

September-October 1992

Price \$3.50

Confederate Veteran.



Hood's Texans

The Deadliest Day of the War

Forrest's Forgotten Horse Brigadier

DRAB: The Forgotten Confederate Color

Refer all copy to:
Editor-in-Chief
P.O. Box 710287
Houston, TX 77271-0287



The Official Journal of the
Sons of Confederate Veterans

Though men deserve, they may not win, success;
The brave will honor the brave, vanquished none the less.

Price: Free to Members
Non-Members: \$13.00 Per Year

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1992

S.A. CUNNINGHAM
Founder

Editor-In-Chief
James N. Vogler, Jr.

Associate Editor-In-Chief
Earl Langham

Assistant Editor
Pauline Duryea
Joyce Claypool

Official Confederate Artists
Confederate Veteran
Bruce Marshall

Art Director
Melissa Anglin

Legal Counsel
Jack N. Fuerst

The Confederate Veteran is published six times per year by the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Military Order of the Stars and Bars as a service to their membership. Non-members may subscribe to the journal for \$13.00 per annum. Send all subscriptions to: The Confederate Veteran. The articles, photographs, or content of the Confederate Veteran may not be reproduced without the consent of the Editor-in-Chief. The opinions expressed by the authors of signed articles reflect the personal views of the writers and are not necessarily a statement of S.C.V. or M.O.S.B. policy. Services or products advertised do not carry S.C.V. or M.O.S.B. endorsement unless otherwise specified. The Confederate Veteran reserves the right to accept or reject content of advertisements.

Delivery problems and change of address: All problems concerning the non-receipt of magazines should be directed to General Headquarters since all mailing records are kept by the Adjutant-in-Chief. Changes of address also should be sent to General Headquarters. The address is: Box 5164, Southern Station, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5164.

COVER & CENTER SPREAD:

"Rebel Yell" by Don Troiani, Historical Art Prints LTD.

Features



12

Hood's Texans, The
Deadliest Day of the War
by Harold B. Simpson



24

Forrest's Forgotten Horse
Brigadier
by H. Gerald Starnes



36

DRAB: The Forgotten
Confederate Color
by Fred Adolphus

Departments

Commander-in-Chief's Letter	2
Attacks on the Colors	4
Confederate Images	7
The South's Last Boys in Gray	8
Books in Print	10
Chaplain's Comments	42
The Last Roll	43
Here's the Real Story	45
Notices	48
Confederate Trivia	51
New Members	52
Camp News	54
MOS&B	60
Confederate Classified	64

D R A B



The Forgotten Confederate Color

by Fred Adolphus

Over the last few years much has been written about Confederate uniforms. Authors have focused much of their attention on the colors of these uniforms. They have done quite a bit of research on what shades of gray were used and the frequency with which butternut appeared in the Southern ranks, but little attention has been given to another color that was widespread in Confederate armies. That color is drab—the color of undyed wool.

Occasionally, one comes across a casual allusion to Confederates wearing drab or white clothing but, surprisingly enough, no attention has been given to the use of drab clothing as a whole. Michael R. Moore probably

comes closest to hinting at the vast amount of drab cloth used in the War Between the States in his thesis, "The Texas Penitentiary and Textile Production in the Civil War Era." Therein, he describes the production of undyed "white" cloth for the Confederate Army, but concentrates more on the manufacturing process than the actual use of drab fabrics. As with most of the casual references to drab clothing, there is no indication that this color may have been quite common among Southern troops, and one is left with the impression that white uniforms were an oddity. It is only after analyzing the numerous historical accounts that one sees the overall use of this color. Drab was indeed a much-used color

throughout the South during the War Between the States, and mention of it as such in regard to Confederate clothing has been very much neglected. Perhaps this evidence will show that drab was the third most widely worn color by Confederate forces, after gray and brown.

Before touching on the sources of evidence regarding the use of drab clothing, it is helpful to mention a few of the names that undyed cloth went by in the War Between the States era. The fabrics were referred to as drab, undyed, unbleached, white, gray (or gray goods), sheep's gray or even negro cloth. Drab fabrics could appear in shades from white (if bleached) to grayish-white to yellowish or brownish-gray. The shade of the undyed (or unfinished) fabric was dependent upon how well it was washed, whether it was bleached and how much lanolin it retained. Perhaps even the shade of the fleece may have influenced the final tinge to a degree.

Before discussing the use of drab in the War Between the States, it is helpful to know that the use of undyed woolen outer garments was not wholly without precedent. Several 18th and 19th century era European armies wore undyed white uniforms, including the French, Austrians and Saxons. Going back further, even the common peasant garb consisted of "colorless" woolen clothing. In medieval times, colorless cloth meant brown, as the sheep of that era were brown. But it is interesting to note that clothes simply weren't dyed by the common folks back then.

Chronologically, the first evidence that might be cited on the use of drab clothing in America comes from antebellum times.

William Physick Zuber, Texas Revolution and War Between the States veteran, described in his autobiography none other than the renowned Stephen F. Austin as sitting on his horse "...yonder in the rain..." with "...a sealskin cap...to protect his ears, and a drab overcoat which covered him from head to foot...We looked at each other, but neither of us spoke...Though I knew that this man was much admired by many persons, I had no idea of the magnitude of his character, nor dreamed of the sufferings he was to endure for his country."

Zuber was but a mere boy when he made this observation in 1830 in San Felipe de Austin.

Another interesting allusion to drab cloth was made by a Maryland Confederate officer in June 1862, that referred to the use of this color both during and before the War. Lieutenant McHenry Howard recalled that General Winder, commander of the famed Stonewall Brigade, wore a white or light drab overcoat and commented that, "Not long before the War, it had been suddenly discovered on the eastern shore of Maryland that the thick and strong white or light drab cloth which was bought in large quantities for the 'servants' (they were seldom called slaves there), was excellent material for overcoats and nearly every young gentleman in Miles River Neck (Talbot County), had one made. A long cape came down to the wrists."



As a final authoritative source for the use of drab clothing in antebellum times, one can turn to Moore's "Texas Penitentiary" paper. Therein, he describes the process of producing cloth at the Huntsville penitentiary and what the end products looked like. It is important to note that the Huntsville penitentiary factory, which had been in operation since antebellum days, went on to become the largest textile mill west of Georgia during the War in the South. Furthermore, the production of cloth at the mill continued during the War much as it had beforehand, except that the production was primarily for the Confederate military machine instead of the private sector.

Moore explains that during the production of cloth, woolen yarn was dyed or bleached before the fabric was woven. However,

"...most plain weave cottons left the factory as 'gray goods' unfinished (dyed or bleached) before 1865. These gray goods were suitable for slave clothing." Additionally "...woolens were not bleached after being spun, the potash often proved sufficient. Extract of logwood and coppers were the most common dyestuffs for woolen fabrics and produced varying shades of yellowish-brownish gray. Most yarn or fabric was, however, left white." Moore further describes the woolens of the Huntsville factory as having come in three colors; "...white (bleached), brown (bleached and dyed) and 'sheep's gray' (natural fleece color; yellowish to brownish gray)."

Confirming these statements about cotton cloth is a reference to slave's clothing having been made from white and blue cottonades in the 1840s in William Ransom Hogan's book *The Texas Republic*. Further testimony comes from a Union soldier, Harris Beecher, in the Louisiana Bayou country, in May 1863. He observed that the slaves "were mostly clothed in coarse gray cotton suits. A few, though, were decked off with the most expensive finery, which they had stolen from their masters or mistresses. All the women wore gaudy colored bandannas, wrapped over their woolly pates, and the men generally had broad brimmed straw hats, much the worse for wear."

As to its overall use, there are indications that drab cloth appeared on both the east coast and the western frontier, which suggests a widespread usage. The cloth was seemingly used not just for slave clothing but for regular people's apparel as well. This leads one to believe that this type of fabric was generally common and was perhaps used as work clothing that, in a war, could easily become a field uniform.

Regarding its manufacture, we can be sure of a few facts (at least in the case of the Huntsville penitentiary factory). First, it was commonly produced, seemingly for the sake of expediency, to be used for slave clothing in antebellum times and for soldiers' clothing during the War. Second, the undyed drab cloth did appear in a range of shades from bleached white to yellowish or brownish-gray. Third, the so-called "gray goods" were produced in cotton weaves, jeans and as woollens.

Moore explains further about the manufacturing process that "...as the War wore on and machinery deteriorated, cloth became coarser. Likewise shortage of dyestuffs, primarily extract of logwood and copperas, limited the amount of woolen fabric dyed at the factory." In fact, there was an incentive not to wash the yarn, because the residual lanolin helped the machinery. This is further evidence that the mill produced drab cloth for the Confederate Army.

There is abundant evidence of drab clothing having been used by Southern troops. Its use was not limited to the vicinity of the Huntsville mill, but was found in all theaters of the War to one degree or another.

Alfred R. Waud, famous for his drawings for *Harper's Weekly*, had this to say of the Virginia "Black Horse Cavalry" while he was detained behind Confederate lines: he noted that among the enlisted troopers, "...there was little else but homespun among them, light drab-gray or butternut color, the drab predominating..." and "Light jackets and trousers with black facings, and slouched hats, appeared to be ...the court costume of the regiment." Waud's sketch appeared in the September 27, 1862, edition of *Harper's Weekly* indicating an early war usage of this color in Virginia.

The much-lauded 2nd Texas Infantry, noted for its tenacity at Shiloh, Corinth and the Vicksburg "lunette," wore drab at one time and earned a nickname for its conspicuous appearance. Prior to the battle of Shiloh, Colonel John C. Moore, the regimental commander, requisitioned "properly colored" uniforms from New Orleans, as his men were wearing Union Blue clothing, and he did not want his soldiers mistaken for Yankees. The requested uniforms, made from unbleached Huntsville factory cloth, arrived in Corinth before the march to Shiloh, and a member of the regiment reported that, "When the packages were opened, we found the so-called uniforms as white as washed wool could make them. I shall never forget the men's consternation and many exclamations not quoted in the Bible, such as 'Well, I'll be d——!' 'Don't them things beat h——!' 'Do the generals expect us to be killed, and want us to wear our shrouds?'" Joseph E. Chance describes the issue of this clothing in his regimental history of the 2nd Texas, as well. "The new uniforms waiting in Corinth to greet the regiment on their arrival were unconventional, to say the least. Bundles of white wool uniforms had been sent with no designation as to size. The uniforms were issued and a comical scene ensued. Soon the company grounds were full of men strutting up and down, some with trousers dragging under their heels, while those of others scarcely reached the tops of their socks; some with jackets so tight they resembled stuffed toads, while others had ample room to carry three day's rations in their bosoms. The exhibition closed with a swapping scene that reminded one of a horse-trading day in a Georgia county town." The Yankees, however, did not take such a light-hearted view at seeing these uniforms. The viciousness of the Texan's attack at Shiloh caused one Federal prisoner to remember that regiment as "...them hell-cats that went into battle dressed in their grave clothes."

In the Trans-Mississippi region, drab clothing is much in evidence as having been used. Company B of the 18th Texas Cavalry, upon its formation as the "Morgan Rangers" of Bastrop, was lucky enough to have uniforms made for its members. Captain Hiram S. Morgan spent his own money to outfit the troops in gray double-breasted coats and gray trousers with yellow cavalry stripes on the legs. The fabric used for these uniforms was a yellowish-gray, Huntsville penitentiary jeans. These uniforms were issued in early 1862.

General Sterling Price's Missourians received an issue of drab uniforms in northwest Arkansas on March 1 and 2, 1862. They were part of the stocks that had been requisitioned by the Indian General, Albert Pike. That did not stop Price, however, from filching the uniforms for his own troops, while the Indians, for whom they had been ordered, were still wearing the "blankets, moccasins and other odd dress" that they had come into camp with. "General Pike, who had been at the greatest

pains to obtain regulation uniforms for his Cherokees...was fighting mad over this amiable brigandage...(but) the Missourians were all agreed that there was no use wasting good new (uniforms) on ignorant savages." These uniforms were made in the Little Rock penitentiary from Huntsville cloth and consisted of woolens, cotton jeans and osnaburgs. Uniforms of caps, coats, pants, shirts and drawers were produced. Ephraim Anderson of the Missouri Brigade, who received some of this clothing, recalled, "Our regiment was uniformed here; the cloth was of rough and coarse texture, and the cutting and style would have produced a sensation in fashionable circles: the stuff was white, never having been colored, with a goodly supply of grease—the wool had not been purified by any application of water since it was taken from the back of the sheep. In pulling off and putting on the clothes, the olfactories were constantly exercised with a strong odor of that animal.

"Our brigade was the only body of troops that had these uniforms issued to them, and were often greeted with a chorus of ba-a-as....Our clothes, however, were strong and serviceable, if we did look and feel somewhat sheepish in them."

In the summer of 1862, Walker's Texas Infantry Division received extensive issues of cotton clothing. Allotments of 8,000 yards of osnaburgs to each regiment were sewn into tents, knapsacks, haversacks and clothing, by the women of Smith County. These troops spent the summer in cooler cotton fabrics rather than traditional woolens. As most cottons left the factory as "gray goods," it is a safe bet that these uniforms were undyed.

Again, in March 1863, Walker's Texas Division (renowned as "Walker's Greyhounds" because of their copious marches back and forth over Louisiana and Arkansas) was reported as being "well clad" in penitentiary uniforms. Although no mention of color is made regarding their clothing, it is interesting to note that during the nine-month period following February 1863, Major W.H. Haynes, the chief of the Confederate Clothing Bureau, received 110,000 yards of white woolen cloth from the Huntsville factory. This white cloth was used for uniforms.

David C. Edmonds furnishes a rather colorful picture of a Louisiana militia officer in drab, when he relates the description of General John G. Pratt of Opelousas in Grand Coteau in October 1863. Edmonds relates that, although Pratt sported a gray beard, "it looked more like porcupine quills than any thing human, and to finish off the beauty of his face, it was sprinkled miscellaneously from the chin to his eye brows with tobacco juice. His military apparel consists of a drab colored coat, with broad cape, pants of one piece but very greasy; a dirty shirt which had once been red, a rough pair of boots and

a broad brim straw hat. His pants were worn without suspenders, and very short in the waist, the flaps of the pockets hanging down like the ears of some old dilapidated dog." From this description one might conclude that the Louisiana militia was in dire straits.

In Mississippi, in the area around Vicksburg, there were extensive issues of white uniforms. Waul's Texas Legion, stationed at Fort Pemberton on the Tallahatchie River near Greenville, was issued uniforms of undyed wool in February or March 1863. The uniforms were described as being "...a light greyish tan but would soon take on the color of the Mississippi mud."

The 3rd Louisiana Infantry also received white uniforms at this time. Private Willie H. Tunnard described the issue as follows, while stationed at Snyder's Mill, Mississippi in mid-March 1863; "The regiment received a new uniform, which they were ordered to take, much against their expressed wishes. The material was a very coarse white jeans, 'Nolens volens.' The uniforms were issued to the men, few of whom would wear them, unless under compulsion, by some special order. On March 22nd orders were issued to cook three days' rations, and be prepared to move ere daylight the succeeding morning. The weather was gloomy and rainy, the roads in a terrible condition. Some of the men suggested the propriety of wearing the new white uniforms on the approaching expedition, which, it was known, would be among the swamps of the Yazoo Valley. The suggestion was almost universally adopted, affording a rare opportunity to give the new clothes a thorough initiation into the mysteries of a soldier's life. Thus the regiment assembled the next morning arrayed as if for a summer's day festival."

Another Louisiana unit, the 26th Infantry Regiment, had similar misgivings about the white uniforms. Colonel Winchester Hall, the regiment's commander, recorded that "About this time (March 1863) we received the fruits of the conscript levees in Louisiana. The men so raised were placed in various Louisiana commands, after receiving a white woolen uniform. The uniform was unlike any other about us and marked these men among the volunteer soldiers, who treated them with a contempt, in many cases undeserved; but so it was the white uniform was known only as an emblem of reproach wherever it appeared.

"Soon after these men were in the harness, our regiment received the same kind of uniform; now the Quarter Master's Department of the 26th was never so plethoric as to supply our mere necessities in this line, and a suit of clothes all around was a rare occasion. The clothing was sorely needed but a howl of indignation rose from the regiment, at the bare suggestion of wearing the badge of a conscript. The indignation was intensified by the fact that none of the conscripts had been put

into the ranks of the 26th, and its integrity as a volunteer organization was intact.

"Comfort, appearance, everything was forgotten in the thought that henceforth men who had sought the ranks, and men who had been impressed into service, would be blended, by the uniform, into an undistinguishable mass. The indignation seemed so becoming a volunteer, that officers were loath to invoke coercive measures in their power. They appealed to the men, and showed the folly of giving way to a fancy. One company after another, in time, yielded to what appeared to be inevitable, until Company B - staunch old hearts—stood out alone. Captain Bateman, however, never relaxed his efforts to kindly bring them to a sense of duty, until only two in the company stood out. The Captain reported the case to me. I ordered the men to be tied up by the thumbs until they were disposed to obey the orders of their Captain. They soon relented, but I fear not willingly."

Two other accounts of Confederates in white at Vicksburg can also be cited. E. McDonald Anderson of the 1st Missouri Brigade wrote that his unit wore this type of uniform, and Lieutenant Anthony B. Burton of the 5th Ohio Battery reported that Cumming's Georgia Brigade was clothed in a similar fashion.

Despite all the evidence that Southern troops at Vicksburg were clothed in white, at least one report references a different color. Union troops that took prisoners from the 42nd Georgia Infantry on June 24, 1863, claimed the officer and seven enlisted men were wearing "regular Confederate Army regulation butternut."

Another interesting note that may explain why so much white cloth was used in "Army of Vicksburg" uniforms is the fact that Generals Taylor and Holmes, in the Trans-Mississippi Department, pirated 200,000 yards of imported cadet-gray cloth in October 1862, that was supposed to go east of the Mississippi River. It is highly likely that undyed penitentiary cloth was sent instead, as the white cloth described above was almost assuredly from Huntsville.

Apparently, drab uniforms were not the only undyed articles issued to troops in the Trans-Mississippi. At the

Battle of Flat Rock Creek in the Indian Territory on September 16, 1864, Captain George Washington Grayson of the 2nd Creeks described their Confederate issue hats in the following manner: "Our government had issued to our men certain wool hats which appeared to be manufactured of the plain sheep's wool without any coloring, while the latter seemed not to have seriously concerned himself about the symmetry and poise of any individual hat. They were all apparently on one block and driven together in long stacks, and when one came near a stack of them he could distinctly discern the odor of the raw material. It smelled very like getting inside of a pen where a drove of sheep is confined. Now these hats, while not comely of shape and general appearance, had the further disadvantage of losing, after a

short service, even the little shape and semblance that had been given them by the manufacturers. The entire brim would invariably flop down, leaving little other signs of its former self than a dirty cotton string, while the crown, without any apparent provocation, would push sharply up in the centre, converting the whole into the exact figure of a cone. These hats, being a dull whitish color, were very susceptible to the effects of dust and dirt and naturally had a dingy appearance at best, which became execrable after a month's wear." After this condemning description of the Confederate "sheep's pen" issue headgear, it is no wonder that Grayson went on to relate with relish how his men helped themselves to capture Federal hats following the battle.

Besides hats and uniforms, no assessment of a soldier's clothing would be complete without men-



tioning his blanket. Next to having a jacket, the blanket was probably closest to his heart, as far as items of personal comfort go. There is evidence to suggest that even this item of issue was drab in color for the Confederate Army. By examining Union Army blankets, one gets a clue as to what the norm for the times was. The Union Army regulations called for a "gray" blanket. Judging from the extant sample's fabric, there is no evidence to indicate that these goods were ever dyed. A random inspection by collector Anthony L. Tafel showed that most samples are light brown now and were most likely a natural fleece color when they were made (sheep's



gray). Considering that the Confederacy patterned much of its more generic equipment after the pre-war army, it is not too risky to assume that Confederates would have also opted for a cheap, easily manufactured sheep's gray blanket.

The last reference to drab uniforms is found in the Shenandoah Valley at the Virginia Military Institute. A former cadet, John S. Wise, gave an account in 1889 of what the corps wore on May 15, 1864, at the Battle of New Market. The cadets, having worn out their cadet-Gray peacetime uniforms in Jackson's Valley Campaign of 1862, were, by this time, compelled to use plainer garb and, in Mr. Wise's own words, "we had to resort to coarse sheep's-gray jacket(s) and trousers, with seven buttons and a plain black tape stripe...We were content with a simple forage cap, blue or gray, as we could procure it. The cadet of today disports himself in white cross-belts, shining plates and patent leather accouterments. Then we had a plain leather cartridge-box and a waist-belt with a harness buckle...Then, we went into the battle of New Market with muzzle-loading Belgian rifles clumsy as pickaxes." The museum at VMI has several cadet jackets believed to have been worn at New Market. They are all rough-gray cloth, severely plain.

It is significant that the last reference to drab clothing was for 1864. Although drab clothing was most assuredly used up until the bitter end, by the middle of the War it was being used less and less. The decline in its use can be linked to the same reason that butternut became less-used as the War went on (contrary to popular myth). All domestically manufactured fabrics and dyes gave way, to a large degree, to the introduction of English "army cloth." Today we call it Cadet Gray; back then the Southerners referred to it as Confederate Gray. In any case, it was a high-quality bluish-gray wool kersey that came into the South in enormous quantities. The first big imports came into the Trans-Mississippi Department by the early fall of 1862. The Richmond Depot in Virginia was well supplied with English cloth by the spring of 1863. Issues from these stocks of cloth followed soon thereafter.

The bluish-gray kersey continued to make it through the Yankee blockade right up to the end of the War, and with improvements. The English cloth was made into uniforms in Ireland and sent to the Confederacy ready for use. By the fall of 1864 and early 1865, troops in Lee's army, in the remnants of the Army of Tennessee and in the Trans-Mississippi Department, were being issued these Irish-made Confederate Gray uniforms. This accounts, in part, for why there are so many cadet-gray uniforms in museums and so few butternut and light gray uniforms by comparison. The cadet-gray clothing was issued later and "survived" the War.

Having cited a number of cases referring to drab clothing, an explanation of the factors that varied shades

in drab cloth is in order. A large residual amount of lanolin or dirt in cloth, resulting from not cleaning or bleaching the yarn, might explain why Confederate cloth was often described as having yellowish, tannish or brownish hues. No dying would have been necessary for those shades. Even if brown or butternut dye were added to drab yarns, some of the gray (natural fleece color) or yellow (lanolin) tones might show through. Likewise, even after a reasonable cleaning, drab cloth was not always snowy white, and certainly showed some tinge of gray, tan or yellow, or a variant thereof.

We might safely speculate that some uniforms that we had once thought were dyed gray were in fact left drab or actually dyed brown. An unbleached drab uniform could easily appear brown-

ish gray if the fabric were only given a small dosage of brown dye, which would not be sufficient to mask the natural fleece color.

With all the attention that historians are now focusing on Confederate uniforms, more evidence on the use of drab clothing is bound to surface. As this knowledge permeates the ranks of the average War Between the States buff, we may just see the day when Johnny Reb is known not just as the soldier in gray and butternut, but also as the soldier in white!

