

For
Benjamin Wentzle
Foreman of Sock Dept.

THE
ORDNANCE MANUAL

A. Few Army

21st April 1854

THE USE OF THE OFFICERS

OF THE

UNITED STATES ARMY.

To go on Sock Return.

SECOND EDITION.

Washington:

GIDEON & CO., PRINTERS.

1850.

U.S. Army Accoutrements 1840-1860

By Richard Johnson

The period 1840 through 1860 was selected for this presentation for several reasons. In 1841 the government published for the first time an Ordnance Manual which described the accoutrements of the individual soldier in detail, including the dimensions of many items. Subsequent editions of this manual were published in 1850 and 1861. Prior to the publication of the 1841 manual the government in 1834 and again in 1839 published "Regulations for the Government of the Ordnance Department" both of which listed the soldier's accoutrements but included no details other than the price of each item. The 1839 edition included "old pattern" and "new pattern" accoutrements. The "new pattern" essentially represents those described in greater detail in the 1841 Ordnance Manual. Identification of accoutrements used prior to 1839 is for the most part conjecture. Records in the National Archives provide some information on pre-1839 leather goods, but it is limited.

In this discussion I will include items in use at the beginning of the War Between the States, but will stop at that point as the 1861 through 1865 accoutrements should be the subject of a separate discussion. You will recall that Harry Repman conducted a symposium on Union carbine cartridge boxes at the New Orleans meeting. Navy accoutrements have not been included as the first detailed description of these items was not published until 1852 in the Navy Manual, "Preparation of Vessels of War for Battle." However, feel free to bring up leather goods of any type in the discussion period following my presentation. I do not intend to give the dimensions or construction details of any item unless necessary for clarification.

The years from 1830 to 1845 marked a period of change in the arming of the individual soldier and the first substantial rearming of the troops since the War of 1812. Changes included: the adoption of the first percussion arm—the Model 1833 Hall carbine produced by Simeon North for the 1st Regiment of Dragoons; the replacement of the 1840 flintlock musket by the Model 1842 percussion musket; the replacement of the 1836 flintlock pistol by the Model 1842 percussion pistol; the replacement of the 1817 and 1819 flintlock rifles by the Model 1841 percussion rifle; the replacement of the 1812 and 1818 Starr sabers by the Model 1832 dragoon saber and that by the Model 1840 heavy cavalry saber; and others. As part of the rearming, the accoutrements used with the individual arms of the soldier were either altered or replaced by newly designed items.

The War Department of the period did not have a research and development staff nor could it contract with institutions or industrial firms for weapons development as the Department of Defense does today. It was necessary to depend for arms development upon the genius of individual inventors such as Sam Colt, industrial pioneers such as Nathan Ames, the officers and civilian employees of the Ordnance Department, and troop commanders in the field. Additionally the War Department relied heavily upon arms developments in foreign countries, mainly England, France and Prussia. In 1829 Lieutenant Tyler, 1st Regiment of Artillery, then in Europe, was requested to procure samples of the arms and accoutrements in use by privates of the French infantry, artillery and cavalry. In 1832 General Wool while in Europe was authorized to procure in England samples of cannon, swords and belts.

To evaluate improved weapons or accoutrements the War Department appointed Boards of Officers. In 1831 Lewis Cass,



Secretary of War, appointed a Board "With a view to the establishing of a uniform system in the operations of the Ordnance Department, both as it regards models and patterns of arms, carriages, and equipments of every species, as well as all kinds of supplies proper to be furnished by that Department . . ." The development efforts of the War Department resulted in the improved accoutrements listed on the 1839 Regulations as "new pattern" and subsequently described in detail in the 1841 Manual. As an example of such improvement, the eagle stamped infantry cartridge box listed as "old pattern" in the 1839 Regulations was basically the model 1808 cartridge box which had been used in much the same form as early as the Revolution. I will not discuss all accoutrements listed in the Ordnance Manual—musket slings and bayonet scabbards are examples.

It is interesting to note the distribution of arms and accoutrements in 1834:

	Total Number	Percentage in the hands of —		
		U.S. Army Units	State/Territory Militia	Arsenals & Forts
Muskets	831,180	.6%	30.3%	69.1%
Rifles	145,283	46 rifles (Dragoons)	79.1%	20.9%
Pistols	41,435	1.4% (Dragoons)	80.0%	18.6%
Carbines	1,647	24.2% (Dragoons)	0.0%	75.8%
Cartridge Boxes	159,890	3.7%	96.3%	Not reported

I point this out to show the small percentage in the hands of the regular forces. The carbines in the hands of troops were the newly manufactured Model 1833 Hall made for the 1st Regiment of Dragoons.

The infantry entered the 1840's wearing crossed buff leather belts, one of which supported the .69 caliber musket cartridge box. Note that this belt did not have a breast plate. The buff leather was whitened by the application of pipe clay which had been steeped in water. The box contained two tin liners each holding a bundle of 10 cartridges in the lower compartment and 10 cartridges in the upper divisions, six in one and four in the other. The infantry soldier could thus carry 40 rounds. On the box flap was the large oval U.S. plate,

adopted for this "new pattern" box. Two sizes of the U.S. plate were worn; one 3.5"x2.2" will be referred to as the large oval plate; a smaller plate 2.8"x1.6" will be referred to as the small oval plate. The back of the box has loops for the shoulder belt only with no provision for wear on a waist belt. As long as he carried the flintlock musket, the soldier used a pick and brush for cleaning the touch hole and pan.

When 1841 Ordnance Manual was published the decision had already been made to discontinue the white buff leather bayonet belt. At that time the round eagle breast plate which had been adopted in 1831 for wear on the bayonet belt was transferred to the cartridge box belt. Thereafter, the bayonet scabbard was attached to a frog sliding in the waist belt. The infantry non-commissioned officers wore a white buff sword sling with a double frog for the sword and bayonet. Completing his accoutrements, the infantryman wore a white buff 1.5" wide waist belt with a small oval U.S. plate.

The 1841 cavalry and dragoon accoutrements consisted of a white buff saber belt with large oval U.S. plate with two saber slings and a shoulder strap. The white buff carbine sling with steel swivel is one of the rarest of all the pre-Civil War accoutrements. The pictured example is a militia type and in general appearance is the same as that described in the 1841 Manual. The carbine cartridge box with small oval U.S. plate has a single tin with two lower and five upper divisions which hold a total 40 rounds of musket caliber cartridges for the Hall carbine. The box has loops for wear only on the saber belt. The pistol box is similar to but smaller than the carbine box. It has the small oval U.S. plate and one tin for 40 rounds of rifle caliber cartridges. It also has loops on the back for wear only on the saber belt. It should be noted that this box was not issued to the dragoons, but only to militia cavalry not armed with the Hall carbine. The dragoons carried 10 rounds of pistol cartridges in their saddle holsters. This was apparently sufficient for the single pistol they were issued. The white buff sword knot completes the cavalry and dragoon accoutrements.

The artilleryman of the 1841 period wore distinctive sword belts with an interlocking U.S. plate. The mounted artilleryman wore a saber belt with 2 slings but without provision for a shoulder strap. The foot artilleryman wore a sword belt for the Model 1833 foot artillery sword.

The rifleman's waist belt and plate, bayonet belt and plate, and brush and pick set were the same as worn by the infantryman. The exception to this was the bayonet belt for the Hall rifle which was narrower than that for the musket (1.5" vs 2.3"). The Hall rifle bayonet belt is probably the rarest of the pre-Civil War accoutrements. I know of no existing example. The distinctive rifle accoutrements consisted of the pouch, flask and white buff flask-and-pouch shoulder belt.

Since the primary accoutrement changes were implemented during the 1839-40 period with the "new pattern" items described in detail in the 1841 Ordnance Manual, I will now cover the additions, deletions and changes appearing in the 1850 and 1861 Manuals. It should be noted that several changes to accommodate such items as the Colt revolvers do not appear in these Manuals. As indicated previously with the elimination of the bayonet belt, the round eagle breast plate was moved to the infantryman's cartridge box belt as indicated in the 1850 Manual. The primary change in infantry accoutrements during the 1840's was the addition of a percussion cap pouch. The 1850 Manual describes the standard pouch that continued through the Civil War. However, thanks to Major Rufus L. Baker, Ordnance Department, we have a description of the pre-1850 cap pouch. Major Baker's 1841 Ordnance Manual, at the West Point library, contains copious notes including a description and sketch of the new "percussion cap pocket". This early pouch is distinguished by the location of the brass button on

the front rather than the bottom of the pouch as in the later type.

Cavalry accoutrements remained substantially the same in the 1840-50 period, the one exception being the addition of the cap pouch. The cavalry pouch differed from the infantry pouch in that the cavalry pouch belt loops on the infantry pouch were made for the 1 1/2" wide waist belt.

The 1850 Manual indicates no changes in the artilleryman's accoutrements.

The rifleman's accoutrements, however, were changed by the addition of a cartridge box. While the dimensions of this box vary slightly from the 1841 carbine box it is not possible to distinguish an 1841 cartridge box from that described as a rifle box in the 1850 Manual. The rifleman's waist belt did change, however, from 1.5" wide to 2" and the belt plate from the small oval to large oval U.S. waist belt plate.

The 1850 Manual lists accoutrements for sappers which basically were the same as for infantry with the exception of the sword belt. The belt of white buff leather with interlocking U.S. plate had a large sliding frog for the sapper's and miner's bayonet. The sappers and miners were formed in 1846 and were the enlisted soldiers of the Corps of Engineers.

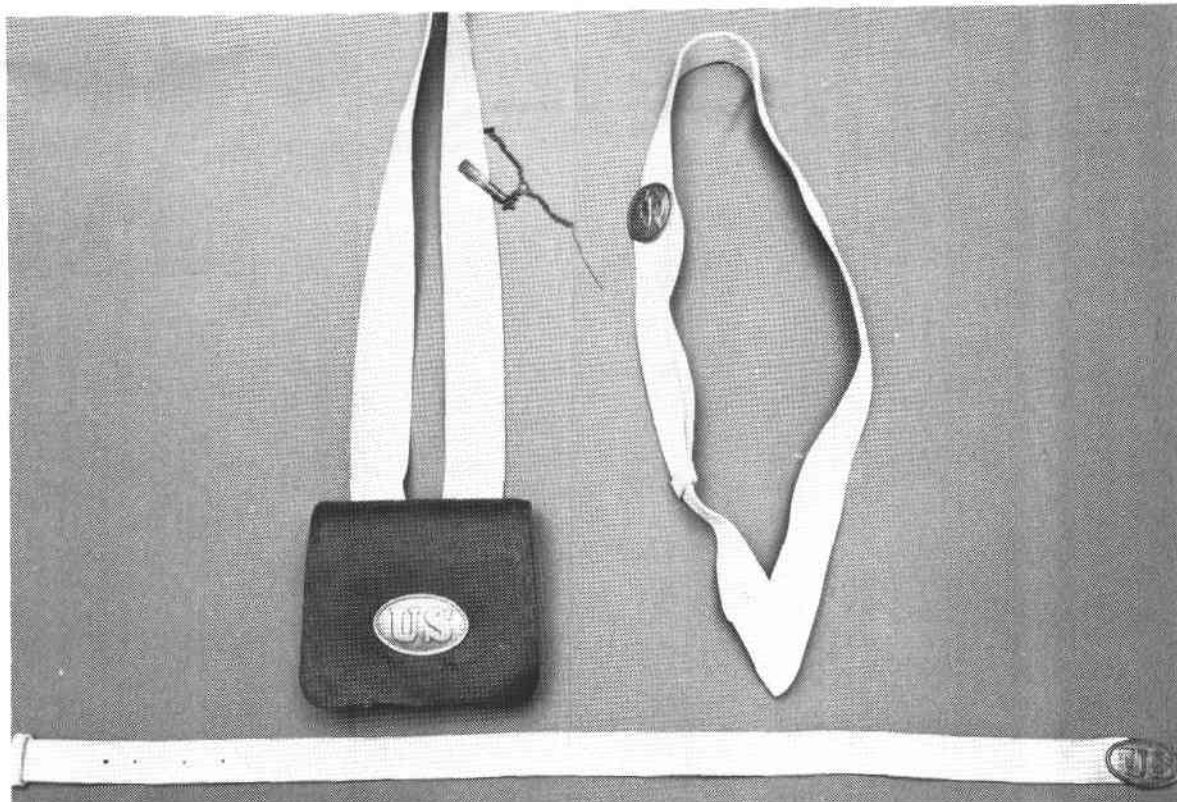
Mention of the sapper's and miner's bayonet frog leads me into two major changes in accoutrements introduced in 1851. The first of these was the introduction of a new sword belt plate for officers and enlisted men; This was the rectangular plate with silver wreath of laurel encircling the arms of the United States and the motto "E Pluribus Unum" which I will refer to as the eagle plate. An even greater change later in the year was the conversion of all belts from white to black. New procurements of belts specified black buff and orders were issued by the War Department for the blackening of belts in the hands of troops and in storage. While the 1861 Ordnance Manual specifies black buff leather for most belts, shoe leather is also noted and very rapidly replaced the blackened buff leather. By the time the large Civil War purchases of accoutrements were made, buff leather was no doubt completely replaced by the smooth shoe or bridle leather.

Changes noted in the 1861 Manual descriptions of accoutrements include for infantry the .58 caliber cartridge box. The detailed description includes the use of copper rivets. An additional box is listed in the 1861 Manual for the .69 caliber ball for use with those earlier .69 caliber muskets which were now rifled. The dimensions for these boxes are listed for comparison purposes in the 1861 Manual. The infantry waist belt by 1861 had increased in width from 1.5" to 1.9" and the waist belt plate was changed to the large oval U.S. A sergeant's and musician's waist belt was added which had no suspension slings or frogs and had the 1851 eagle plate.

Cavalry accoutrement changes in the 1861 Manual include a cartridge box for the carbine which is described as being like the infantry cartridge box except in dimensions with 2 loops on the back for a 2" waist belt. This description fits a box which collectors accept as being for the 1855 pistol carbine. The numerous special carbine boxes of the Civil War period were discussed in New Orleans. After 1851 dragoons and cavalry were equipped with black belts. The dark buff leather foot artillery belt with eagle plate and mounted artillery belt are the only changes noted in artillery accoutrements.

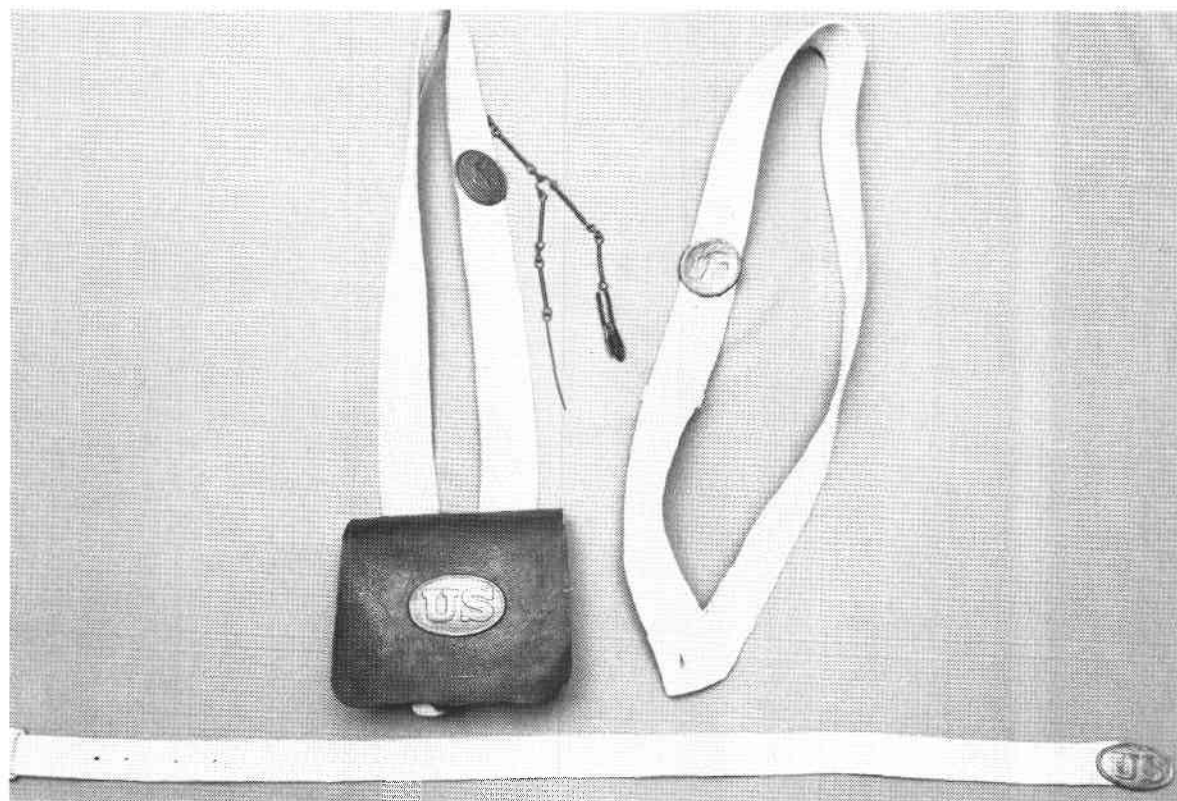
The rifleman's accoutrement as listed in the 1861 Manual are exactly like the infantrymen's. The only distinctive item described is the waist belt for the 1855 sword bayonet.

Should you have the time and the desire to analyze this presentation and the accoutrement descriptions which are available, you will note discrepancies, which indicates that our knowledge of accoutrements of the period 1840 - 1860 is incomplete and there is much research remaining to be accomplished.



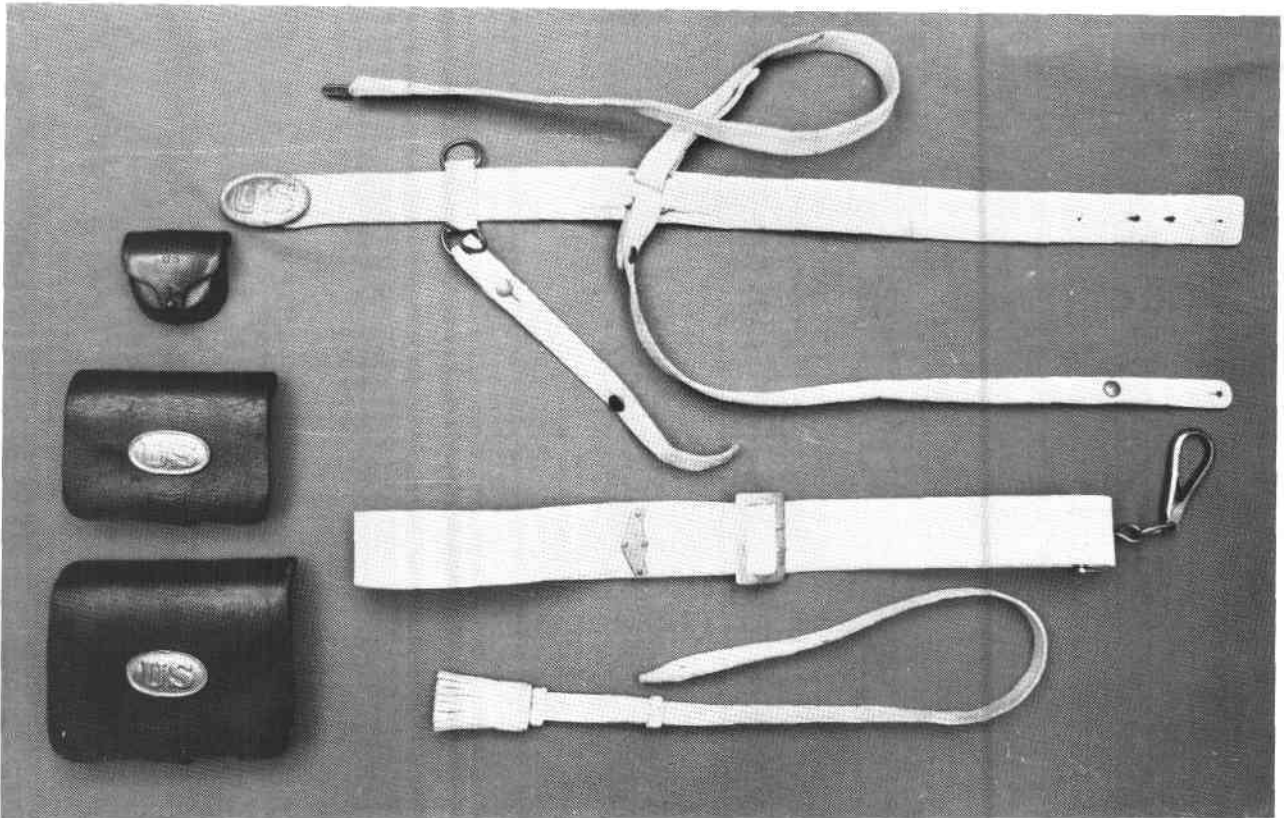
Circa 1840 Infantry Accoutrements

.69 Cal. Cartridge box with large oval U.S. plate. Shoulder sling, white buff leather with pick and brush set. Bayonet sling, white buff leather with round eagle plate.



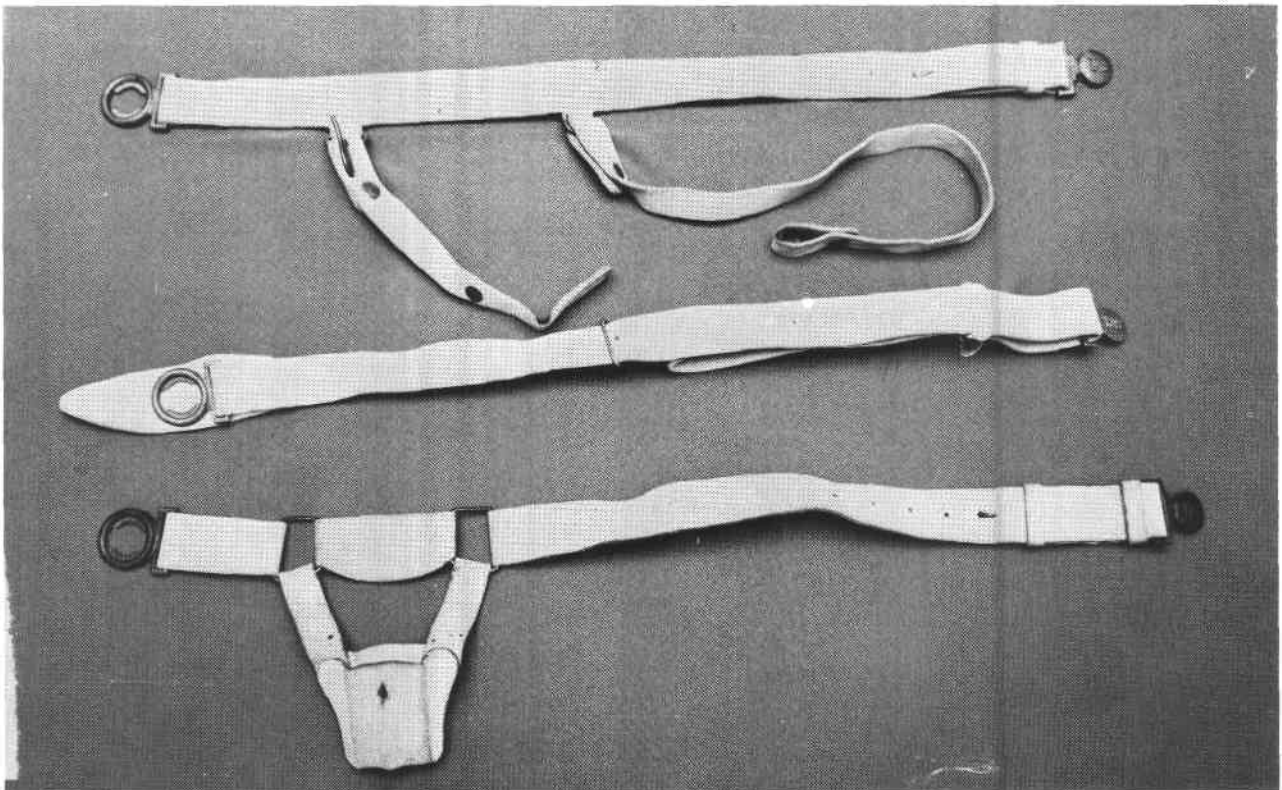
Circa 1841-1851 Infantry Accoutrements

.69 cal. cartridge box with large oval U.S. plate and white buff leather cartridge box sling, round eagle plate and brush and pick set. NCO sword and bayonet sling, white buff leather with round eagle plate. 1.5" waist belt, white buff leather with small oval U.S. plate.



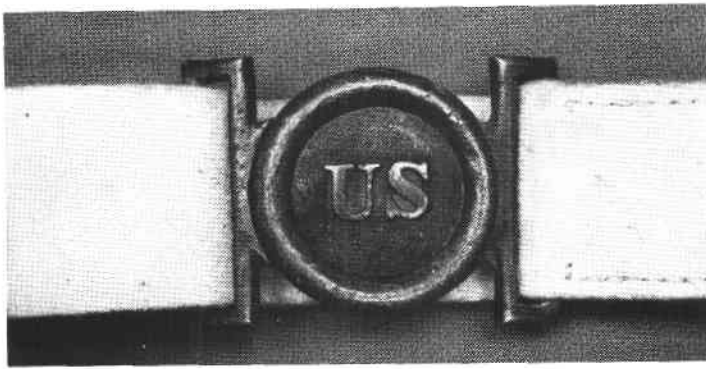
Circa 1841-1851 Cavalry Accoutrements

Saber belt, white buff leather with large oval U.S. plate. Cap pouch, early style with finial on front of pouch. Pistol cartridge box with small oval U.S. plate. Carbine sling, white buff leather. Carbine cartridge box with small oval U.S. plate. Sword knot, white buff leather.



Circa 1841-1851 Artillery and Sappers belts with interlocking U.S. plates

Top: Mounted Artillery belt, white buff leather. Middle: Sappers and Miners belt, white buff leather. Bottom: Foot Artillery belt, white buff leather.



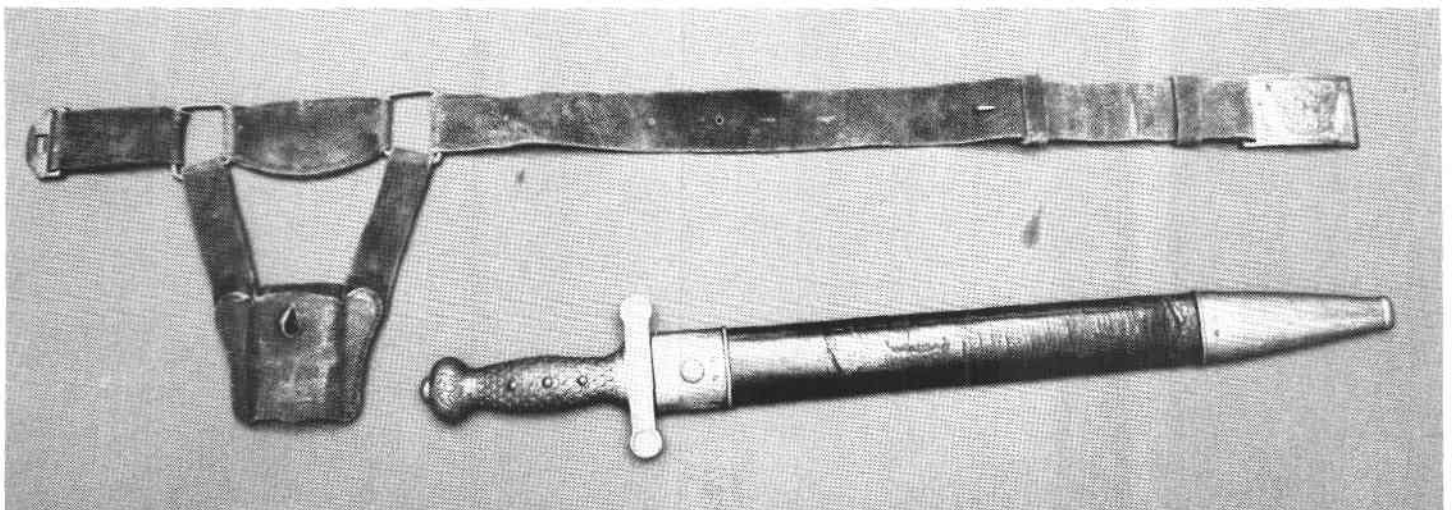
Interlocking U.S. belt plate introduced about 1839. Used on Artillery and Sappers waist belts until replaced by the rectangular eagle plate.



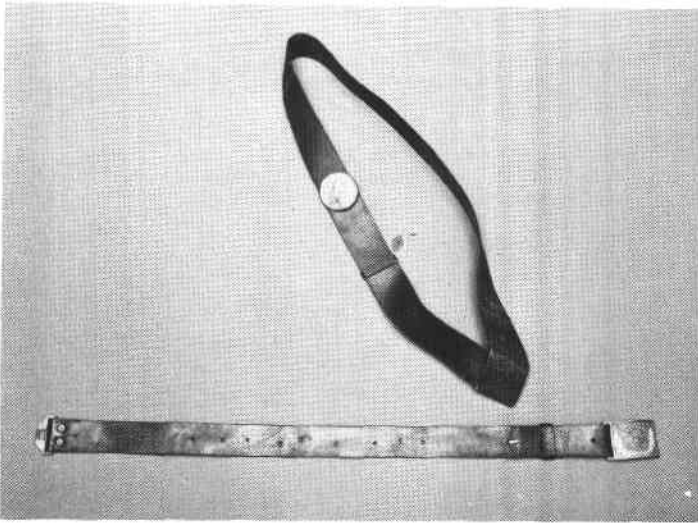
Waist belt plate introduced in 1851 with silver laurel wreath encircling the arms of the U.S.



Circa 1855 Rifleman's waist belt for sword bayonet, bridle leather.

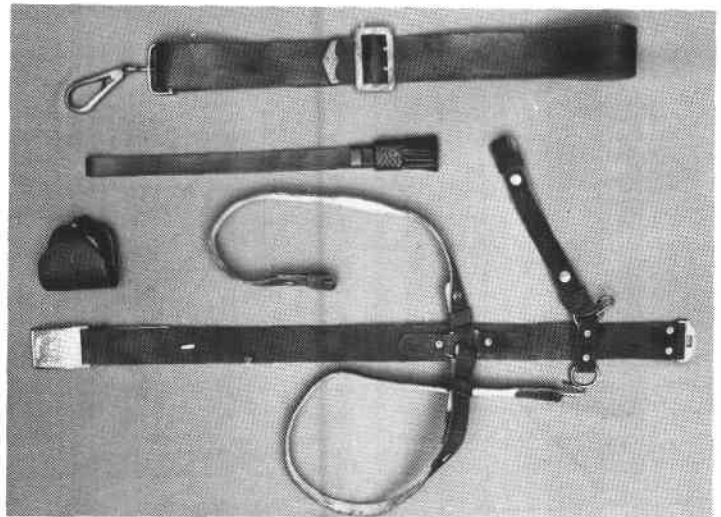


Circa 1851 Foot Artillery sword belt with rectangular plate, dark buff leather. Shown with Model 1833 Foot Artillery sword.



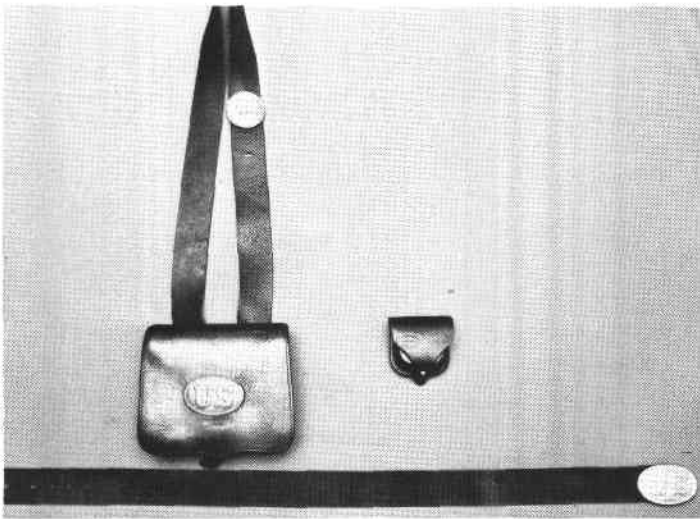
Circa 1851-1865 NCO Accoutrements

NCO sword and bayonet sling, bridle leather with round eagle plate. NCO waist belt, bridle leather with rectangular plate.



Circa 1851-1865 Cavalry Accoutrements

Waist belt with rectangular plate, dark buff leather. Cap pouch. Sword knot, bridle leather. Carbine sling, bridle leather.

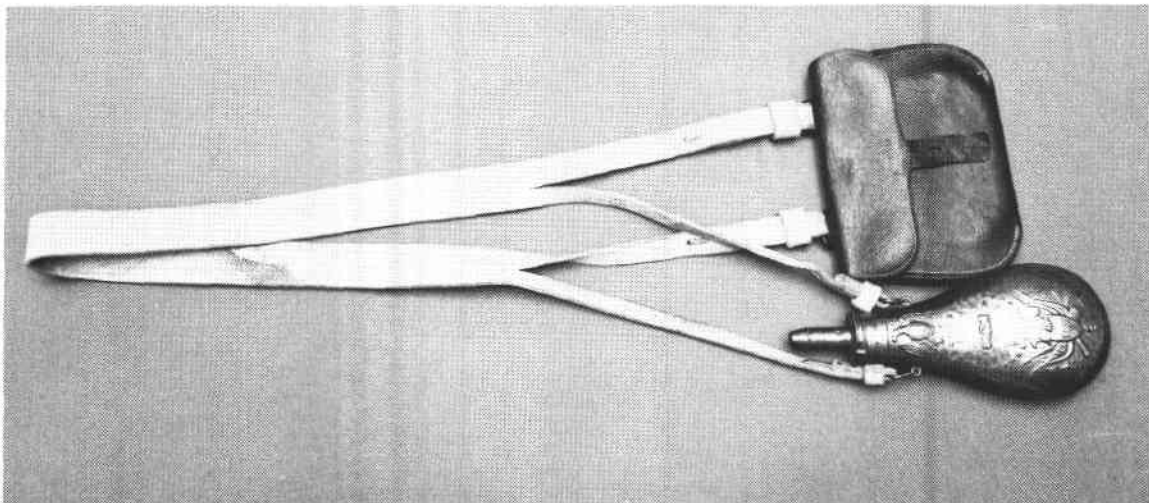


Circa 1860 Infantry Accoutrements

.69 cal. cartridge box with large oval U.S. plate. Shoulder sling, bridle leather with round eagle plate. Cap pouch. Waist belt, dark buff leather with large oval U.S. plate.



Left: Circa 1840 small and large oval U.S. plates for waist belts and cartridge box flaps. Right: Circa 1835 round eagle plate for over the shoulder sling.



Circa 1841-1851 Rifleman's pouch with white leather belt and flask.

On preserving old leather . . .

The discussion after Dick Johnson's talk centered mainly on ways to preserve and restore old leather. Before this, a pistol-carbine box was displayed and the members should all look at pistol cartridge boxes at gun shows—as these things go, the pistol box is fairly common but the pistol-carbine box is not. At first glance they are the same but the pistol-carbine box is slightly larger and when you open the flap it is a miniature M1885 Rifle-Musket box—the inner flap, the implement compartment and the tin compartments for two sets of four and two sets of six cartridges.

Another point was the feeling that all cartridge boxes from 1840 up through the Civil War had a circular brass US plate attached to them if they were actually issued to the troops (late in the Civil War the US was embossed). A box without the plate, or the holes where a plate was, was kept in arsenals, armories or the contractor's factory and was never issued to the troops.

Hoppes #9 is good for removing the verdigris from brass studs.

Many suggestions were made for treating black bridal leather.

1) "Tannery oil"—a spray which should be sprayed on the fingers and then rubbed into the leather.

2) Mink oil or grease—rubbed on the leather. Some felt that

the "Tannery" should be used first as a cleaner.

3) Tanners oil—from saddle shops to soften the leather.

4) British Museum Leather Dressing—distributed by Fisher Scientific Company.

5) Glycerine.

6) Mineral Oil.

7) Lanolin and Mineral Oil—50-50— heat and apply.

8) Picard's dressing.

Most people felt that "Lexol" should not be used, and never use Neats Foot Oil.

To clean and soften white buff is an almost impossible task. none of the above mentioned oils or greases can be used—they will darken the leather—don't use it. Some brave souls have washed it with detergents or used dry cleaning fluid. This will take the dirt out but the leather will still be stiff when it dries. The only solution is laborious—brush it with a soft, stainless steel brush and then work it your hands and fingers. Maurice Garb suggests you do this while you are watching a long football game on television.

Harry J. Repman



Harry Repman explains as Richard Johnson listens during the discussion period following the talk.