

Basic Detail Report



Title Man's Uniform Shako

Date about 1815-1825

Primary Maker Smith Shiers

Medium Felted fur (probably), leather, and brass fittings

Description Militia uniform shako, possibly from a mounted unit. The body of the shako is made of olive-green felted fur (probably). The crown, visor, and sweatband are leather. The shako is stylistically consistent with Imperial French

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or English hats worn by mounted troops in about 1815-1820, and by some

United States troops from about 1820 to 1832, as evidenced by the felt body

(sides and top of interior) and the leather top to protect against weathering. A

silvered brass plate with a silvered eagle applied to a brass sunburst adorns the

front of the shako; this motif is a variant to that designated for United States

Army Dragoon (cavalry) troops from 1832 to 1850, though the motif may have

been used earlier. This variant suggests that the shako was used as part of a

militia uniform. The shako is decorated with braided off-white cords, probably

of worsted wool, and tassels with medallions. The medallions suggest the

uniform of mounted troops, because they would have helped keep the shako on

the head while riding. A small hole at the top of the crown and on the front,

combined with a wire loop inside the shako, would have held a plume (now

missing). There is a hole and some shadowing on both sides of the shako in the

leather binding along the base of the crown; this suggests that the shako once

had chin scales. The interior of the shako is lined with cotton or linen, with a

cotton or linen cord drawstring to adjust the fit. There is a thin, leather

sweatband. The underside of the visor is lined with green, glossy leather. A

paper label with the name and address of the manufacturer is affixed to the top

of the interior.