

During the Civil War soldiers were issued what were called "great coats". They are made of a very high quality wool. So high a quality wool that they were not hemmed at the bottom. One of the advantages of these long unseamed coats was that patches to clean your musket could be cut off, particularly from the cape. The cape was deemed relatively useless, but it was great for making gun patches. Now when these coats were issued they could be rolled in the gun blanket and carried on top of the knapsack. They were awful. We lost almost an entire regiment in a parade in Troy recently just because we were exhausted mostly because the uniforms we were wearing were made of wool. We learned something else too. Most of the guys didn't like them very much so they threw them away. When they threw the stuff away they also threw away the great coat. The haversack became the soldier's home. Everything the soldier owned could be carried in his haversack.

We'll talk about food now. Miss Church is here tonight from the United States Sanitary Commission, organized to improve the conditions of the soldiers. The soldiers lived in absolutely horrible conditions -incredibly horrible. The Sanitary Commission was formed to improve the lives of the soldiers. Who organized this? Miss Church: It was organized by. She was appointed by P.M. McKinley who was Secretary of War at that time. She was 50 years old. She had very strict rules about her nurses. They had to be over 30 years old. They had to be very plain looking. They had to wear brown dresses without any adornment whatsoever, neckline buttoned up and no hoops were allowed. She was a very dedicated woman often paying the nurses out of her own pocket. She was the reason the Sanitary Commission came about in 1861, made up of thousands of women from the Ladies Aid Societies throughout the country. They were given almost unlimited funds to look into the deplorable conditions of soldiers, both mentally and physically. In the beginning they were only allowed to run hospitals at the very far end of the fighting at the rear. Later on the older ladies were allowed to work at the front to take care of the men. It took lots and lots of guts, I must say, for the women to take care of these men. (She made us take baths, brush our teeth, delouse our clothing. They provided bandages. They brought uniforms from home. Miss Church tonight brought us a nice pot of chicken soup. Something we don't usually have.

When we enlisted, let me read you something here, this is what the Government told us we were going to get. " 12. ozs. of pork or bacon; or four 1#4 ozs. of salt or fresh beef (this is every day) 1# 6 ozs. soft bread or flour of 1# hard bread. After every 100 rations 15# beans or peas; 10# rice or hominy; 10# green coffee or 8# roasted coffee; four 1#8 ozs. of tea; 15# sugar; 4 qts. agar, 3# 12 ozs. salt; 4 oz. pepper, 30# potatoes, if practicable, 1 qt. molasses." What we lived on for four years was salt pork and hard tack. That was it. Something about salt pork and hard tack. It comes in barrels. large barrels. These barrels are allowed to sit on railroad sidings for days, weeks, months until the stuff can

be shipped off to the soldiers. Now, salt pork isn't too bad. I have some I bought last year in Virginia. It is sitting in the refrigerator and it's fine. The stuff was incredibly durable. The reason it's there is I want to see how long it stays before something starts growing on it. It went through an entire week in regular camp life with no refrigeration, 90 degree heat and it's been in my refrigerator since May. So, we'll see.

Does anyone know what salt pork looks like? Looks like bacon, real fatty. The other staple was hard tack. It's a 2 7/8 inch cracker 1/2 inch thick with 13 holes in it. The soldiers called these holes "worm castles". Generally from sitting in the barrels the maggots would get into them. The soldiers used to take bets as to how many maggots were in the cracker. Hard tack is unleavened bread. Flour, water and a pinch of salt is the recipe. (He drops the cracker on the floor and passes one around) Here, take a bite out of it. It's edible, believe it or not. I won't be responsible for anyone's teeth. One of the things they did with these was to fry the salt pork with a cracker in the pan. The cracker would soak up the grease from the salt pork. It would make these things edible. They're commonly crushed with the rifle butt in order to be eaten.

I have some other personal effects of some soldiers up here if you care to come up. We are desperately trying to find some artifacts. If anybody has anything, personal effects, letters - letters are real good- final word about these people is from the actual people themselves. This is the only way we can talk to these people in the past is through their letters and documents. I have a very interesting knife right here. This fellow ( I haven't been able to document it yet) This is a military-style knife that was available through settlers who followed the army. This belonged to Peter Cipperley. He was probably from the 169th New York which was recruited from this area= later the 125th. I have a harmonica here which was a wonderful item. It was carried by a fellow named Michael Carmen, also the 169th. He lived here on Burden Lake Road, in town, in the old house next to Barnums, the one that was burned out or torn down not so long ago, the Carmen House. Very few items from the 125th. We'd love to get some. So much for my commercial.

Now the weapons. There were many different types of weapons carried by the 125th. This is the Model 1853 Enfield. It's an English made weapon.; There were 450,000 of these imported and used by the Union Army and 400,000 in the hands of the Confederacy. The weapon is very often called a Confederate weapon but it's not true. In fact there were more in the Union hands than the Confederacy. Soldiers just loved them. were an excellent shooting weapon and had engraving on the hammers. They were a wonderful gun. This is an original. This is a reproduction. The reason I have the two of them. They were originally blue but because the Officers preferred the shiny Springfield type very often the bluing was removed from the gun. This is what it's supposed to look like. This is the issue. The other type is the Model 1861 Springfield. This is also an early war issue weapon. This particular gun was carried by a fellow by the name of Charles Andrew of the 120th out of Saugerties. Later in the war they were issued the 1863 Typ 2 Springfield. This is the reproduction of the same rifle. I's

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I'm showing you the reproductions because I want you to understand how seriously we take this hobby. These weapons are reproduced meticulously right down to the last detail. Parts are interchangeable. The English weapon was a .577 - 58 caliber; a little over 1/2 inch. It fired a mini ball shaped like this. Springfield's were 58 caliber so they were only .0001 of an inch smaller. The ammunition if the bore was clean and new, was interchangeable. Ammunition was issued 40 rounds at a clip in packs of 10. These were carried in a carbine box - 10 rounds in top, 10 rounds in bottom, 2 tens in a box. Before battle an additional 20 rounds were issued. They were carried in the haversack. Some soldiers carried them in their hats, in their pants pockets, any where they could fit them. Notice in the film just before Pickett's charge before the confederates got into the rifle range a soldier was arranging all his cartridges on the wall. When the fighting was on the move the soldiers carried one cartridge in their teeth. When you undo the cartridge it looks like so., wrapped in a piece of paper. The powder charge is wrapped in another piece of paper. It has a little tail on the end. The only time you'll see newsprint, by the way, during the civil war. Newspapers were as good as gold. Rarely were they used for cartridges. If they weren't passed around until they couldn't be read anymore, they were used for writing paper, which was also very difficult to get a hold of. So, I won't go through the Manual of Arms here, but essentially the cartridge was taken from the box, the tail was torn, the powder was poured into the barrel, and the ball was set by the thumb, the rammer was drawn and the ball was sent home. The rail was withdrawn and replaced. Now, the Enfield musket has a bit of a nipple protector. It's a little bit of lead that fits over the nipple to keep the nipple from being crushed accidentally when the hammer comes down on the nipple. If the nipple is crushed the weapon is useless. A little tiny brass cap containing a small charge of mercury. Load and come to the ready of load and come to the shoulder. Now if we were marching into battle we would go to the shoulder because then the next order was "Forward March" and off to the line of battle we would go to meet the enemy. Or if we were already in the battle we were ordered to "Come to the ready." The next order "Aim" "Fire" "Recover" "Reload" and "Come to the ready" Then go through the same routine. Now, depending on what is going on, you fire by volley, you fire by ranks, you fire by this, you fire by that. Usually the next order is "Fire by Will". Who's Will? You hear that Civil War joke all the time. Now, during the Revolutionary War these weapons were smooth bore 69 caliber, and most weapons, particularly of European make were issued with bayonet; This one was invented by the French in 1777. However someone found markings as early as the 1680s. They were originally developed for boar hunting. BOARS GET REAL NASTY IF YOU SHOOT THEM AND YOU DONT kill them. So the intent was to turn the rifleman into a pike man so he could do in the boar as he was charged by one boar. Well, the French got this brilliant idea that this was a wonderful thing for a war and came out with the first triangular bayonet in 1717. This was still in use until the Second World War in the hands of the Russian troops.

I mentioned that the weapons in the Revolutionary War were smooth bore weapons. Very little damage was done to the musket. The bayonet was considered the true weapon. By the time the Civil War came, (we saw Pickett's charge) thousands still fought using Napoleonic tactics which were traditional in Europe for 200 years. However, now we had rifles and muskets. This weapon will kill a man at 300 yards. The old weapons you were lucky to hit anything at 50 yards. During the Civil War we lined up in two lines. In the case at Manassas they were less than 100 yards from one another, in a wide open field. They blasted away at one another until nobody was left. They could not keep up an effective volley so the troops retreated. You saw Pickett. He lost 1/3 of his men in half an hour, over 5000 men. That was because we were no longer using rifles with muskets. After the Civil War you no longer saw the Napoleonic tactics which we saw all through the Civil War. 26,000 men in one day. It's the largest body count of any single day of fighting in American military history. So what about bayonets? The bayonet was not terribly effective anymore because before anyone could get close enough to use it usually you shot him. So this became a utilitarian device. It was used as a candle stick, drying your socks over the fire. If you were lucky enough to get a hunk of beef or small game, you could skewer it on your bayonet and cook it over a fire. They were wonderful tent pegs and trenching tools for latrine digging. They were very seldom used for their main purpose.

I'm almost done. There were three branches of ground troops. Infantry, artillery (same uniform trimmed in red), Cavalry, trimmed in yellow, Medical corps, in green. Cavalry was issued repeating weapons because it was very difficult to load a muzzle weapon on the ground. To this day I've been trying to find a legitimate reason why repeating weapons were not in the hands of the infantry during the Civil War, because repeating weapons were available. One reason that I read was because they were afraid they would use up too much ammunition. There was more powder shot and shells used during the Civil War in all wars combined up to Vietnam. Those of you that are here that were in WW II, Korea, etc. you know how much steel these ships were pouring into the mountains and how much was getting used on the ground. More shots and shells in all American wars up to Vietnam. More men were killed, wounded, died from disease in the Civil War than in all wars up to Vietnam. The Civil War had a very significant role in the evolution of the United States. Artillery. These are two projectiles of the Civil War. The Hotchkiss and the Parrot shell. Both these devices are anti-infantry. They had either time fuses or percussion fuses on the end. They were set in the walls over the heads of the passing infantry. A bullet. Both these shells were filled with little round balls. These were very lethal. Basically that's it. Are there any questions.

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