

**Packing Your Knapsack
and
Haversack**

**Some helpful hints on passing
Sergeant Truffessus's
Inspections**

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Fellow Messmates if it has not become obvious to you Sergeant Truffessus looks for certain items and certain items only among your meager possessions. As a British soldier you do not have much. Therefore, the good sergeant, who is a fellow of particular Spartan upbringing and way of life, does not expect to see your kit loaded down with excessive items. These items will just draw forth his anger upon your mortal soul, bring wrath upon you and your fellow file members, and make the company suffer with long work details.

With these thoughts in mind I have set forth this little work to instruct and encourage you fellows in passing the inspections. Over the years I have used this technique in getting by in our particular military institution and avoid the ever-dreadful fines, which has left my friend HANGER Ashby in such a state of stress that he has grayed even more. Alas then messmate, please to take these suggestions as an encouragement from an old soldier. Therefore, with no further talk I give you my:

***System for the Complete Interior
Management of your Knapsack
and Haversack While Upon
Campaign***

The good sergeant being a fine person for detail and has a keen passion for history uses these virtues upon inspection. Therefore, look at what the British soldier carried historically. Never deviate from this and you should do well and manage to keep a few pennies of your pay. A good place to look to find what is carried is *Wolfe's Instructions for Young Officers.* This grand officer had the following to say about the soldiers' knapsacks in the year 1756.

The soldiers are not to be burdened with to many necessaries in their knapsacks. Three shirts, two pairs of shoes, three pairs of worsted stockings, and one pair of soles are all that will be wanted.

(Wolfe, page 44)

Now of course one pair of shoes and stockings would be worn by the soldier, as well as one shirt. This would leave the follow items in the knapsack. Two shirts, two pairs stockings, a pair of shoes, and a pair of soles. Nothing else is mentioned.

In addition, to what General Wolfe had to say about knapsack packing we have another reference that tells us exactly what was carried in the knapsack. The following list is from a letter sent by Lieutenant Archibald Bailey of the 60th Regiment to Colonel Bouquet. In its contents he describes the knapsack and what are to be carried inside it by a soldier in the 60th.

A Knapsack with strap and buckle.

Contents:

- 2 shirts**
- 2 neck stocks**
- 2 pair worsted stockings**
- 1 pair summer breeches**
- 1 pair of shoes**
- 1 clothes brush**
- 2 shoe brushes**
- 1 blackball**
- 1 pair leggings (or extra Gaiters)**
- 1 handkerchief**
- 2 combs**
- One knife**
- One spoon**



Nothing else is listed as being carried. Now messmates if you look carefully at this list you will notice that he has basically a change of clothing and items to keep is clothing and shoes maintained. The only personal items are his handkerchief, combs, a knife and spoon to eat with. A soldier does not need much else on campaign. He can change shirts, shoes, neck stocks, has summer breeches to wear in hot weather, a pair of leggings for very rough terrain.

The total weight of these items and including the knapsack is still just less than ten pounds. This is what the sergeant is looking for in your knapsacks. Of course some personal items can be thrown in, but don't weigh your sack down with burdensome unnecessary items. Remember what James Wolfe said about all you need.

Some other items might be a personal item from your biography such as a flute or tin whistle. Perhaps a deck of cards or maybe some dice would be a good

addition. However, with the laws set down by their Lordships against gambling I would conceal these items somewhere else and not let them be seen at all.

As for shoes well the good sergeant knows that these are dear to many of us a good pair of center seam moccasins are a good substitute, and when your old pair wears out and you get the new shoes out. Put the old ones in the sack so you will then have them. Cobble them up rough and make them look like a good field repair. These can add a lot to your characters' biography wearing these about camp from time to time and will save on your good shoes for long Marches and battles.

Here is what I carry in my knapsack besides the Necessaries mentioned above.

1. A small pouch with six extra flints in it. This little item has saved many fellow file members as they neglected their flint supply over the years. I mainly use the three with my battalion box where you are supposed to have them.
2. Soap ball, and a small linen cloth for a towel, Boar bristle toothbrush and a small tin of tooth powder.
3. A housewife with needle and waxed linen thread. I also carry a small leather awl, to repair leather gear. Two horn gaiter buttons, one large and one small domed pewter buttons.
4. A wooden trencher,
5. A pair of mittens (which can double to grab hot items off fire).
6. A small pair of tongs for me pipe
7. A song book, and paybook
8. A small tin of Bohea tea.
9. Two small linen handkerchiefs

My tin cup I carry through the strap of the sack, as I will drink from my Canteen during the day. That's all that is needed when on campaign. The forage cap is carried tucked under the closing straps, and my heavy fatigue shirt is carried inside my blanket roll. Messmates you will be surprised what you find you do not need. Items like pipe, tobacco, strike-a-lit, knife and even my spoon I carry in my uniform pockets along with sundial compass which I have found out and the good corporal can agree gives a good time about camp. Usually our good sergeant and his Corporal will let you know when something must be done at a particular time, and good soldiers know what's going on anyway right?

I have found that modern money and car keys are never convenient carried anywhere but in a small leather bag tied with a cord around your neck.



Here I deposit car keys and a \$20.00 bill. All other modern items are locked safely in the vehicle, and out of the camp.

As for the haversack, it has only one purpose in the British army and that was to carry your food in when on campaign. I am afraid it has no other use and the dire misfortune on the individual who does not have his rations tucked neatly and safely in his haversack during inspection. Boiled beef, bread, biscuits, cheese, dried peas, oatmeal and rice properly packaged is what looks the best and will keep the sergeant in a good humor.

The following are things he does not like to see:

Shiny fruit, buy bulk apples and pairs they look better with imperfections.

French or Italian white bread, muffins and specially breakfast rolls in the Haversack.

String cheese

Your wallet or car keys

Any modern packaging

Do you get the idea messmates with these good suggestions you can trek about an encampment just like me with the good blessings of our N.C.O. Corps. No fear of the dreadful stoppages or excessive duty as a kettle Corporal at the kitchens. Therefore, take these suggestions at heart and you will find that it's not so bad. Well, take care lads and I will be back again but for now I am away on king's duty again. Remember to wear your kit high on your back and be ready for the next march.