

## 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Company B – Uniform Guidelines (June 2024)

### Introduction:

The purpose of this page is to help you navigate the various uniform and kit items you will need to participate in 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts.

We strive to uphold a high standard of authenticity based on the equipment available, our personal financial constraints, and the latest historical research. It's a continuous work in progress so by no means should you feel stressed or not join our unit based on not having everything noted below.

We are here to assist. So, if you are looking to just give reenacting a try **the unit has loaner uniforms, gear, and weapons** for your use before you commit.

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### Uniform Guidelines

Every event has its own unique uniform guidelines based on what year, unit, and battle we are portraying. **Event guidelines will always trump unit guidelines** and a quality sack coat and forage cap will set you up for almost all events.

Over the course of the war the 2,047 Union infantry regiments in Federal service saw quite a variation in their uniforms. 1861/62 Army of the Potomac quartermaster returns show a massive number of frocks and other coat types being issued, specifically after Antietam and before Chancellorsville, in addition to sack coats. After Gettysburg, the war department decided to try to standardize the federal fatigue uniform for all field service units with sack coats. Regimental commanders could purchase more flamboyant uniforms for his troops, which some did, many did not. This is when a number zouave and units like the Iron Brigade adopted sack coats. However by May 1864, Federal units especially the Veteran Volunteer units that had reenlisted, showed a varying mix of sack coats (majority), frocks, private purchase sack coats, private purchase jackets, issue infantry jackets, and even some mounted jackets, plus civilian hats (forage caps still being the majority).

**All this said - we hold to a unit standard of sack coats and forage caps as a guideline - as we don't want things to get out of control, however there is some variation available in your individual impression with your NCO's approval and within the event uniform guidelines.**



93<sup>rd</sup> NY (AUG-NOV 1863) showing a mix of sack coats, Frock (dress) coats, Infantry Jackets, State Jackets, and musician Frocks. All enlisted (save for the sergeants) wearing forage caps.

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### "What uniform items should I buy first?"

This is a matter of opinion, but our general suggestion is to start here, as these are the most personal of the visible items.

- **Forage Cap (Dark Blue)**

- **Preferred:** Model 1858, Type I or II
- **Acceptable in very limited numbers:** Authentic civilian hats/slouch (1863+) *and by permission only and/or event dependent.*
- **Unacceptable:** Kepis, Hardee hats, infantry bugles, Fenian harps, feathers, squirrel or buck tails, etc.
- **Sources:** (1) Dirty Billy, (2) Russell Osmianski, (3) Kepi Nation/Greg Starbuck, (4) Connor Timothy; (5) [minimum acceptable] C&D Jarnagin model 1858.



Winslow Homer sketch of soldiers of the 28th Massachusetts, sometime in 1863 or after. A clear picture of the hats and cap brass they were using.

- **Shoes (aka brogans)**

- **Preferred:** Federal Issue (aka Jefferson Bootees, brogans, contact shoes), with either pegged or sewn soles, preferably the earlier non rivetted pattern.
- **Unacceptable:** Modern footwear, high-top bootee, brown (natural) leather; soles other than leather, Vibram soles added, laces other than rawhide
- **Sources:** Missouri Shoe & Boot Co.; South Union Mills; The Depot Historic; C&D Jarnagin.
- \*1- to 15-month lead time.
- **Note** – modern shoes for new recruits may be worn only at the captain's discretion. Contact him prior to the event.

- **Sack Coat (Dark Blue)**

- **Preferred:** Schuylkill Arsenal or quality Contract sack coat, lined or unlined
- **Acceptable in very limited numbers:** Frock coats (1861-1865), Infantry jackets (1864+), commercial sack coats (1864+), private purchase jackets (1864+)
- **Unacceptable:** Mounted or artillery coats, a low-quality sack coat
- **Sources:** (1) Wambaugh, White & Company; (2) K Windahl & co.; (3) W. Hutzell & Co.; (4) Old Timey Rags; (5) The Honest Sutler; (6) The Depot Historic; (7) [minimum acceptable] C&D Jarnagin with handsewn buttonholes.

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- \*3- to 12-month lead time.
- **Trousers (Sky Blue)**
  - **Preferred:** Either a Schuylkill Arsenal or quality Contract trousers
  - **Unacceptable:** Cheap sutler trousers, dark blue, and pre-war version
  - **Sources:** Same sources and lead time as Sack Coats
  - You will also need a pair of period suspenders (aka braces)
    - **Sources:** Merrick's Custom Leather, The Depot Historic, South Union Mills
  - \*3- to 12-month lead time.



8<sup>th</sup> U.S. Regulars (June 1863) looking homogeneous in Sack Coats and Forage Caps. Note they are not wearing the commonly assumed Frocks and Hardees for Regulars.

### ***"What uniform items should I buy next?"***

Your next purchases should begin with whatever the loaner kit lacks in either fit or availability. The goal is to wean yourself off the need for loaner kit.

- **Issue shirt**
  - **Preferred:** U.S. Army issue domet flannel shirt, gray flannel shirt, wool or cotton knit shirt
  - **Acceptable in limited numbers:** Civilian shirts or proper material and construction
  - **Unacceptable:** Shirts of modern style or materials, bright colors, unbleached muslin, white cotton, and modern collared shirts
  - **Sources:** South Union Mills, K. Windahl & Co., Wambaugh, White & Co, NJ Sekela, The Depot Historic, The Honest Sutler
- **Drawers**
  - **Preferred:** U.S. Army canton flannel drawers, wool or cotton citizen drawers, none
  - **Unacceptable:** Any type of modern underwear
  - **Sources:** Wambaugh, White & Co, South Union Mills, Depot Historic.
- **Period Socks (aka stockings)**

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- **Preferred:** Correct period wool socks
- **Unacceptable:** Modern hiking socks, rag wool socks, socks with low tops.
- **Sources:** South Union Mills; S&S Sutler
- **Greatcoat**
  - **Preferred:** Either a Schuylkill Arsenal or quality Contract
  - **Unacceptable:** Dark blue prewar coats, double-breasted (mounted service) coats, gray or brown coats, or those made of jean cloth.
  - **Sources:** K. Windahl & Co, The Honest Sutler; C&D Jarnagin greatcoats are acceptable, but ensure you request no buttonholes. Cut and sew them yourself.



24<sup>th</sup> Corps (Appomattox, 1865) showing late-war uniform and headgear variation.  
Trivia question – that’s not the standard rifle stack. So what is it?

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### Equipment Items

- **Rifle Musket**
  - **Preferred:** Enfield (P53) three-band rifled musket, Model 1861 or 1863 Springfield.
  - **Unacceptable:** Any other type of weapon, (e.g. flintlocks, '42 .69 cal, Lorenz, etc) any original weapon, any 2-band variation of the Enfield or Springfield.
  - **Sources:** Comers Gunworks, Taylor’s Firearms, Falls Creek Sutler.
  - \*\*\* Up to 15-month lead time
  - **Defarb:** Comers Gunwork and Tom Watts
- **Bayonet**
  - **Sources:** See Rifle Musket vendors
- **Musket sling**
  - **Preferred:** Period accurate sling for weapon
  - **Sources:** Dell’s Leatherworks, L.D. Hanning, C.A. Davisson, Merrick’s Custom Leather

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- **Scabbard**
  - **Preferred:** 2-rivet early war version
  - **Acceptable:** 7-rivet late war version
  - **Unacceptable:** Enfield (straight) scabbard and frog
  - **Sources:** Dell's Leatherworks, L.D. Hanning, C.A. Davisson, Merrick's Custom Leather
  
- **Waist belt**
  - **Preferred:** Correct construction and material, with the pattern 1858 (early war) or 1861 oval US buckle
  - **Unacceptable:** Brown or buff leather, any belt buckles other than regulation oval US.
  - **Sources:** Dell's Leatherworks, L.D. Hanning, C.A. Davisson, Merrick's Custom Leather
  
- **Cartridge box and sling**
  - **Preferred:** Model 1857 or 1861 .58cal box, with corresponding 1858 (early war) or 1861 oval US box plate
  - **Acceptable:** Model 1864 (Late war impressions only)
  - **Unacceptable:** Brown or buff leather, any belt buckles other than regulation oval US, wearing it on your belt unless directly specified.
  - **Sources:** Dell's Leatherworks, L.D. Hanning, C.A. Davisson, Merrick's Custom Leather
  
- **Canteen, strap, and cover**
  - **Preferred:** US regulation model 1858 canteen
    - Philadelphia Depot; jean cloth, leather (early to mid-war) or cotton strap (1863 onward), cotton cork string, long cork
    - New York Depot; cotton strap, metal cork chain, jean cloth (early to mid-war) or light blue cover (1863 onward)
    - Cincinnati Depot; cotton strap, cotton cork string
  - **Unacceptable:** No cover, corrugated, Confederate or Mexican War canteens.
  - **Sources:** S&S Sutler, C&D Jarnagin, South Union Mills, Dell's Leatherworks (sling)
  
- **Haversack**
  - **Preferred:** Early war style (11.5" x 12")
  - **Acceptable:** Mid- to -late war (2" wider)
  - **Unacceptable:** White or blue-white tick, leather, anything not black.
  - **Sources:** L.D. Hanning; K. Windahl & Co., Missouri Boot & Shoe
  
- **Knapsack**
  - **Preferred:** Federal issue two-bag knapsack of black-tarred canvas.
  - **Unacceptable:** Anything else, including militia hardpacks, wooden insert, 1864 models.
  - **Sources:** L.D. Hanning; Dell's Leatherworks. C&D Jarnagin is acceptable.
  
- **Blanket**
  - **Preferred:** 100% wool, have a hand sewn "US", unfinished edge
  - **Unacceptable:** Any modern material, period civilian blanket, coverlets, quilts, jean wool blankets.
  - **Sources:** Wambaugh, White & Co; B&B Tart; S&S Sutler

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- **Gum blanket**
  - ***Preferred***: Vulcanized rubber
  - ***Acceptable***: Painted cloth, poncho
  - ***Unacceptable***: Any modern poncho or ground cover
  - ***Sources***: South Union Mills; S&S Sutler; C&D Jarnagin
- **Shelter tent**
  - ***Preferred***: Type IIa
  - ***Acceptable***: Type III (mid- to late- war)
  - ***Acceptable in very limited quantities***: A-frame tents
  - ***Unacceptable***: Tents with brass grommets, Sibley tent, anything modern
  - ***Sources***: Wambaugh, White & Co; S&S Sutler; The Honest Sutler; The Depot Historic



139<sup>th</sup> PA (Date UNK) showing mix of sack coats and frocks. All enlisted wearing forage caps. Note the pant color variation.

### ***Personal articles***

- **Mess equipment**
  - ***Preferred***: Period accurate tin cup, a tin plate, and knife, fork, and spoon
    - You may want; boiler, mucket, coffee pot
  - ***Unacceptable***: Anything modern, stainless steel or copper
  - ***Sources***: South Union Mills; C&D Jarnagin; Dixie Tin Works; The Depot Historic; S&S Sutler
- **Eyeglasses and case**
  - ***Unacceptable***: Sunglasses, modern frames, darkened/transition lenses
  - ***Sources***: Historic Eyewear Company
  - ***Note*** – modern eyewear for new recruits may be worn only at the captain's discretion. Contact him prior to the event.
- **Handkerchief**
  - ***Sources***: South Union Mills
- **Housewife** (aka sewing kit)
  - ***Sources***: Sutler of Fort Scott; Button Barron; Carter and Jasper
- **Toothbrush**
  - ***Unacceptable***: Anything modern
  - ***Sources***: South Union Mills
- **Tooth powder**



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- **Sources:** Sutler of Fort Scott, South Union Mills
- **Writing Material**
  - **Unacceptable:** Anything modern
  - **Sources:** The Sullivan Press
- **Wallet & money**
  - **Unacceptable:** Anything modern
  - **Sources:** South Union Mills; Dell's Leatherworks; The Sullivan Press (Money)
- **Matches and a Candle**
  - **Sources:** Sutler of Fort Scott; Wyatt Enterprises; Blockade Runner
- **Poke Sacks & Ration Bag**
  - **Sources:** Dell's Leatherworks; South Union Mills; Wyatt Enterprises; K. Windhal & Co
- **Candles**
  - Button Barron; Sutler of Fort Scott; Carter and Jasper
- **Winter Items**
  - **Preferred:** Period accurate wool hat, scarf, and gloves/mittens/wristers
  - **Unacceptable:** Anything modern
  - **Sources:** South Union Mills; S&S Sutler



119<sup>th</sup> PA (mid-war, Date UNK) showing mix of sack coats and frocks. All enlisted wearing forage caps.

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30<sup>th</sup> PA (Date UNK, mid-war) showing mix of sack coats and frocks, '42 Smoothbores and even dark blue pants. All enlisted wearing forage caps.