


## Civil War Reenactment: Uniforms

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A reenactor portraying a Union cavalry officer explains some of the many uniforms worn by soldiers in the Civil War. A transcription of the video is below.

**Video:**  Civil War reenactment-Uniforms

**Duration:** 3:27

**Read the related article:** [Civil War Uniforms](#)

**Transcript:**

#### ***Video Transcript***

(00:01)

I'm a dragoon, which is early US cavalry. In 1860-61 time period, they're rolled over, the First and Second US dragoons were made into the First and Second US cavalry. The Third — the Mounted Rifles became the Third Cavalry, and then the current First and Second became the Fourth and Fifth. So there was a lot of turmoil there.

(00:27)

The orange tape is what designated the dragoons, and they balled up all the tape and switched out the tape on their shell jackets until it ran out in about the '63 time period. The orange is for the dragoons, if you see green tape, it's for the mounted rifles. They serve out in New Mexico and Arizona. If it's red tape, it was artillery, supposedly, this is what the — in actuality that didn't actually happen — but red was supposed to be artillery. And then yellow was cavalry, and the blue or black was for the infantry. As far as the US army goes, it was a sky-blue color. North Carolina used the black for infantry for some of their units.

(01:25)

All these different hats could be worn by an artillery unit, and that's not counting, you know, if infantrymen found a slouch hat or something, he could pick it up and wear it. Red was the color of artillery. Artillery also had the cross cannons. If it was infantry, it was a bugle, or a horn. The numbers, the regiment designation, and the letter was the company, so this was Company D, first, and this was Confederate Unit, First North Carolina, Artillery. And this is a forage cap, was Company D, of the Fifth US, which is the West Point Battery. Here again you can tell it's artillery, and you had the federal blue. Confederates would also wear the blue. Some Federal units wore gray. Confederates pretty much standardized on gray because it's a cheap dye. You can make it out of walnuts or pretty much anything. The reason it's this color blue is because that's what the French had, and they could sell to the Federal government.

(02:44)

The forage caps were a copy of the French — everything French seemed to be big-time then. But after it was washed and stuff, that's where it sloped over, but it was supposed to stand straight up. Reason they call it a forage cap is if you're out on a march, and you can — come across some apples, or an extra shirt of something, you could stick it up here and just wear it on top of your head.

(03:07)

This is a kepi, which was the only thing that was just supposed just to look good. I'd much rather wear a slouch hat and

keep the rain and sun off. The soldiers at that time would roll the front brim up instead of the traditional way ball players do it today.

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