

## A Receipt for a Happy Musket

### Field Cleaning.

1. Place a folded cleaning patch between the hammer and the nipple (cone).
2. Fill a tin cup full of hot, soapy water. Pour about one half of the cup carefully (so as not to scald your hand) down the barrel. A funnel is helpful here. Cover the end of the barrel with your finger or place a tampion in the muzzle. Swish the contents up and down several times and then pour it out on the ground. It should look black and cruddy if you did it right.
3. Pour the other half of the hot, soapy water into the barrel. Place a bristle brush or wire brush on the end of your cleaning rod. With the water still in the barrel, run the brush up and down several times. Pour the water out and repeat if the musket is especially dirty. The water should be coming out more or less clean.
4. Run a few patches down the bore to remove residual fouling. Four or five patches should be adequate.
5. Place hammer at half cock. Remove the nipple (cone) with a nipple wrench.
6. Using cotton swabs and pipe cleaners, or a patches and a nipple pick, clean all the fouling out of the bolster and flash channel. While you are doing this, soak the nipple (cone) in some hot water.
7. After the bolster is clean, remove any fouling from the inside of the nipple using a pipe cleaner or nipple pick. Hold it up to the sunlight and look through the larger end. You should be able to see light through the opening at the bottom. If not, continue until you can.
8. Lightly oil the threads of the nipple and screw it back into the barrel slightly past "thumb tight." Do not over tighten.
9. Keep an oily rag in an empty cap tin with your field kit. If you choose to polish your metal parts, some field merchants sell emery powder in period envelopes. Keep in mind that this procedure is just for field cleaning. To really care for a firearm, read on.

### Cleaning Once you Get Home.

1. Follow Field Cleaning steps Number 1 and 2 (above), then:
2. Remove the ramrod. Place the hammer at half-cock and loosen the lock assembly. Remove the barrel screw from the tang of the barrel. Remove the barrel bands. Turn the musket upside down and lightly tap the butt of the stock on the ground. Carefully lift the barrel from the stock.
3. Remove the nipple (cone) and place it in some Hydrogen Peroxide to soak.
4. Place the barrel in a pail of hot, soapy water, bolster end in the water.
5. Pour a little warm water down the barrel. Use a sectional cleaning rod with an un-slotted jag. The jag has a flat bottom to clean the back of the breech.
6. Run your cleaning rod with the un-slotted jag attached and run a patch up and down the barrel. Repeat with a wire brush attached to the cleaning rod, up and down the

barrel. The brush will create suction drawing water from the pail. Remove the barrel from the pail after several passes with the brush.

7. Run a few patches down the barrel until they come out basically clean.
8. Soak a patch in Hoppes #9™ and run it down the barrel until patches come out clean. Another product recommended is Shooters Choice™ because it gets the lead and copper out of the pores in the metal. Soak a cleaning brush in solvent and run up and down the barrel a few times, and then go back to the patches again.
9. Dry the bore until the patches come out clean.
10. Oil the bore. Much has been written on the best oil for black powder firearms. Break-Free™ is recommended because it has the right consistency to stay on the metal without getting too gunky and attracting dirt (like grease). Both the bore and the outside of the barrel. Only use grease on the moving parts of the lock assembly.
11. Clean the bolster and flash channel with cotton swabs, a tooth brush and pipe cleaners. Clean any fouling from around the outside of the bolster area, light abrasives like Comet cleanser or a wire brush can be used for built up fouling if necessary. Remove any rust from barrel with Ballistol™ and steel wool or a brown 3M™ pad. Clean the inside of nipple (cone) with pipe cleaners.
12. Remove the lock assembly. Spray with penetrating oil such as Ballistol™. Apply white lithium grease to the moving parts (tumbler and sear). Clean visible dirt away with pipe cleaners.
13. Reassembly musket. Clean fouling or rust from ramrod if needed. Put some oil on the underside of the barrel bands and on threads of nipple (cone) before reinstalling. Grease is probably better because it is heat resistant and it will keep the threads from freezing up under fire.
14. Run an oiled patch, or some "bore butter" (beeswax-based lube) on a patch down the barrel. Lightly oil the outside of the barrel and lock assembly.
15. Leave musket out of carrying case to "air." Do not store in canvas bag or carrying case. Leave hammer at release position so all springs are stored un-cramped.
16. In about a week, run a couple patches down the barrel to remove any residual fouling that came out of the expansion cracks in the barrel as they cooled down. Place a folded patch between hammer and nipple (cone). Re-oil inside and out. There, you are done until the next time you shoot.

**Mr. Barry**

NOTE: The US Army published three *Rules for the Management and Cleaning of the Rifle Musket, Model [1855, 1861 and 1863 respectively], for the use of Soldiers with Descriptive Plates*. They have been reprinted in various forms since the late 1970s. Currently, copies for each of the three Springfield Models can be purchased (\$4 each) from Bob Sullivan of Sullivan Press (3405 Main St., Box 407, Morgantown, PA 19543 and owner@sullivanpress.com) Reprints can also be found at some of the general line field merchants. **Mr. Christen**