatively significant input of kit imported from Britain, including buttons, blankets, and finished uniforms, - with most of these arriving in quantity by mid 1863.

The next two installments of this three part series will deal with early commutation state issues, and CS Quartermaster Depot issues respectively.



Trans-Mississippi Confederate Uniforms

(Part II – April 1861 through October 1862)

Early war impressions have not enjoyed a great popularity amongst authentic units, partially because of early war anachronisms/lack of standardization (making difficult the accurate portrayal of a 'common soldier'), and partially because the 'best' or 'most critical' battles in the East and the West occurred in 1863-64. However, the study of early impressions in the Trans-Mississippi *is* rewarding because 'most decisive' actions there occurred between 1861 and mid- 1863 (with the exception of the Red River Campaign). Furthermore, I would argue that there *were* common 'looks' for the early war Confederate (even if only 'civilian with accoutrement - style' or 'commutation jacket - style').

The database which I draw on is comprised mostly of period photographs (from the *Portraits of Conflict* series, the *Confederate Faces* series, and the various Time-Life's series) and secondarily from original soldiers letters, diaries and sketch books. Other sources include Ron Field's excellent *American Civil War Confederate Army* (1996), and information picked up via US museum visits, and via the Internet.

Soldier's Shirts

The elaborate fatigue and battle-shirts so often visible in Confederate portrait photos of 1861/1862 get very little representation in UK re-enacting. Perhaps this is because they are not 'off-the-shelf' items, or maybe it's because they look to modern eyes a bit 'over the top.' However such shirts had a long currency in the South, particularly so in the Trans-Mississippi and would be 'right' for any Trans-Mississippi impression -- especially 1861-63. Remarkably, in studying portrait photos of Trans-Mississippi enlisted men, there appears to have been some uniformity in these homemade shirts. Perhaps mothers & sisters were working to some common store-bought patterns. Or perhaps there were common ideas about what 'soldier's shirts' should look like. Take, for example, these journal entries of Pvt. Randolph Howell, Co.C, 5th Texas Cavalry:

May 2, 1861

Ma agrees to make my "soldiers" shirts on the morrow

May 3, 1861

I superintend the making of said soldier's shirts

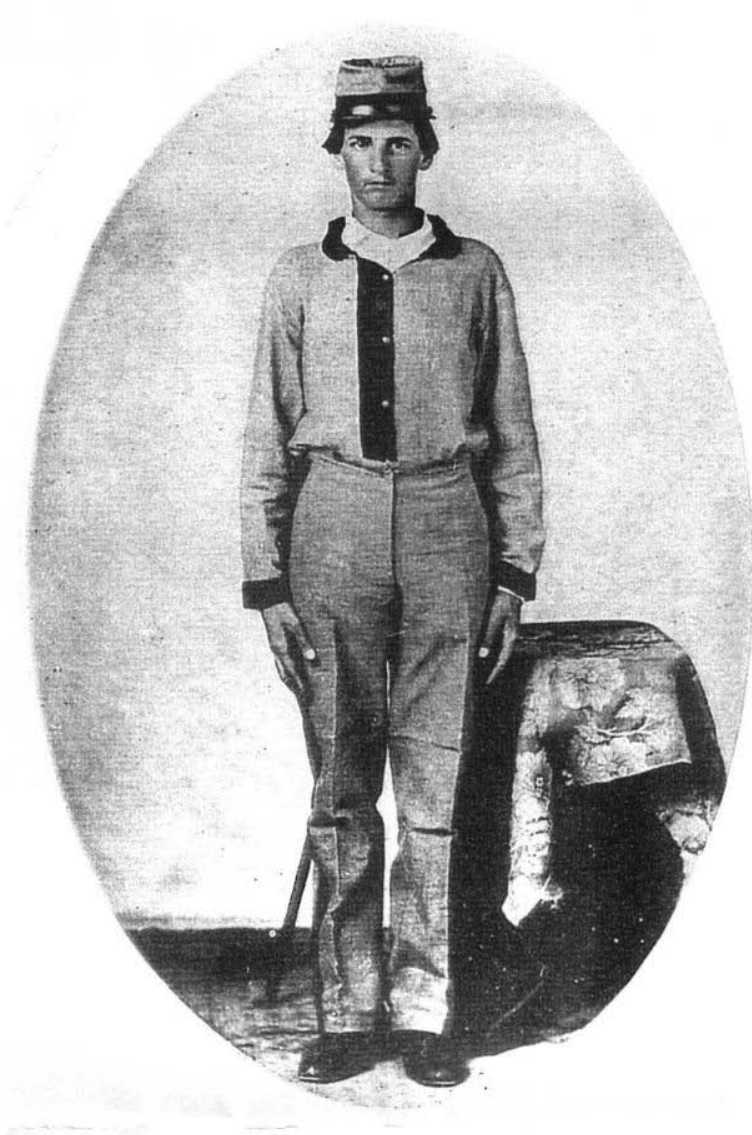
(Thompson 1990: 55).

I have observed some common 'types' of soldier's shirts which may be frequently seen in photos of men from the states which concern us. The units listed after each type's name are those from which photo id's have been made. I have placed photos of individuals wearing the first three (most common) types on the photo page at the end of this article.:

1) **The Military Shirt**

3 Ark ST, 2nd Miss Cavalry, 8th, 14th, & 16th Miss Inf, Jefferson Artillery (Miss.), Missouri State Guard, 1 Texas (late 1861), 3 Texas Cav, other unidentified Texas units.

This was one of the two most common 'soldier's shirts.' It was invariably made of light-weight grey wool flannel or linsey-woolsey (wool cotton blend). In cut it was similar to a typical pullover civilian shirt with a two inch drop collar. However, it differed in having dark velvet, (sometimes flannel or velveteen?) facings. In photos these always appear to be black, but some on darker grey shirts only, appear to have been dark red or blue. The collar of these shirts seems always to have been made of the facing material, as was the centre-line button hole placket (which usually extended down as far as the bellybutton and was one to two inches in width). Optional facing areas were: bands on pocket tops (of which there was usually one, and rarely two); cuffs (usually); and epaulette lines (not real epaulettes, but facing cloth sewn on as shoulder reinforcements). The neck opening featured 3 to 4 cloth-covered, china or brass (coin or ball/zouave) buttons, with the sleeves normally having one or more matching cuff buttons.



Pvt. William Schadt, 1st Texas Infantry
Photo Backmarked, Galveston Texas 1861

2) The Check & Tape Shirt

3 Ark ST, 11 Ark Inf., 3 Mo Inf, Waul's Texas Legion, 7 Texas Mounted. Rifles, and the 7, 10, & 16 Texas Cavalry.

This was the other common 'soldier's shirt.' It was often made of a bright 'checkered' (cheque or plaid) cotton or linsey-woolsey cloth, cut like a normal civilian shirt (pullover or button-up), and trimmed at points with narrow one-half inch or inch wide tape. This tape was equally likely to be light (yellow/buff) or dark (red/black). The tape location was very individualistic, but here are a few ideas:

- Always around edges of a floppy collar or, if not a drop collar, around the neckline;
- Usually all the way around pockets which were almost always double and may have been square or shield-shaped, OR along pocket openings and in ornamental 'V's on the pockets;
- On frill button-ups: in two parallel line running either side of the central button areas to the bottom of the shirt, OR on pull-overs: as trim on a central shield or tube-shaped button-hole bib and in horizontal lines along the front edge of shoulder reinforcements. Buttons look to usually have been white (glass or bone).



Brothers Pvt. Thomas Duval & LT William Duval 3rd Missouri Infantry.
They fought at Wilsons Creek, Iuka Corinth and Vicksburg

3) Circus Rider Shirt

10 Tex Dismounted Cavalry, 3rd Texas Cavalry, Texas Good's Battery.

The loudest common soldier's shirt going, it looks to have been restricted to Texas units. It consisted of solid, dark wool, button-up, collared shirt with the addition of three vertical lines of white, dark red or black tape (the outer two slightly lines slightly converging). The centre line held

the buttonholes of which there were 9 to 11. The outer lines held false buttons at a matching spacing. The buttons were of a small coin or ball/zouave type. This shirt is so farby looking that it might even be cool. There are photos of it which must have been taken in mid 1862, so its not just an early war aberration.



2nd LT Alf Davis, Good's Texas Battery
Who Fought at Wilson's Creek & Pea Ridge

4) The Bushwacker Smock

[3 Ark ST, various Missouri Irregulars]

As far as photographs show, this distinctive type of garment was limited to the northern Trans-Mississippi. The origins of the 'Smock' or 'Overshirt' are as a New England Workmens garment in the early 19th century, however, they seem to have continued to exist in the west after their decline in the East. One such garment, made in wool, was recovered from the wreck of the steamboat Arabia which sank near Kansas City, Mo in 1856 (Brown 1999). In structure they were long and loose, usually with an open neck to show off a regular shirt and cravat underneath. In effect they fulfilled the function of a jacket, and were always worn outside the trousers, being belted in at the waist. Some beautiful and convincing reproductions of this style of shirt may be seen in the recent film 'Ride With the Devil.'

5) Fireman's Shirt

[1 Texas (late 1861), 2 Ark]:

A shirt that sutlers sell too many of, as there are relatively rare in period photos. The commonly used material looks to have been solid heavy cotton or light wool flannel. Plastrons were large, covering the chest to within 2" of the sides and extending to the top of the bellybutton. They had 4 to 5 large buttons on either side (bone, glass, or brass coin).

Of the Trans-Miss origin units wearing these shirts, a good portion served in the ANV and Army of the Tennessee. The 'Military,' 'Check & Tape', and 'Fireman's' styles can also often be seen in early war photos of Virginians, Carolinans and Tennessean troops, so they would all be safe for generic early war impressions (hey, Wilson's Creek, Shiloh, & Seven Days Battles all in one shirt -- they could be useful). As to sources, Richard Beardall is willing to custom make such shirts at a reasonable price (ca. £40-£50), with most visible sewing done by hand. I received an impeccable 'Military Shirt' from him last year. Send him the specifications, he will make to order. Alternatively, I can make them for you entirely by hand at a dearer price (Ca. £65) and a 3 to 6 month wait...

Remember that homemade soldier shirts, excluding smocks, were usually worn tucked-in over plain white undershirts. I have never seen suspenders over the top of these shirts, whether

tucked in or left out (good evidence that suspenders were not always worn). Again, for much of the war in the Trans-Mississippi they were an alternative to formal military jackets.

Early Campaign Dress: the first fights in Missouri & New Mexico

The Southern troops in the First Missouri Campaign (June-Oct 1861, including Wilson's Creek) were predominantly Missouri and Arkansas State Troops. Except for rare militia uniforms (blue or grey frock coats), the troops were dressed almost entirely in civilian clothes – especially Civilian Sack Coats and 'soldier's shirts.' Square and oval Militia belt plates are visible in many portrait photos on white waist belts. Indeed, such belts are a nice touch for any early war impression. Interestingly the 3rd Arkansas State Infantry, who fought at Wilson's Creek had a 'marching order' group photo taken in June, 1861 which survives (in two versions! one published in Field 1996, another in Roberts & Moneyhon 1987). Of the 72 men in the photo (from what can be distinguished), at least 4 men wear 'military' shirts, at least two wear 'check & tape' shirts, and at least two wear 'Smocks', although the majority wear civilian sack coats (at least 10 of these are clear). Also of interest, 15 wear cravats, at least 22 wear white canvas knapsacks (with white shoulder straps & a cross-strap,) and only 6 have shoulder-straps for cartridge boxes visible (as we will see in the next article of this series, cartridge boxes were most commonly worn on the waist belt in the Trans-Mississippi).

Sources: Passable (third generation castings...) militia belt plates can be had from Winchester Sutler (Virginia) or pay a bit more for the 'real thing' (or darned near to it!) from Hanover Brass (also in Virginia). Narrow & full-width White Buff waist belts, as well as cartridge box slings are sold by Jamigans. Some good civilian sack coat patterns are available, and most of the better sutlers (including myself, ahem!) will make them (brown jean or satinette is a good bet for fabric). Trousers should be civilian pattern, brown or blue cottonaide or jean work trousers, or black or brown wool 'Sunday-go-to-meeting' trousers. Former militia units had sky or dark blue kersey trousers cut like regular US Army issue. Accoutrements should be either old US Army issue/militia, or civilian/'home-made.'

It is unlikely that living historians in the UK would ever portray the Confederate Army of New Mexico (1861-62), to begin with you need a good desert to do it in, but I will mention it briefly for the sake of interest and completeness. Troops dressed either much as they did in Missouri at the time (probably with greater quantities of soldier's shirts, always popular with Texans), but with a much higher input of US Army goods current in 1861. This was due to

the total capture of US arsenals in Texas at the beginning of secession and the early captures of fort depots in west Texas. Clothing rolls of the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles (September 1861 - February 1862), and soldier's diaries, note that the Confederates drew Federal kepis, cavalry felt slouch hats with tassels[!], broadcloth cavalry jackets with brass buttons, greatcoats, issue shirts, and trousers (Adolphus 1996:180; Frazier 1995: 96; Alberts 1993: 124). One wonders how they told themselves apart from their Federal opponents... Still, most contemporary sketches of the Army of New Mexico by soldier artists show that a degree of admixture rapidly crept in, with Federal cavalry shell jackets being coupled with common slouches, and blue kepis worn with 'soldier shirts', indeed A.B. Petticolas self-portrait drawn at the end of the campaign shows him in a tattered plug hat and a typical 'military type' soldier's shirt (Alberts 1993; Thompson 1991).

Clothing in the Trans-Mississippi Just Before and After Shiloh

For the February-March 1862 Pea Ridge campaign a good number of Texas & Indian troops joined the old, mainly Missouri & Arkansas, command of Price to form the 'Army of the West' (commanded by Van Dorn). At this time the uniform of the 'orphaned' Missouri troops was probably little different from that worn in the First Missouri Campaign. However for the troops of other states the benefits of the commutation system, by which states were reimbursed by the CS government for supplying uniforms to troops, had begun to show.

Nowhere was this change more evident than with the crack 3rd Louisiana Infantry, the only Louisiana unit to have been with Price's army at Wilson's Creek. In September, 1861 they received one of their states first commutation issues [not in early 1862 as given in error in Part II]. Sgt. William Watson, a Scot serving with the 3rd, recorded that he encountered a newly resplendent member of his company:

"But I see you have got a new rig -- where did you get that?" said I referring to a new suit of clothes I saw he had got on. "Oh." said he "you don 't know about that yet. A whole wagon of things has come from Baton Rouge to us with new clothes, shoes, stockings, and shirts..."

(Watson 1995 reprint: 248.)

The nature of this new uniform was described by Orderly Sgt. W. H. Tunnard:

This clothing was manufactured in the State Penitentiary, and was of a substantial material known as jeans, being of greyish-blue color, with the exception of Company K, which was dark brown. The outfit., infused a new feeling and spirit amongst the men.

(Tunnard 1997 reprint: 69)

The said jacket was lined in plaid linsey-woolsey and padded at the shoulders. The cut of this first-issue jacket was said to be 'long,' which probably implies a single-breasted frock coat such as Louisiana commonly issued to its troops in the first year of the war (see the Crescent Regiment, below) (Field 1996). The rest of the September clothing issue included per man: one red flannel shirt, one plaid linsey shirt, one cotton undershirt, one pair plaid linsey or flannel drawers, and a pair of jean trousers of a matching material to the jacket (Field 1996: 53).

Meanwhile in Arkansas, newly raised units intended for the Trans-Miss theatre were receiving Commutation clothing from the Little Rock Penitentiary. Field (1996: 84) cites this early (and short-lived) state depot as having produced 3,000 uniforms, 8,000 pairs of shoes, 600 knapsacks and 500 cartridge boxes in Autumn/Winter 1861. The uniforms, which are known to have been in part supplied to the 18th & 23rd Arkansas, are said to have comprised grey/brown frock coats and trousers in a matching shade of jeans cloth, and grey forage caps. The single-breasted frock coats had dark blue faced collar & cuffs and eight or nine buttons. Some production continued up until Little Rock's capture in 1863. The single, known surviving example dates from this later period of production, and full details of it are currently posted on the Frontier Guard's website (the actual coat is curated at Fort Snelling in St. Paul, Minnesota). It is made of light-grey jean cloth with few visible slubs, lined in undyed osnaburg throughout, has nine original Federal Eagle buttons, and a blue flannel collar (like Columbus & Alabama depot jackets, tending towards the shade of the latter).

Elsewhere in the Trans-Miss, units were training and equipping, preparing to join the Confederate Army of the Mississippi at Corinth for their march to destiny at Shiloh. It is worth examining here the uniform of two regiments who were subsequently to return to the Trans-Mississippi theatre.

The Louisiana Crescent Regiment was raised in New Orleans at the beginning of the war but did not see action until Shiloh. One early uniform, which may be seen in *Echoes of*

Glory (pg. 129), was a 7-button single-breasted frock coat. It was made of a light grey jeans cloth and featured epaulettes in the same fabric, with pale yellow piping on the collar, epaulettes, centre line, and cuffs (chevron type). As with most frock coats it has a visible horizontal seam at the hips, where the frock coats wide 'skirt' is attached. The accompanying pair of trousers (also of Pvt. J. B. Phillips, who died shortly after Shiloh) are pale blue jean or cottonaide of a military cut, with pale yellow piping down the seams and dark metal buttons. This first Crescent jacket is in line with other early 1861 Louisiana issue jackets visible both in photos and other surviving examples (see *Echoes of Glory* pg. 130). Common features are piping (pale yellow or black), epaulettes, no facings, chevron cuffs, and 7 to 9 buttons (seemingly US Eagles or LA Pelican types).

However, in late 1861 Louisiana had begun to issue shell jackets in either the brown or light-blue grey Baton Rouge Penitentiary jean cloth. The cut of these jackets is often referred to as 'Commutation Style' or 'Louisiana Style.' In its long cut it resembled a Richmond Depot I, but differed in being slightly longer, and in sometimes having rounded edges to its low collar. The range of variation may be seen in three contrasting examples: a surviving jacket of Pvt. J. Dimitry (Crescent Regiment, early 1862 issue, *Echoes of Glory* pg. 132), a portrait photo of Pvt W.H. Martin (7th La, late 1861 issue, Field 1996: 51), and a portrait photo of Pvt. C.L. Van Houton (Crescent Regiment, 1862 issue, Moneyhon & Roberts 1990: 164). The Dimitry jacket is very plain: brown jean, 9 buttons, long cut, low square edged collar, no facings, piping or epaulettes. The Martin jacket essentially looks like that of Dimitry only with black piping on the collar, centre line, and chevron cuffs. The Van Houton jacket has only 7 buttons, and features a low rounded collar faced in black, with matching black epaulettes and chevron cuffs. To summarise the early war Louisiana Commutation Shell jacket should broadly resemble a Richmond Depot I only slightly longer, with a distinctive low collar (only about an inch & a half wide) square or rounded at the margins, and a chevron cuff feature. Buttons should be 7 to 9 in number with no Block I's in sight (Eagles or Pelicans), piping and epaulettes are optional.

Further to the west, the 2nd Texas Infantry began the war clad in captured Federal *fatigue* blouses. However, on the eve of the Shiloh campaign in March 1862 the entire regiment received jackets which had been commissioned in New Orleans by the regiment's commander. The outfits received excited much comment at the time, shell jackets in the 'commutation style' and military trousers, but all in white jeans cloth. The 2nd Texas thus entered into

legend as those "hell-cats that went into battle dressed in their grave cloths" (Chance 1984: 24). However by the end of 1862 it became apparent that the 2nd Texas were only trend-setters, since white, undyed jean was to become one of the most common cloth issues of the Trans-Mississippi depot system.

Sources: Confederate Yankee offers a 9-button Louisiana style shell jacket which conforms to the type mentioned above (piping and other whistles & bells at your discretion). I can also custom make for you an approximation of any of the jackets described above using County Cloth or material from Family Heirloom Weavers.

Confederate single breasted frock coats in jean look gorgeous, but the trick is finding a good tailor to do one for you at a decent price, Confederate Yankee does one in jean at \$323 with hand-done buttonholes & top-stitching. Charlie Childs offers an excellent kit for a fraction of that price.

Undyed jeans cloth is a real problem, though it is sometimes available from Charlie Childs or Family Heirloom Weavers.

Any early war impressions in the Trans-Mississippi should feature either state buttons (Texas and Louisiana state buttons were surprisingly common, especially the latter), Federal Eagles from depot captures or Coin Buttons, steer clear of Block I's until mid 1862.

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The final installment of this three part series will deal with CS Quartermaster Depot issues in and to the Trans-Mississippi.

Trans-Mississippi Confederate Uniforms

(Part III -- November 1862 - June 1865)

The Depot System Gets Rolling

The Confederate Quartermaster depot system was late in starting in the Trans-Mississippi and the Department of Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana. The earliest state depots/arsenals were those in Baton Rouge (LA), Little Rock (ARK), and Jackson (MS) which existed from late 1861. Baton Rouge was never an official Confederate Quartermaster Depot, but a state facility, which ceased to exist when the city was captured in May, 1862.

Production records for Little Rock are only available for 1861 (see part II) and Spring 1863. Field (1996) notes that the nature of its post-1861 output is unclear, but probably consisted of sack coats and frock coats. A single surviving frock coat is known, and was thought to be manufactured in 1862/63. It is made in coarse light grey jeans cloth, with a dark blue kersey collar, and osnaburg lining (data from: www.geocities.com/capitalguards.LRfrock). Little Rock fell to the Federals in September 1863.

Jackson is the only one of these three early state facilities to become an official Confederate Depot, but it also ceased production relatively early due to military action, its factories being burned by the Federals in May 1863. Production then transferred to its principal sub-depot in Enterprise (MS). How long Enterprise continued to exist is uncertain, but there are references to it in the OR up to mid 1864.

Longer lasting, though later starting, depots were those of Houston (TX) and Shreveport (LA). The Houston Depot began to produce clothing in December, 1862 and continued to do so until the end of the war (Adolphus 1996). The Shreveport Depot was founded in June 1863 by a transfer of an earlier depot facility from Monroe (founded Fall 1862), and became the central depot for the entire Department of the Trans-Mississippi from September 1863 until the end of the war (OR vol. 33).

The Mississippi Depots from Winter 1862 through Spring 1863

A report by Major L. Mims (Quartermaster for the Department of Miss. and East. La.) dated 5 February, 1863 notes that his department had three sources for clothing: the depots of Columbus (MS), Jackson (MS), and Enterprise (MS):

Columbus... furnishes about 700 suits of clothing per week; for the present however, we are employing all force there in the making of tents, 250 tents per week are being manufactured. Enterprise... furnishes 25 wagons per month, 400 pairs of shoes and 250 complete sets of clothing. Jackson... furnishes 1,000 suits per week; manufactures 40 blankets per day. The most of the purchasing done for this department is made through these depots. It should be mentioned that Jackson also manufactures 25 tents per day; they are incomplete, however, for the want of rope. Three factories – the Jackson, Woodville and Choctaw – work constantly for us, making a sufficiency of woolen goods. They do not make enough cotton goods for the requirements of the department. (OR 38: 616-617)

It should be noted that in early 1863 Jackson production was very strong, certainly on par with any other major Confederate Depot at the time. But what was Jackson producing? Though no one has yet coined the notion of a 'Jackson Depot style jacket,' the case of Waul's Texas Legion provides some valuable clues. Also the equipping of Waul's Texas Legion illustrates well the sluggishness of the early Trans-Mississippi quartermasters. Organized in April 1862 at Houston and Brenham, Texas, this Brigade-sized unit did not become fully equipped with arms and accoutrements until October 1862 at Holly Springs, Mississippi, and did not receive its first uniform issue until November 1862 at Coldwater, Mississippi. The diarist Phillip Amsler (Co. E, 2nd Btn.) noted on October 13th that "we received our arms consisting mostly of old firelock muskets converted to percussion, with bayonets. Also cartridge boxes, bayonet scabbard and belt, [these] being new and in good order with forty rounds of ammunition" (Hasskarl and Hasskarl 1985: 8). On November 9th he wrote that "we received a good uniform last week consisting of good blue cloth pants, a grey woolen jacket well lined, and a grey cap. Quite a comfortable suit. We can also draw shirts and drawers if we want any" (Hasskarl and Hasskarl 1985: 12). Frederick Adolphus (pers. comm.) suggests that the wording of Amsler's letter implies the use of high-grade woolen jeans in this uniform. Blue woolen jeans cloth for trousers was by no means rare (see

some examples in *Echoes of Glory*) and is available today via Charlie Childs/County Cloth or Family Heirloom Weavers (logwood dyed jeans), or in the UK via Richard Beardall/Sutlers Stores.

As to the cut of the jacket, Adolphus believes they were probably issued via a Mississippi Depot (Jackson being the closest, and certainly a major producer at that time). The question is: what sort of jackets? A fairly definitive indication, I believe, comes from a more-detailed letter written at approximately the same time from Camp Coldwater:

Camp Cold Water near Holly Springs, Mississippi, Sunday, October 26, 1862

...I returned from Holly Springs about sunset, and when I got to the Regt., I found the boys all in Uniform which they had drawn. Their pants were all sky blue; their coats grey round about, with cuffs and collars trimmed with blue. Grey caps for all. This will add much to their appearance in the field... [John K. Earns, surgeon, 41st Tennessee Infantry] (Smith 1994)

What seems to be described is a typical Columbus Depot Jacket (see Jensen 1989; Field 1996). When one adds to this letter the proof that three of the eight surviving Columbus Depot jackets probably saw service in the Vicksburg campaign with Mississippi & Missouri regiments, it appears very likely that the large facility in Jackson was producing jackets in the Columbus Depot style. The three jackets in question are the McDonnell Jacket (Cowan's Battery, Ms Artillery), the Jones Jacket (1st Mo Inf, captured at Champion Hill), and the Jenkins Jacket (Breckinridge Cavalry, Ms). These jackets share most characteristics, but have some small differences: Front of Body Cut Curved; Curved Tail in Back, 6 buttons (Miss I's & US Eagles), blue kersey collar trim, width of blue kersey cuff trim ca. 2 & 1/2 inches, Pockets: 2 Interior and no External [1] OR 1 Interior and 1 External Pocket; single top-stitching (two being machine sewn with dark brown outer thread, one handsewn) (all characteristics from Geoff Walden's Columbus Depot jacket website: www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Quarters/1864/cdjacket). Using these specifications it should be possible to construct an 'appropriate' Columbus Depot jacket for wear in the mid-war Mississippi/Louisiana area with a reliable sutler or 'mess tailor'.

Trans-Mississippi Depot Production and Imports 1863-1864

A June, 1864 report of Maj. W.H. Haynes explains that he took charge of the Clothing Bureau of the Trans-Mississippi in June, 1863 and from that date had supplied the troops of the Districts of Arkansas and West Louisiana. He also supplied and controlled the distribution of materials from the Depots of San Antonio, Houston, Tyler and Jefferson, Texas; noting that the cavalry divisions stationed in Louisiana were supplied directly from the Houston Depot. He reported that from January 1863 through June 1864 the Trans-Mississippi depot system (namely the Depots of Shreveport, Houston, and Little Rock [until Spring 1863 only]) issued the following total quantities of equipment:

23,397 blankets; 48,987 kepis and hats; 32,011 completed jackets; 8,098 sets of material for the manufacture of jackets; 51,336 trousers; 12,554 sets of material for the manufacture of trousers; 55,082 pairs drawers; 63,608 shirts; 6,715 pairs socks; 66,805 pairs shoes; 2,565 knapsacks; 8,155 haversacks; 251 axes; 107 picks; 81 spades; 329 camp kettles; 2,136 skillets; 505 wall tents; 610 A-frame tents; 365 tent flies; 661 wagon sheets [its should be noted that production of all materials other than uniforms virtually ceased by the end of 1863].

Of these, the following quantities were actually produced in Shreveport (Report of Brig. Gen. W.R. Boggs, Head of Clothing Bureau, Shreveport, 18 January, 1864):

15,230 kepis; 7,657 jackets; 21,747 pairs of pants; 43,651 shirts; 38,952 pairs of drawers; 571 overcoats; 6,269 pairs shoes; 1,372 knapsacks; 9,162 haversacks; 216 tent flies; 546 'A' tents; 202 wall tents.

In contrast, the Houston Depot (under Capt. Edward Wharton) gave the following production figures from January 1863- February 1864 (Adolphus 1996: 177).

13,691 kepis and hats; 20,925 jackets; 40,293 pairs of trousers; 39,407 shirts; 34,507 pairs of drawers; 3,426 pairs of socks; 43,657 pairs of shoes; and 377 great coats.

All of these figures do not quite add up, but they demonstrate that Shreveport and Houston were the two most important centres of manufacture in the mid to late war Trans-Mississippi, and that Houston Depot jackets were more common than those of Shreveport.

The following is a description from Rudolf Coreth (36th Texas Cavalry [dismounted]) on the issue of Houston Depot jackets to his unit in Houston on 16 November, 1863:

We received our winter cloths: pants, jackets, hats and blankets. The trousers and jackets are of gray woolen cloth. Everything is pretty good. The order came that each man is to get two complete suits and, in order to complete these, another requisition for clothes was made, but they haven't arrived yet. (Goynes 1998: 111).

Houston Depot jackets were usually made of imported British Cadet Grey Kersey cloth, the first shipment of which was received through the blockade in Autumn 1862 (12,000 yards, Texas Quartermaster receipt, cited in Adolphus 1996: 172). Indeed there are records in the *Official Records (Navy)* for seizures off the coast of Texas in November 1863 of blockade runners carrying large quantities of "woolen cloth of a color between blue and grey. That is just the Confederate uniform color" (ORN, I, 20, pg.658). Southern-made cloth from the Huntsville Penitentiary (bleached white woolen jeans, "sheep's grey" woolen jeans, and bleached white woolen kerseys) was shared between the Houston and Shreveport depots, with its white kerseys usually being reserved for 'Negro labourers' clothing.

Both Houston and Shreveport jackets were, it seems, of a similar cut, although the cloth they were made of differed quantitatively, with the Shreveport suits being more often of Huntsville jeans cloth and white kerseys (Adolphus pers.comm.). Buttons, as observed from photos, would have numbered either 6 or 7 on the Shreveport Depot jackets. One possible surviving Shreveport jacket is a late-war issue to Charles Perkins of the 3rd Louisiana (illustrated in Field 1996: 126). It is of a light-brown jean, with a low curved collar featuring wide collar gap, 6-piece cut, with 6 buttons (Louisiana Pelicans), and top-stitching with a thick white (flax?) thread.

Captain Wharton described the manufacture of the Houston Depot jacket as follows:

Single breasted with seven buttons made of 1 3/4 yards of double width coarse, cadet gray cloth, basted with spool cotton and sewn with flax thread... Bleached domestic sleeve lining taking 3/4 yard and unbleached domestic for the body lining and pockets ... [being] heavy weave cotton material from the penitentiary mill. (Adolphus 1996: 173)

Rare surviving photos show the collars of these jackets to be low, with their margins gently curved, as with early war Louisiana jackets. The jacket was also comparatively long for a shell, being specified to come to 'below the top of the hips',- making it as long, or longer, than a Richmond Depot 1 (ibid.). Facings, when present, were of imported kersey in branch of service colour. However, I have not yet seen a photo of a likely Houston Depot jacket with facings. Buttons used for infantry jackets were either 'Block 1's' (solid cast, or tin-backed two-piece), Houston-made pewter buttons ('T-E-X-A-S' letters around a star OR 'CS' in a wreath), Brass Texas State Buttons (rare), or imported(?) 'CSA' buttons (late 1864-65) (Adolphus 1996: 174).

Houston Depot trousers were usually made of Huntsville jeans, the cadet gray kersey being spared for jackets and kepis. Adolphus (ibid.) notes that the trousers had four to five buttons, unbleached domestic serving for the pockets and waistband, with a buckle and cloth belt in the rear. Stripes in cotton webbing may or may not have been added.

However, it should also be remembered that the Houston Depot 'production figures' include some complete goods which made it to Texas through the blockade. In Fall 1863 Wharton, the head of the Houston Depot, reported receipt of 2,400 jackets and 2,916 pairs of trousers in grey wool from Great Britain (Adolphus 1996: 175). Adolphus believes that these might have been early Tait uniforms, which would make them the first of their type issued in America. By 1864 there is documentary proof for this connection: Adolphus (ibid.) notes the existence of a Peter Tait Company shipping invoice of 10,000 "Suits Infantry Uniforms" to be shipped via Liverpool to Texas in November 1864. Further conclusive evidence of shipment of complete uniforms from Britain to Texas comes once again from reports of Federal blockade runner shipments off the coast of Texas in November 1863:

SIR: I have the honor to report to you the capture by this vessel [USS Virginia] of the British brig Volante,, of Jersey, this day [November 6th, 1863]... Upon examination of her papers, I found that she carried the following articles contraband of war, viz, boots and shoes, army blankets, case of stockings, bales of confederate uniforms, woolen cloth, etc...

(ORN, I, 20. 660).

The presence of British import jackets in the Trans-Miss, whether in 1863 or 1864, might also be physically attested by numerous relic lined-script 'I' British-import buttons recovered from sites along the Texas Coast and Louisiana (Adolphus *ibid.*), and indeed from datable sites such as the siege lines of Port Hudson (May 1863) and the Battlefield of Bayou Bourbeau (November 1863) (author's collection).

Problems of Distribution, Manufacture, and Storage

Despite the number of depot uniforms produced in the Trans-Mississippi, the distribution system did not seem to always be effective, especially for units in the field. The memoir of Maj. Silas T. Grisamore, the quartermaster of the 18th Louisiana Infantry who served from Shiloh through the Red River Campaign, does not record a single effective depot issue to his regiment. He notes that after their initial commutation issue by the state of Louisiana (early Spring 1862), they drew jackets in September 1862 made by private contractors in Alabama which were "a good size for 10-year-old-boys" along with over-large shirts and trousers made by Alabama ladies relief organisations (Bergeron 1993: 82). The men were able to get little use out of them. Later, in Louisiana (March 1863) Grisamore obtained a quantity of British cadet grey kersey for his regiment and had them made into by a local tailor who hailed from Paris. The results were disappointing: the sleeves ended at the elbows, and the side pockets fell under armpits. Despite their beauty (with black piping and brass buttons) many of the coats were unwearable. Grisamore also recalled another occasion when out of a batch of 110 contractor coats made for the regiment at Thibadeaux only 3 could be made to fit any man in the company for which they were intended. Grisamore closes by writing "If there is ever any more wars or rumors of wars, I am going to steer clear of tailors who make uniforms under contract" (Bergeron 1993:110).

in Missouri, the Indian territory, and Arkansas the clothing situation became so desperate from 1863 onwards that captured Union uniforms were often utilised. George Washington Grayson, a Creek Soldier fighting in Arkansas recounted (Baird 1991: 99),

Our government had issued to our men certain wool hats of plain sheeps wool without any coloring. Now these hats., had further disadvantage of losing after a short service even the little shape and semblance of figure that had been given by its manufacturer. Our soldiers

were poorly clad... So when we caught a prisoner we generally stripped him clean of his wearing apparel as we desired, they always being better than our own...

Indeed, in October 1864, General Rosecrans addressed a letter of complaint to Gen Sterling Price regarding the recent Missouri campaign (*OR* III, 53: 1011). "A number of prisoners taken in this fight were dressed in our uniform, and in obedience to existing orders from departmental headquarters, and the usages of war, they were executed instanter." Despite the appeals of Confederate authorities to cease this practice from 1863 onwards, the wearing of blue in the northern Trans-Mississippi by southerners was common.

In late May 1864, after the conclusion of the Red River campaign General Taylor wrote that his command was "Without shoes, and utterly worn out with marching and fighting...Until an adequate supply is furnished the Clothing Bureau is liberal in promise and utterly barren in performance." (as cited in Gallaway 1988: 125). Ironically, in a region not lacking cattle, tanned leather production was a problem which dogged the Trans-Mississippi throughout the war. For example in 1864 the 11th Texas Infantry (ca.500 men) reported it was deficient 165 cartridge boxes, 179 cap pouches, 380 shoulder belts, and 258 waist belts! (Johannson 1998: 70). Economization with leather ware resulted in the tendency of Trans-Mississippi infantrymen to dispense with shoulder belts and suspend cartridge boxes from the waist belt. Problems in leather production notwithstanding, the Shreveport and Houston Depots had been hit hard by a decline in cloth production from Huntsville (due to decaying machinery) and a tightening Federal blockade of the Texas coast. From mid-1864 onwards, clothing shortages became so acute that Louisiana and Texas troops were allowed to go home on furlough, so long as they returned adequately clothed (Gallaway 1988).

A good index of Trans-Mississippi armaments is held in an August, 1863 ordnance return for Walker's Texas 'Greyhound' Division: 2,697 .69 calibre percussion muskets (mostly 1842 Springfields, with some earlier conversion pieces), 1,485 Enfield Rifles, and 43 Colt Repeating Rifles (Johannson 1998: 68). The rifled pieces were generally distributed to flank companies (usually A & B), rather than to entire units. As Rudolf Coreth of the 36th Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) noted:

The guns with the longest range were given to the wing companies, the next-farthest-shooting ones to second companies and so forth till the center gets the poorest guns... So

we lost our Enfield rifles and got Singers [Springers or Slingers?] in their place. (Goynes 1982:114).

However, by the end of the successful Red River Campaign in Spring 1864 these numbers had changed somewhat for the survivors of the Greyhound Division, particularly due to captures at Mansfield: 848 .69 calibre smoothbores, and 2,353 rifles (mostly Enfields and Springfield).

Blessington (1875: 115) wrote of the dress of Walker's Division after the Red River campaign:

It is impossible to point out the variety our division presented. Here would be a fellow dressed in homespun pants, with the knees out of them; on his head might be stuck the remnant of a straw hat, while a faded penitentiary cloth jacket would perhaps complete his outfit. His neighbor very likely was arrayed in breeches made of some castoff blanket, with a dyed shirt as black as the ace of spades and no hat at all...

Another Greyhound remarked that most of the division's clothes left in storage before the Red River campaign were either stolen or had rotted (Johannson 1998: 71).

Recommendations for the Generic Trans-Miss Foot Soldier: mid 1863- end 1864

The following is a guide for a 'generic' Trans-Mississippi impression, valid for mid to late war Bayou Fourche (ARK), Red River (LA), and Camden (ARK) campaigns and for garrison duty in Texas. It is derived from informal suggestions by Frederick Adolphus (pers.comm.), from Adolphus (1996) and modified on the basis of my own research on photos and contemporary sketches:

Jacket Cadet Grey Kersey or Taupe! 'Drab' Jeans Jacket, 6 or 7 'Block I' buttons, low curved collar, length 2" below hips, osnaburg lining. This will serve as a Houston or Shreveport jacket. A good pattern (which can then be slightly modified) is Charlie Childs' 'Thomas Taylor' pattern (which has the right collar and basic cut, though a bit short).

Trousers may be of white jeans or suitable 'homespun' jean (blue or brown) with a belt at the rear waist seam (Richmond Depot style pattern). Buttons may be of bone or pewter.

Accoutrements Black or russet leather. Some cartridge boxes were made by the Houston Depot (see *Echoes of Glory*, pg. 197), but no replicas are being made today. Using a US pattern box suitable for your gun calibre would appear the best policy. Place the cartridge and cap boxes both on the waistbelt, as cartridge box slings were rare in the Trans-Mississippi. The most common belt type for our region was of the simple 'harness style' roller buckle variety, 1 3/4" wide belt. Make sure that the roller buckle is properly japanned. (Trans-Mississippi Depot is your best supplier).

Depot produced Shirts and Drawers bleached white cotton, unbleached osnaburgs, blue linen drill, unbleached flannel, indigo blue stripes, blue checks and other documented cloth with white glass button for shirts. Flannel or linen for drawers with two bone buttons per pair. For homemade shirts draw inspirations from appropriate soldier photos.

Shoes Depot Brogans (pegged, double-thick soled, straight lasts OR crooked), or British Import Brogans (sewn and/or nailed soles -- not pegged). Russet Brogans were atypical, and were viewed as 'slave shoes.'

Hats Photos, and the mid to late war Trans-Mississippi sketches of Merrick (1991) and an unknown individual (Davis 1999) show an interesting pattern. Kepis appear to have been very common on later war Trans-Mississippi Confederates, with 18 of 37 individuals

counted on 4 Winter 1862/63 to Autumn 1864 sketches wearing them. The remainder wear either flat or round crowned, dark colour slouches. The few surviving mid to late war portrait photos of common Trans-Mississippi soldiers show that most slouches were black, with slightly more flat crowned than round-crowned, some appearing in the style of Hardee hats. Kepis were either plain or featured a branch of service band. Buttons/chinstraps on kepis were often not present as an economization.

Canteen The most common dug finds in the Trans-Mississippi are typical 6" flat tin drum canteens. Most of these would have had leather straps featuring 1" japanned roller buckles (modify the Jarnigan's variety by replacing their brass buckle with japanned variety, also available from them!)

Haversack plain linen or white cotton jeans, with button closure; avoid all tarred sacks for Trans-Mississippi Confederate impression.

Blanket most of the blankets used by Trans-Mississippi soldiers were British imports which came in large numbers through the blockade. They were of a heavy wool cloth and blueish in colour. The best replica of this type of blanket can be had from Charlie Childs ('Blue-Grey Confederate Blanket' \$99).

Weapons The most commonly available weapons were 1842 Springfield Muskets and Enfield Rifles.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Frederick Adolphus for supplying me with most of the information found in part 3, and to Jon Eggleston for sending me some of the Trans-Mississippi Quartermaster returns.

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OR = Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies

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