

FROM THE CLERK'S DESK

How Long Did Equipment Last?

How long would our equipment last in the field, you may ask? I do not know how representative the data. I will present the information I have and let you draw your own conclusions.

The source of my information is the records of all the equipage and ordnance issued to Company I of the One Hundred-fiftieth New York State Volunteer Infantry issued from 30 June 1863 through 31 May 31 1865, obtained from the Dutchess County Historical Society. The One Hundred-fiftieth was mustered into service on 10 and 11 October 1862. The regiment left the state 11 1862. It served in the Eighth Army Corps at Baltimore, Maryland until 2 July 1863 when it joined the Second Brigade, First Division of the Twelfth Army Corps and finally the Second Brigade, First Division of the Twentieth Army Corps in April 1864.

The One Hundred-fiftieth was stationed in Baltimore from October 1862 to the end of June 1863. The following calculations do not reflect that part of their service, only the time they were in the field. Their service found them in the following campaigns: Gettysburg, Atlanta, Shaman's March to the Sea and the campaign in the Carolina's. During that time, Company I was issued some equipment every month from June 1863 to January 1865, and then there is no record of them receiving anything until the end of April 1865 and finally on 31 May 31 1865. I used company strength of fifty-six men in the calculations. This was derived from the following:

- On 30 June 1863 the company was issued fifty-five knives, forks, spoons, cups, and plates. The condition when delivered was described as worn.
- In Lieutenant David B. Sleight's ledger, he lists fifty-seven men in Company I.
- In 1864, the Company I Inspection Reports for 1 and 8 March plus 8 and 15 April list fifty-six, fifty-six, fifty-three and fifty-two men present respectively.

So, for example, in the twenty-three month span between June 1863 and May 1865, the regiment was issued 212 pairs of drawers. From that, I calculate each man used 3.8 pair of drawers in the twenty-three months, which suggests that drawers lasted an average of six months. Table A contains estimations of equipment lifespan for most items issued to a typical Federal infantry soldier.

Mike Peets

Type of Equipment	How long it lasted in the field	Comments
Rifle	8 ½ months	Seventy-five percent of those issued were Enfield's and twenty-five percent were Springfield's. Forty-nine Enfield's were issued on 30 June 1863 in Frederick, Maryland.
Scabbards	8 ½ months	
Cap Pouch	8 ½ months	
Cartridge Box	8 ½ months	
Cartridge Box Plate	7 ½ months	Issued in June, August, December 1863; January, February, July, September, October, December 1864; and January and April 1865.
Cartridge Box Belt	8 months	
Cartridge Box Belt Plate	6 ½ months	Issued in June, August 1863; January, February, July, September, October, December 1864; and January and April 1865.
Gun Sling	7 ½ months	
Waist Belt	8 ½ months	
Waist Belt Plate	8 ½ months	
Bayonet Frog		Only one ever issued
Tompion		Only fifteen ever issued
Forage Caps	14 ½ months	Issued in August, October, November, December 1863; February, April, September, November 1864; and January, April, May 1865.
Blouses / Flannel Sack Coat	11 months	
Trousers, Infantry / Trousers, Cavalry	6 months	All were infantry trousers until 25 July 1864. Of the sixteen pair of cavalry trousers, eleven were issued on 25 January 1865
Shirts / Knit Shirts / Flannel Shirts	4 months	Thirty-eight flannel shirts were issued between 31 July 1863 and 30 September 1863, and forty more were issued on 25 January 1865. Twenty-four knit shirts were issued on 31 October 1863, and then thirty more on 25 April 1865 and twenty-four on 31 May 1865.
Drawers	6 months	
Bootees / Shoes / Boots / Boots, Cavalry	3 ½ months	I am assuming shoes and booties are used interchangeably. One pair of boots shows up on 30 November 1863 and twenty-six on 31 December 1863. Twelve pair of cavalry boots was listed on 29 February 1864 and twelve more with the description "Sewed" were listed on 25 January 1865. The ratio of boots to booties was eighteen percent boots to eighty-two percent bootees
Stocking	3 months	
Great Coats		Forty-one were issued. That leaves fifteen soldiers without them.
Blankets		Fifty-seven were issued.
Rubber Blankets / Rubber Poncho's / Painted Blankets	9 ½ months	There was a 50/50 split between blankets versus poncho's. Thirteen "Painted Blankets" were issued on 19 August 1864.
Knapsacks	9 months	Issued in June, August, December 1863; January, February, September, November, December 1864; and January, April, May 1865.
Haversacks	8 months	
Canteens	7 ½ months	
Shelter Tents	7 ½ months	
Red Stars	10 months	These were first issued 30 September 1863 and continued to be issued through 25 January 1865.

TABLE A Summary of Equipment issued to the One Hundred-fiftieth New York Infantry.