

# Infantry Accoutrements of the US Army, 1812-1814

FREDERICK C. GAEDE

Paintings by H. CHARLES McBARRON, Jr

'Accoutrements... habits, equipage, or furniture, of a soldier, such as belts, pouches, cartridge-boxes... etc' (William Duane, *A Military Dictionary*, 1810). Although essential to the effective use of the soldier's weapons and to his wellbeing, US Army accoutrements have begun receiving significant attention only recently. Many reasons have contributed to their neglect. Accoutrements were made of more perishable materials than weapons, resulting in low survival rates, both originally and subsequently. Accoutrements typically did not generate sentimental attachment, or have a utilitarian value, which might encourage their being taken home by soldiers and used or preserved after their military roles had ended. And lastly, until the middle of the 19th century we do not encounter a generally literate soldiery, remarking on what they wore or carried.

There are, of course, official contemporaneous correspondence and records, but they are incomplete and often not well organized for the researcher. All of this has contributed to a lack of effort to identify not only the official patterns of early accoutrements, but what was actually in use at any specific time. Despite these obstacles, enough has been gleaned from

surviving specimens and archival resources to give us a fairly complete idea of the accoutrements of the enlisted soldiers of the United States during the War of 1812.

Duane's 1810 definition of accoutrements is virtually identical to that offered by Captain George Smith 31 years previously in his own *Universal Military Dictionary* of 1779. This is not surprising since, by and

large, accoutrements had not evolved in any significant way during that period in the United States. Except for the experiment during the 1790s 'Legion' period with making the entire infantry branch of the army into light infantry, and concurrent adoption of a waistbelt-mounted cartridge box, 35 years later the suspensory equipment of the enlisted soldier still resembled what had been used during the years of the American Revolution.

Indeed, a comment made in 1809 by an Army inspector, Col. Henry Whiting, not only reinforces this thought, but describes an accoutrement (the 'New Model' cartridge box adopted during the Revolution) very similar to what the Army was about to procure: 'The best model of a Cartridge box is that established by long use in the revolution, and will contain 29 rounds in the wood 11 in the Tin at the bottom, which also has a compartment for spare flints — on the outside a receptacle for oilcloth, worms & screwdriver — a large Flap which secures the whole from rain & supported by a Shoulder Belt.' This is not very different from the Model of 1808 cartridge box described below.

However, war, or in this case the possibility of war, always brings to the forefront projects which have languished in peacetime. So, despite the uneasiness with which standing armies were viewed in the United States after the American Revolution, and President Thomas Jefferson's own Republican Party's professed determination to rely solely on the state militias for the country's defence, Jefferson and his administration were forced, albeit reluctantly, to give increased attention to military preparedness after the Chesapeake-Leopard affair in June 1807 made a second war with Great Britain a distinct possibility. Within a year the US Congress authorised five new infantry regiments (the 3rd through the 7th), one of light artillery and one of light dragoons, virtually tripling the size of the Regular Army to 10,000 men. Congress also

tion of \$200,000 to provide arms and equipment to the various state militias<sup>(1)</sup>.

The lack of change in weapons technology, large materiel surpluses from the American Revolution, small size of the Regular Army and subsequent tight military budgets had delayed attention to improving accoutrements. But a general dissatisfaction in the 1790s with the light infantry style accoutrements favoured by Gen. Anthony Wayne focused new attention on them as 'war fever' spread. Thus many of the accoutrement patterns in use during the War of 1812 had their origins in the energy devoted to their improvement as a result of the 1807 confrontation.

## PROCUREMENT REORGANISED

Since 1795 the responsibility for all accoutrement procurement had been in the hands of the Purveyor of Public Supplies. However, on the very eve of the War those responsibilities were divided between two new departments. On 28 March 1812 the Purveyor's office was abolished. It was, in part, replaced by a Quartermaster Department with a Commissary General of Purchases. As the feeding, clothing and general comfort of the soldier was the responsibility of this new department, in addition to clothing and rations the accoutrements relating to those functions were to be procured by it. These included the knapsack, haversack and canteen. The first Commissary General of Purchases was an intelligent, resourceful, seemingly tireless individual by the name of Callender Irvine.

The new Ordnance Department, created on 14 May 1812, was now to be responsible for those accoutrements directly relating to weapons, and so became responsible for cartridge boxes, scabbards and the respective belting for the various branches of service. It was headed by an equally efficient individual, Decius Wadsworth, from 2 July 1812 to 8 February 1815.

Late in 1807 Secretary of War

H. Charles McBarron's reconstructions opposite show three US Army soldiers who are unlikely ever to have met, but they do help illustrate how the ideal was tempered by the expedient. **Figure A** shows the ideally fitted-out soldier of 1812 or spring/summer 1813, before the remainder of the uniform changes of January 1813 began to get into the field. He has the cylindrical felt cap which was later replaced by the 1813 Leather Cap worn by the other two figures. His blue coat, with the last remnants of the 18th century red facings at collar and cuffs, would soon lose its white tape decorations as well. The close-fitting linen pantaloons are shown as worn in summer, with separate black gaiters. His belting is of the preferred whitened buff leather, with a plain brass oval plate on the bayonet belt.

**Figure B** represents many of the soldiers of Gen. Scott's army on the Niagara frontier in 1814, with the long blue overalls, coat and belt of a

short grey woollen type (a 'grey jacket with sleeves', as Irvine termed it), devoid of trim and facings. The smart but impractical pantaloons have been replaced by woollen overalls, more suited for campaigning, with the gaiters worn beneath them. He has a typical haversack, rather larger than the type described in the text, and a tin canteen with a leather sling.

**Figure C** shows the linen jacket and overalls intended for summer wear and for use by troops in southern latitudes. He wears a hide knapsack, as discussed in the text. His Pattern of 1808 belting is black, as on Fig. B; note details of bayonet scabbard in its generously cut frog. The Lherbette knapsack lying in the foreground is based on the example used by Nathaniel Mitchell of the 1st US Artillery, illustrated in the text. The muskets are M1795 or M1808, both of which were based on French Charleville models extensively used

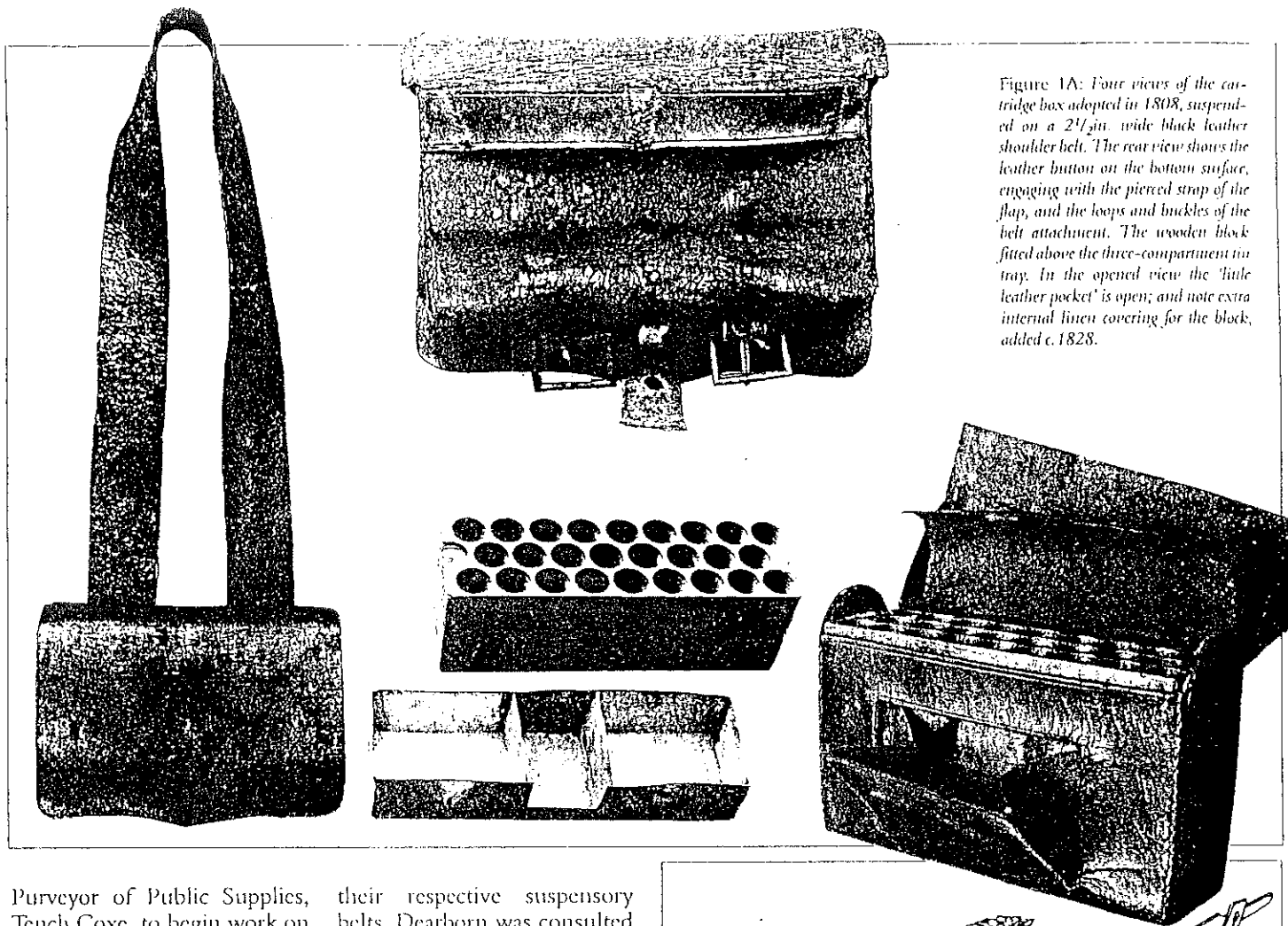


Figure 1A: Four views of the cartridge box adopted in 1808, suspended on a 2½ in. wide black leather shoulder belt. The rear view shows the leather button on the bottom surface, engaging with the pierced strap of the belt attachment. The wooden block fitted above the three-compartment tin tray. In the opened view the 'little leather pocket' is open; and note extra internal linen covering for the block, added c. 1828.

Purveyor of Public Supplies, Tench Coxe, to begin work on several new accoutrement patterns. The intent appears to have been to create uniform patterns for the accoutrements to be used by both the regular forces and the state militias, and a network for their procurement. This would parallel the system for arms procurement, which relied on two National Armories, at Springfield, Massachusetts and Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), and contractors who based their production on the national patterns. However, for accoutrements it never quite worked, since most states used their portion of the \$200,000 annual appropriation to procure arms, and contracted locally for the more easily made accoutrements, merely using the national patterns as guides.

### BOXES, BELTS AND SCABBARDS

Coxe, whose offices were located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, worked with city leather craftsmen, principally Edmund Kinsey, to develop new patterns for the cartridge box, bayonet scabbard and

their respective suspensory belts. Dearborn was consulted at every step and his comments and suggestions were incorporated as work on the patterns progressed rapidly. Deliveries of the new accoutrements began early in 1808. With very minor changes these patterns would serve the Regular Army not only during the War of 1812 but for the next 20 years<sup>(2)</sup>.

The cartridge box shown in Figure 1 is typical of the thousands obtained by contract during the War; none were produced in national arsenals of manufacture. It represented an evolutionary step over a popular style used in the American Revolution, described above, and ignored the 'belly box' suspended by a waistbelt and neck-strap that had preceded it. In many ways it combined the best features of both the British and French boxes of the period: the bored wooden block of the former with the tin tray of the latter. In addition to the 26 paper-wrapped cartridges carried in the wooden block, bored for .69 calibre rounds, six more could be stored in each of the end compartments of the tin tray located directly below the

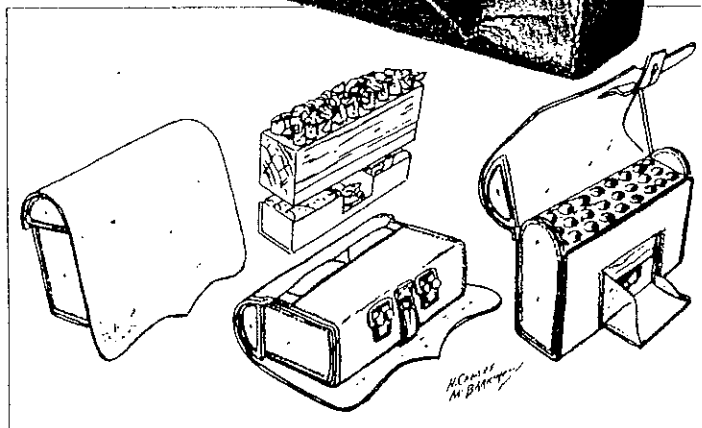


Figure 1: The black leather cartridge box adopted in 1808 weighed about 3 lb. with its shoulder belt and full load of 38 cartridges of .69 calibre. The 'little leather pocket' providing access to the central compartment of the tin tray is open in the right-hand view. Note the lack of decoration on the flap. (H. Charles McBarron, Jr.)

wooden block. The centre compartment of the tray held flints and cleaning rags (as opposed to more cartridges in the French box), and was accessed from the outside through a 'little leather pocket', as Coxe described it. The box and outer flap were of black leather, the latter devoid of any decoration except a tooled line around the edge<sup>(3)</sup>. Generally two semicircular pieces were affixed to the outer flap, giving a bit of added weather protection to the cartridges. A closure tab on the outer flap (with corresponding leather button on the bottom of the box), two buckles, and a piece on the back of the box to retain the shoulder belt completed the box itself.

The shoulder belt was 2½ in. wide, narrowing at the ends into billets about 4 in. long, the width of the buckles. These, engaging holes punched in the billets, allowed adjustment of the length of the belt, and its removal for cleaning or replacement.

The bayonet belt was also 2½ in. wide, with a rather large frog (5 in. across by 4 in. from top to bottom). Although the

frog, shown in Figure 2, had two openings, and doubtless was used by some NCOs to carry both sword and bayonet scabbards, all surviving examined by the author have only held a bayonet scabbard. The scabbard itself was simply a tapered, triangular-shaped piece of black leather with a brass clip to retain it in the frog and a brass ball tip to help protect the end. The examples of the latter shown in Figure 3 were recovered approximately 35 years ago from a trash dump at Sackett Harbor, New York, the site of a large supply base for the US Army in 1814<sup>(9)</sup>.

The use of crossbelts with an oval belt plate at the point where the belts crossed on the chest followed practice in the British Army. However, unlike the ornate regimental plates favoured by the British, those for US enlisted men were plain brass. They were with a hook and two studs on the back to attach to, and facilitate adjusting the length of, the bayonet belt. Some extant examples of this plate are the prescribed oval and a full 2½ in. wide. Numerous others, recovered from a wide variety of wartime sites, are slightly narrower — 2¼ in. to 2⅞ in. wide. No explanation for the discrepancy has been discov-

ered to date.

Before the War it was a struggle to furnish all the companies in a regiment with the same colour of crossbelts. As was noted in a letter to the Secretary of War on 5 April 1809, 'There is now a want of uniformity in the accoutrements of the same Regiment. Some have been furnished with black belts, some by particular request with yellow, and others with white belts.' However, by the outbreak of hostilities there is ample evidence that whenever possible the crossbelts were desired to be of whitened buff leather. Irvine referred to the proposed uniform of the Army in March 1813, for example, as 'A plain blue coat without a particle of red — with white or buff cross belts — and white overalls — for Infantry and Artillery will have a handsome effect.'

Some units apparently managed to get issues of buff belts during the War; but as the making of buff leather was a tedious process and best performed in certain seasons of the year, shortages of it were noted

almost immediately. As early as 1 February 1812 Coxe was informing the new Secretary of War, William Eustis, that he had been 'forced to accept offers for 6,000 cartouche boxes with black leather belts... as there is no prospect of buff belts in the year to come...' In the event the vast majority of the belts used by both the Regulars and militia forces were of black leather and not of

*Fig. A is ideally fitted out in winter clothing, which included pantaloons of blue or white wool with the bottoms made 'gaiter fashion... with a tongue to cover the instep & straps, leather, under the shoe to keep (them) in their proper places'. He wears Fig. B load his Lherbette knapsack with extra clothing; the latter's accoutrements lie around him, including one of the wooden stove canteens discussed in the text; his cartridge box, showing attachments; his bayonet belt; and a three-button haversack. His 1813 leather cap shows a slight variation in decoration, with a 'white streak' painted round the edge of the false front — cf. Fig. C in colour plate. The standing figure is typical of the appearance striven for in 1812, the other soldier of the field appearance of the infantryman from late 1813 and throughout 1814. (H. Charles McBaron, Jr.)*



the preferred buff. This widespread substitution of black for buff, and the large number of surplus belts after the War, would result in confusion about the regulation colour of the crossbelts in the US Army for years.

### KNAPSACKS

#### Lherbette's knapsack

At about the same time that Coxe was finishing the cartridge box and bayonet scabbard patterns an enterprising New York City businessman by the name of John P. Lherbette presented a new model knapsack to the Army. Lherbette had been making headgear for various militia companies in New York when he decided to respond to an 1807 request for proposals for furnishing items for the Army. After a review of 100 trial knapsacks Secretary of War Dearborn informed Coxe on 27 May 1808 that Lherbette's was to be the model for all knapsacks obtained thereafter, and that he had contracted for 1,000 already. At the same time he forwarded to Coxe a pattern knapsack that 'bears the Seal of this office' to guide the inspection of the first 1,000 that Lherbette was to deliver. Thus the concept of 'sealed patterns', common to European procurement systems, was used in the United States as well in the early 19th century.

Dearborn retained the Prussian blue with which the flap of previous knapsacks had been painted, as well as the letters 'US' in Spanish brown (later changed to vermilion to stand out better). Lherbette's patent application adds some detail about the knapsack: it was made of Russia sheeting, a kind of smooth burlap; the insignia to be painted on the outer flap was to be a red 'US' encircled with an oval stripe of white; the strapping was of black leather; and two 'Wooden Blocks shape of an Olive' were used to secure the shoulder belts.

What Lherbette claimed to be his new feature, worthy of a patent, was the fact that the knapsack rode square upon the soldier's back. This aspect of the knapsack, 'not being broad-

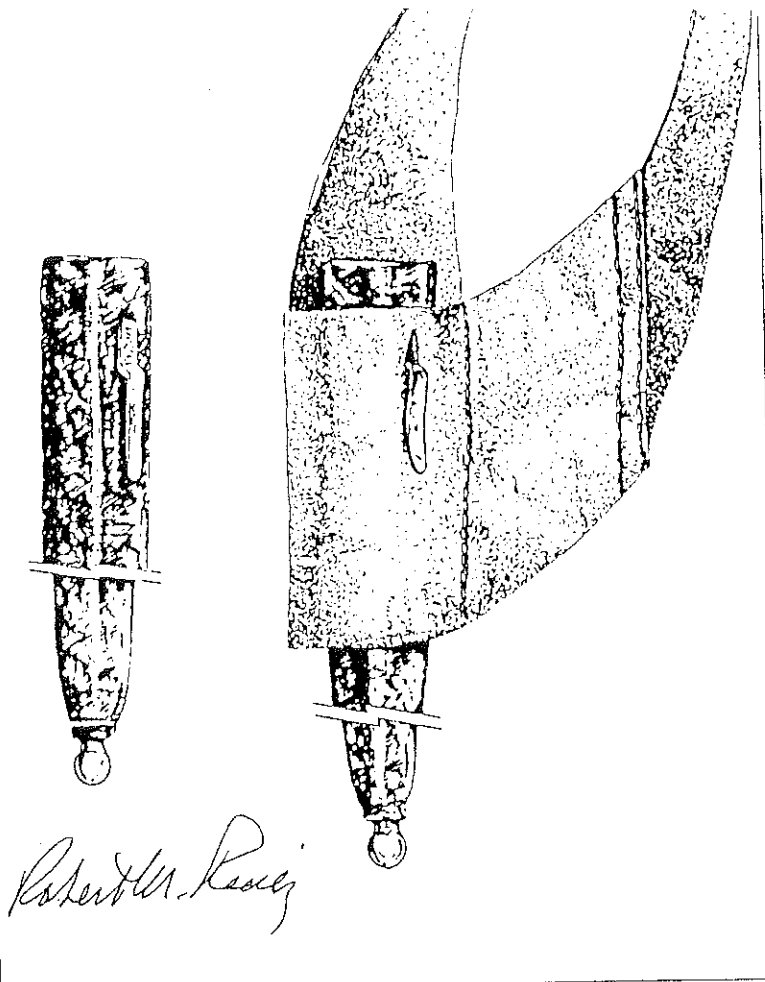
Figure 2A: One of six known examples of the bayonet frog in black leather; none are known in the preferred whitened buff leather.



er than a mans back..., does not prevent him from wheeling about the ranks...' However, while perhaps different from certain American knapsacks of the Revolutionary War era<sup>65</sup>, in reality it largely copied patterns that had been introduced by the French starting in 1767; and, with its two compartments, it follows construction details dating as far back as the Revolution. In any case Lherbette was granted a patent for this knapsack in 1808, and began advertising for militia orders at the same time that he was persuading Dearborn to give him a US Army contract.

In 1808 Lherbette offered his knapsacks to the Army a 65c unpainted and 80c 'painted two coats', although the patent application indicates they were to have three coats. In 1810 Coxe was instructed to pay Lherbette \$1.37½ each for those knapsacks that had passed inspection.

The knapsack illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 is the only extant example that conform to Lherbette's patent; fortunately it also has a Regular Army provenance, as it is known to have been used by Nathaniel Mitchell, a corporal in the 1st US Artillery who died of consumption in New York on 27 July 1814. The original design of a US in an oval has been overpainted with



#### Above:

Figure 2: The simple construction of the bayonet belt, frog and scabbard are evident in this drawing. The two-section frog was a hold-over from the previous century, the second loop holding an NCO's sword or a camp axe; it seems seldom to have been used in the War of 1812. (Robert M. Reilly)



#### Left:

Figure 2B: Throat of an original Pattern of 1808 bayonet scabbard in the author's collection, and clip recovered from the Sacket's Harbor site.



looping ribbon design specific to the unit in which Mitchell served. At least one other Regular Army unit, the 4th Rifle Regiment, also had a specific unit designation painted on their knapsacks.

### Hide knapsacks

Soon after Callender Irvine assumed the office of Commissary General of Purchases in the late summer of 1812, he began experimenting with knapsacks made of animal hides. Perhaps they appeared reminiscent of the French patterns of the late 18th century, since Col. George Izard requested on 13 November 1812 knapsacks 'made of skin like the French Artillery.' To Secretary of War Eustis, Irvine wrote three days later that he was sending a prototype knapsack 'made of skin in imitation of those used by the French soldiery, which is not only much more durable, but effectively protects its contents from moisture.' On 26 December 1812 Irvine went further: 'I propose that knapsacks made of Deer Skin shall be furnished in lieu of linen painted knapsacks, the former will last three or four years service; the latter not more than one year; the former will cost 80 cents; the latter \$1.00.'

Irvine must have gotten at least tacit concurrence to procure and issue hide knapsacks, as he sent out pattern knapsacks in March 1813 and made note of them throughout the rest of the year. For example, he replied to James Calhoun, a Deputy Commissary: 'Your letter of the 24th instant is received, as you cannot provide Cowhide knapsacks in time for the 39th Regiment of Infantry, please send them linen painted knapsacks.' And a little later, to Elisha Tracy, another Deputy Commissary: 'Your horsehides should be well dressed in belum (sic) otherwise the knapsacks will become hard and unserviceable.'

However, probably the best description of one pattern of these hide knapsacks is contained in a letter from Deputy Commissary Amasa Stetson in Boston, Massachusetts to Irvine, dated 3 May 1813.

deputy commissaries who had been sent the pattern hide knapsacks in March, and this letter was a status report to Irvine. Because of its insights on the process by which patterns of accoutrements were developed it is quoted in its entirety:

'The box containing a Helmet & Knapsack is received. On receipt of your orders to provide Knapsacks, I bought about 2,000 horsehides, a number much greater than were necessary to make the sacks required, under an impression that they would, upon its being known the(y) were to be used for that purpose, rise, as they immediately did, twenty to thirty pr. ct. As I obtained them from the Leather Dresser, I got them made up of the best constructed form I could devise, tho somewhat different from that which you had the goodness to send me. I should have lined them but for the addition to the weight, without which they are too heavy, difficulty of getting them made, & additional expense. They have been made up from 18 to 19 inches wide, 16 to 17 deep, with a flap of twelve inches, the upper or outward part 3 to 4 inches wider than the under or back of them, that they might fill easier & form better to the back, main strap 1½ inches wide, set near to each other at top & wider at the bottom and with a stay of leather on the inner side thro which the straps are stitched, & bound the edges or sides of the Knapsack with neats leather; considering that the work would be the first which would fail, if they were duly supported with stays, I rejected needle work altogether & had them stitched 6 to the inch with an awl & a good waxed thread; I have not extended the main straps to the bottom by 4 or 5 inches, finding if they were secured at the bottom it would draw the weight hard against the soldiers back & throw the top off from the shoulders. I like the flap of the Knapsack you sent me better than that which I have been making, it appears handsomer, bound, secures the Blanket better from the additional size & the lining

to secure the contents from wet which the skin will absorb in hard rains, if you have no objection I will continue the kind of work, bind the side & stitch on the main straps the distance from the bottom which I have done.'

One last detail on these hide knapsacks is contained in a letter to Irvine dated 25 February 1814: 'I have made a number of those horsehide knapsacks sufficient to experience me in the cutting of them and I want to inform the Commissary General... if you will not permit the pockets of the sacks to be pieced you will lose at least one quarter of each hide. ...The hides I made them of is well dressed and without stench.'

### The Glengary knapsack

Despite Irvine's assertions about the durability of the hide knapsacks, he quickly found fault with them. They did stink, and many rotted due to the inadequate storage facilities available. These problems are somewhat surprising, since hide knapsacks had been used on the Continent for years by this time. Consequently, in 1814 he introduced the third (and final) knapsack pattern used during the War. Although it remains something of an enigma, the 'Glengary knapsack' is noted in correspondence by that name until about 1812.

There is no doubt that the Glengary was intended to replace hide knapsacks for the troops of the Regular Army. Irvine sent the Deputy Commissaries samples in August 1814 with the notation that it 'is designed as a pattern by which when you receive orders you will have others made.' Three months later Irvine notes: 'I had 10 or 15,000 Glengary knapsacks made here for the regular troops on the lines. In my absence the militia absorbed the greater part of them to my great regret. They should be of the Glengary form for the regular troops.'

Included with the samples sent out in August was a pricing of the components of the new knapsack pattern, which provides some detail on its construction: 'Linen 55/100ths,

ing 12½/100ths, Strapping 70/100ths, Buckles 7½/100ths, in all \$1.60/100ths each.' A few additional details are included in a proposal dated 15 December 1814 to make knapsacks of the 'New Highland pattern, Glengary' by Garrit Sickles. If the Government provided the 'canvas, Buckles & Buttons' he would make them for \$1.35; 'if the strings may be of good neat Leather — \$1.25.'

Although the Glengary was a painted linen knapsack, how it differed exactly from the Lherbette is still being researched. References to it after the War indicate it had 'pockets' and 'boards', suggesting a type of frame knapsack. However, it remains unclear whether this was the distinguishing feature of the Glengary. Correspondence with individuals knowledgeable about early British accoutrements, and research in Great Britain, has so far failed to provide a link between the US Glengary and any British pattern knapsacks. It does not appear to be a copy of the Trotter, which had been in service for about 15 years with British troops, and the 'Highland' reference has everyone baffled.

### CANTEENS AND HAVERSACKS

Just as with knapsacks, it is possible that three different basic canteen patterns were procured and issued during this period. Two were wooden, with one constructed like a small barrel using short staves placed around two round heads, the whole held together by two hoops, either thin bands of iron or interlocking wood. Three short cross straps held the hoops in place and retained the shoulder strap. There is no doubt that this pattern canteen was procured during the War, for it is described in several extant contracts. Further, Coxé himself describes this canteen in a letter to William Keane dated 14 February 1814, noting the canteens were to be about 7 in. in diameter, 3 in. to 3½ in. wide, the 'common staves' to be ¼ in. thick and the bung stave ¾ in. thick 'to enable the

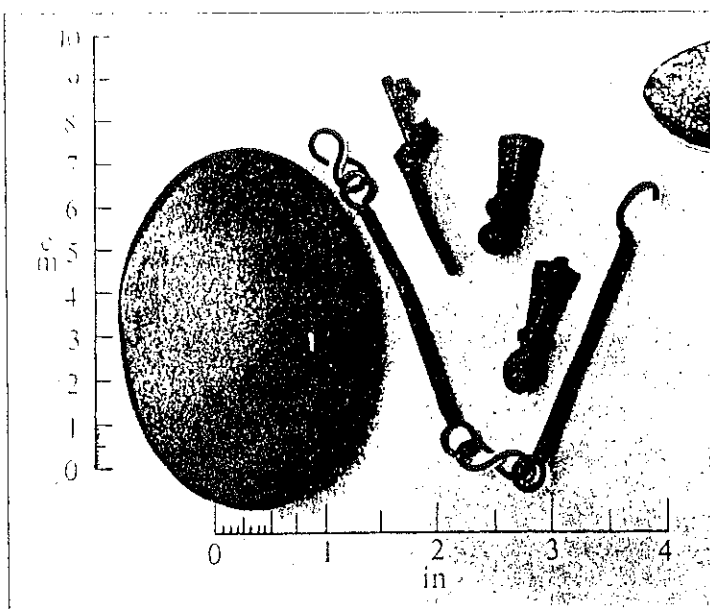


Figure 3: Artifacts recovered from an 1814 dump at Sackets Harbor, NY, by J. Duncan Campbell: one of the smaller plain brass bayonet belt plates, two links from a pick-and-brush set, a bayonet scabbard clip and two brass scabbard tips.



Figure 3A: Reverse of two plain brass bayonet belt plates, of the smaller type well known from numerous recovered examples; note cast hook, stud, and — surviving on the left hand piece — the washers rivetted to the stud.

mouthpiece to drink out of.' The hoops were to be of flat hickory  $\frac{1}{5}$  in. or  $\frac{1}{6}$  in. thick, tongued into one another. This style of canteen is illustrated in the right foreground of the large monochrome illustration by Hugh McBarron herewith.

Of the other known contracts for this pattern canteen, two (with George Guck dated 2 November 1812 and John House dated 23 March 1813) substitute iron hoops for the hickory, and include the specifications that 'the slings (are) to be made of good leather of a proper length and width', and that the canteens shall 'have two coats of good light blue paint'.

The second type of wooden canteen, popularly known as the 'cheesebox' style due to its similarity to the round wooden containers used to make and store cheese, is shown in Figure 6. It is known through numerous surviving examples<sup>(6)</sup>, most of which have been overpainted and other designations applied. This example is  $8\frac{1}{4}$  in. in diameter and  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. thick, and retains its original dark blue-black paint and vermillion lettering. Another almost identical example is in the National Museum of

American History, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Another slightly smaller example ( $7\frac{3}{8}$  in. diameter by  $2\frac{5}{8}$  in. thick) has a light blue cloud painted behind the red lettering. And a final specimen retains what appears to be its original sling of  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. wide black leather, with a thong securing a mushroom-shaped wooden stopper.

Only one painter of canteens has been identified by the author: George N. Reinhart, a coach painter of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who 'has gave

(sic) general satisfaction'.

Tin canteens are known to have been used during the War as well, but no contracts for their construction have been located to date. This leads to a tentative conclusion that any tin canteens issued (and, for example, we do know from the Fort Fayette freight books that substantial quantities of tin ones were sent to the Northwest Army in 1813<sup>(7)</sup>) may have been from surplus Revolutionary War stocks. Somewhat in support of this theory is the fact that a tin canteen of the same style as examples recovered from sites dating from the Revolutionary War has been found at Fort Atkinson, a site occupied exclusively by the Regular Army in the 1820s (Figure 7). This suggests that such surplus stocks could have continued to

have been issued well after the War was over<sup>(8)</sup>.

On the other hand, it is possible that some of the canteens were newly constructed during the War. Examples recovered from Fort Meigs, Ohio, have squared loops for  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. wide straps rather than the more commonly encountered round tubes to retain suspensory cords; archaeological recoveries indicate tubes to be 18th century features of canteens<sup>(9)</sup>. In any case we do know that there were plenty of canteens available to meet the Army's requirements after the War, for in 1836 Irvine noted: 'I have not purchased any Canteens since the year 1814 — I paid for them at that time 40/100 each ...'

The least documented accoutrement item, and the simplest, is the haversack. We know Coxe advertised for them as early as 1808, and they have universally been part of the soldier's essentials. In 1811

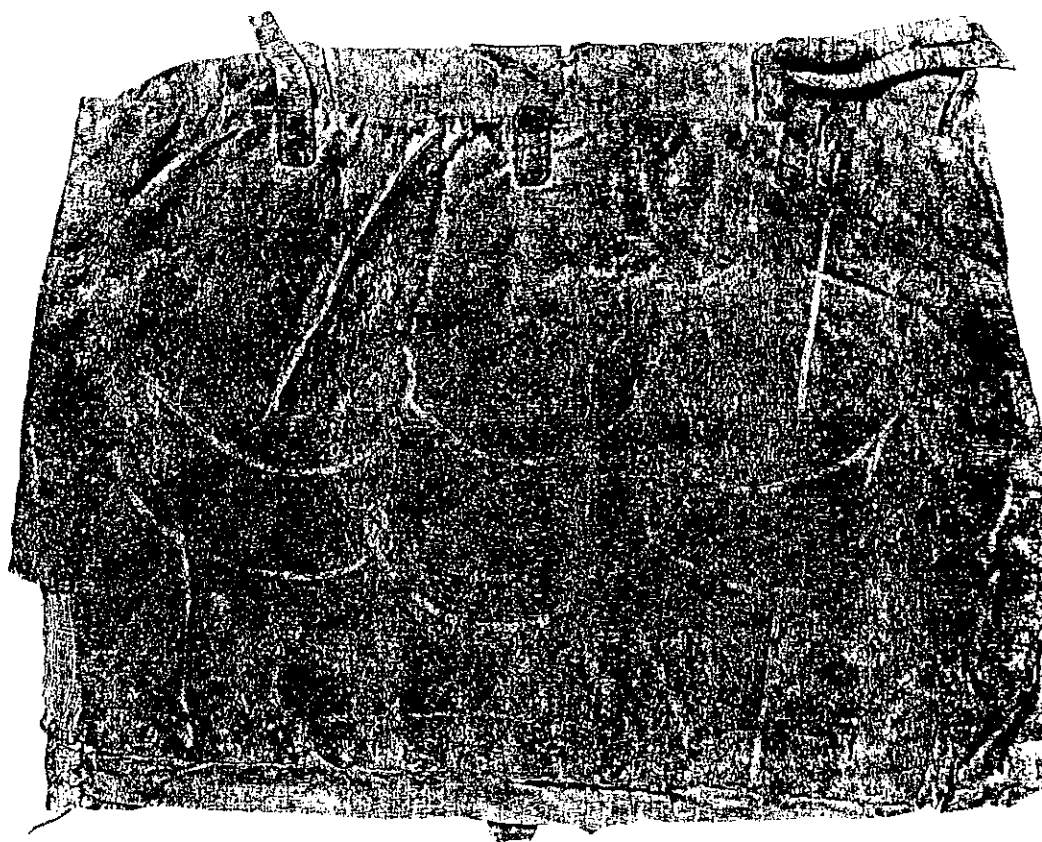


Figure 4: Outer flap of the Lherbette pattern knapsack used by Corporal Nathaniel Mitchell, 1st US Artillery, c. 1814. The original 'US in an oval' design can still be made out on the original, just underneath the centre of the distinctive looping ribbon insignia of Mitchell's unit. (J. Craig Nunnos Collection, National Army Museum)



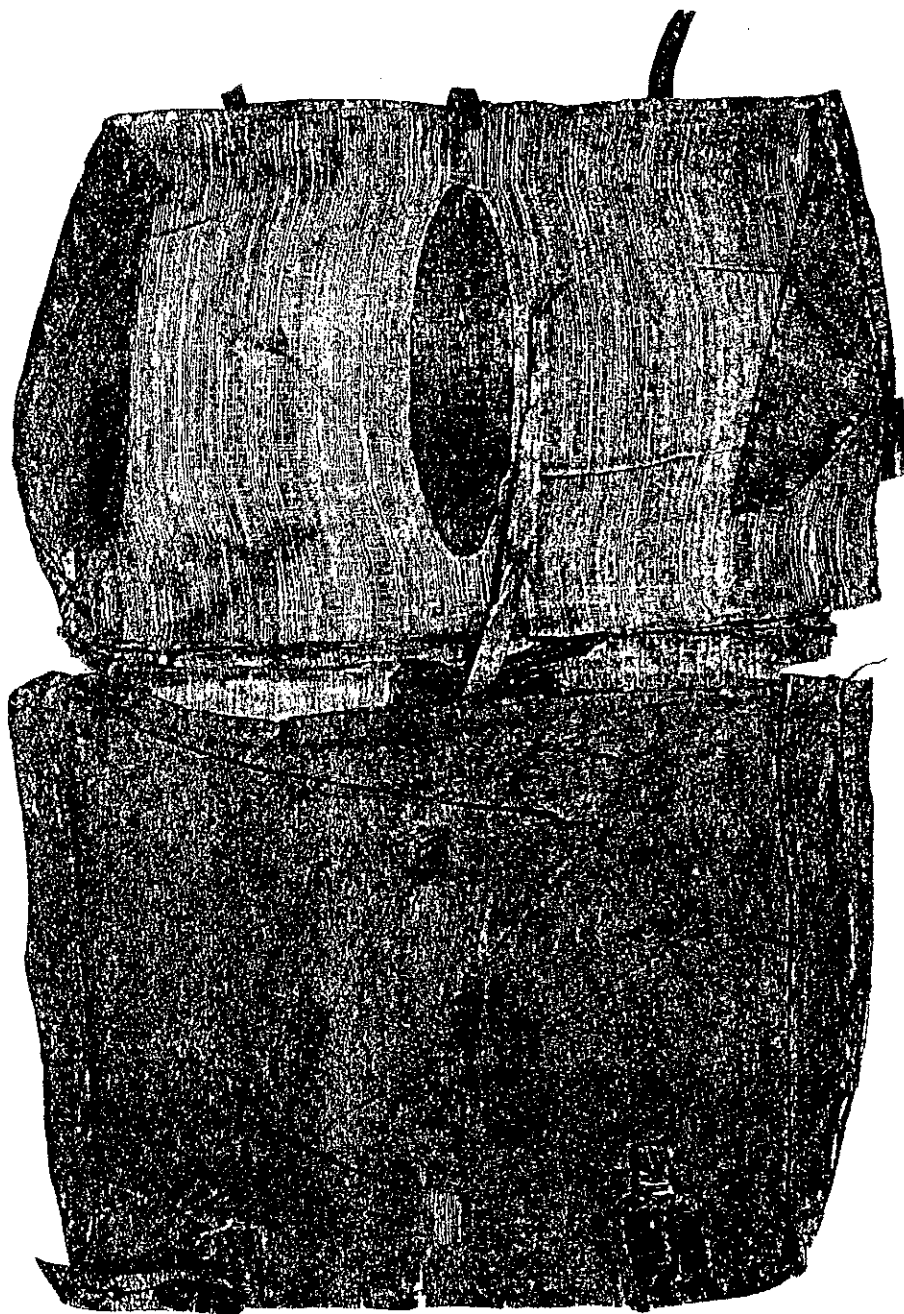


Figure 5: Interior of the Lherbette knapsack. Labour-intensive in its construction, it led CGP Callender Irvine to search for more easily made alternatives when it became obvious that large numbers of troops had to be equipped. (J. Craig Nannos Colln., National Army Museum)

Coxe wrote to James Kerr, a manufacturer, stating: 'The haversack (is) to be made out of two pieces of Russia Sheeting to be as wide as  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Breadth of the Sheeting, the depth to be 13 inches clear of the flap when made, the Flap to be 3 inches deep, when made, the first 120 to be sent to the office immediately.' As he had noted earlier that the sheeting 'is  $40\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide', we have a rough idea of one haversack pattern that was considered (there is a notation on the letter 'not approved by Secy'). It is likely that a haversack of this size, 13 in. wide by 16 in. deep, would have required three buttons to close it. No other references to haversacks that include

Although there was some discussion 'against the use of haversacks' in 1811, Irvine included them in his estimates of 'Equippage necessary for Army for one year, 1812-1813', and it is clear that some type of haversack was available throughout the War.

#### VARIATIONS FROM THE PATTERNS

Items described so far in this article have largely been the ideal accoutrements. However, as shortages developed (that of blue cloth for the uniform coat is well known; that of buff leather for belting has already been noted) they affected accoutrement procurement. Add the normal exigencies of

items were accepted for use that did not conform to the 'established patterns'. The latitude in the size of the wooden canteens ordered in February 1812 indicates that at times even the procurement orders were lax, not to mention the inspection of items badly needed to clothe and equip troops already in the field.

Yet other examples of deviations from the established patterns can be found. In a 'Report of Items at Boston Massachusetts Unfit for the Regular Service' dated 23 August 1815 the inspecting officer, George Flomerfelt, normally stationed in Philadelphia, told Irvine that there were, among other items,

the sockit of the Bayonet out from the Body of the Soldier, insted (sic) of in,' and 31 Cartouch Box Belts 'made to Button on the box instead of Buckling.' The latter comment confirms the letters from Robert Dingee, a New York leather worker, and others complaining about the lack of buckles for sale in the city in 1814. Several examples of Pattern of 1808 cartridge boxes are known with leather buttons on the bottom for the attachment of the shoulder belt.

The tin canteen situation suggests the use of serviceable old surplus. In addition Irvine attempted to purchase captured material to ease shortages. '5 bales of haversacks', along with 54 bales of blankets (50 per bale) and 36 bales of tents (five per bale) were among the cargo of the captured British ordnance ship *Stranger* that Irvine was unable to buy at auction in 1814 for want of hard currency.

With the accoutrement procurement process a fluid one, and Government officials, contractors and the marketplace all helping to determine what was actually manufactured and sent into the field, it is no wonder that a variety of patterns were both procured and used concurrently in the US Army during the War, with 'old' patterns often being seen alongside 'new' patterns in the same unit. Before the War this was not an important consideration to officers, since complete regiments seldom served together. Because of the small size of the pre-War Regular Army various companies generally served as somewhat independent commands, stationed far apart. Thus uniformity was not a primary concern; it mattered little that one company had white belting and another black. But when companies, and then regiments, were brought together it did matter to the officers in com-

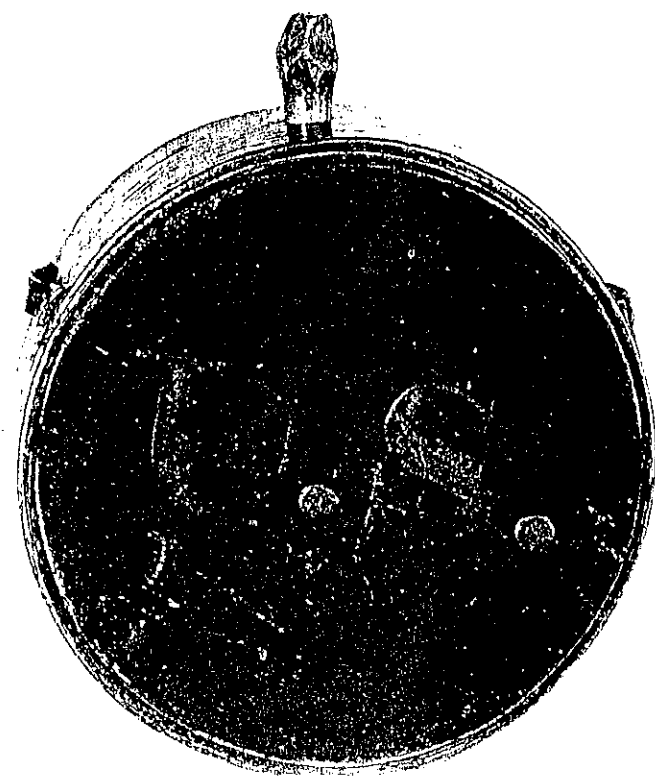
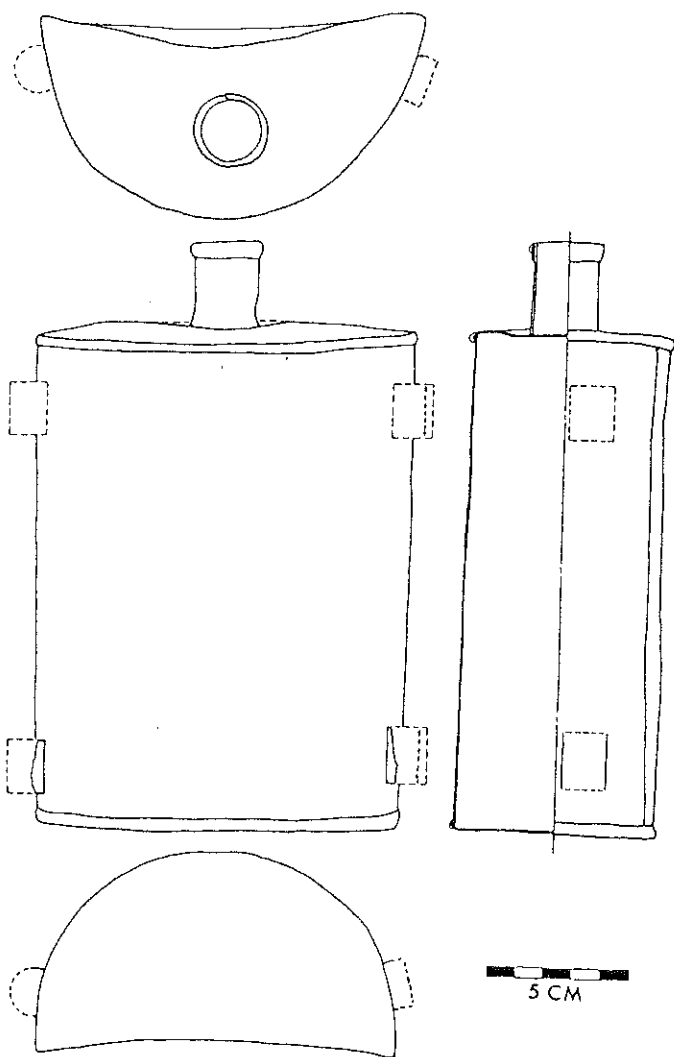


Figure 7: Tin canteen, c.1825, recovered from Fort Atkinson. This style was in use in North America as early as the Seven Years' War. This example may represent Revolutionary War surplus, or new manufacture for the War of 1812, depending on the original shape of the retainers for the sling.

presented such a motley appearance.

While it is clear that the preponderance of accoutrements used during the War did not conform exactly to the established patterns that the Army had worked so diligently to complete in the years before the War, it appears that most of the accoutrements were at least serviceable and fulfilled their roles in the hands of the troops. The majority of the complaints noted above were about pattern, and not quality.

After the War there was an effort to rid the stores of surplus material that did not conform to the regulations, through auctions or issues to the state militias. However, much still ended up in the hands of the Regulars after 1815, sometimes with instructions — particularly with regard to clothing — that the items be modified for fatigue purposes. Consequently there was widespread confusion over what was regulation for years after the War. White buff belts, for example, were not uniformly reintroduced into the US Army until 1819. Ideal accoutrements, for which the search had begun in 1808, were doubtless still an elusive goal well into the 1820s. M

#### Acknowledgements:

The author would like to thank the following individuals for their critiques during the preparation of this article: René Chartrand, Parks Canada; Stephen Osman, Minnesota Historical Society; and James Kochan, National Park Service.

#### Footnotes:

Unless otherwise indicated, all information and quotations are from documents found in the US National Archives, Washington, DC, Records Group 92 (Office of the Quartermaster General),

primarily the Coxie-Irvine Papers at Consolidated Correspondence File and Record Group 156 (Office of the Chief of Ordnance).

(1) Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York, 1967) p.109. See also John F. Callan, *11 Military Laws of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1863), pp.205-6.

(2) Frederick C. Gaede, 'The Model 1828 Bayonet Belt', *Military Collector & Historian*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4 (Winter 1985), pp.159-64.

(3) About 1816 Charles Hamilton Smith, an English artist just returned from a spying mission to the United States, portrayed a group of 'United States Infantry', one of whom has what appears to be an oval brass plate on the flap of his cartridge box. This author has no corroboration for such a device for the US Army prior to 1839. Question by other authors about details in Smith's works suggest that he worked largely from memory. The original painting is in the Houghton Library of Harvard University, and has been reproduced as Plate No. 550 in the *Military Uniforms in America* series, The Company of Military Historians.

(4) J. Duncan Campbell, 'A War of 1812 Military Trash Pit', *Military Collector & Historian*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (Winter, 1955), pp.102-4. The majority of the items recovered are now in the collections of the Pennsylvania State Museum and the Ft. Sill Artillery Museum.

(5) Harold L. Peterson, *The Book of the Continental Soldier* (Harrisburg, 1968), pp.144-164.

(6) The number of surviving examples has been troublesome to some students of early 19th century accoutrements. The lack of documentation of this pattern in the War of 1812 period, combined with the knowledge that tens of thousands of wooden canteens were contracted for during the Second Seminole War period (1835-42), but are equally undocumented at this time, has spurred further research on the question. Thus, while the cheesebox pattern canteen has long been associated with the War of 1812, its documentation is not as conclusive as one would like.

(7) Plate No. 538, 'Regular Infantry Regiments of the Northwest Army, 1813', *Military Uniforms in America* series, The Company of Military Collectors & Historians. Also personal communications with Joseph Thatcher, New York State Bureau of Historic Sites.

(8) Gayle F. Carlson, *Archeological Investigations at Fort Atkinson, 1956-1971* (Nebraska State Historical Society, Publications in Anthropology), No. 8, pp.66-7. The strap retainers have rusted off this example. If the original retainers were round then the canteen was probably surplus 18th century; if square, then it could have been surplus War of 1812.

(9) Jacob L. Grinn, *Archeological Investigations of Fort Ligonier, 1960-1965* (Annals of Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, 1970) Vol. 42, pp.166-7. See also William S. Cornwell, 'Eighteenth-Century British Military Canteens', *Medical Radiography and Photography*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1975), pp.146-7. These 18th century examples were compared with War of 1812 examples recovered from Fort Meigs, Ohio, in the collections of

Figure 6: Typical canteen of 'cheese-box' construction. Canteens of the period were generally suspended by a  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. wide leather strap, although no doubt this was often replaced with a cloth sling by the soldiers when the leather wore out. (Old Sturbridge





## Notes and Queries

### Queries

[Editor's Note - Responses to queries should be sent to the Editor. They will be forwarded to the enquiring party, and published in the Brigade Dispatch. Please include the name of the unit, if any, to which you belong.]

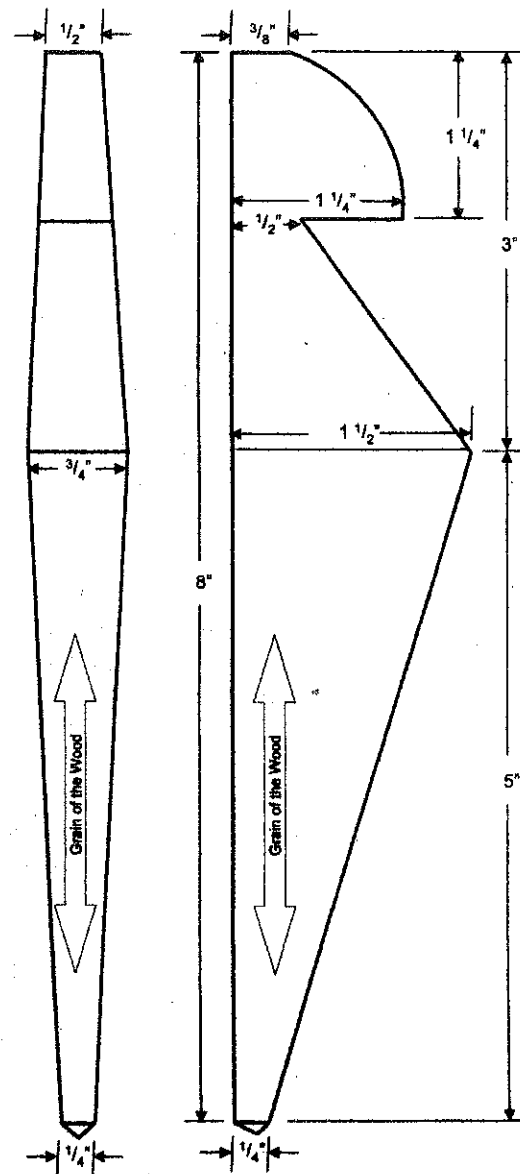
### Notes

The Fort Ligonier Tent Pin referred to in Mark Tully's article "Tent Pins" (The Brigade Dispatch, Vol. XXXII, No. 4) is in my experience an ingeniously designed item that is better suited to its purpose than any other tent pin design I have ever encountered.

A number of years ago, through the courtesy of Marty West, Fort Ligonier's Site Director, I was privileged to be able to study the original artifact tent pin recovered in the archeological excavation of the Fort. A feature of its design that is not readily apparent from Mark's description is that, in addition to the taper on the notch side of the pin, its sides are also tapered from the widest point toward both the bottom and the top (see accompanying dimensioned drawing). In addition, the striking surface at the top is narrower than the throat of the pin at the rope notch, greatly reducing the tendency to knock the rope notch lip off when driving it in.

I have used this type of tent pin with great success for over 15 years in all kinds of situations. I use copies of the Fort Ligonier pin for my wedge tent, and a version about 50% larger for marquees and other large shelters. When driven to its widest point, it keeps the tent rope or loop above the ground, thereby retarding rot. Its design permits it to be driven repeatedly into hard soils without breaking. (I have several from the first batch that I ever made that I have used at every event since and which are still serviceable.) When driven so that the tension of the tent rope or loop is approximately perpendicular to the long axis of the pin, it holds extremely well, even in sandy or wet soils, even in wind and rain. When it is time to strike camp, the tapered faces make

the pins easy to remove. Many can be removed simply by pulling the rope they hold in the direction of the pin's long axis. The more reluctant ones require only a few gentle taps on the sides to loosen them to the point where they can be easily withdrawn. It is a durable pin that holds well and is easy to use. What more could a soldier want?



*Tent pin excavated at Fort Ligonier*

I make mine with a few simple tools - a drawknife, a saw and a wood chisel. After riving out billets of approximately the right size, I secure one in my vice and begin by first flattening the back surface (the one on the opposite side from the rope notch). I then taper the two wide sides. (Using a tapered wooden wedge to help hold the pin securely in the vice, I move on to the rope notch side. I first form the long taper. Four quick strokes form the point. I then make the saw cut for the rope notch and complete the notch with the wood chisel. The final step is to form the top with a few strokes of the drawknife. Starting with a rough billet, I can make a finished tent pin in about a minute if I concentrate on what I'm doing.

If you decide to try the Fort Ligonier style tent pin, here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Use good, rough wood. Oak, ash and hickory seem to work best. (I get my raw materials by searching through the firewood piles at events for pieces of straight grained hardwoods.)
- Make sure that the grain of the wood runs parallel to the flat edge of the pin so as to minimize splitting.
- Make sure that the top is well rounded and that the area where the mallet strikes is smaller than the throat of the pin at the notch. This is very important to prevent the notch from splitting off.
- Stay with the shape and dimensions of the original, but don't worry about being exact. These are, after all, utilitarian items that will see rough usage.
- A drawknife is perhaps the quickest and most effective tool for making these pins. Never use a steel hammer to drive the pins - always use a wooden mallet.

Norm Fuss  
1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Regiment

\*

The response to the "War and Washington" song query (Vol. 32 No. 3 and No. 4) contains a clue that the information is not directly from an 18<sup>th</sup> century source. Numerous and deeply researched scholarly articles in this and other publications have clearly demonstrated that huzza was not misspelled "huzzah" until the mid 20th century, and that the standard 18th and early 19th century pronunciation in Britain and America, north and south, was "huzzay" (See "Pronouncing Huzza - Clear Voices Across the Centuries," Vol. 31 No. 1.) Therefore, the song's chorus with the modern pronunciation and spelling of "Huzzah, Huzzah, Huzzah, Huzzah," is probably not from an original 18<sup>th</sup> century source. Most likely it is copied from a flawed modern transcription, or from a recording. While it is possible that it was occasionally spelled "huzzah" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we can be pretty certain that the standard accepted spelling in Britain and America was "huzza."

Mark Hilliard  
10<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment

\*

The article "Old Tents" (Volume 29 No. 1) overlooked one very obvious use for the cloth from worn out tents. At the beginning of the 1778 campaign season, DeLancey's Brigade was ordered to repair their tents using cloth from one of the worn out tents. Presumably the worst of the tents were used to repair the others (Orderly Book of the Three Battalions of Loyalists commanded by Brigadier General Oliver de Lancey. New York Historical Society, 1917). Brigade orders given on 13 April 1778 read:

Officers Commanding Companies will this Day order the Tents of their Respective Companies to their Own Quarters, there to be Immediately repaired. A Tent of every Compy must be cut up to mend the rest.

\*\*\*\*\*