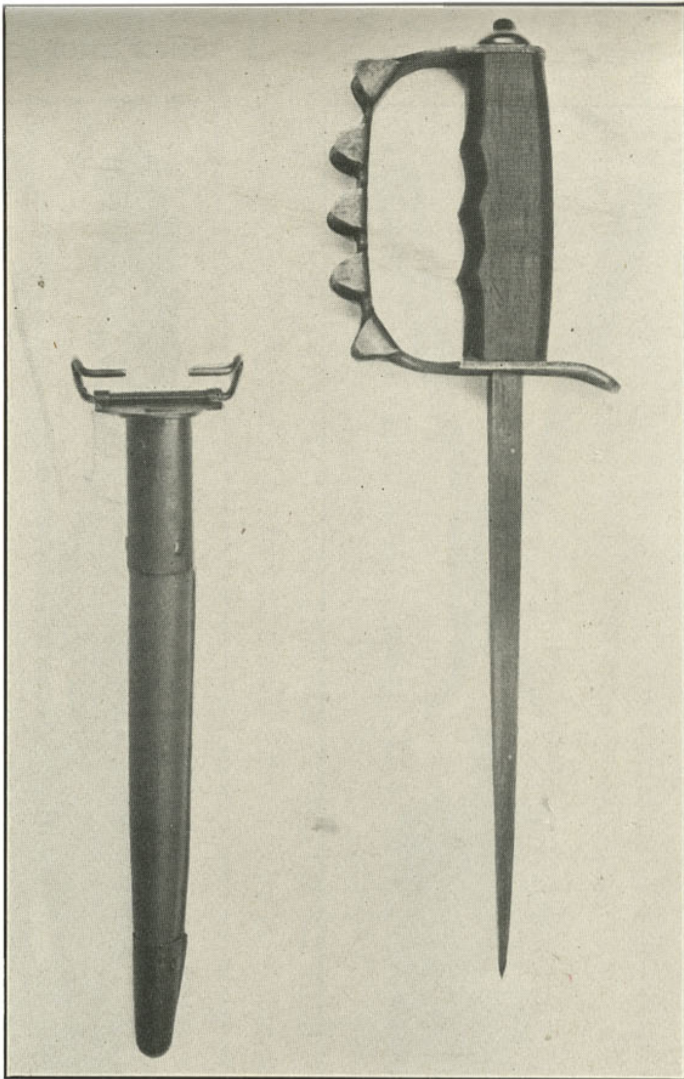
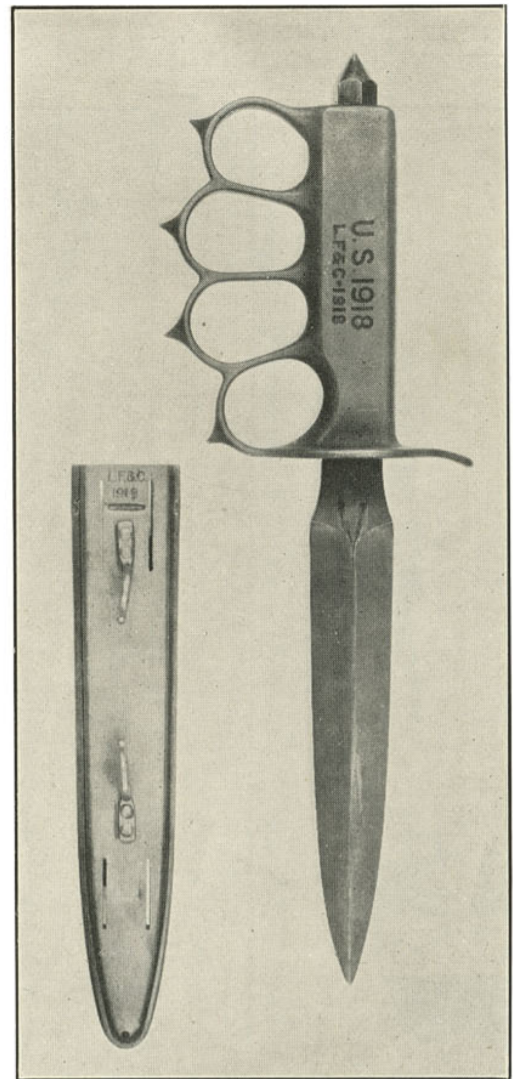


TRENCH KNIVES



1917 MODEL OF TRENCH KNIFE AND SCABBARD.



MARK I TRENCH KNIFE WITH FLAT BLADE, DESIGNED BY A. E. F.

A new weapon which had come into use during the great war as part of the soldier's individual equipment was the **trench knife**. The question of making such knives was taken up by the Government with various manufacturers throughout the country and they were given a general idea of what was required and, in conjunction with the Ordnance Department, were requested to develop details. The design submitted by Henry Disston & Sons, of Philadelphia, received the most favorable consideration. This knife was manufactured and known as model 1917. It was a triangular blade 9 inches long. The triangular blade was deemed the most efficient because of the ease with which it would pierce clothing and even leather. This knife was slightly changed as regards handle and given a different guard to protect the man's knuckles, and was known as model 1918. These knives were sent abroad in large quantities to be used by the American Expeditionary Forces. Landers, Frary & Clark produced 113,000 of these knives and the Oneida Community (Ltd.), Oneida, N. Y., 10,000.

On June 1, 1918, the American Expeditionary Forces made an exhaustive test, comparing the various trench knives used abroad.

The four knives tested were as follows; United States, model 1917; Hughes; French; and British knuckle knife. These tests were made to determine the merits of the different knives as to the following points:

(a) Serviceability—ability to carry in hand and function other arms.

(b) Quickness in action.

(c) If the soldier were knocked unconscious, would knife drop from hand?

(d) Suitability to carry in hand when crawling.

(e) Probability of being knocked out of hand.

(f) Weight, length, shape of blade.

(g) Shape of handle.

It was found that the model 1917, although a satisfactory knife, could be improved. Therefore the trench knife known as Mark I was developed partially by the American Expeditionary Forces and partially by the Engineering Division of Ordnance. This knife was entirely different from the model 1917, having a flat blade, metal scabbard, and a cast-bronze handle. It was a combination of all the good points of all the knives used by the foreign armies.

The Government placed orders for 1,232,780 of the new knives. Deliveries were to have begun in December, but before that time peace had come and the orders had been reduced to 119,424. The new model knives were to have been manufactured by A. A. Simons & Son, Dayton, Ohio; Henry Disston & Son, Philadelphia; Landers, Frary & Clark, and the Oneida Community (Ltd.). All contracts were canceled except the one with Landers, Frary & Clark.

America's Munitions 1917-1918

by

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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
DIRECTOR OF MUNITIONS

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p. 228