

**THE
AMERICAN
SWORD
1775-1945**



*A SURVEY OF THE SWORDS WORN BY
THE UNIFORMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES
FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE CLOSE
OF WORLD WAR II*

*A NEW REVISED EDITION INCLUDING
American Silver Mounted Swords 1700-1815*

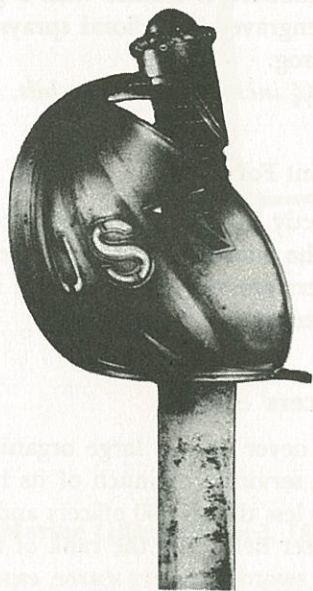
By Harold L. Peterson

War. It is English in its design and was probably imported from that country by the firms which sold it here.

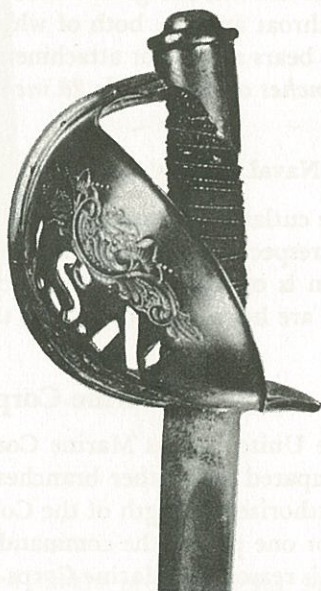
The blade, which has been broken and ground down, is slightly curved and single-edged with a heavy quill back. It is etched on the obverse side with floral sprays, a mast, a trident, the legend "United States Navy" and the name "W. H./Horstmann & Co." The reverse side bears similar floral sprays, an anchor in a sunburst, an American eagle, a ribbon with the motto "E PLURIBUS UNUM," and the words "in New York." The grips are wood covered with fish skin and were originally wrapped with twisted gilt wire. There is a ferrule at the base of the grips, and they are surmounted by a backstrap which expands to form the eagle's head pommel. The guard is of the half basket pattern with an eagle and anchor in the area of the counter-guard. There is a small counter-guard on the reverse side which works against a spring, and the quillon finial is an acorn. All metal parts of the hilt are gilded brass. The scabbard is missing.

Collection of Philip Medicus

Since the blade has been shortened no measurements are given.



140



141

140. Naval Officers' Cutlass, 1862

Students have long argued whether the cutlass illustrated in the accompanying plate was used by officers who preferred a shorter more

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compact weapon to the regulation sword or whether it was worn by chief petty officers who preferred a weapon handsomer than the issue arm. It was strictly non-regulation for either one of these groups to wear this sword, and so official documents do not help to solve the problem. Perhaps both groups used it. The Ames Sword Company catalog of 1885, however, specifically refers to it as an "officers' cutlass," and so that designation has been used here.

The curved blade is single-edged with only a rudimentary false edge. A broad fuller begins near the hilt and runs to within six and one-half inches of the point. In all respects it is exactly similar to the blades used for the issue cutlasses. It is stamped "1862" on the obverse side near the hilt and "Made by /AMES MFG. CO./ CHICOPEE/ MASS./" on the reverse side. The grips are wood covered with leather and wound with twisted gilt wire. The pommel is of the Phrygian helmet pattern and ornamented with a floral scroll around the top. It is engraved "Sam'l Huse U.S.N. to F. C. Warner U. S. N." The guard is a solid half-basket exactly like that of the enlisted man's cutlass except that it is embossed with a swirled pattern and bears the cut-out letters U S N. All metal parts of the hilt are gilded brass. The scabbard is leather with a gilded brass throat and tip, both of which are engraved with floral sprays. The throat bears a stud for attachment to a frog.

32 inches overall, blade 26 inches by 1¼ inches wide at the hilt.

141. Naval Officers' Cutlass, 1862, Variant Form

The cutlass illustrated herewith is exactly like the preceding specimen in all respects except the decoration of the guard. In this type, the swirl pattern is omitted, and the cut-out letters are set between floral sprays which are heavily stamped into the gilded brass.

Marine Corps Officers' Swords

The United States Marine Corps has never been a large organization as compared with other branches of the service. For much of its history the authorized strength of the Corps was less than 1,000 officers and men, and for one period the commanding officer held only the rank of major. For this reason the Marine Corps officer's swords are very scarce, especially for the years prior to the Civil War, at which time the distinctive Marine Corps sword was abandoned for a period of sixteen years. In 1875 the Marine Corps sword was reinstated and remained in use until 1942. The swords for this latter period are by no means common, but they are not nearly so scarce as those of the early years.