

Mess Furniture in the Army of the Potomac.

by John E. Tobey

Mess furniture could be found at three different levels within the typical infantry regiment. The first level was the soldier himself—according to Army regulations, “. . . on marches and in the field, the only mess furniture of the soldier will be one tin plate, one tin cup, one knife, fork, and spoon, to each man, to be carried by himself on the march.”¹

The second level was the company and included mess pans and kettles. Sometimes, the commissary equipment kept at regimental level was also referred to as “mess furniture,” even though it was normally used only in the processing and distribution of foodstuffs to the companies. Such equipment included measuring and meat-processing equipment, and constitutes the third level.

This article will discuss the usage and appearance of commonly issued mess furniture, concentrating on the first two “levels.”

Soldiers’ Mess Furniture: Issue.

Mess gear was normally issued early in a soldier’s military experience, often in one of the first camps or depots he found himself in. While being a specific case, the experiences of soldiers processed through the Elmira (New York) Depot were probably typical.

When the Elmira Depot first opened in April, 1861, little thought was given to providing recruits with their own mess gear—the mess gear purchased by the state went into mess halls, and was used by the soldiers as they ate their meals. The mess gear was *supposed* to stay in the mess hall.

The flaws in this system quickly became evident. One new soldier who ate in one of these mess halls wrote less than a month later,

. . . we ate with our fingers, for the spoons and forks have vanished. I was lucky enough to get a plate, [but] others had to eat off the table. I shall not be the one to eat off the table tomorrow, so the plate stuck to my fingers when I went back to barracks. Do not think less of me for this for this is the way in the Army.²

By the end of 1861, the communal mess furniture system had ended. By December, mess furniture was among the first items given to each man when he first entered one of the camps that made up the Elmira Depot: “A mattress filled with straw, a tin plate, cup, knife, fork and spoon constituted the outfit issued to each man.”³

The soldiers took this same mess gear, provided in the training camps, into the field.

Later volunteers and drafted men were often accepted individually or in small groups directly into Federal service. In these cases, mess furniture was provided in haphazard fashion by whatever agency found itself burdened by this responsibility. In one case, for example, the provost-marshal’s department found it necessary to procure mess furniture for drafted men.⁴

An important fact is the soldier’s mess furniture was *not* an item stocked by the Quartermasters Department for re-supply after this initial issue. In most cases, if a soldier lost or destroyed his, he was on his own hook to replace them. One source was undoubtedly the sutler’s establishment, who stocked fairly large quantities of mess furniture. Another option was to improvise mess gear—more on this later.

In some special cases, soldiers *were* re-issued mess gear. One such example would be the soldiers of the 126th New York Infantry, who received their first issue of mess gear in either Geneva or Elmira shortly after enlistment in the late summer of 1862. This regiment was among the troops surrendered to the Confederates in Harper’s Ferry in September that same year, and all of their weapons and equipment were turned over to the Southerners. Transported to a camp near Chicago to await exchange, the men were reissued mess furniture and canteens there.⁵

Two other sources remained for mess gear, but were rarely utilized—the enemy, and the local populace.

Soldiers’ Mess Furniture: Appearance.

To understand what these items actually looked like, we have to understand where they originated.

As already stated, the first issue of furniture normally came from the training camps, where it was usually provided by some local contractor. In the Elmira case already mentioned, one local hardware merchant sold knives, forks, spoons, tin cups and tin plates to the authorities in May 1861—this merchant undoubtedly purchased these items on the open market elsewhere. Similar scenarios were probably enacted elsewhere.

Since these items were simply purchased on the open market, and since there did not appear to be little if any specifications regarding them, there was potentially a great amount of variety. On the other hand, the examination of number pieces of original mess gear has produced some interesting observations.

The most important feature that the stuff had in common was that it was *inexpensive*. Since commercial sources were providing it, this was probably a foregone conclusion. Instead of the silver plated tableware being offered the typical shoppers of the time, tin plated iron was purchased instead. Instead of ivory or fancy wooden handles, it was bone, plain hardwood, or even plain iron.

The second feature that much, but not all, mess furniture had in common was its *practicality*. The typical eating ware of the period was not necessarily fit for use in the field, either too fragile or too heavy. Some supremely practical designs seem to have originated during the war, as shown in the examples presented below. Unfortunately, some contractors decided to err on the side of profit, and ignored this feature, much to the dismay of the soldiers who received their wares.

Let us examine the different articles themselves.

Spoons.

When the war started, the typical “mid grade” spoon of the period was “coined” from a fairly heavy sheet of some soft non-ferrous material like silver or German silver, and the most common design was called a “Fiddleback.” Coining is a cold-forming process in which the metal is forced into a die under pressure—it produced the pleasing filigree designs at the top of the handle.

A cheaper spoon being manufactured was actually a very old design—it was cast from a soft metal, normally pewter.

Both of these styles had disadvantages for use as military equipment. The first was too expensive, and the second was too fragile. Of course, some contractors managed to sell some pewter spoons to the military. FIG 1 shows one of them, and other examples have been recovered from campsites. Unfortunately, these spoons were too fragile to survive long in a haversack. At the very least, the soft metal would bend easily, and the cheapest versions often broke off at the connection point of the handle and bowl, as has the one shown in FIG 1. Pewterware makers of the period would actually cast a small piece of iron wire into the handles of spoons to prevent this, but for some reason (probably expense) only a few spoons observed by this writer actually having wartime provenance could be proven to have this feature.



FIG 1. A pewter spoon.

The coined spoons were rarely supplied because of the value of the metal in them. At least one spoon was examined in which the material it was made from was only half as thick as a normal spoon – this was used by a soldier of the 117th New York Infantry named David Wysinger and it is shown in FIG 2. Note the deformations obvious in the photo—the extremely thin material bent easily.

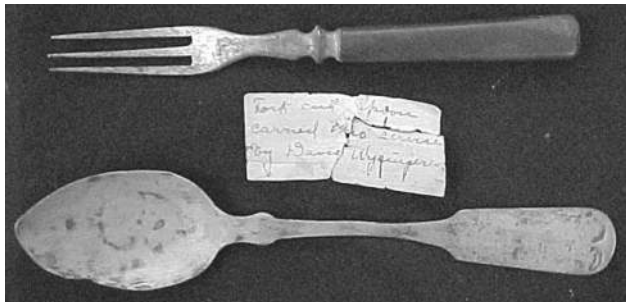


FIG 2. A stamped fork (top) and a coined spoon (bottom).

Stronger than pewter and much cheaper than the normal alloys used in flatware, iron had some disadvantages that took a while to work out. The earliest iron spoons were

actually made of very thin sheet iron, dipped in tin. Undoubtedly inexpensive, these spoons also bent easily despite the formed edges on the handle. Such a spoon is (FIG 3) and was used by Moses Hilton of the Sixth Massachusetts Infantry. Moses mustered into this unit in August of 1862, and died of disease in April of the following year. This particular design was apparently fairly common, for a fair number of examples exist in various collections, usually with a New England provenance.



FIG 3. The sheet iron spoon used by Moses Hilton.

What was needed was a *durable* iron spoon. The traditional spoon design could not be coined in iron—too much pressure was needed since iron was harder than the soft alloys. Spoons were difficult to cast in iron because the bowls could not be cast very thin, and a cast-iron spoon with a thick bowl would be unwieldy. The thin tinplate spoons lacked strength.

The first design that seemed to solve these problems combined a tinplate bowl and a cast iron handle, riveted together, and the whole dipped in tin. A spoon examined with this design had a handle with the “ridge” so typical of the design cast in.⁶

The next evolution in iron spoons substituted a stamped iron handle. The bowls were still stamped from thin sheet metal, but the handles were stamped from thick sheet iron. The two parts were then riveted together and the whole dipped in tin. One of these spoons is shown in FIG 4.



FIG 4. A spoon (top) and a knife (bottom) with stamped iron handles.

The apex of the stamped spoon design arrived when a die was developed that stamped the entire spoon from a single piece of thick sheet iron. Unlike the simpler, earlier dies, this one “stretched” the material in the bowl during the stamping process to make it thinner. The result was a spoon with a thick handle and a thin bowl that could be tinplated for longevity. These spoons were extremely durable and cheap to produce in large numbers.

There were a number of different spoon designs that used this new die, some incorporated different features like strengthening ribs. One of these, with an October 1864 patent date, is shown in FIG 5. Most soldier spoons were tablespoon size—this one is only “teaspoon sized.”



FIG 5. A fork (top) and a spoon (bottom) made completely of stamped sheet iron.

Forks.

The typical “mid grade” civilian fork of the period was cast in soft alloy with a tang that was pressed into a hollow handle. Made of ivory, bone, hard rubber, or even horn, the handle was filled with pine pitch. The tang was pressed into the heated pitch to connect the handle to the tines.

The cheapest civilian forks were stamped from thin spring steel and had flat handles of some attractive material riveted onto them. They often had decorative bolsters of pewter at the upper end of the handles. They did *not* have geometric designs of metal inlaid directly into the handle.

Both of these styles saw use during the war. The hollow-handled ones were adapted through the use of cast iron tangs and tines, with cheap handles of bone or wood pitched on to them. David Wysinger used one of these (FIG 2).

The slab-handled fork design was well suited for service without much modification. Strong and inexpensive, many of these forks saw service during the war.

Two kinds of all-iron iron forks also saw use. The first style, shown in FIG 6, was cast iron, of the same handle design as the fiddleback spoons. Durable if a bit heavy, this particular fork was used by Isaac Jelliff of the 143rd New York Infantry. Finally, some makers used the same stamping process used on spoons to make forks. One of them is shown in FIG 5. Another version, without the strengthening ribs shown in that particular specimen, bears the stamp of G. I. Mix, a prolific manufacturer of military mess gear.

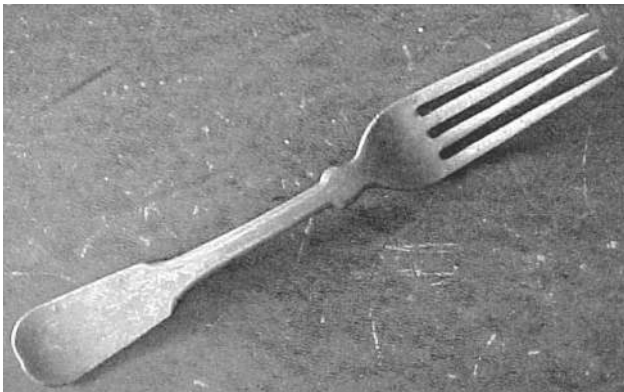


FIG 6. A cast iron fork.

Knives.

Civilian knives followed the same designs as forks—hollow handled and slab-handled. Like forks, both of these designs were adapted to military service in the same ways.

One such knife is shown in FIG 7. From an old GAR display, the old tag says, “Frying Pan Knife Fork & Spoon that went from Atlanta to the Sea.” The frying pan will be discussed shortly. Note the pewter “bolsters” at the end of the wooden handles.

The “stamped iron” sets discussed previously included an interesting form of mess knife. These were the product of G. I. Mix—stamped of tempered steel, they have no added handles at all. These sets were being supplied to the troops by the summer of 1863, for the one shown in FIG 4 belonged to Edward Janes, a member of the nine-month Fifty-first Massachusetts Infantry. This soldier mustered out on 27 July 1863.



FIG 7. The knife (top) and fork (bottom) that went “from Atlanta to the Sea.”

Patent Models.

These were not supplied by the government, but procured by the soldiers on their own. They were quite popular, as noted by veteran John Billings:

... I recall [the] *knife-fork-and-spoon* arrangement, which was peddled through the state camping-grounds in great numbers and variety. Of course every man must have one.⁷

Ira Petit, a member of the Eleventh US Infantry, bought a “knife fork & spoon combined for the pocket” for one dollar in November 1862.⁸ Although Billings also goes on to say that the combo sets did not last long, there are a fair number of original groupings that suggest that some of them were carried for a *very* long time.

More common varieties of these sets can be classified into one of two categories: “folding” sets and “interlocking” sets. Folding sets like the one shown as Example D in FIG 8 were popular with outdoorsmen for a hundred years after the war—this particular example is marked “Union Army Knife.” Of the interlocking models, the Richards Patent (Examples B and C in FIG 8) is most often seen. Less seen is the Worman & Ely set (Example A in FIG 8). There were many other, less common makes.

Tin Cups.

The typical cup used by the Federal soldier was made of tin-plated thin sheet iron. There were many varieties of these items, including some interesting regional variations.

The most common cup seen in collections will look like example A in FIG 9A, measuring about four inches tall and 4.25 inches in diameter. This sized cup, with its handle hooked to its rim with iron wires, is called a Type 1 cup using Hedren’s typology.⁹ Example C (FIG 9A) is Hedren’s Type 2—constructed like the Type 1, only shorter. Example B (FIG 9B) is a Type 3. This one differs from the

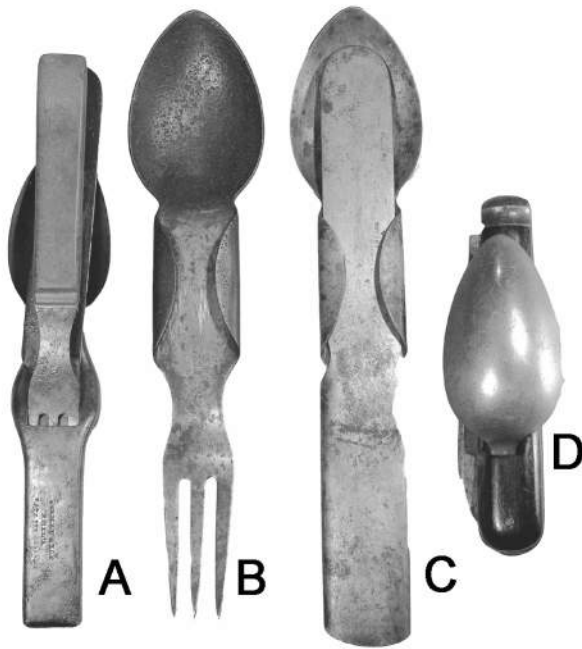


FIG 8. Examples of combination sets.

having its handle attached at the top with rivets. This particular cup has a soldier-added wire bail that will be discussed shortly.

The main difference between a civilian tin cup and a military tin cup is the means of attaching the handle. The handles on many civilian cups were attached with solder only—this arrangement is fine on the farm where the cup was used for dipping water out of the spring, or sampling milk from the pail. Soldiers, however, need to put theirs in a campfire. Solder handle joints will part if the liquid level falls below them when they are heated in a fire. That is why, on military cups, the handles are connected with rivets at the bottom, and either wires or rivets at the top.



FIG 9A. Two examples of tin cups.

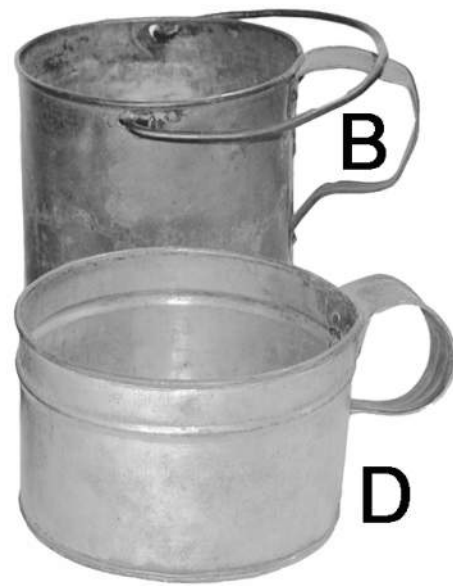


FIG 9B. Two examples of tin cups.

These cups share a few other common characteristics. First, they have flat bottoms with a simple turned lip—the crimping machines used to make bottom joints without solder were not used until after the war. Although cups have been documented with a variety of handle styles, the “ear” shape shown in the photo is predominant. The handles do *not* bear a stamped “US”—that cup was the Model 1874.¹⁰

There were also regional variations. Since mess furniture was procured locally, this was only reasonable.

The cup shown as Example A in FIG 10 is a variation of the Type 1 called by some collectors the “New York Cup” since these models often come with that provenance. Bigger than the typical “4x4,” this one measures 4.375 inch diameter by 4.75 tall. They are also made of thinner material than the typical cup. The one shown in the photo belonged to R. F. Bowman of the 161st New York Infantry.

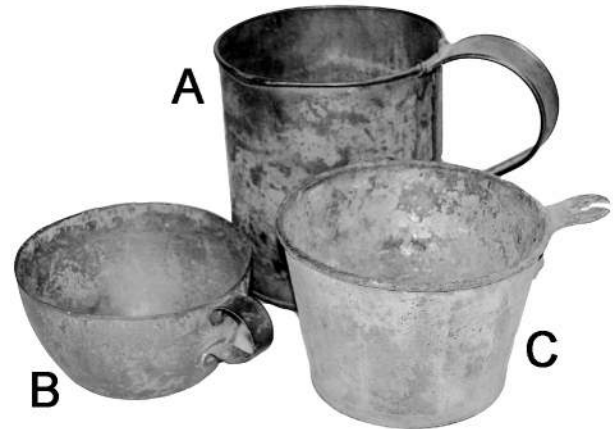


FIG 10. More tin cup varieties.

One cup not seen in the hands of reenactors was the one manufactured by G. I. Mix, of flatware fame (Example B in FIG 10). This maker was located in Connecticut, and

many of his products found their way into New England units. These so-called “Mix” cups would have been almost indestructible in normal usage—their only disadvantage is their relatively small size. The one shown here is 4.25 by 2.5 inches.

The final cup that is shown in FIG 10 (Example C), is also usually attributed to New England troops. Three cups of this style have good provenances: two of them were used by Maine soldiers, and one by a Massachusetts volunteer.¹¹ This unusual cup has tapered sides and a bracket-like handle.

Some other kinds of cups were probably carried in small numbers. One of these was a version equipped with a lid and a bail, probably intended to be the cup equivalent of a combination utensil set, combining the qualities of a cup, pail, and covered pot. Specimens of these with wartime provenance are relatively uncommon—they were probably uncommon with the troops as well.

Plates.

There were two purpose-made plate designs used in the Army of the Potomac. Shown in FIG 11, they were simple affairs of tin plated sheet iron. Both of them have relatively deep “dishes” to them. The bottom one was an extremely common pattern and can be distinguished by its pressed “rings.” This particular example was preserved with black paint and embellished with the photo of its original owner, George Harvey of the 111th New York Infantry.



FIG 11. Two tin plated sheet iron plates.

Modify and Improve.

Some soldiers modified their issue gear in various ways. One of the most common modifications was to add a piece of wire to the tin cup to turn it into a miniature camp kettle. One of these is shown in FIG 9B.

Tin plates were subject to various modifications, including adding one or two holes for hanging them up, to adding dozens of holes to turn them into graters. A few plates have been found that had handles permanently added to them to turn them into frying pans.

As stated earlier, the soldiers were on their own if they lost or totally ruined their issue mess gear. Even soldiers who cared for their belongings would eventually wear them out:

I have long been without a cup. Somebody stole mine long ago; and I, unfortunate for me, am deterred by the relic of a moral scruple which still lingers in my breast, from stealing someone else's in turn. My plate is the original Camp Miller tin plate, worn down now to the iron. I have leaned and lain upon it, until it looks as if it were in the habit of being used in the exhibitions of some strong man, who rolled it up and unrolled it to show the strength of his fingers. There is a big crack down the side . . .¹²

Plates and cups were definitely the most perishable of Billy Yank's possessions. When gone, some soldiers did not choose to replace them from the sutler's tent.

For plates, some soldiers used canteen halves. The US issue canteen was composed of two bowl-shaped pieces of tinplate soldered together with a spout on top. These canteens were supplied in enormous numbers—all the enterprising soldier had to do was find a canteen that was lost or condemned, make sure it was empty and then throw it into the camp fire. The heat would quickly melt the solder joints and the two “bowls” could be pried apart with bayonets or ramrods while still hot. One soldier's comment about eagerly sought-after canteen halves:

The old canteen was thrown into the fire and the heat soon melted the solder by which the two halves were joined, and the soldier found himself in possession of two tin basins each about eight or ten inches across and in the center about two inches deep. One of these he carried day after day in his haversack . . . The government forgot to supply the soldiers with wash basins, and the canteen half made a convenient substitute. It was a trifle small, it is true, but by being frequently replenished it answered the purpose admirably. After the man had finished his ablutions he would . . . split the end of a stick for a handle, and he had a frying pan—a prime article. Tons and tons of the flesh of the swine were fried in the half-canteen . . . If he drew coffee in a “raw” state, the half-canteen was an excellent roaster . . . In the fall, when the corn in the fields was hardening, he took a half-canteen, stabbed it full of holes with his bayonet from the inside, and the convex surface made an excellent grater . . . [to make] a sort of meal.¹³

These canteen halves must have been fairly common among the troops. They were small, light, of good capacity and pretty easy to replace. Lastly, they were free! FIG 12A and FIG 12B show one example excavated at Chancellorsville. Found in a trench, it illustrates another fact of life for Civil War mess gear—it was commonly used as entrenching tools. At Chancellorsville, the commander of the 111th Pennsylvania Infantry reported,

Some [men] loosened the earth with their bayonets, knives, and forks, while others threw it up with their hands, tin cups, tin plates, and frying pans. In this manner a fine line of defense was soon formed and occupied by the men.¹⁴



FIG 12B. Another view of the canteen half/plate.

Another improvised gem was the “tin can boiler.” Canned goods were quite common, and the empty cans littered campsites. Unlike modern tin cans, the Civil War period cans were quite well made. Of slightly thinner material than a genuine tin cup, they had the same soldered sides and burred bottom cap. Taking one of these, the soldier would enlarge or neaten the hole cut in one end to remove the original contents, punch two holes near the upper lip, insert a piece of wire and presto, a tin can boiler. These must have been very common during the war. Our old friend John Billings had this to say about them,

... a recruit would afterwards be seen with his pint or quart preserves can, its improvised wire bail held on the end of a stick, boiling his coffee at the camp-fire...His can soon became as black as the blackest, inside and out. This was the typical coffee boiler of the private soldier, and had the advantage of being easily replaced when lost, as canned goods were in very general use by commissioned officers and hospitals.¹⁵

Some soldiers carried one of these boilers in addition to his regular tin cup. The boiler would be used in the fire, the cup to drink from. This is reasonable when one considers the size of some issue cups—of what use as a boiler would one of the small “Mix” cups be?

Some soldiers eschewed boiling or frying, and chose to cook their rations by spitting them on bayonets, ramrods, or sharpened sticks. This was mess equipment at its most basic level!

Other Mess Gear.

Some soldiers carried mess equipment other than those types already discussed. One item occasionally seen was the fry pan. The one shown in FIG 13 was actually carried in the war, probably by Henry Rudie of the 137th New York Infantry. Others of this same pattern have been excavated from campsites. This cheap, mass produced pattern has a simple handle stamped from flat sheet iron and riveted to a pan that is 7.5 inches in diameter and 1.5 inches deep. John Billings had this to say about frying pans,

To fry [the fresh meat ration] generally necessitated the taking along of a frying-pan, with which not many of the men cared to burden themselves. These fry-pans—Marbleheadmen called them *Creepers*—were yet comparatively light, being made of thin wrought sheet iron. They were of different sizes, and were kept on sale by sutlers. It was a common sight on the march to see them borne aloft on a musket, to which they were lashed, or tucked beneath the straps of a knapsack.¹⁶

Other soldiers carried “pails.” These items were probably shaped much like a large tin cup but with a bail and without a handle. Sergeant John Hartwell of the 121st New York Infantry wrote, “I went down to Georgetown & bought a little pail, cup, knife & can of milk”¹⁷ James Hosmer’s little mess carried a pail he called a “boiler,” among other things,

At McGill’s suggestion, we have bought a coffee-pot, a frying pan, and a kettle for boiling. Wivers carries the coffee-pot slung at his side. Sgt. Bivins carries the frying pan strapped on his back . . . I have, strapped to my belt, the boiler, its crocky bottom painting thunder-clouds on the blue of my right thigh, as it swings to and fro. It will hold 2 or 3 quarts.¹⁸



FIG 13. A sheet iron fry pan.

As mentioned in this quote, some men actually carried coffeepots with them. Bear in mind that all of the mess gear we've discussed so far was intended to be carried on *the soldier*. These were not items to be carried in the "baggage wagons." This is one of the fascinating aspects of researching 1860's army life: on one end of the spectrum we have soldiers carrying coffeepots, pails and frying pans, and at the other end a soldier with a beat up spoon, old tomato can on a homemade bail and nothing else.

Coffeepots were relatively simple affairs of copper or tinplate, shaped like a very large tin cup with tapered sides and a spout. Most surviving pots are lidless today, but some of them may have had lids at one time.

One very popular item (if they can indeed really be considered pieces of mess equipment) was the cloth poke bag used to contain food items in the haversack. One soldier wrote home for them,

I would like to have you make me 2 or 3 little bags that will hold about a pint for me to carry sugar & tea or coffee. Make it of the strongest cloth with a stout puckering string in each, they want to be about 7 or 8 inches long . . .¹⁹

Company Mess Equipment.

Two items were the property of the company—the camp kettle and the mess pan. These were used during the war in great numbers.

How many of these items were actually present in a company? The number varied. Here are a few actual examples:

1. Company B of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania Infantry consisted of about fifty-one rank and file on 28 October 1862. They had five camp kettles, and two mess pans.²⁰
2. Company D of the 107th New York Infantry had about twenty rank and file in November 1864, and had one mess kettle and two mess pans.²¹
3. Company I of the Sixty-fourth New York Infantry had twenty-one men in the beginning of 1863, with three kettles and two mess pans. For the first three quarters of 1864, its strength varied from between twelve and nineteen men, and they had one kettle and two mess pans.²²

Much has been made of the proper ratio of men to mess gear, but study of original documents show inconsistencies, particularly in the early years of the war. The best option for re-creating any particular company's issue would be to research the returns for that particular unit. Otherwise, any of the above ratios could be used.

Camp kettles were un-plated heavy sheet iron cylinders with bails on them. One contract for mess kettles lists them being provided in nested sets of three, weighing about eighteen pounds a set.²³ This corresponds nicely with a post war specification that calls for mess kettles to be made from "No. 24 Bloom Iron," and a wired edge containing a 7-gauge wire. The wire bails were set directly into the sides of the kettle near the top rim. The handles were 0.25 inch wire. They came in three sizes: twelve inches in diameter by 11.75 inches deep, 10.25 inches in diameter and eleven inches deep, and nine inches in diameter by 10.75 inches deep.²⁴

Original mess pans existed in two forms: a fabricated sheet metal version, and a pressed iron version. Billings described them this way: "A mess pan stands about six inches high, and is a foot in diameter at the top. I think one will hold nearly six quarts."²⁵

Some original mess pans are pictured in the second volume of Lord's *Collector's Encyclopedia*. Made in the shape of a dish with tapered sides, one of them was found in a US camp at Falmouth, Virginia. It was unpainted iron, 7.75 inches in diameter at the top, 6.25 inches in diameter at the bottom, and 1.75 inches deep. It had a loop attached to the rim for suspension.²⁶ Another one pictured is closer to Billings's description, at 11.5 inches at the top, eight inches at the bottom, and 5.25 inches deep.²⁷ Other excavated examples are somewhere between these two in size.²⁸

The soldiers themselves did not carry the company mess furniture—they were carried in a wagon with other regimental baggage. When this transport was not available, the pans and kettles were usually left behind. The report mentioned above for Company D of the 107th New York Infantry had this to say about the company's mess pans and camp kettles when the regiment marched "to the sea" from Atlanta: "Had to be abandoned for want of transport."²⁹

Regimental Commissary Equipment.

At least one officer referred to the Commissary Equipment of his regiment as "Commissary Mess Furniture." Charles Soules of the 64th New York listed the following items as being in the care of the regimental quartermaster:

One platform scale
Two commissary chests containing:
One spring balance
Three liquid measures
Two dry measures
Three faucets
Two funnels
Two molasses gates
Four tin scoops
Two cleavers
One hatchet
Two meat saws
One meat hook
Five butcher knives
One butcher's steel
Two tap borers
One cooper's adze and handle

Although outside the scope of this article, we should probably explain a few of these items. The spring balance was really a "spring scale." These have been excavated from campsites in fair numbers. The faucets used to tap into barrels—making holes for these are what the "tap borers" were for. A butcher's steel was a rod used to hone the knives.

Implications for Reenactors.

There were items occasionally seen in Federal camps but in such small numbers that they should be avoided: Dutch ovens, pot hooks, ladles, spatulas, graters, strainers, griddles and stoves to name a few. The purposes filled by every one of these items can be duplicated by one of the

issue items, or something easily improvised in the field. This is probably the reason that they were so little seen.

A few items available to reenactors have almost no historical precedent. These would include items like fire grates and enamelware. This last mentioned article, also known as speckle ware, glazed ware, graniteware and agateware, was *not* commercially produced until the 1870s.³⁰

With the exception of the company and regimental equipment, the military authorities had little to say about

the men and their mess furniture. Within certain limitations, this is one of the rare opportunities for historical interpreters to tailor their kit to their own predilections. Some may want to keep their issue gear, and even supplement it with something like a coffeepot or a frying pan. Others may want to strip down to the bare essentials—this writer knows of one hardy individual who has campaigned for year with only a tomato can boiler and a pocketknife. Providing the items themselves are authentic, either scenario is historically accurate!

NOTES AND SOURCES:

Photographs are by Chris Piering.

1. *Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States* (Philadelphia: J. G. L. Brown, 1861), 23.
2. Letter from "Willy" to his sister, dated 18 May 1861. This soldier was a member of the Twenty-seventh New York Infantry, unpublished manuscript in the collection of William Linder.
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4. United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (OR)* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), ser. 3, vol. 3, 142, quoted in Kevin O'Beirne, "The Campaigners Instruments of Culinary Art," *The Columbia Rifles Research Compendium*, first edition (2001).
5. Wayne Mahood, *Written in Blood, a History of the 126th New York Infantry in the Civil War* (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1997), 54.
6. This spoon, part of a set made by G. I. Mix, was examined at the Richmond Civil War Show in May 2004.
7. John D. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee* (Boston: George M. Smith & Co., 1887), 272.
8. J. P. Ray, ed., *Diary of a Dead Man* (New York: Eastern Acorn Press, 1981.) 80.
9. Paul Hedren, "Army Tincups on the Western Frontier," *Journal of Military Collectors and Historians*, Summer 1992 (vol. 44, no. 2).
10. Douglas C. McChristian, *The US Army in the West, 1870–1880* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 214.
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13. Wilbur F. Hinman, *Corporal Si Klegg and his Pard* (Cleveland: N. G. Hamilton & Co., 1892), 54–6.
14. *OR.*, ser. 1, vol. 25, pt. 1, 753.
15. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 129.
16. *Ibid.*, 133–4.
17. Ann Hartwell Britton and Thomas J. Reed, eds., *To My Beloved Wife and Boy at Home* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1997), 261.
18. Hosmer, *Color Guard*, 112.
19. Britton and Thomas, *To My Beloved Wife and Boy at Home*, 36.
20. John M. Priest, ed., *James Wren's Civil War Diary* (New York: Berkley Books 1991) 102.
21. "List of Expended Camp and Garrison Equipage" for the month of November, 1864. Unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Chemung County Historical Society.
22. "Quarterly Returns of Camp and Garrison Equipage," various dates, unpublished manuscript in the collection of Stephen Rogers.
23. Francis Lord, *Civil War Collector's Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Edison, New Jersey: Blue and Grey Books, 1995), 339.
24. Quartermaster General of the Army, *US Army Uniforms and Equipment*, 1889 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press reprint, 1986), 270.
25. Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 136.
26. Lord, *Collector's Encyclopedia*, 120.
27. *Ibid.*
28. For example, one pictured in Stanley S. Phillips, *Excavated Artifacts from Battlefields and Campsites of the Civil War 1861–1865* (Lanham, Maryland: S. S. Phillips and Assoc., 1980), 175.
29. "List of Expended Camp and Garrison Equipage" for the month of November, 1864, unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Chemung County (New York) Historical Society.
30. Sharon Bledsoe, "Porcelain Enamelware: Should We Use It?" *Camp Chase Gazette*, included in the *3rd Mississippi Infantry Regiment Camp of Instruction* book, Thomas Czekanski, ed., January 1998.