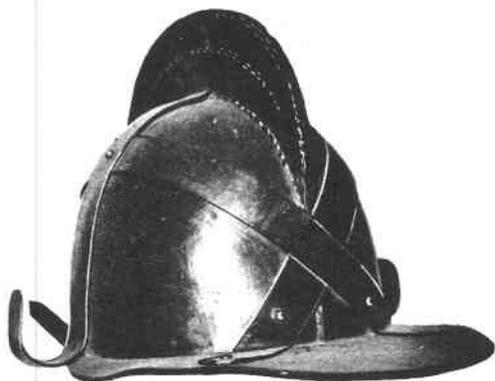




A TRICORN CIRCA 1700-1800

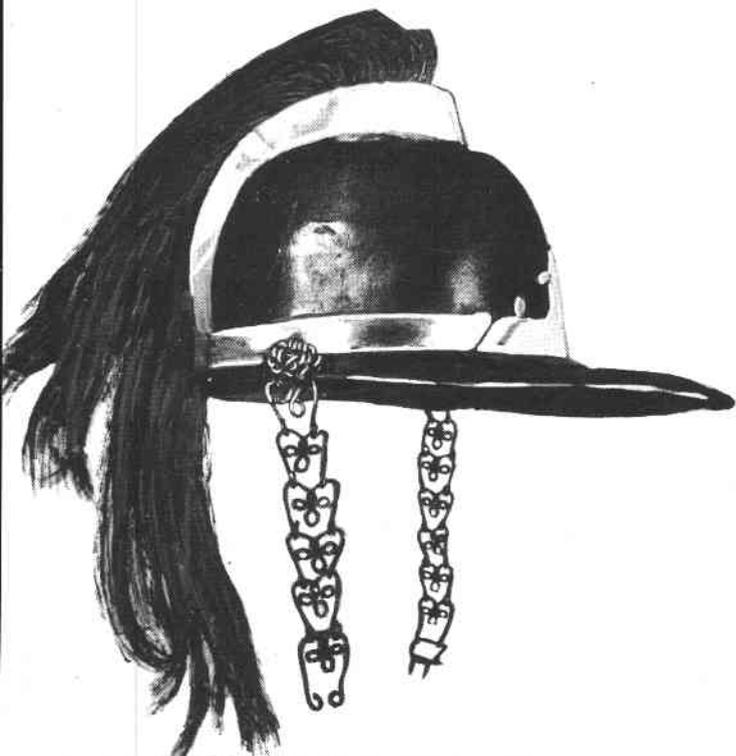
The most common style worn in the Colonial Period was the felt hat with low crown and broad brim. It was worn in several different ways, as a broad brim hat turned up one side on in front or pinched together on three sides to form a Tricorn. It usually had a cloth cockade on side and with cloth binding around the edge of the brim. This was a civilian style worn by militiamen. Common as they were in Colonial days very few specimens have survived the years and few can be authenticated.



B DRAGOON HELMET CIRCA 1778

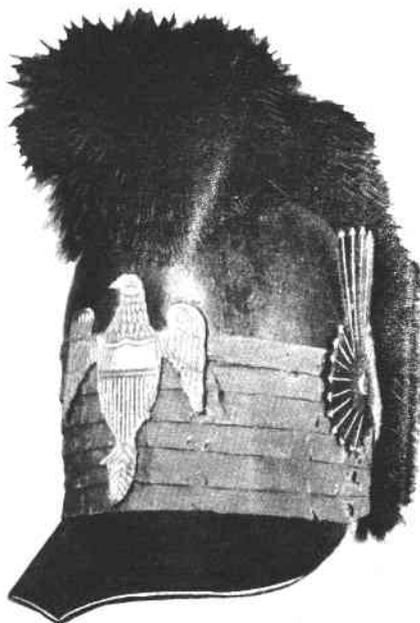
The most outstanding headgear worn during the American Revolution by the troops was the Dragoon Helmet. It was worn by mounted troops who often had to fight on foot although obviously they preferred to fight sitting down, on a horse's back.

This helmet has been identified as being used by Col. Bland's 1st Virginia Horse of the Continental Line, 1778. It is jacked leather, heavy and thick with three metal bands, two crossed in front and one over the sides. The high comb gave adequate protection and also were helpful as stops for the saber slashes. Although a general dragoon style, research has indicated it could have been used in the Navy as a "boarding cap". (B)



C DRAGOON HELMET CIRCA 1778-81

Here again is a Dragoon Helmet, heavy jacked leather, jockey style, brass band at bottom, low brass channel comb, horsehair in the comb, ornamental brass link chin strap, pointed leather visor edged with light leather. Period 1778-1781. (C)



D CIRCA 1798 to 1800

Very few changes were made in headgear during the later part of the 18th century. Our standing army consisted of approximately 800 men when George Washington became president. With the possibility of war with France in 1798 many volunteer units were organized and radical changes were made in headgear.

Picture (D) shows leather headgear of the period 1798 to 1800. Large cockade on the left side with large brushed wool pompon, red muslin band, bear fur (replaced) on the crest and an early style eagle insignia plate. On some helmets of this style the insignia plate is eliminated and the bear fur covers the entire front of the visor.

The early 19th century saw many changes in headgear. The first being the cylindrical hat somewhat like the silk toppers worn today. It was called a civilian style. Cockade and plume on the left side. It was worn for only a short time, mostly by the cadets at West Point Military Academy. No known specimen has survived the years.

In 1802 the true Cylindrical style was adapted for the foot soldiers. (E) It was of leather, brass bound leather visor, leather neck piece, red leather band at bottom of crown, brass insignia plate and a red feather plume. This ran into about 1816 and was the type used during the War of 1812. A few years ago we were able to positively identify this hat as the type used in that particular War and not the so called Bell-crownas so many of Ogdens and others prints will show.



E CYLINDRICAL STYLE
CIRCA 1802-1816

This (F) is known as the Bell-crowned, if you can visualize a bell turned upside down this is what is supposed to be. Circa 1820-1830, it is of leather, small cockade with star, brass eagle insignia, brass scale chin straps, gilt cord and tassel, wool pompon. Many of the early prints, lithography and even paintings will show the troops in the war of 1812 as wearing this style of helmet but we have found that it wasn't so they wore the cylindrical type and this type of hat did not come out until about 1818 or 20, and it was under of course the Napolionic picture of the day, most everything we used in the early days were somewhat taken from the military of Europe we copied many of them although we were not copy-cats insofar as our fighting was concerned.

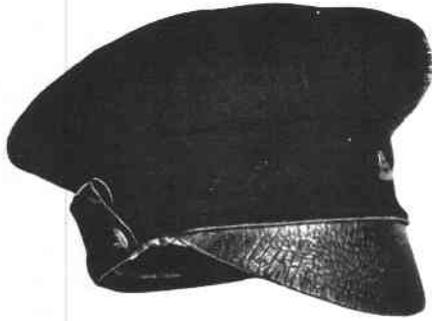


F BELL-CROWNED
CIRCA 1820-1830

Next (G) is an all leather, jacked leather again, with the silvered cord over red muslin bands with a brass eagle plate and it says "UNITY IS STRENGTH 1776" and again of course we don't go by dates on things of this sort, it was evidently a group organized in 1776 and continued on. This is of the period 1835 and is what we call the Ear-to-Ear Type of hat where the crease so called goes from ear to ear rather than the other war or straight across.



G EAR TO EAR TYPE
CIRCA 1835



This one (H) is just a little cloth hat that probably is not of any particular interest it looks more like a police officer's cap than anything else but it is the type used in the Mexican War. There were several variations, not in the style itself but in the decorations. Some of them would have beading around the top of orange which would indicate Dragoons this one was obviously used by the foot soldier it has a neck band in the back which lets down to protect the neck from the sun and rain, has a little A in the front which would probably indicate the company. It is made of blue cloth, leather visor and eagle buttons.

H REGULAR ARMY CIRCA 1845

The next is called the Chapeau de Bra (I), it is a type of hat that could be folded and carried under the arm and was worn either fore and aft or sideways. It has the large red feather plume, is made of felt, silvered cord and a large leather cockade. It measures 23 inches. It ties together and by loosening the cord the back flap will go down the neck to protect from the rain. There is a story attributed to a hat of this sort that goes, the officers themselves wore the hat fore and aft and they would always insist that the under officers would also wear their hats that way. And on many occasions when they would have time off they would go down town and before they left the ranking officers would say, "well alright boys have a good time but don't go off half-cocked". They would have a tendency to turn the hats sideways so they wouldn't have to continue the military bearing necessary to wear the hat properly.

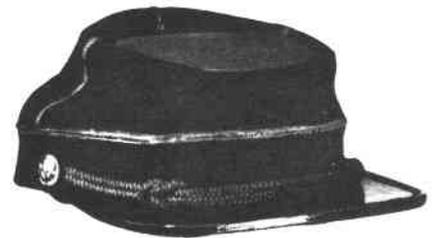


I CHAPEAU DE BRAS
CIRCA 1800-1810

This one is the early Civil War cap (J), it will be hard for you to see but the stitching runs around and up to a peak in the front which is a carry-over from the 1851 model except that this is the



floppy type. There are some people who disparagingly call it the Bummers Cap but I call it a Union Cap. It has the insignia on the top which wasn't always regulation of course as they would put their patch on of the corp they were in but I like to keep the hats the way I find them and not change them around. It is made of blue cloth, sloping rounded visor rough cut from bridle



J FORAGE CAP CIRCA 1861

leather. This is probably the most common style of the Civil War regular issue of all that we generally see. Many have square visors, some round sloping and this one is probably just in between, rounded corners and the square part in front.

K OFFICER'S CAP CIRCA 1861

The next is the Officers style (K) and is part of a Colonel's uniform that I have. It has a very stiff leather visor in contrast to the cardboard coated with tar that most of them were. It doesn't have the beading or the stitching like the other has and the inside of the hat is a great deal better made than the average type used by the enlisted men. Made of blue cloth with red cloth crown, gilt piping, gilt cord. The number of pipings indicated the officer's rank. It is a Zouave style, variant.



L MILITIAL PARADE CAP
CIRCA 1870-1875

Quite often I am shown little hats like the one shown here (L) as a Civil War hat but it is definitely of the 1870-1875 period and it is quite similar to the type used in the Civil War although the coloring is much darker. We identify from the buttons and the fact that the visor is again a cardboard visor stiffened by some black impregnation and of course the insignia plate will all show that it is of a later period than the Civil War. These little short caps have a stiffener in the back to keep them up. The band and the buckle are both smaller than the regulation cap. The normal wool pompon has been replaced by a tin oil lamp or night parades. I can just imagine the people standing on the side-lines watching the parade saying "boy look at those hot-heads".

Early uniforms, especially in the early part of the 19th century were designed with very high standing collars. Most of them were three inches or more in height and as they extended to the cheeks the V type opening in front exposed the bare neck to the elements and public. Silk or linen stocks were worn around the neck by the officers. The enlisted men were issued stocks of leather. They were first issued about 1814 and the Marines were the first to wear them which I believe gave rise to the name "Leathernecks".

Well gentlemen I believe I have reached the end of my discussion on Military Headgear. Although somewhat foreign to your guns I do hope that it has been of some interest to you. I thank you for your attention.

Editor's note... We regret that due to limited space it was necessary to delete some of Mr. Lewis's talk. Undoubtedly he has created interest in a phase of collecting little known to many of us. If you seek further data on Military Headgear we would like to recommend the book "U.S. Military Headgear 1770-1880" by our own Waverly P. Lewis.