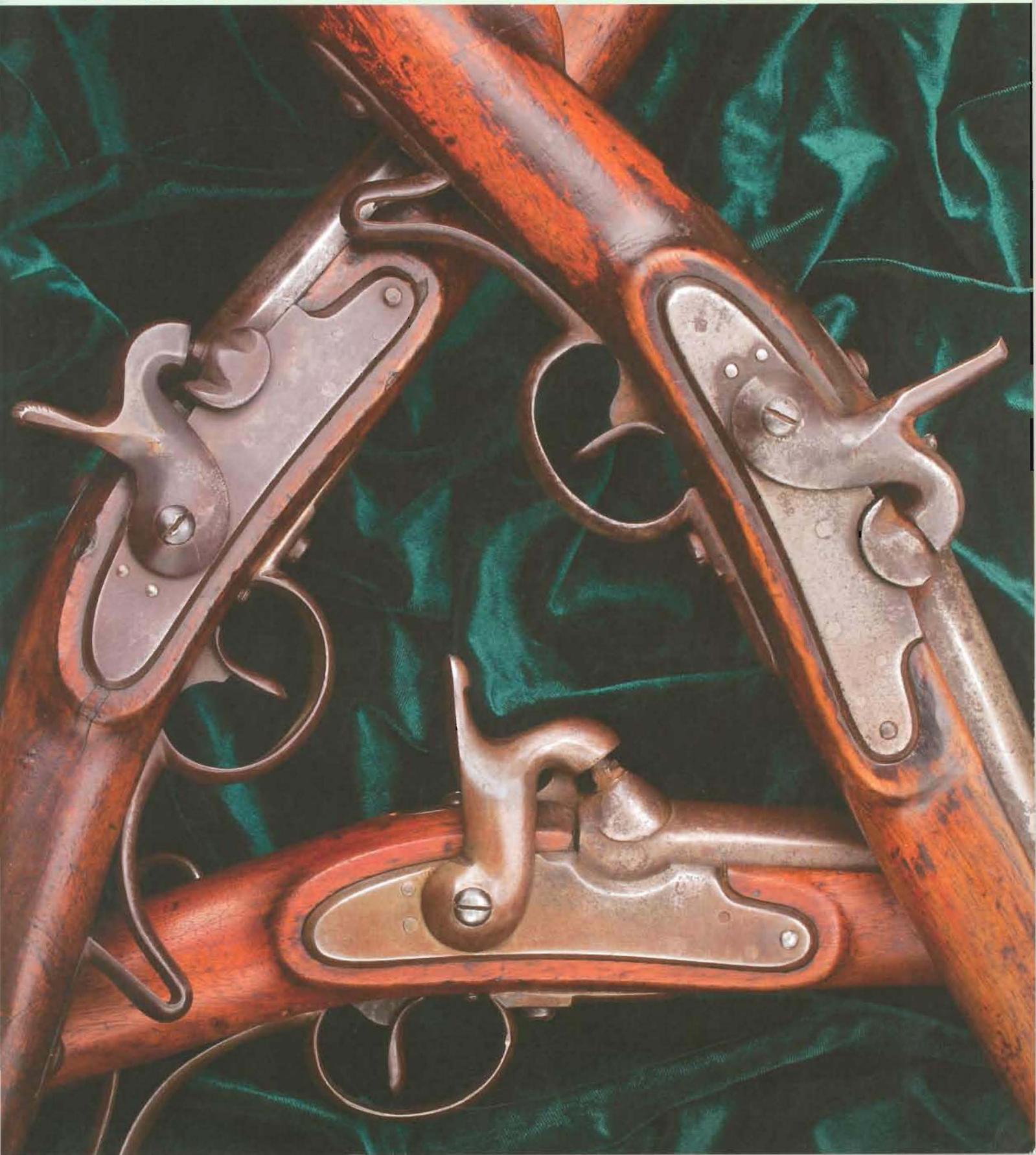


# North South Trader's CIVIL WAR

The magazine for collectors & historians

Founded 1973

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Vol. 35 No. 4, 2011

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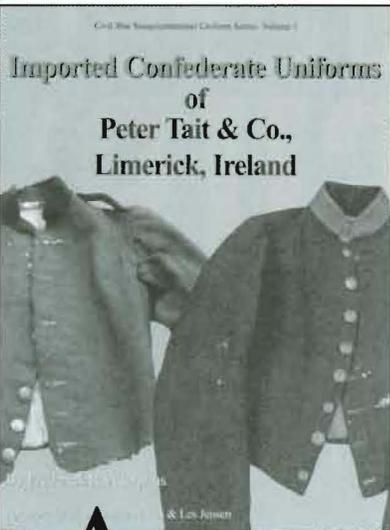
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### Cover: "The Austrian M1851 Carbine"

New discoveries now give this little understood firearm its rightful place in Civil War history. Photo by Jack W. Melton, Jr.; composition by Jack W. Melton, Jr., Peggy Melton, and Stephen W. Sylvia; artifacts courtesy Russ Pritchard, Jr.; cover story on p. 22.



**Announcing the  
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Now for the issue itself, I'm still drooling over Joe Haile's plates—beautiful cover photo and another outstanding issue.

"Throw me something, mister!" Happy Mardi Gras.

R.J. Boutte from [where else?] Louisiana

**SNAKE ID**

Here is a photo of a snake buckle that I dug in Ringgold, Georgia, in Catoosa County. David A. Hubbard's article "Snake Bit" [Vol. 35 No. 2] was the great source of information that helped me to identify my find.

There were no 6th or 44th Massachusetts Regiments in Ringgold that we could find record of, but in David's article he stated that the 39th Georgia Infantry was issued snake buckles. These men were from various parts of northwest Georgia, which included Catoosa, Walker, Gilmer, Chattooga, Dade, and Whitfield Counties. Because of David's article, I can now say that my snake buckle was a Confederate-issued buckle.

Please tell David thank you for a good job.

Jim Walker via e-mail

*You just did, and we thank you for writing.*

—Ed.

— In memoriam —

**Jim Tenety**

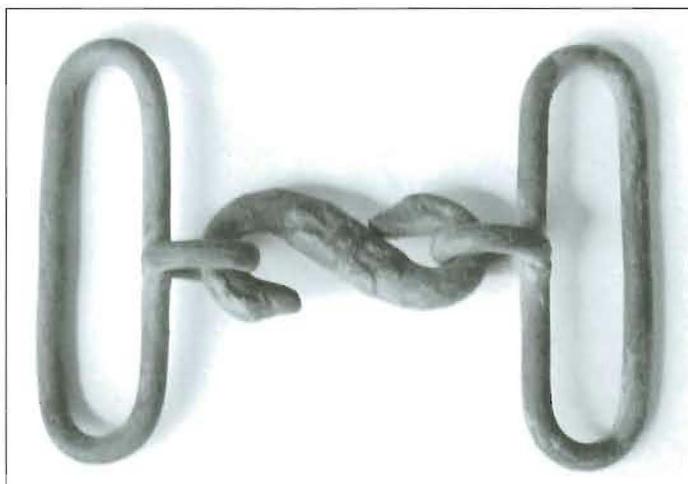
1918 - 2011

*Tribute by Michael Hammerson  
of London, England*

Jim Tenety, who died one week short of his 93rd birthday on January 30, 2011, was among the last of that widely known and respected old guard of Civil War dealers who made the hobby such a pleasure for all levels of collectors. Raised in New York City, where his father had a printing business in the Flat Iron Building, he was a graduate of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

Jim loved airplanes, and he knew how to fly before he learned how to drive a car. When the United States entered World War II, licensed pilot Jim wanted to join the Air Corps but was picked by the US Navy.

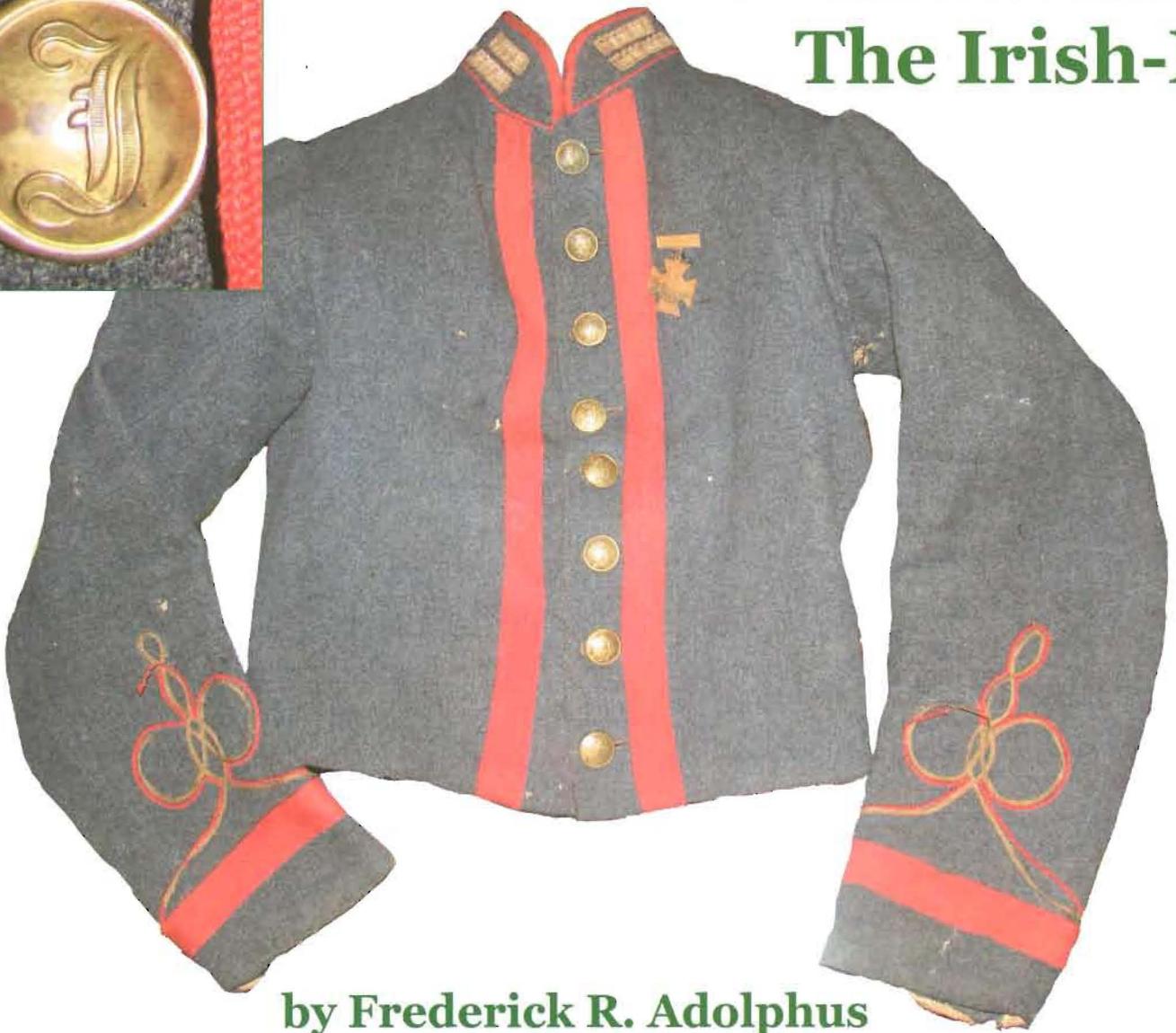
His first job was gun inspector, making it necessary for him to know all the guns used, from the .45 calibre pistol to the 10-inch guns on battleships. He then served as an engineering duty officer and, after the war, became a career officer in the Bureau of Ships.



*Jim Walker's snake buckle, unearthed in Ringgold, Georgia, and—thanks to David Hubbard's article—identified to local Southern troops.*

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SELECTIONS FROM THE Janet  Bedford Hayes FAMILY COLLECTION

# The Irish-Ma



by Frederick R. Adolphus



Above, plain variant jacket of Richard Mauzy Blakemore. Blakemore was with the 4th Tennessee Cavalry but also served as adjutant of an artillery battalion under Forrest.

Left, an interior view of Blakemore's jacket allows a full perspective of the linen lining. This example has two breast pockets.

Inset, top left, Blakemore's plain variant jacket bears English I buttons.

All images this page courtesy the Warren Rifles Confederate Memorial Museum, Front Royal, Virginia.

# e Confederate Uniforms of Peter Tait



*Collar trim variant jacket of Benjamin S. Pendleton, 2nd Virginia Infantry, who fought from June 1861 to Appomattox. Images here and below courtesy the Texas Civil War Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.*

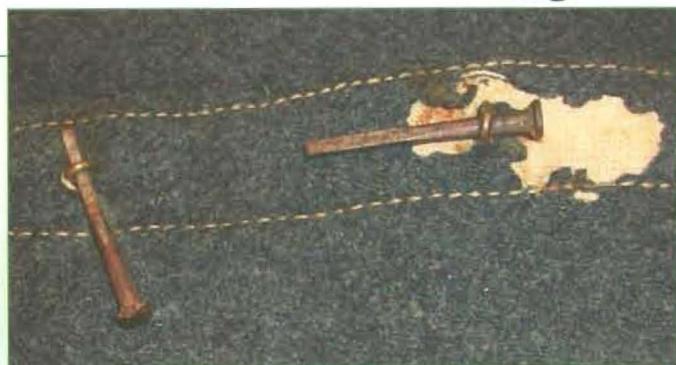
**P**eter Tait & Co. Confederate buttons are nothing new to Civil War collectors, but the actual jackets themselves have attracted less attention—until now, in any case.

Confederate quartermaster authorities began contracting with the Peter Tait Co. in December 1863 for “ready-cut” sets of uniforms; that is, pre-cut kits that required sewing. This concept evolved into contracts for “ready-made” uniforms, and by the summer of 1864, Peter Tait & Co. was sending both ready-cut sets and ready-made uniforms to the Confederacy through the Blockade.

In both cases, the uniforms consisted of cadet gray jackets and pants. The unassembled uniform sets were sent to the state of Alabama quartermaster, and the finished Tait uniforms were sent to Confederate authorities.

The blockade runners carrying Tait’s uniforms delivered their cargos at Wilmington, North Carolina, and Galveston, Texas. Confederate troops in Texas, North Carolina, and Virginia received these uniforms in 1865, but the Alabama state troops received their Tait uniforms sooner, beginning in the early autumn of 1864.

Surviving records indicate that approximately 53,600 “ready-made” Tait uniforms were imported into the Confederacy. Roughly two-thirds (38,100 uniforms) of these went to Virginia and North Carolina, while one-third (15,500



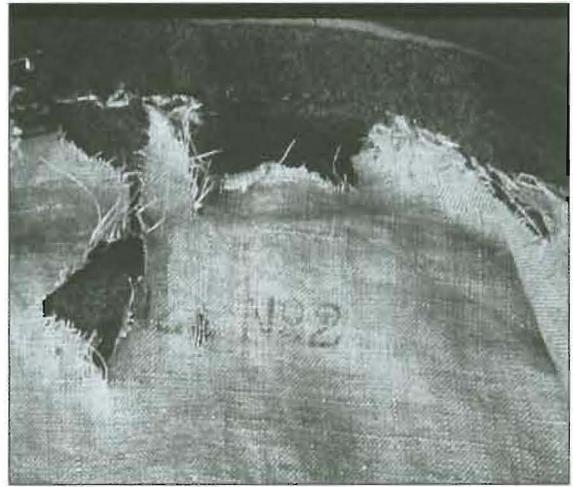
*Most Tait jackets are missing their original buttons. Pendleton apparently used nails to affix the replacement buttons.*

uniforms) went to Texas. There are no records to conclusively document how many pre-cut uniform kits were sent to Alabama, but an estimated 5,700 Alabama State troops were furnished with these uniforms in early 1865, suggesting that many more may have been issued before and after.



*The single back placket seen on the jacket at left is the most noticeable feature of the Tait jacket. It was copied from the British army tunic of the day. Courtesy Leslie D. Jensen.*

*Stamps were applied on the lining just below the collar. The jacket at left is stamped "SIZE No. 2"—a simpler size system than that evidenced on the opposite page. Courtesy Leslie D. Jensen.*



**T**oday, only the Tait-style jacket survives in various collections. No unquestionably documented Tait trousers have been identified.

The jackets are easy to identify, even those that were significantly altered, because they were made to strictly templated pattern. Variations are minor, limited to different button types, application of facings, interior pocket tailoring, and collar shape. Aside from these comparatively insignificant variations, the jackets closely follow the same distinctive pattern.

The Tait jacket was made of heavy, dark, blue-gray woolen kersey—the same cloth that the South imported to make Confederate jackets and trousers. Contemporaries referred to its color as “cadet gray” or “Confederate gray.”

The jacket had two-piece sleeves, a five-piece body (two fronts, two sides, and a single back piece), a one-piece collar with a two-piece inside, eight brass buttons fastening the front, and an unbleached, white, heavy linen lining, fabric that was common to Tait’s native Ireland. The lining had a black, ink-stamped marking indicating the size; for examples, see the images on this page and opposite.

The jacket generally had a single pocket inside the left breast, opening at the lapel. Some jackets, however, had one or two inset breast pockets in the inside lining.

The collar had a hook and eyelet closure.

Interestingly, some features of the jacket were finished with raw edges, including the right front piece along the edge of its eight buttons, the bottom lapel piece of the left front, the collar lining, and the top trim pieces of the shoulder straps. The jacket was topstitched along the front lapels,

collar, and shoulder straps.

Much of the garment was machine sewn, yet a considerable portion, most notably the lining, was finished by hand. Trim cloth was either royal blue for infantry or madder red for artillery.

The manufacturer also stenciled the left side of the kersey material components—essentially, the inside—with white paint markings as a quality control measure.

The jacket was tight fitting, riding a bit higher than most Confederate jackets, but it presented a fine appearance. Tait also produced the uniforms in standardized British army sizes.

Finally, while Tait made both infantry and artillery uniforms, there is no evidence to indicate that the firm produced a cavalry uniform.

Surviving examples and battlefield photographs of the Tait jacket indicate that there were four distinct ready-made jacket styles as follows:

1. The “plain” jacket has a gray collar and is devoid of shoulder straps and any facing colors. One of these surviving jackets, worn by Richard Mauzy Blakemore (p. 38), has its original Old English I (Tice CSI215C1) buttons. The plain style has provenance to the Army of Northern Virginia and possibly North Carolina.
2. The “collar trim” jacket has either blue or red collar facings and is without shoulder straps. None of the surviving originals have their original buttons, and all have provenance to the Army of Northern Virginia. For an example, see the Pendleton jacket on p. 39.
3. The “full trim” jacket has blue or red facings on both

Right, most Tait jackets had a single inside pocket, opening vertically along the left lapel facing, as noted in the jacket featured on this page.



This full trim artillery jacket bears a size stamp more intricate than that seen on the opposite page. Surviving stamps indicate that Tait used various types of marking systems.



Closeup of the Roman A button on this full-trim artillery jacket.

collar and shoulder straps. Two of the surviving full trim jackets retain their original buttons: small, lined Roman I and A types. The blue trimmed Taylor jacket seen on p. 42 has lined Roman I buttons (Tice CSI-206Am1) with Tait backmarks. The unprovenanced red trimmed jacket seen at right retains four of its lined Roman A buttons (Tice CSA206B1), also with Tait backmarks. This style was used in the Army of Northern Virginia as well as in North Carolina and Texas.

4. The “welt” jacket has blue edging, or welting, around the collar and shoulder straps as seen on the Duncan jacket on p. 42. . Both surviving jackets of this type retain their original buttons: Old English I buttons (Tice CSI215C1 and CSI218A2). Both of the jackets have provenance to the Army of Tennessee’s Carolina Campaign.

The last type of Tait jacket is the Alabama variant made from the pre-cut sets. The only surviving Alabama Tait jacket follows the typology of the full trim style of ready-made Tait jackets. The Pillans jacket seen on p. 43 has blue shoulder straps and collar trim. The state quartermaster department assembled these jackets with five buttons instead of the usual eight that Peter Tait & Co. applied. Otherwise, the Alabama variant closely resembles the full-trim style of ready-made jackets.

Tait provided gray trousers as part of its uniforms, and these were presumably of the same dark, blue-gray, woolen material as the jackets. While such trousers were delivered, it is difficult to identify surviving artifacts as such because



Full trim variant jacket. All images this page courtesy Leslie D. Jensen.



*Welt variant jacket of Hugh Lawson Duncan, 39th Georgia Infantry. The closeup of Duncan's shoulder strap above highlights the welt and the English I button.*

*Duncan enlisted in the 39th on March 4, 1862, and surrendered at Greensboro, North Carolina, on April 26, 1865. Courtesy Dr. Robert M. Jaffee.*



*Full trim variant jacket of Marcus D.L. Taylor, 63rd Tennessee Infantry. It bears Roman I buttons.*

*A 19-year-old enlistee in May 1862, Taylor was wounded at Chickamauga in 1863. After a lengthy recuperation, he returned to his unit and was promoted to first sergeant. He continued to fight all the way to the surrender at Appomattox.*

*Courtesy Beauvoir, the Jefferson Davis Home and Presidential Library, Biloxi, Mississippi.*



*Above and right, Alabama variant jacket of Harry Pillans, an 1864 enlistee in the 62nd Alabama Infantry. The jacket was assembled from a pre-cut kit and bears the single back placket that is the hallmark of the ready-made Tait jackets. Courtesy the Mobile Museum of History, Mobile, Alabama.*

there is not a well-documented pair of Tait trousers to use as a reference point.

**M**ost collectors are familiar with the distinctive brass buttons that adorned Tait jackets. Regrettably, few of the extant jackets retain their original buttons. As such, relic hunters have brought most Tait button variants to light by recovering them at former Confederate sites. A few variants have no Tait backmark but carry the floating shank eyelet that, along with the button face, associate them with Tait uniforms.

The floating shank is easily identifiable by the indented “shield boss” in the back. Manufacturers developed the floating shank to mitigate button shank breakage when packing jackets tightly together in bales.

No Tait buttons have surfaced with faces that





indicate cavalry association nor with a backmark that bears the name of Alexander Collie, who also made Tait-style uniforms.

Tait-style button faces are limited to five basic patterns: a lined manuscript I with scrolls (in two sizes), a lined Old English I, a stippled Old English I, a lined Roman I, and a lined Roman A. The Roman I and A buttons seem to have provenance to the full trim jacket style, and the Old English I has provenance to the plain and welt style jackets.

**I**n sum, Peter Tait & Co. made a distinctive uniform that conformed to Confederate cadet-gray regulations and enjoyed a sort of universality that no other Confederate uniform could claim. The Tait uniform was made to a fairly stringent pattern, something noted in Union uniforms but utterly lacking in Southern depot-made uniforms. While the Tait jacket exhibits consistent tailoring, color, and materials, Southern depot uniforms differ widely in appearance.

The Tait uniform was also issued throughout the Confederacy, albeit for a short duration, making it the closest thing that exists to a universal Confederate uniform.

Last, and perhaps most significant to today's collectors,

the late-war importation of the Tait goods meant that some survived the conflict, allowing for a well-balanced study of Tait's uniform jackets today.

**NSTCW**

#### Selected sources

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Left, one of the most affecting photographs to emerge from the conflict, this image serves a dual purpose. Not only does it show that war is, indeed, all hell, it also serves as visual proof that Confederates wore Tait uniforms. This fallen Army of Northern Virginia artilleryman was clad in a full trim variant jacket, albeit with the buttons and shoulder straps removed, presumably by souvenir hunters. The photograph was taken by Thomas C. Roche at Petersburg on April 3, 1865.

ment between Peter Tait & Co. and C.J. McRae, purchasing agent, CSA, Liverpool, England, October 13, 1864; Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-1865, M437, Roll 114, T (201-321), Letter from James L. Tait to James A. Seddon, Richmond, Virginia, December 15, 1863.

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Texas-born Frederick Adolphus is author of the recently released *Imported Confederate Uniforms of Peter Tait & Co. of Limerick, Ireland*, reviewed in our Vol. 35 No. 3. His interest in the Civil War was sparked by playing with toy soldiers during the Centennial, which ultimately led to degree in history at Texas A&M and a career in the US Army museum system. He is currently director of the Fort Polk US Army Museum.

*This marks his second feature-length article in NSTCW.*

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