

## Fatigue or Forage Cap

By Gene Hickman

We don't really know exactly what the fatigue or forage cap may have looked like, but we have some educated guesses. The U.S. military regularly copied European military uniforms and equipment. It seems to be the type that was common in Europe at the time and which was adopted by the U.S. military in 1812. These caps are also much like the "overseas" caps we adopted during the 20th Century. This style of cap was common in France from the Napoleonic Wars through WWII.

The Orderly Book, Clemson's Company, 1st Infantry Regiment, 1807 and the Standing Orders of the 1st U.S. Infantry, 1801 called for foraging caps when on guard duty. "...The Men are to provide themselves with Foraging Caps, which they will, when on Guard put on at dusk and wear them during the night" They were to... "be blue, Bound with red and fixed on the top of the Cartridge Boxes." (Hamtramck. 1801).

Speculation is that forage caps were made from the remains of an old uniform coat (tails). They were, we believe, shaped much like a pointed sleeping cap, rolled or sewn to form a wide headband. It was usually worn with the point tucked back into the band. These are quite easy to make. What we don't know is how "finished" they are. They are probably not finished or lined, as they are soldier made and used for fatigue or guard duty. We don't know if they had contrasting red welt in the blue seam, if they had the red regimental numbers on them, if those numbers were placed above or below head band, if they had a "V" cut or inverted "V" in the center, and/or if they had or didn't have tassels (as seen on many French models). What we do know is that they are part of the fatigue uniform, are good cool weather caps, great sleeping caps, and simple and quick to make.

