

Recruiting SOP

1st Alabama Confederate Cavalry Co. G Wheeler's Escort

The 1st Alabama Cavalry Co. G Wheeler's Escort was reactivated in 1996 with a goal to present an accurate and honorable portrayal of the mounted cavalry from the western theater of the War Between the States. We have been blessed with a loyal and growing membership that is dedicated to a high standard of safety and authenticity and a desire to remain one of the premier living history organizations. Our impression covers the entire spectrum of the cavalry experience- from camp life to mounted and dismounted tactics as well as Civilian impressions. The first participates in battle reenactments, living history demonstrations, parades, and memorials. In addition, many of our members belong to heritage and historical preservation associations and conduct educational demonstrations for local schools and community events.

“Let us covenant each unto the other as they did- even until death”

Getting Started

Reenacting has continued to gain in popularity as a way to “find out what might have been like”. In addition to the hobby's fascinations one finds camaraderie with like-minded people as they share this unique experience. Naturally, we think that the cavalry is the ultimate part of “living history”. The addition of horse brings another dimension that few people in today's work know much about; and with any living memory of the old horse cavalry waning, we feel it's important to pass on the legacy and tradition of this once vital service. We'll tell you now that it ain't easy and there are other units that are less demanding than we are, but when everything is right and the men and horses are working as a team, it is a spectacular sight to see and experience.

First, if you would like to be a member of Wheeler's Escort, you should study our rules and regulations in the Membership Requirements section. You can find this information on our website: www.wheelersescort.org. We are a family oriented unit and encourage the presence and participation of the reenactor's family members. However, we're not for everyone, but if you like a challenge and a chance to learn about the total cavalry impression we are just might be what you're looking for. Although we portray an Alabama Unit we have members from Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, as well as Alabama.

Next contact Col. Joe Way, P.O. Box 6359, Navarre, Florida 32566, 1st Sergeant John Downing, or Sergeant Chuck Austin for more information. Also it would be helpful to get in touch with a member of Wheeler's Escort nearest you. They will help you with the selection of your equipment and might be able to save you some money in the process. **DON'T BUY ANY THING BEFOREHAND AS IT MIGHT NOT BE TO OUR SPECIFICATIONS.** Some items may be available for loan during your first year. To petition for membership in Wheeler's Escort you will have to be sponsored by an active member from the ranks of the unit as well as meet with the unit Commander for approval as a new recruit.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION:

The 1st Alabama Cavalry Co. G Wheeler's Escort is a non-profit, mounted living history organization whose purpose is to educate its members and the public about the Civil War cavalry. Each member, mounted and dismounted cavalry, provides his own horse and equipment under the guidelines of the rules and regulations. We also portray a Federal Civil War Cavalry (the 4th U.S. Regular Cavalry) unit when necessary, and it is each member's responsibility to be able to accurately represent both a Confederate and Federal cavalryman in the time frame of the War Between the States (1861- 1865). This task is paramount to providing historically accurate battle reenactments and to this organization. Safety is always of the utmost importance and the primary consideration of members. We believe that to effectively demonstrate the tactics and maneuvers utilized by the cavalry that sufficient number are essential and unit of purpose is the key. Always in the mind of each member is to set a proper example for others.

Membership:

Membership is open to males fourteen- (14) year or older. Person under the age of eighteen (18) year of age must have parent or guardian permission with a notarized signature on a release form to be a member or to participate in any activities that Wheeler's Escort attends or sponsors. Member under the age of 14 may not be allowed to take the field with weapons at many Alabama Division Events. Applicants must be in good physical condition and health. An application must be sponsored by an active member of the unit, and meet with the unit commander prior to obtaining that status of a Class B member of the unit. The member will remain as a Class B member for a period of one (1) full year and be required to participate in at least three (3) drills or reenactments. Upon completion of these requirements, the active members will vote upon for Class A member status by majority vote of active members. Class B members will have not voting privileges at this time and may not hold any officer or NCO slots within the Company. New men are considered Class B member no matter what background or previous experience they have.

Dues:

Annual dues for membership in Wheeler's Escort are fifteen (\$15.00) dollars for a single member, twenty (\$20.00) dollars for the entire family. Dues are payable to the Secretary/Treasurer, Sergeant Chuck Austin, by January 31 of each year, which are applied towards the insurance and Alabama Division dues.

Annual Meeting:

An annual meeting is held each year at a time and place convenient to the majority of the members. Upcoming events, new rules, election of officers and NCO/s, and the general direction of the unit will be discussed and voted upon. The Commander shall preside over the meeting or in his absence, the next ranking member.

Rank:

The Company Commander of Wheeler's Escort will hold the rank of Captain or above, CS Cavalry. NCO positions available with the Company include one (1) 1st Sgt., one (1) Platoon Sgt., one (1) Corporal Dismounted (Brevet Rank). Rank above private shall be held at a minimum and be determined by the unit Commander according to average field strength. The ranking member present may brevet member for an event.

Horses:

Horses maybe of the following breeds: Grade, Quarter horse, Saddlebred, Morgan, Thoroughbred, Arabian, Walking or Racking horses. *Horses showing characteristics of the breeds such as paints, pintos and appaloosas will be have to be evaluated before being used.* A current (-) negative Coggins test and vaccinations are necessary for the protection of all horses and are required by most event hosts. Each trooper shall bring a copy of current (-) negative Coggins results to each event. The ranking member present may dismiss poorly conditioned, sick or unruly horses. This reflects on the unit's appearance as a whole!

Horse Equipment:

The most important part of the trooper's equipment was his saddle. Well made, it provided the durability and comfort for both horse and rider to endure the rigors of campaign. A poorly made saddle left him with saddle sores or a lame horse.

Like the rest of his equipment, the recruit brought his own saddle into Confederate service upon enlistment. Some of the designs have existed since the 18th century while others were born out of the westward expansion of the early 1800s.

An effort was eventually made by the Confederate Ordnance Department to provide a Standard saddle for the cavalry, but due to the variety in craftsmanship with the trees various saddle makers and limitations on the availability of leather, hardware, saddle-trees, the result was often inadequate. With the possible exception of the HOPE or TEXAS saddle, the preferred saddle by Confederate cavalrymen became the U.S. issued MCCLELLAN, procured either by capture or Confederate-made imitations.

Although Wheeler's escort allows several different kinds of saddles for a Confederate impression, your first saddle should be an 1859 McClellan. It will be appropriate for anything we do. Make sure the hardware in iron, not brass and that all leather saddle furniture is dyed black (i.e. appropriate for a Federal Cavalry Impression). *The pre-war Hope, Jennifer, Ringgold, Grimsley, or Campbell are all acceptable alternative. No 1874, 1904, or 1928 riggings on McClellans and no other post-war saddles will be authorized.* Wooden stirrups or period iron stirrups are correct. Halter should be period civilian, Confederate, or 1859 Union issue with iron hardware link straps and lead straps. Headstalls and bits should be pre- 1865 Confederate. Civilian or Union issue. *No chrome hardware.* Saddle blankets shall be union issue blue, gray, brown or red wool. Spanish moss blankets have been documented for Confederate service if you can find one. Saddlebags must be Union or Confederate issue or period civilian. Valises, cruppers, martingales, pommel holsters, and carbine throats/holsters are optional.

Uniforms:

All uniforms shall be correct 1861-1865 U.S. or C.S. Army pattern and made home spun (Jean Cloth), in gray or natural wool-jean, linen, cotton, or other natural fiber. All officers and men are encouraged to wear a minimum of rank distinctions and uniform trim on the battlefield. Buttons should be SCA, Block or Script C, wood, Federal eagle, State or Shell. Purchase the highest quality shall jacket you can find with the sleeves one (1) inch longer than your size. It is advisable to buy the jacket one size larger to allow for shrinkage. **IT WILL SHRINK.** Trousers should be gray, butternut, or natural wool-jean it is not necessary that the trousers and the shell jacket fabric match up. Trousers of a civilian pattern in black, gray, or butternut made of jean cloth, cotton, or canvas is perfectly acceptable for Confederate Service. *NO trim for Confederate Service authorized. By 1862 there was little if any yellow wool trim available. Soldier you are representing the American Citizen Soldier.*

Federal uniforms will be exactly that – UNIFORMS, and shall consist of a federal cavalry shell jacket with trim and sky-blue federal issue (wool) trousers or those similar. Uniformity is key when portraying the Yankee, Federal Cavalry. Anachronisms such as zippers, belt loops, modern work pants, levis, etc. will not be allowed.

Hats should be period slouch hats in a dark color (black, brown, or gray). Make sure it is a dark color. Kepis and forage caps are accepted but were seldom worn by Westerners. Straw hats are accepted. Footwear shall be Cavalry issue (M1861) boots with square toes and heels. *NO East German military, motorcycle, or cowboy boots.* Leather equipment should be Union Black. If eyeglasses are required, the trooper should try to be equipped with a style correct to the period. No modern eyeglasses or sunglasses can be tolerated. Modern rings and other jewelry will not be worn while in uniform with the exception of a wedding band. Wristwatches will not be worn on to the battlefield or in view of the general public. *Earrings will not be allowed while in uniform under any circumstances!*

Weapons:

You can get by with one pistol and a saber for a while. Though the original 1st Alabama Cavalry Co. G. Wheeler's Escort used mostly revolvers. The 1858 Remington is sturdier and extra cylinders are easy to

replace on horseback and cheaper than buying another pistol. *We highly recommend the 1858 Remington.* Sporting goods catalogues such as Cabellas, or Bass Pro Shops usually run sales on cap-and-ball revolvers. Pistols will be cap-and-ball revolvers only and must be holstered. Longarms should be period military (carbines, rifles, or muskets). *No Shotguns, Hawkins, or Zouaves. Henry Repeating Rifle can be utilized for a Federal Cavalry Impression only.* We recommend the Sharp's Cavalry Carbine as the longarm of choice to all our troopers due to its versatility and easy reloading the single shot carbine while on horseback. The Sharp's Carbine can be used for both Confederate and Federal Impressions. It was widely issued to Federal troops; similar models were manufactured in Southern Armories, and used by Confederate troops when graciously supplied by the enemy. Sabers should be 1840 or 1860 U.S. cavalry sabers.

Camps:

Wheeler's Escort is a family oriented unit. We camp both modern and authentic campaign. We realize and appreciate that our families allow us to participate in this hobby and we encourage their attendance and support at the vents we attend and sponsor. Therefore at most events modern camping sites are available to the trooper and his family if you do not wish to campaign. Any modern conveniences are permissible while camping "modern" including but not limited to RV's, Horse trailers with living quarters, modern tents, propane, ice chest, etc.

While in an **authentic** (Static) garrison camping situation women and children will not be permitted in the camp after dark. Boys under 14 years of age may camp with their fathers or guardian only at designated events. Each trooper who has a horse in camp is expected to perform picket duty as assigned by the highest-ranking NCO. Picket duty consist of a one (1) hour shift at night where the trooper will feed hay to the horses, check lead straps and lines, and keep the campfire burning. *The drinking of alcohol is forbidden while the camps are open to the public.* Alcohol may be consumed after hours in a period container but *drunken or disorderly behavior will not be tolerated! Two occurrences of such behavior will result in dismissal from the unit! Profane language in the presence of the general public, ladies, or minor children of the troopers of the unit will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Please remember that you are representing a devoutly religious southern gentleman of the 1800s.*

Tents:

For authentic camping, each trooper is expected to have one shelter half (Dog Tent). Small A-frame tents are acceptable in inclement weather, but their use is discouraged while the unit is on campaign, as we represent a cavalry unit on campaign and may relocated the bivouac each night.

Miscellaneous Equipment:

All other items must be documented and period. A haversack (tarred Union or Confederate), knife, fork, tin plate, tin cup, canteen, gum blanket or poncho, wool blanket or period style quilt, power flask, curry comb and brush, feedbag rations and spurs are optional but highly recommended due to several movements/turns which frequently have to be performed. It is highly suggested that you go ahead and spend the money up front for a stainless steel canteen; it will last forever and will not rust.

Safety

Get to know your horse. There is nothing that can replace riding experience. Know yours and your horse's limits. If there is a question that you or your mount will not be able to perform a task ordered of you DON'T do it. Your first responsibility is to the safety of the spectators, yourself and your mount. In a saber melee, keep the saber tip up! Do not point or thrust. Make contact only with the broad side of the blade. Maintain close contact with your opponent-turning your horse to the right. In loading pistols use regular Cream of Wheat ONLY over the top of powder in revolvers. Do not cover the cream of what with bore butter. Prior to taking the field the NCO's will inspect pistols to ensure they see the cream of wheat and not a potential projectile. Wonder-wads, toilet tissue, etc. can travel 25 yards and ignite clothing. Never aim directly at anyone at less that 25 yards. If ever this is ever a doubt elevate the mussel of you weapon. Cartridges for firing of Longarms should contain no more than 80 grains of powder. They should never be taped, glued, or stapled. Secure your saddle with the use of a surcingle. Tighten girth and surcingle equally and securely. This will not only prevent a fall, but will lessen your horse's chance for saddle sores. Make sure weapons are clear before taking the field.

Troopers are required to fire caps on unloaded Longarms before taking the field. Always tie a horse by the lead strap. Never tie a horse by the reins. When in formations, speed shall not exceed a controlled canter. We are not in a race. Always maintain the ordered gait, stay together and in formation. This is not an easy task, and is one the main reasons why we drill. We are a mounted military maneuvering unit. Not an armed posse.

IMPROVING YOUR IMPRESSION

This text is not offered to criticize anyone's impression. We have all improved over our predecessors and still have room for more. The greatest reward is the fact that we continue to learn as we teach.

The Basic Impression:

A common mistake when becoming a reenactor is to tailor your impression around what you think looks good on you. Unconsciously, you will retain some of your 20th century appearance. Realize that you are not portraying yourself, but someone who lived over 135 years ago- with different customs, mannerisms and dress than you are accustomed to. Because we are creatures of the 21st century, this is initially the most difficult to transform. We can never do it completely (no one want lice or dysentery) but we can come close enough to offer the public a reasonable facsimile of Confederate cavalry on campaign. Understanding that there are no absolutes, the living historian should strive for a generic impression. His appearance shouldn't be gaudy, but basic. The 1st Alabama Cavalry Co. G Wheeler's Escort rule against yellow trim for the confederate impression is for that reason, though it is obvious that a minority of soldiers wore trim- especially early war. Anyway, your horse lets everyone know you are a cavalryman. Veterans, became practical, wearing carrying only what was necessary for survival. Try to imagine yourself on a real campaign with a real chance of being killed. You must depend on your horse to safely return to your own line. What would you carry? What would you leave behind?

The Uniform:

Though we should always be military in routine and drill, it must be understood that the Confederate soldier was a Citizen Soldier. From necessity much of his clothing came from home. Men were frequently given furloughs in the winter to obtain fresh clothing for themselves and their messmates. By studying the civilian clothing of the period, one can develop the basics for a western Confederate impression. Hats, Shirts, Vest, trousers, boots, and shoes, and even sack coats can be of civilian styles. Women at home largely made even depot issue clothing that was contracted to the Confederate government. Homespun jeanscloth became prevalent as a symbol of the South's ingenuity in the face of the blockade. Of course, the other supplier of the Confederates was the generous foe. However, Federal authorities issued order to execute Confederates wearing in whole or part any Union uniform. Also, the confusion on the battlefield prompted Confederate commander to order troops to re-dye captured trousers and overcoats as soon as possible. They were usually dyed butternut or black with vegetable dyes on hand, such as walnut shells, indigo, coppers, or sumacs- much the same dyes used in Confederate uniforms from mid-war on.

Hats:

Probably the most noticed part of an individual's impression is the hat, and yet, there are more than a few reenactors that wear incorrect ones. There is difference between a period slouch hat and a 3x Bailey hat from a western store. Though a new company called Stetson had invented the shake hat just prior to the war, most hats were stiff of wood felt. Many varieties were popular during the 1860s, - from the common slouch hat, beehives, coachmen, wideawakes, derbies and even the wheelhats. Back seamed to be the predominate color, followed by brown and gray. White felt hats were rare. Most hats had silk band on the crown and many sported trim tape on the brim for reinforcement. The hat was seldom worn with the brim low over the eyes because a man would be considered "shifty". Some soldiers would turn the brim up on one side or in the front to facilitate shooting. Though some troopers from certain states adorned their hats with stars (Texas & Miss.) or palmettos (South Carolina), brass cross-sabers and unit numbers or letters were rare in the western theater. Hat cords were not an issued item to enlisted men. Straw hats were popular in summer if available. Forage caps and Kepis were sporadically issued. Except for early war, they usually contained not trim. They were never as popular with the troops on either side in the west as the more utilitarian slouch hat.

Jackets and Vests:

1861 Confederate regulations called for a “double-breasted frock coat” to be worn by enlisted men. With the necessity of save material, a new shorter jacket quickly emerged- the shell jacket. Hundreds of thousands of these were manufactured during the war. Initially, a soldier’s jacket was usually tailor made wool, as his civilian clothes had been. As the war progressed, a shortage of fine wool developed in the South. Homespun or jean cloth, a coarse mixture of wool and cotton, became a substitute fabric for uniforms. It was easily manufactured at home and became a sort of symbol of Southern independence. They were dyed with vegetable dyes as earlier mentioned. Though gray was the preferred color, the cloth would soon oxidize and give a yellowish-brown hue. It should be noted that today’s reproductions uniforms are chemically dyed and will not oxidize. JEAN CLOTH SHOULD NEVER BE WASHED; if you must it may be dry-cleaned occasionally. However, this will still cause the uniform to fray, tear, and shrink. You are supposed to look dirty anyway. Since reproductions are usually machine sewn, an individual may add hand stitching at the seams and buttonholes with heavy brown thread. Early versions of shell jackets often contained shoulder straps or belt loops. These were eliminated as the war progressed. Exterior pockets were common in jackets manufactured in Alabama and Mississippi. The number of buttons varied between 5 and 9. The most common button was state, wood, shell, and Federal. Block ‘C’ buttons were not as common in the west, but some ‘gilt’ letter buttons were made in Montgomery.

Vests were sometimes made of the same fabric as the jacket, especially if a complete suit was sewn by a loved one back home. This vest often had a standing collar. Civilian vests with laped collars were also common.

Shirts:

White muslin shirts were the most common as they were issued to Union troops in large quantities. Other civilian shirts of various patterns were popular. Shirts were the pullover types with 4 or 5 buttons. It was customary to button up to the neck. Slaves normally wore calico. In the early states of the war large over-shirts called “battle-shirts” were prevalent, especially before jackets were available. Many contained colored trim and large pockets. ‘Bib’ shirts were normal of a ‘shield’ design instead of the type offered by most sutlers today, and should therefore be avoided.

Trousers:

These were of a loose fit with either a ‘tie-back’ or ‘belt-back’. There were no belt loops as they were worn to fit or were supported by galluses (Suspenders) attached with buttons of bone or tin. Pockets could be ‘side-seamed’ or ‘mule-eared’. Wood was the preferred fabric for civilian trousers, though homespun or cotton began to appear as the war progressed. Depot issue trousers were usually the same for all branches of service. Some trooper improvised by sewing parts of gum blankets, canvas, or leather in the seat for reinforcement. Civilian trousers could be of designs such as ‘houndstooth’ or ‘pinstripe’. The Alabama Division discourages the use of ‘sky-blues’ for a Confederate impression.

Boots and Shoes:

Mid-nineteenth century footwear was square toed and square heeled. Of course, boots were preferred by cavalrymen, with the straight-topped civilian style the most available. Knee-boots were popular if they could get them. A general shortage of leather by mid-war caused many improvisations. Some boots were made with wooden soles. Confederate issue, Union or civilian spurs can be worn. Our unit wears the Knee cavalry boot with military spurs.

Accessories:

I recall reading in the memoirs of a Pennsylvania cavalryman that a sutler sold portable iron stoves to his entire unit before they went to the front. These recruits actually strapped the contraption to their saddles and attempted to ride with them. The Virginia countryside was strewn with stoves within the first mile. Another group of Yankee trooper purchased iron vest, with a sutler had promised, and would stop bullets. The last lesson that some would learn was that they didn’t work. Though not as outlandish, some unscrupulous sutlers today will sell shoddy or historically incorrect items to an unsuspecting reenactor. Canteens that leaked or fell apart because of faulty soldering and frail tin cups that collapsed are some of the items that I have purchased. Just because a sutler sets up his tent at a reenactment does not necessarily mean he knows or even cares if his wares are dependable or correct for the period. Military horse tack with

brass hardware, modern bandannas, and blue and red porcelain enamelware cups, plates and coffeepots are some of the merchandise sold to, and unfortunately used by some reenactors, I have seen kerosene railroad lanterns offered, though they didn't come into use until the 1870s. The living historian's personal items are just as important a part of his impression as his knowledge of drill. A good rule of thumb is if you're not sure, don't use it.

Weapons:

Longarms:

The original 1st Alabama Wheeler's Escort Longarms, like much of the Confederate Cavalry, underwent a transformation as the war progressed. Initially, most were armed with double-barreled shotguns and musket loading muskets brought from home because of a shortage of weapons. These were of 8, 10 or 12 gauge, and were not sawed off so some accuracy could be maintained. Pre-rolled cartridges of "buck and ball" were issued for shotguns by the ordnance department. Though shotguns could be found in the Confederate cavalry throughout the war, their use diminished as troopers obtained more accurate fired weapons. Carbines were the preferred longarm of the cavalry. They offered reasonable accuracy with portability. The problem was that they were not always easy to obtain. Maynards, Smith, and Gallagher carbines saw some service early in the war due to a small supply in Southern arsenals, but metallic cartridges required by these were difficult to manufacture. By far, the most reliable carbine was the sharps. Its use of paper cartridges also allowed a readily available supply of ammunition. Infantry rifles and rifled muskets were by far the most prevalent longarm in Western Confederate cavalry. They were more easily obtained, either from the enemy or their own ordnance department, and their superior range made them an excellent weapon against the increasing numbers of repeaters in the Federal ranks. The rifle was usually carried slung tightly over the shoulder.

Pistols:

The revolver quickly replaced the saber as the prime weapon on horseback. Col. Mosby's statement, "If you close enough to stick 'em your close enough to shoot 'em, was followed by much of the Confederate cavalrymen by late 1862. The most reliable was the Remington New Army 44. Its easily loaded cylinders and sturdy backstrap made it superior to the colts. Revolvers should be loaded with regular cream of wheat or vermiculite for safety. Wonder-wads will not be allowed since they can travel up to 30 feet when fired.

Sabers:

For centuries the saber had been the symbol of the cavalry. Images of gallant cavaliers engaged in personal combat inspired many 'Beau Sabeurs' to enlist in the cavalry at the beginning of hostilities. No one saber was the standard issue for Confederates. The U.S. model 1840, nicknamed 'wristbreaker', was found in U.S. arsenals throughout the South upon secession, and this issued to some regiments. The newer model 1860- 'light' cavalry saber also existed in lesser quantities and would become the standard issue for Yankee Cavalry during the war. Local firms, such as the Nashville Plow Works, produced the majority of Confederate made sabers. One of the reasons the Confederate cavalry quickly surpassed its Federal counterpart was the ability to adapt to a changing mode of warfare. Men like Forrest, Mosby, and Morgan unhampered by West Point doctrine, realized the limits of the mounted arm and developed more practical and effective methods for the use of cavalry. These men had to travel greater distances than their eastern brothers did. They traveled light and moved quickly, fighting dismounted in a pitched battle and using the hoses only for maneuver. In the scheme of these tactics the saber was obsolete. A useless appendage that added unnecessary weight to the trooper load. By mid-war, both Forrest and Morgan had banished the saber from the enlisted ranks. Major Hosea, a member of Union General Wilson's Staff, recalled a meeting with Forrest during a truce just prior to the Wilson Raid. Upon receiving what was taken as a challenge by Major Hosea, Forrest replied, "Gin'ril Wilson may pick his men and I'll pick mine. He may take his sabers and I'll take my six-shooters. I don't want nary a saber in my command- haven't got one... I ain't no graduate of West Point; never rubbed by back up agin any college, but Wilson may take his sabers and I'll use six-shooters and agree to whup the fight with any cavalry he can bring" Forrest was able to prove his point later in the campaign, when he and his escort company of 80 men stopped a saber charge by an entire Yankee regiment, firing their Navy 36s from horseback and making good their escape. Though the Federals

were slow to lean, they did make one adjustment, as mentioned by Capt. Fredrick Whittaker, 6th New York Cavalry, in his 1871 book *Lessons of a Decade*. In reference to dismounted skirmishing he wrote, “The dash and impetuosity of a dismounted skirmish line is far beyond that of an infantry force of equal numbers. The men come into action perfectly fresh. His saber was left on the saddle.” When we saber fight at late-war reenactments, what lessons are we teaching the public?

Saddles:

The 1859 McClellan should be first choice for anyone entering the hobby. It allows him to have suitable equipment for both Confederate and Union impressions. Hardware should be iron of Japanned Black, Union regulations called for a blue ‘ dragoon’ blanket as saddle blanket, but photographs show that Yankee troopers also used any available blanket. A good second choice for a Confederate saddle – especially the western theater – is the Hope. Several photos show Confederates mounted on Hopes and diaries and memoirs reveal they were very popular. Other saddles such as the Jennifer, Grimsley, Campbell and variations of the English Saddles were also used. Several Confederates mentioned that they carried all of their blankets and shelter half under their saddle because they had no saddle pads.

Conclusion:

In striving for better authenticity is important not to be too critical of others. The old maxim, “ You can catch more flies with honey”, applies here as well. While each of us has our own comfort level, most enthusiasts are willing to accept constructive guidance. It is important to start the novice off right, because once he becomes a veteran he will be more set in his ways. The best procedure with those in other units is to just set a good example with your own.

1st Alabama Cavalry Co. G Wheeler's Escort Campaign Packing List

1. Clothes
 - A. One complete uniform
 1. Federal Impression
 2. Confederate Impression
 - B. Cold or hot weather items (i.e. greatcoat, long johns, etc.)
 - C. Extra socks and underwear
2. Personal Hygiene
 - A. Toothbrush and toothpaste
 - B. Comb or brush
 - C. Washcloth
 - D. Toilet paper
3. Sleeping gear
 - A. Shelter Half (Dog Tent)
 - B. Twine
 - C. Gum blanket and poncho
 - D. Wool Blanket(s) and or quilt
 - E. Bug Spray
4. Horse Feed
 - A. Feed Bag
 - B. Grain Bag- be prepared to travel with 2-3 days of ration on saddle
 - C. Hay – hay will be pre -positioned or horse drawn
 - D. Canvas Water Bucket
5. Ration for Trooper
 - A. Tin or copper cup, spoon, and small frying pan
 - B. Prepared food for duration
 - C. Jerky cured ham, salt pork, hardtack, biscuits, etc.
 - D. Canteen
6. Weapons
 - A. Carbine
 - B. Pistols
 - C. Extra Cylinders
 - D. Extra Powder, caps and cream of wheat
 - E. Saber
7. Other Equipment
 - A. Matches, Candles, knife, hatchet
 - B. Front and rear shoes for your horse one each, with 10 shoeing nails
 - C. Gun cleaning equipment (KISS – Keep It Simple Silly)

SUGGESTED INITIAL EQUIPMENT

- Uniform: Slouch Hat (Black), Jefferson shirt (unbleached muslin), Sky Blue Federal Mounted Trousers, Shell Jacket (Federal and Confederate), Saber Belt with eagle plate buckle, holster (to be worn on ft. hip, but of the pistol forward), Cartridge box, cap box
- Tack: Saddle (1859 McClellan with black leather), Bridle with bit (M 1859), Halter with lead and link strap, Blue (Dragoon) with orange stripes saddle blankets, saddle bags M 1859, canteen, saber M 1860, "light" cavalry

One Year Requirements

Poncho, Gum Blanket, Haversack, fork, spoon, plate, cup, wool blanket or quilt, Carbine sling, pommel holsters, spurs, federal overcoat, breast strap, crupper, carbine socket or throat, tentage

Carbine: Sharps (preferred), Gallagher, Smith, Burnside, Spencer Repeater, Henry Repeaters can only be used during Federal cavalry impressions. Mussel loading longarms such as Enfields, Springfields, etc.

Remember start with the basics. Many of these items can be bought used at great savings, and may helpful hint from the veterans can get you started cheaper. Also certain items might be loaned until you get yours. Ask questions and compare prices, and consider the sutler's reputation as reported to you by some of the veterans.