

“The following is a revision of my article originally published in the June 2017 edition of “Man-at-Arms” magazine. It incorporates new information, especially about late-date variations of the cutlass, developed by myself as well as other individuals including Charles Pate and Gerald Roxbury. I would welcome feedback and any additional information you wish to supply.”

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# M1861 Cutlass

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The M1861 Navy cutlass is one of the American military’s most iconic weapons. It is almost as much a symbol of the Navy as the crossed M1860 sabers are of the cavalry. It is a prominent feature of the Navy Surface Warfare and the Special Warfare Boat Operator badges, as well as many other Navy coats-of-arms and patches; it serves as a symbol of office of the Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and has recently been re-authorized for wear by Navy Chief Petty Officers. It links today’s sailors to the historic past of wooden ships, close encounters and boarding operations where the cutlass played an important role in hand-to-hand combat in tight quarters. Although those days were largely past when the M1861 cutlass was introduced, thanks to Hollywood and countless book illustrators, when most people think of boarders away, cutlasses, or pirates, they think of the M1861-style sword.



Figure 1 M1861 Navy Cutlass

**Model Designation:** The Ames Civil War cutlass is commonly referred to as either the Model 1860 or the Model 1861 cutlass. Although M1860 is the most used designation, it is not the most appropriate. The Navy first asked Ames to produce a sword based on the French Model 1833 in May 1861, and a 6 July 1861 letter from the Navy to Ames states “Sir: The Bureau desires you will forward a sample cutlass and sample bayonet for Sharps Rifle, and mark these ‘*Standard 1861*’.” (Italics added.) In the absence of evidence to the contrary, this seems definitive.

**Grip Materials/Wrapping:** M1861 cutlasses originally had leather-covered wooden grips with twisted brass wire wrapping. Some commenters contend there never was a wire wrap, and that examples with purported “original wire wrap” are incorrect later “restorations”. The existence of clearly genuine examples, such as the USS Hartford pair discussed below, seems to refute this, as does the fact that the imprints of the wire are clearly visible in the leather on most surviving examples.



Figure 2 Original Wire Wrapped Leather Grip. Normally there were 18 twists of wire but sometimes 17 or 19 twists are found.

The wire-wrapped leather grips were, however, problematic in that the brass would corrode in the salt air. As a result, at some point, probably after the Civil War, most of the Navy cutlass grips were “jacked”, i.e. the wire wrap was removed and the grip was polished and coated with a tar-based protective solution. Given the near universal and uniform nature of the modification, it seems likely there was a Naval Ordinance Directive ordering it, but I have not found one. A pair of M1861 cutlasses from the USS Hartford Veterans Hall mounted in a plaque dated June 1865 was sold at Cowen Auctions’ 13 June 2014 sale of the DeHaan collection of items related to Admiral Farragut and his flagship, the USS Hartford. Both still had their original wire wrap, which would suggest the modification occurred after June 1865.

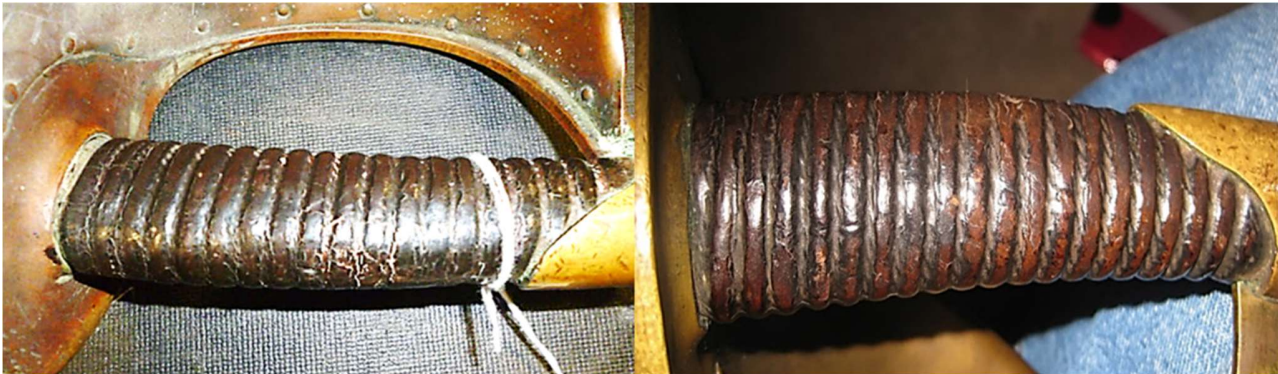


Figure 3 Post-CW Modified Grips. The wire wrap was removed and the leather was polished and coated with a tar-based protective substance. Note the impressions of the wires in the grooves.

Some M1861 cutlasses may have been modified with cast aluminum replacement grips. The following is extracted from a 21 April 2012 exchange on "Sword Forum International":

Question: "In the big sword collection I picked up a few months ago, this Naval cutlass was in the group. I initially chocked it up to being a replica but now I'm not so sure... The part that made me assume it was a replica is that the grip is not leather but cast aluminum. But as I was looking at this again, I noticed... The stamping of the rack number appears to be old and not recently done, and the grandson of the former owner said he acquired his pieces around 1950 and 1960. Is anyone aware of aluminum grip cutlasses like this?"

Reply: "Sir: I was present at New London CT when a US sub was de-commissioned, circa 1971. There were Model 1860 and Model 1918 (sic) Cutlasses in the arms rack....Some of the 1860 models had been reconditioned with a grip like yours...I was surprised to see such items still in use!! "

The Medicus collection also had a metal gripped cutlass (p.196, item 94c) which was described as having an "iron grip" (probably wrong – most likely aluminum). I have since seen other examples such as the one below which was recently sold on ebay:



Figure 4 Aluminum Replacement Grip

The aluminum grips were probably made in the early to mid-twentieth century as replacements for original wooden grips which were worn/damaged beyond reasonable repair. I do not know whether the aluminum grips were a centrally-directed repair/modification or something done locally by a ship/installation armorer, but if they were not Navy-modified, these aluminum-gripped cutlasses would not have been part of ship's equipment.

**Serial Numbers:** In August 1861, the Navy requested Ames stamp serial numbers on the guard and scabbard of each future cutlass produced, using “M” to designate 1000, e.g. cutlass 12,345 would be marked “12M/345”. Since 600 cutlasses had already been delivered, Ames started such numbering at 601; those cutlasses already delivered were to be retro-marked by the Navy. These numbers are often erroneously referred to in ads and discussions as “rack numbers”, but in fact they are, as noted, serial numbers. Serial numbers do not always appear on the scabbards, but when they do they are stamped on the obverse of the scabbard just above the frog knob using the same format as on the guard. It is obvious that the scabbard were frequently interchanged since few if any are found with cutlasses and scabbards with matching serial numbers.



*Figure 5 Serial Numbers on the Quillon and Scabbard*

There are a couple of issues related to these serial numbers. First, Ames received contracts from the Navy for a total of 25,000 M1861 cutlasses, and, based on Bureau of Naval Ordinance records, delivered approximately 22,000 of them during the course of the Civil War. However cutlasses are found with serial numbers well above 25,000. (The highest number I have seen is 25M/977.) The simplest explanation, of course, is that Ames just delivered more cutlasses than currently-known Bureau of Naval Ordinance records would imply. It is also possible that Ames applied the serial numbers before the cutlasses were inspected and accepted by the Navy and that about 3000 serial numbered cutlasses were rejected. This would explain why serial numbers are found in excess of 25,000 when only 22,000 cutlasses were purchased.



Figure 6 High Serial Number. Example of a serial number well above the 22,000 cutlasses delivered during the war.

A second issue is that there seems to be a discrepancy on many cutlasses between the serial numbers on the guard and the date on the blade, i.e. some high numbered hilts have early dated blades and vice versa. The cutlass with the above-mentioned serial number 25M/977 has an 1862-dated blade. The lowest serial number I have ever seen, i.e. "13", was mounted on an 1864-dated blade. I suspect these disparities are the result of the blades being dismounted from the hilts for repair/refurbishment and reassembled without much care to ensure the blades were re-mated with their original hilts.

**Ames Address Markings:** All Ames M1861 cutlass blades were stamped with the Ames address on the reverse ricasso. The markings, however, were often lightly struck and were easily worn/polished off over their long years of use. Most blades were marked using the Ames scroll address with the words "Made by/AMES MFg Co/CHICOPEE/MASS" on a scroll. Others were marked with large block letters "AMES MFg Co/CHICOPEE/MASS". Least common were some 1864-made cutlasses which were marked with the arched words "AMES MFg Co/CHICOPEE/MASS".



Figure 7 Different Ames Markings on Reverse Ricassos of M1861 Blades

**Inspector Markings:** Most M1861 cutlasses produced for the Navy during the Civil War were inspected by Daniel Reynolds and stamped on the obverse ricasso with “U.S.N.” and the initials “D.R.” over the year date of manufacture. This is the normal order, but I’ve seen a number of variations, including the complete reverse, i.e. “1862/D.R./U.S.N.”. The inspector’s initials “D.R.” are also frequently, but not always, stamped on the pommel.



*Figure 8 D.R. (Daniel Reynolds) Inspector's Marks on Blades and Pommel of M1861 Cutlass.*

Occasionally different initials are found stamped on the pommel. I have seen one marked “HK” and another marked “PC” on one side and “J.W.R.” on the other. These marks were probably applied in conjunction with a repair requiring removal and re-hilting of the cutlass. Both examples were obviously re-peened. (The initials are probably those of Navy inspectors Henry Kirk, James Wolfe Ripley, and Cdr Pierce Crosby.)



*Figure 9 Unusual Inspection Marks on Pommel*

Some M1861 cutlasses, mainly of early date, are found with no inspectors’ markings. All, however, appear to have seen active duty, e.g. have the jacked grip modification, wear and tear consistent with long use, etc. Prior the Navy hiring Daniel Reynolds in 1862, Navy did not have a dedicated inspector.

Although he attempted after his hiring to retro-inspect previously accepted items, some pieces probably got through the acceptance process unmarked. However most non-serial numbered CW cutlasses were probably those produced for the Revenue Cutter Service and Army as discussed below.

In 1866 the Navy conducted an inventory/inspection of all small arms on hand including cutlasses. It issued "Ordinance Instructions for the United States Navy" which directed cutlasses be marked "On the blade, immediately below the guard, with an anchor; and the letter P over the initials of the Inspector....All arms in store or returned from ships will be stamped with the anchor before being issued." It further provided "The Bureau will furnish to each Inspector two sizes of stamps. Muskets, Carbines, and Cutlasses are to be marked with the larger, .15-in., and Pistols and Revolvers with the smaller, 0.1-in., size of stamps." (Very similar small arm inspection-marking instructions had been issued in a 29 August 1864 Naval Bureau of Ordinance circular but were too late to be put into effect for cutlasses manufactured that year.) The most common of these re-inspection marks is a large "(Anchor)/P/G.G." stamped on the ricasso on top of the original inspector's marks, parallel to the top edge of the blade and perpendicular to the original marking. The initials "G.G." are for Navy Commander Guart Gansevoort. Guart Gansevoort had been in charge of ordinance at the New York Navy Yard from 1861-1863. A similar, but much rarer, mark is a large "(Anchor)/P/J.R.G." stamped on the ricasso above the year date and oriented with the top towards the tip of the blade. The initials "J.R.G." are for navy Captain John R. Goldsborough who was the Ordinance Officer at Portsmouth Navy Yard, Maine from November 1863 through the end of the war. All the "J.R.G." marked pieces I have seen have no other inspection marks; it is as if he only marked those cutlasses which had failed to receive markings during their initial acceptance.



*Figure 10 Reinspection Marks by Commander Guart Gansevoort and Captain John R. Goldsborough*

In addition to these marks, cutlasses are found with just an "(Anchor)/P" or even only an anchor. These are usually placed above and parallel to the earlier markings but are sometimes seen on top and perpendicular to them.



Figure 11 Variants of Reinspection Mark

**Scabbards:** The M1861 cutlass was issued with a plain black leather scabbard fastened by 39 copper rivets in the back with a single brass knob in front to secure the scabbard to a frog. As noted above, scabbards were to be serial numbered in the same manner as the cutlass guards. Many, however, are seen without numbers or any sign they ever had them.



Figure 12 Standard M1861 Cutlass Scabbards

Peterson and some later authors state there was a variant scabbard with a brass throat and chape, apparently similar to the scabbard of the French M1833 cutlass on which the M1861 was based. Ron Hickox shows the top of such a scabbard in his line drawing of the M1861 cutlass on p 45 of his work "Collectors Guide to Ames U.S. Contract Military Edged Weapons: 1832-1906". I have never seen such a scabbard or even a photo of one. In his work, however, he also quotes an 8 December 1863 letter to Ames stating "Sir, the Bureau desires you to furnish the New York Navy Yard one hundred (100) cutlass scabbards. As these have been somewhat modified, a sample will be forwarded to you by the Ordnance Officer at New York." I have seen a number of scabbards with a brass band around the frog knob and with a brass tip. I suspect this may be the variant referred to in the literature.





Figure 13 Ron Hickox Drawing of the M1861 Cutlass and Scabbard. Note the frog stub is mounted on a locket at the top of the scabbard.



Figure 14 Variant Scabbard

M1861 scabbards are also seen which have been stitched rather than riveted down the back. These are believed to be replacement scabbards made by Bannerman for private sale long after the war.

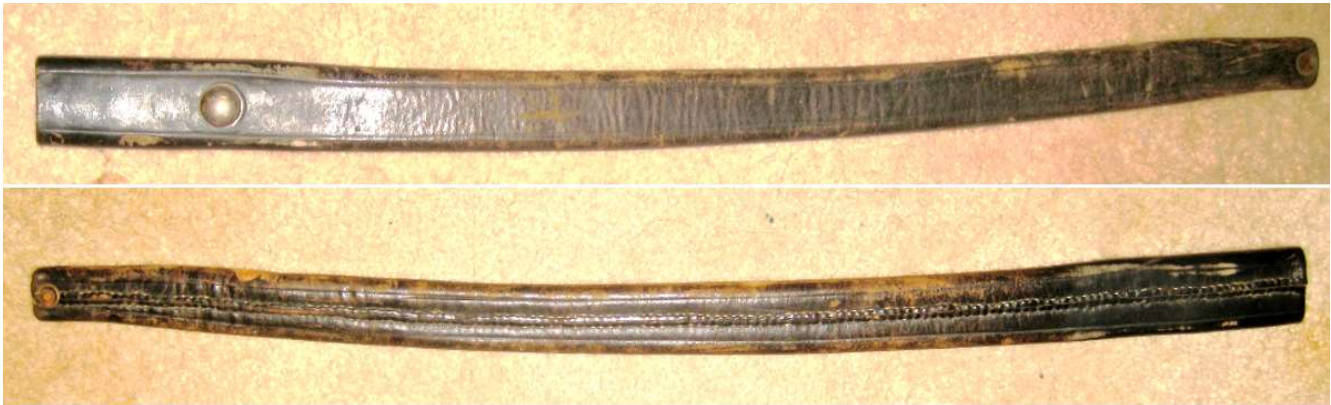


Figure 15 Post CW Scabbard Sold by Francis Bannermann Long After the War

**Cups Removed:** At some point, probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Navy for unknown reasons removed the cups from some of its M1861 cutlasses. The quillons of these modified cutlasses are also usually turned. There are a number of contemporary photos of these modified cutlasses being used.

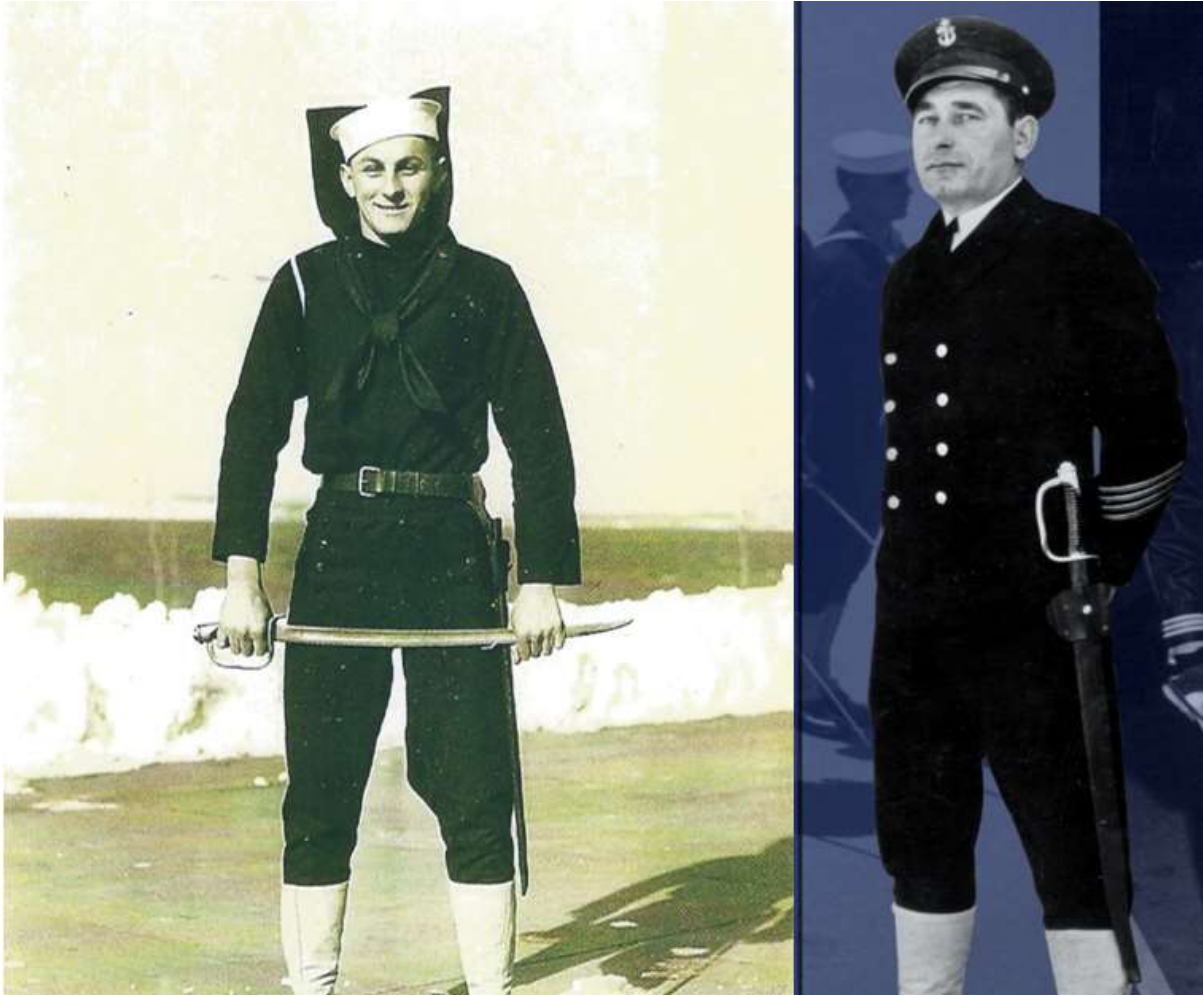


Figure 16 Early 20th Century Photos of Sailors Wearing Cutlasses with Cups Removed

**Officers Model:** An unknown number of gilt-hilted “Officers Model” M1861 cutlasses with swirled design and cut-out letters USN on the bowl of the guard were purchased by the government. There is some question whether these were for officers or senior petty officers. The scabbard was the same as the enlisted model except there was a large star within a rope circle on the bottom rivet’s obverse side. Those purchased by the Navy in 1861 cost \$10.15 each. The last delivery of 18 officers’ cutlasses was made in February 1866. These last cutlasses cost \$25 each, plus \$5.50 each for sword belts. Daniel Reynolds inspected the officer models purchased by the Navy, but Ames produced others for private purchase which would not have been inspected. These private purchase cutlasses sometimes had additional chasing around the pommel rim.



Figure 17 Officer's Cutlass Inspected by Daniel Reynolds



Figure 18 Privat purchase with extra floral design around the rim of the pommel and inside the hilt

There are other purported officer model cutlasses with foliate designs over the cut-out USN. These are Bannerman-modified enlisted cutlasses produced for private sale long after the Civil War.



Figure 19 Bannermann Cutlasses Made from Surplus Enlisted Scabbard

NJ-Surcharged Cutlasses: I have seen over 20 M1861 cutlasses marked “N.J.” on the reverse ricasso. Most have 1861 or 1862-dated blades but I have also seen one with an 1864-dated blade. The serial numbers do not appear to have any discernible grouping.



Figure 20 "N.J" Surcharge on Reverse Ricasso of M1861 Cutlass

It is uncertain for which units these "N.J" surcharged cutlasses were intended. New Jersey did not have naval forces during the Civil War. Although many of the States had navies during the Revolutionary War, these were not continued into the 19th century – too expensive. Jefferson proposed establishing State naval militias consisting of able-bodied men whose normal occupations involved primarily maritime-related work, but the proposal was never adopted – again, too expensive. There are two theories to explain the "N.J" surcharged cutlasses:

- Coastal defense was a major concern of General Burnside who, under operation "Anaconda," organized a flotilla of barges and gunboats to provide a floating force for protection as well as for offensive operations against vulnerable Southern targets. In its formative stages, the flotilla ran into real difficulties off the New Jersey coast because of the treacherous conditions and the U.S. Navy's lack of knowledge of the local waters. The New Jersey Volunteer Militia (NJVM), however, especially the 9th N.J., included many volunteers from south Jersey who were noted for their nautical skills, seamanship and knowledge of the area. As a result, NJVM infantrymen were seconded to man USN gunboats. It is possible that New Jersey issued cutlasses to these seaborne NJVM infantrymen. Similar circumstances led to the Army's procurement of cutlasses in 1864 to equip New York Volunteer Artillery. manning gunboats on and near the James River.

- The second theory is these cutlasses were procured by New Jersey in the 1890s after it had established the New Jersey Naval Militia. NJNM Quartermaster records show that in 1899 NJ had 300 cutlasses on hand, 150 aboard ships, and another 150 in storage.

I believe the first theory is more likely in that the surcharge is identical to that stamped on other small arms used by New Jersey units during the Civil War including muskets, bayonets and other sabers and swords.

**Revenue Cutter Service Cutlasses:**

In addition to the Navy, the Revenue Cutter Service also purchased M1861 cutlasses. The Revenue Cutter Service (RCS), called the US Revenue Marine prior to 1863, is the predecessor to the US Coast Guard. Like the modern USCG, during wartime the RCS was moved from under the Treasury Department and placed under Navy operational control. With the CW looming, President Lincoln placed them under the operational control of the Navy on 30 March 1861. The RCS purchased over one thousand M1861 cutlasses from Ames to outfit its cutters, including a major purchase of 600 in 1864. These RCS cutlasses were identical to the Navy swords but, since they were procured by RCS and not Navy contracts, Ames was not required to serial number them. It is believed that most, if not all, Civil War vintage M1861 cutlasses found with no serial number stamped on the quillon are RCS cutlasses, including the one dated 1865. The 1865-dated example is problematic in that we don't have documentary proof of any RCS purchases after July 1864. The procurement office did, however, provide 36 cutlasses for a cutter being built in Baltimore in February 1865. Although these cutlasses provided in 1865 may have been from previous stock, there may have been another latter purchase for which documentation has not yet been found.

Some un-serial numbered M1861 cutlasses are found with a single "D" inspector's initial. This is different than the "D" as used by inspector Danial Reynolds and is identical to that found on other unrelated Army swords. The identity of this inspector is unknown. There are no inspector marks on the pommel. These swords are all dated 1864 and have the block-style Ames address on the reverse ricasso. They are found with "U.S.N." with period separating the letters or "USN" without.



Figure 21 1864 "D" Inspected Cutlass.





*Figure 22 Unidentified Inspector "D" also Inspected M1840 Musicians; Swords*

**Army Cutlass:** Ames also received a contract for 300 M1861 cutlasses from the Army in 1864. These cutlasses did not have serial numbers and were marked on the reverse ricasso with the Ames address in block letters. They were marked on the obverse ricasso "U.S./A.D.K./1864" and on the pommel with the initials "A.D.K.". "A.D.K." is Army inspector A. D. King. These Army cutlasses were issued to Col. William A. Howard's New York Volunteer Artillery Regiment's "marine artillery" units manning gun boats used on the James River and other streams. See Charles Pate's excellent article "The Army Naval Cutlass and Howard's Marine Artillery" in Man at Arms December 2014 issue for a detailed history.



**Late Date M1861 Cutlasses:**

Most collectors believe production of the M1861 cutlasses terminated with the last delivery of the enlisted cutlasses to the Navy in 1864 and a slightly later delivery to the RCS in 1865. The last officers' cutlasses were delivered in 1866. Ames however continued to list these cutlasses in its sales catalogues. At least some officers' and possibly some enlisted cutlasses were privately purchased in the post-CW period. It was not until the 1890s, however, that we see the government again purchasing M1861 cutlasses.

JAMES SWORD CO.

MILITARY REGULATION.



- No. 537—Old Regulation Navy; Gilt Mountings, Black Leather Scabbard; Fish Skin Grip; Etched Blade,..... Gilt, \$13.00
- No. 538—Old Regulation Revenue and Marine; Engraved Mountings, Black Leather Scabbard; Silver Grip; Etched Diamond Blade,..... Gilt, 20.00
- No. 539—Officer's Navy Cutlass; Black Leather Scabbard; Black Twist Grip; Plain Blade,..... Gilt, 18.00
- No. 540—Navy Cutlass; Black Leather Scabbard; Black Twist Grip; Plain Blade,.....Bronze, \$12.00

CHICOPEE, MASS.

*Figure 23 Page From the Ames Sword Company Catalog c.1883 Listing Officer and Enlisted Cutlasses for Sale*

On 12 May 1892 the Navy's Chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing entered into a contract with Horstmann: " They... will furnish and deliver at such place in the Naval Training Station Newport, R.I. as the commanding officer may direct within the time below specified the following class of articles and at the price set opposite each item respectively ... Class 1 ... 95 broad swords light as per sample submitted by Horstmann Bros, 40 to be delivered within 15 days of date of contract, the remainder within seventy-five days after date of contract. Unit Price each \$2.25 Total \$213.75." The Navy did not further describe the "broad sword" desired, but this is the term commonly used for cutlasses in contemporary discussions, and it is difficult to imagine what other swords would have been intended. Why did the Navy give the contract to Horstmann rather than going directly to Ames? Horstmann was currently providing a broad range of uniform items to the Navy and was also providing NCO and musicians' swords to the Marines. Perhaps it was just more comfortably and convenient to deal with a current contractor than one which they had not used since the CW.



PHOTO BY STUART RANDOLPH WHITMAN.

BROAD-SWORD DRILL AT PELHAM BAY NAVAL TRAINING STATION, N. Y.

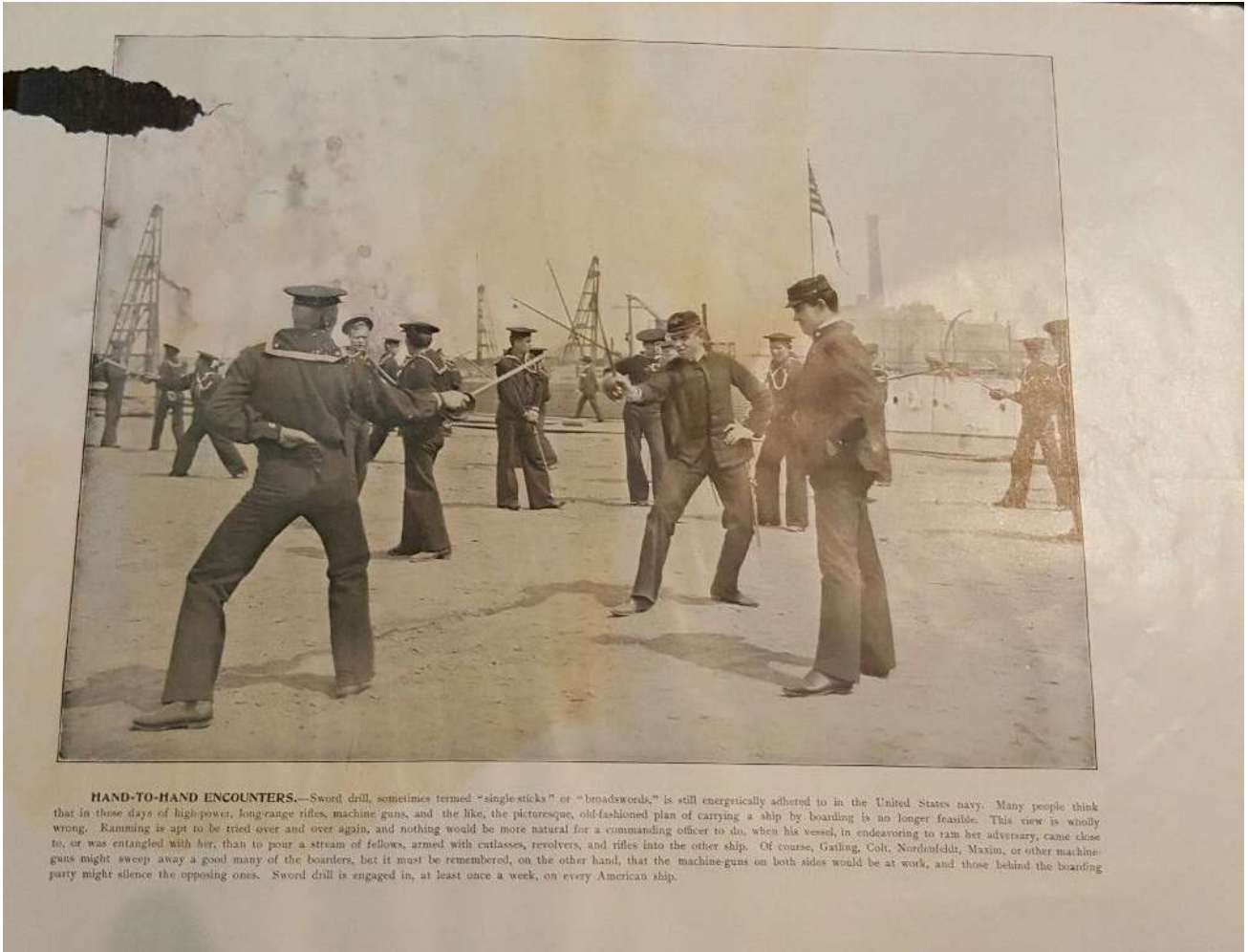


Figure 24 Sword Training in late 19th Century. Note they described the weapons as "Broadswords".

Although there is some ambiguity about the 1892 contract, there is doubt about the new cutlasses procured to equip the USS Niagara. The USS Niagara was a commercial ship built in 1877 which was acquired by the Navy from the Ward Line and reconfigured as a distillery and supply ship of the Collier Service. It was commissioned on 11 April 1898 and supported the fleet off Cuba and Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. It was privately, and lavishly, outfitted by prominent members of New York society as a patriotic gesture. New York Tribune owner William Randolph Hearst personally paid for the small arms used by the crew. The Niagara was decommissioned on 14 October 1898. The cutlasses were procured from Hartley and Graham, the successor firm to Schuyler, Hartley and Graham, but it is believed they were made by Ames. The name of the ship, "Niagara", within a sunburst is etched on the obverse side of the blade.



Figure 25 Cutlass from the USS Niagara

Shortly after the outfitting of the “Niagara”, Hartley-Graham provided similar cutlasses for another ship, the “Aloha”. The Aloha was a 160’ brig-rigged yacht with steam auxillary steam power built in 1899 for Arthur Curtiss James, a wealthy New York yachtsman and industrialist. Although it was a civilian ship, it equipped with a variety of arms including cutlasses. The sword was similar to the “Niagara” cutlass but with the name “Aloha” in the same font on the blade.



Figure 26 Etching on Blade of USS Aloha Cutlass

**Late-Date RCS Cutlasses:**

The RCS also began purchasing new cutlasses from Ames to equipping its cutters. Unlike the Niagara and Aloha cutlasses, these new RCS had plain unetched-blades. Between 1891 and 1903 at least the following the following cutlasses were purchased (there may have been others whose records were not found):

1891 – 12 cutlasses for the “Galveston” (Uncertain. A Captain made a request for the purchase, but there is no record they were actually bought.)

1897 - 30 cutlasses for the “McCulloch”

- 20 cutlasses for the “Manning”

1899 – 5 cutlasses for the “Algonquin”

- 7 cutlasses for the “Windom”

- 25 cutlasses for the “Seminole”

1902 -73 cutlasses “Model 540” (ship not specified). Model “540” was the Item number of the M1861 cutlass in Ames Sale Catalog.

1903 – 12 cutlasses (ship unspecified)

**New York Navy Militia Cutlasses:**

The New York Naval Militia was organized as a Provisional Naval Battalion in 1889 and was formally mustered into State service as the First Battalion, Naval Reserve Artillery, on 23 June 1891. At some point, the unit or some of its members purchased cutlasses from Ames. Gerald Roxbury published a detail article on these cutlasses and the State of New York Naval Militia in the February 2021 edition of Man-at-Arms magazine.

The best known is the Winfield Proskey cutlass from the Medicus collection. It is essentially a M1861 officer’s cutlass hilt with a M1852 Navy officer’s-style blade and scabbard. Winfield Scott Proskey served in the First Battalion in various positions from 1893 to 1895.



*Figure 27 New York Naval Militia Cutlass of Winfield S. Proskey*



A second variety of cutlass used by First Battalion New York Naval Militia featured a hilt essentially the same as a M1861 enlisted cutlass but was gilt with the initials “SNY” for State of New York” cut into the face of the basket. It was mounted on a totally unmarked M1852 officer-style blade and carried in a M1852 Navy officer scabbard. In his article-Gerald Roxbury was able to trace three examples of this variety.



Figure 28 New York Naval Militia Cutlass

All these late-date cutlasses shared a common easily identified difference from their CW-era counterparts in that their grips had 11 twists of wire wrapping whereas the wartime counterparts had 18-19. Surprisingly, only the Proskey example is marked with the Ames Sword Company name. All others were either unmarked or marked with the Hartley-Graham brand. None were serial numbered.



Figure 29 Hilt of Late-Date Cutlass (L) and CW-era Cutlass (R).

**Non-Ames Cutlasses:** The Medicus collection included a cutlass made by Tiffany and Cowen's Spring 2008 auction Lot 166 included three M1861 cutlasses, "one Clauberg and two Ames" (NFI). I have found nothing else in the literature on non-Ames cutlasses, their dates or uses. There are other Tiffany cutlasses besides the Medicus example. They are marked "TIFFANY & Co/N.Y." on the reverse ricasso and seem to mimic the Ames version in all aspects other than the hilt which has 15 twists of wire compared with 18 on the CW-era Ames and 11 on the late-date Ames. I have no information on when and where these Tiffany clones were used.

T



Figure 30 Tiffany Cutlass

There is also a Tiffany officer model cutlass. The guard is gilt brass with blued steel for the cup. Instead of rivets it has slotted screws. The grip is wrapped with sharkskin with gilt wire. The blade is thin, only .75 inches wide. The obverse ricasso is marked "Tiffany & Co./New York", and the blade has a panel

etched with foliage, a spread-winged federal eagle and more foliage. The reverse ricasso is stamped "PDL" for Solingen blade maker Paul D. Luneschloss, and the blade is etched with a panel with foliage, a stand of arms, and more foliage. The scabbard is blued steel with gilt throat, middle mount and drag looking somewhat like a miniature version of a M1850 S&F scabbard. Although the style of the etching and the thin blade would suggest a post-civil war date, nothing is known of the date or use of this cutlass.



Figure 31 Tiffany Officer Cutlass

In this article I have attempted to summarize what is currently known about this iconic Navy weapon, but there is probably a lot more to be known. My hope is that it will motivate those who have or develop any new information to share it through this site or other venue.