



The American Soldier, 1863

The use of riverboats, steamships, and railroads during the Civil War greatly increased the mobility of armies. However, armies in the field required still another type of transportation. Wagon trains not only had to accompany troops on active operations but also had to be employed to distribute stores brought in bulk to railway terminals and steamer wharves. The Army wagons and harness had been perfected by long years of experience and operation on the western plains. The wheels, axles, and other principal parts were made to standard measurements to permit interchangeability of parts. Early in the war the Army procured both horses and mules for use with trains, but experience later convinced quartermasters that mules were far superior to horses for such service.

In the foreground is a sergeant of cavalry in the dark blue cloth uniform jacket prescribed for all enlisted men of the cavalry and light artillery. His unit and arm are recognizable by the yellow metal insignia on his kepi, the yellow lace trimmings on the collar and cuffs, and around the edge of the jacket. The first sergeant's yellow worsted binding chevrons and lozenge, the stripe on his trousers seam, and the red sash show his rank, while the half-chevron on his lower sleeve testifies to faithful service. His light blue overcoat is strapped in front of the pommel and he is using the dark blue saddle blanket with an orange stripe adopted in 1859.

In the left center is a major of ordnance in the dark blue, double-breasted cloth frock coat, with two rows of seven buttons worn by all field grade officers. The dark blue ground of his shoulder straps shows that he is a member of the General Staff or Staff Corps, and the gold oak leaves show his rank as major. The Ordnance Corps insignia on the front of his forage cap is a gold embroidered shell and flame on a black velvet background, and on the gilt, convex buttons on the frock coat are crossed cannon and a bombshell, with a circular scroll over and across the cannon, containing the words Ordnance Corps.

In the background is an Army train manned by civilian teamsters and composed of white covered wagons with "bluish tinted" bodies and wheels "of Venetian red darkened to a chocolate color."