

UPDATES:

FIRST DOWNLOAD COPY - available December 2024

EDITION 1 – posted online August 22, 2023

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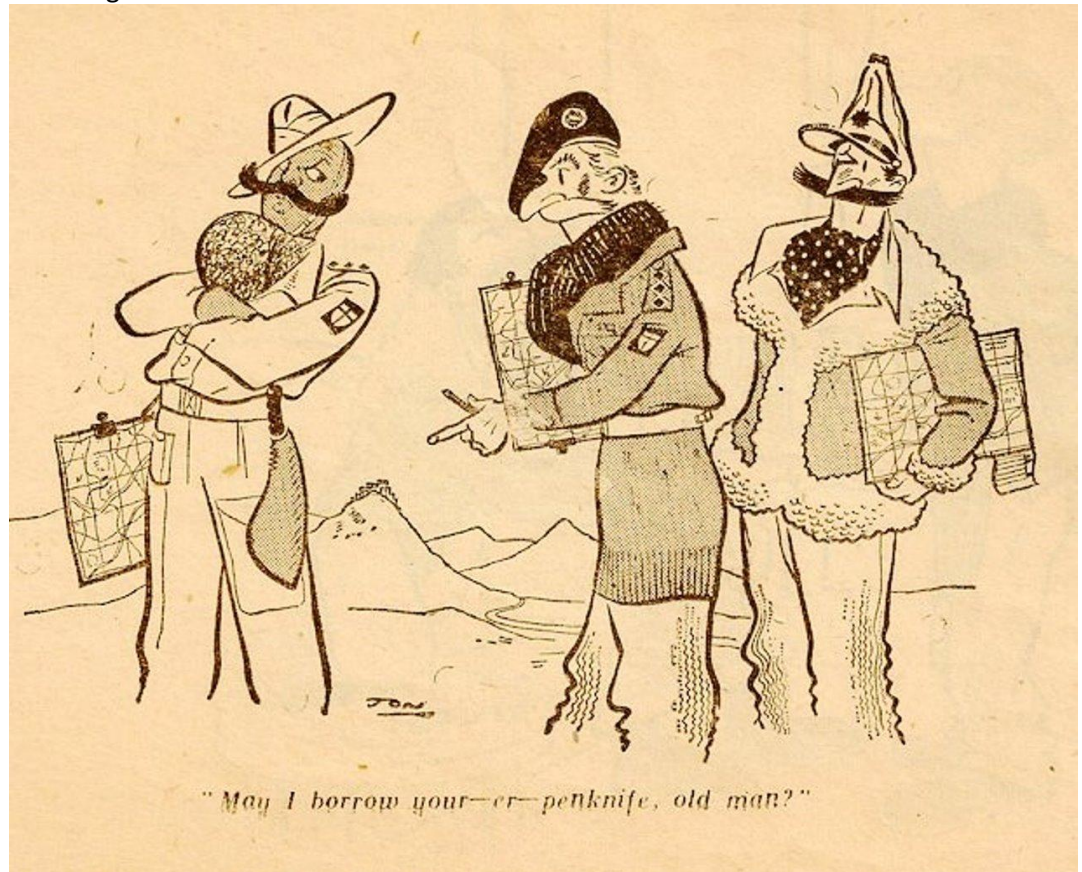
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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Collector Note is to identify and document the range of clasp knives issued to British military servicemen (including RAF personnel) during World War 2 (1939 to 1945). Clasp knives issued to naval personnel will be covered in a later Collector Note.

During the First World War, in addition to “issue” clasp knives, service personnel could also equip themselves with privately purchased knives that were considered to be of a better quality or had other qualities that appealed to the individual (see “British Private Purchase Military Clasp Knives - from the Boer War to First World War” at www.CASK.info) however this practice does not appear to have been common in WW2 and therefore the focus of this Collector Note is more on “issued” knives – with the occasional exception – see following illustration:



SOURCE: The “Two Types” by Jon, produced by the British Army Newspaper Unit, C.M.F. 1944.

2 INFORMATION SOURCES

The background information provided in this Collector Note is primarily obtained from three sources, as follows:

- Ron Flook’s “*British and Commonwealth Military Knives*”¹ (referenced in this Collector Note as B&CMK) published by Howell Press in 1999 is the pre-eminent compendium of information on this subject. A copy of the original pre-publication ‘flyer’ promoting the book is attached as Appendix 4. Where examples shown in this Collector Note are also shown in Flook’s book they are noted accordingly.

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- The individual collections of the co-authors Lawrie Wilson (writer) and Martin Cook (military knife expert), and
- from contributions to the Facebook page "Military Jack Knives from Around the World" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1802219413312074/> by individual expert collectors.

A further potential source of information has been re-discovered by Martin Cook; it of course originates from Ron Flook and it relates to Ministry of Supply records of clasp knife orders for the period 1944 -1945. In a post on the "Military Knives & Daggers of the World" website dated December 9, 2013, Ron stated "If anyone has the inclination to go and research them fully there are pages and pages of WW2 contracts for clasp knives in the Min of Supply Contract Record books held at the National Archives. I briefly looked at them when researching the FS knife contracts but it was just too much to take on at the time to look at them in detail", and he provided the following single page example.

DEMAND		ARTICLE	Quantity Demanded	Date and Number of Contract	CONTRACTOR	Quantity	Price and Unit	Value	Whether subject to Contract	Price confirmed	Value after confirmation	Delivery Date			Remarks
No. of Contracts	Priority (1) or (2)											Est.	Com. Date	Close of Month	
18736/16	1092	Knives Clasp	127,000	28/10/44	John Blyde Ltd	2,900	2s/6d	£392	No	No		7/44	11/44		
18736/16	1092	Knives Clasp	12,000	14/6/44	Thomas Turner & Co	12,000	4s/11	£2450	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Doverport Cutlery	12,500	5s/11	£1718	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Shiffeld Steel Prod	25,000	2/6	£1250	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	H.M. Slater Ltd	2,000	2/6	£350	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	W.R. Humphreys	9,100	4s/6	£1732	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Richard Piggott	4,500	3s/11	£600	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	William Neukam	6,000	4s/11	£1075	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Colclough & Cadman	7,480	4s/11	£12150	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Thomas Turner & Co	18,000	4s/11	£3675	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Colclough & Cadman	1,020	5s/6	£2222	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	Colclough & Cadman	7,480	5s/6	£1061	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	John Clack & Sons	5,200	4s/11	£2125	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.
				28/10/44	A. H. Blyde & Co	7,100	4s/11	£1448	No	No					1,500 in completion of current contract.

3 CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

3.1 Styles of British military clasp knives used in WW2.

In general terms, there were three distinct styles of common-use clasp knives issued to British military servicemen during World War 2, although it is unclear (to me at least) as to why three styles were required; this matter is discussed further in the introduction to each of the styles. The term "common-use" is used here to distinguish such knives from the "Special -Purpose" knives detailed in Section 5 of this Collector Note ([here](#)).



Three-piece (main blade, tin opener, and marlin spike)



Two-piece (main blade and tin opener)



Two-piece (main blade and tin opener) all-metal knives.

In reality however, this Collector Note describes eight different "common-use" styles of clasp knives, and it is probable that further styles (or variants of known styles) will be identified by collectors – which can then be added to this list when further editions are prepared to replace this Edition 1.

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The current list of common-use clasp knives consists of:

GROUP A: three-piece (main blade, tin opener, and marlin spike) with steel bolsters. (See [here](#))

GROUP B: three-piece with moulded bolsters. (See [here](#))

GROUP C: assumed 'private purchase' examples. (See [here](#))

GROUP D: two-piece (main blade and can opener) with steel bolsters. (See [here](#))

GROUP E: two-piece with moulded bolsters. (See [here](#))

GROUP F: NAAFI or Sudanese Linesman's knife. (See [here](#))

GROUP G: two-piece (main blade and tin opener) all-metal knives. (See [here](#))

- Early WW2 "Staybright" knives. (See [here](#))
- Late WW2 "Burma" knives. (See [here](#))

GROUP H: Miscellaneous World War Two Clasp Knives. (See [here](#))

The Special Purpose knives consist of:

- Tyre slasher knives, and similar lock-back knives. (See [here](#))
- SOE "Escape Knife". (See [here](#))
- RAF Escape Boot Knife (See [here](#))
- RAF Clasp Knife (See [here](#))
- British Gravity Knife (See [here](#))

The "Odds & Ends" knives consist of:

- Campaign Knife. (See [here](#))
- ARP Knife. (See [here](#))

The WORLD WAR 2 Indian military clasp knives are all featured [here](#).

The basis for these groupings is primarily Ron Flook's B&CMK in the section "World War Two and Post-War Army Jack/Clasp Knives" commencing on page 137.

It appears that Group A knives were first manufactured in 1939 and probably well prior to the start of WW2 on September 1, as such knives were commonly stamped with the year of manufacture – see example [here](#), and Group D & E knives likely at the same time - although 1939 dated examples appear to be very rare and therefore very collectible. An example by Joseph Rodgers with a 1939 date has been noted – see [here](#). The third of the "*distinct styles of clasp knives issued to British military servicemen*" – the all-metal Group G knives appears to have been manufactured in two phases, being: from **1939 to 1941**, and then from **1944 onwards**, with this later phase probably having been the result of UK's expanded involvement in the War in South Asia (and in particular the Burma campaign), with the consequent need for an all-metal clasp knife better suited to tropical conditions.

Further, in the lead-up to the War, as part of the mobilization process, the standard issue knife to military servicemen was the pattern 6353/1905, the same as issued to military servicemen in WW1 – and until 1939. It is not clear if the production was continuous from the end of WW1 however examples dated 1937, 1938 and 1939 are known.



Maker: "G[Ⓒ]R J. RODGERS & SONS 6 NORFOLK ST SHEFFIELD ENGLAND" is stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade, and "* + 1938" is stamped on the pile side. The closed length is 4 7/8 inches (12.5cm)

I have another two identical knives made by Wade & Butcher that are also stamped **1938**.



A Pattern 6353/1905 Army knife dated 1939, showing the last issue date for these knives.

Maker: "WADE & BUTCHER SHEFFIELD" on the mark tang of the main blade and "1939" on the pile side. The marline spike has a "W↑D" stamp.

A post by [Neil Jenkins](#) (NJ Militaria) on the "**Military Jack Knives from Around the World**" Facebook page notes that these knives are referred to by collectors as the "*Dunkirk Knife*" given that they were carried by servicemen who were evacuated from Dunkirk in early May 1940.

Also, of interest is another post on the Facebook page "**Military Jack Knives from Around the World**" dated September 9, 2022, by active contributor [Martin Jan Brayley](#), with a photo showing the content of the RAF Middle East Command air-drop survival pack; the photo is dated circa 1942 and clearly shows a pattern 6353/1905 clasp knife with a whistle attached.



Contents of RAF Middle East Command air-drop survival pack. C.1942.



Detail of RAF Middle East Command air-drop survival pack. C.1942.

In addition to these pattern 6353/1905 clasp knives, Flook (B&CMK pages 149 and 150) identifies another style of knife that was issued to the British military from at least the early 1920s and possible before, and states that "*While evidence exists to indicate that these knives were issued to the military during World War Two they do not comply in style with any of the usual patterns*". An example of the knife shown on Flook's "Plate 352" is included in this Collector Note in "GROUP K: Miscellaneous World War Two Clasp Knives" (see [here](#)).

Appendix 3 contains a small collection of photos of knives 'being worn', that have been copied from **The Perth Regiment of Canada** website by Gavin K. Watt Part 7 Clasp Knives. <https://www.perthregiment.ca/copy-of-part-8-sten-1> (with permission). [Martin Cook](#) has observed that all the knives identifiable in these photos appear to be the "*2-piece moulded bolster knives*" – see Section "4.5. GROUP E" [here](#).

3.2 Clothing Codes:

Rarely, some clasp knives are found with the 'CC' mark, usually on the tin opener. See Flook pages 140 and 141. To date the following 'CC' codes have been noted:
1940 3pce; CC777 (RAF code)

1944 3pce; CC0532

1944 2pce; CC1001

1947 3pce; CC1029

1951 3pce: CC1029 – details shown on the following knife which is a recent addition to Martin Cook's collection.



Maker: "A. WRIGHT & SONS Ltd. SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of the main Sheepfoot blade. The mark side tang of the tin opener is stamped "↑" above the date "1951", above clothing code mark "CC1029". An interesting observation by Martin Cook is that the hilt rivets have been filed smooth – as shown in the above photo.

The style of this knife is consistent with the knives detailed in "GROUP B: three-piece with moulded bolsters" and is evidence that this style was still being issued in 1951.

4 DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 GROUP A: three-piece, with steel bolsters.

The first of the 'three distinct styles', this group was first produced in 1939 and appears to have been phased out in 1945; Flook (Plate 319 page 139) shows an example by Richards dated 1945 which is stamped ↑ and unusually for this pattern includes a combined tin opener/bottle opener, see an identical knife also made by Richards on the following page. The centre steel liner of these knives is extended to form a screwdriver tip. Apart from the late inclusion of the combined tin opener/bottle opener, there are two versions of this pattern: from its first production in 1939 until around 1941 the knife had a copper shackle; however this was phased out during 1941 and was replaced with a steel shackle. The "1941" date is indicative only as some manufacturers started the replacement in 1940 and others were apparently still including copper shackles in 1942.



Maker: "G. BUTLER & Co. SHEFFIELD" stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade and the tin opener, and "MADE IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND" stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade. The pile side of the tin opener is stamped "1939". The spike is stamped "↑" above "8". The shackle is copper. The knife has an almost uniform dark grey patina which may be original? The knife appears to be consistent with Flook's Plate 317 (page 138).



Maker: “↑ **1940 RICHARDS SHEFFIELD**” is stamped on the pile side of the tin opener and “RICHARDS SHEFFIELD” is stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade. The shackle is copper with a belt hanger comprising of a simplex hook attached to a steel ‘D’ ring on a web belt loop.



Maker: “↑ **S.S.P. 1941**” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. S.S.P. is an abbreviation of ‘Sheffield Steel Products’. The shackle is steel. There is some evidence of a grey patina. The knife appears to be consistent with Flook’s Plate 317 (page 138).



Maker: “↑ **1945 RICHARDS SHEFFIELD**” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener which also has the later bottle opener. Unusually for a late war knife it has metal bolsters.

The knife has a contemporary belt hanger comprising of a simplex hook and leather belt loop with metal swivel.

Note that an all-metal version of this pattern is detailed in the following section “4.3 GROUP C” [here](#).

4.2 GROUP B: three-piece, with moulded bolsters

In reference to Plate 320 (page 139), Flook states “*What exactly prompted the introduction of the moulded bolster is not known for sure, but it was probably due to ease of manufacture and/or a saving in steel*”. There are two types of these knives with full bexoid grips, early examples have full chequered grips, but later knives have a bolster that was moulded into the front of the grips. Again, the copper shackle was phased out circa 1941. By 1945, these moulded bolster knives had a bottle opener on the tin opener blade, like the late war knives with steel bolsters. These knives continued to be made post WW2, and they were still being made in the early 1950’s but were phased out with the introduction of the all-metal version around 1952.



Maker: “↑ 1940” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener and “BAXTER Ltd. SHEFFIELD” stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade. The thin flat grips have full length chequering. The shackle is copper with a belt hanger comprising a simplex hook attached to a steel ring on a web belt loop.



Maker: “↑ [violin logo] G. IBBERSON & Co, SHEFFIELD ENGLAND 1942” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. The thin grips have full length chequering. The shackle is steel. Flook plate 324 (page 141) shows an identical knife and comments on the rather poor quality considering it is made by Ibberson.



Maker: “A.H. BISBY & Co. Ld. ↑ SHEFFIELD 1945” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. The shackle is steel. There is some minor evidence of a grey patina. The knife appears to be consistent with Flook’s Plate 320 (page 139). The knife is dated 1945 but does not have the bottle opener variation.



Maker: “↑ 1943 TAYLORS (EYE WITNESS LOGO) SHEFFIELD” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. The shackle is steel with a contemporary belt hanger attached.



Maker: “↑ 1947, W&S.B, SHEFFIELD” is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener which has the bottle opener attachment. “W&S.B” is the abbreviation of W. & S. Butcher Ltd. which by the late 19th century was owned by the Wade & Butcher company. The shackle is steel.

4.3 GROUP C: ‘private purchase’ examples of the three-piece knife.

These knives are included in this Collector Note to emphasise that just because a knife has identical characteristics to a known military pattern, does not automatically mean that it is in fact a military issue knife. Although not nearly as common as the WW1 practice, Sheffield manufacturers did make military pattern knives that were of a superior quality to the standard issue knife, and this appears to be the case with the following two knives. The third knife however does not have any similarity to a known military pattern.



Maker: “HARRISON BROS & HOWSON SHEFFIELD” is stamped on the pile side tang of the mail blade. Shackle is copper. All metal is bright, probably stainless steel. The tin opener does not incorporate a bottle opener which suggests that it dates to pre-1945.



Maker: “I CUT MY WAY [trademark] WILLIAM RODGERS SHEFFIELD”. The shackle is nickel silver. The knife appears to be unused and unsharpened but shows significant staining due to ‘sitting syndrome’. The inclusion of the combined tin opener/bottle opener suggests a date of 1945 or possibly later. One scale has a probably fake ↑ pheon mark.



Maker: “SMECO, SHEFF ENG” on the mark side of the tin opener. SMECO is S. M. Ellis & Co. of Sheffield. Nickel silver scales and a steel shackle. Again, due to the presence of a bottle opener, this knife dates from 1945. The dimensions of this knife are the same as all the standard “common-use” clasp knives detailed above, being specifically a closed

length of 3.8 inches (9.8cm). This distinguishes this knife from the similar “Girl Guides” and “ARP” styles knives that have a closed length of 9cm. or less.

4.4 GROUP D: two-piece, with steel bolsters

The second of the 'three distinct styles' of this group appears to have been in production from 1940 as I am not aware of any example that date earlier. Flook observes (in reference to the knife shown in Plate 325 page 141) "*Manufactured in parallel with the three-piece knives throughout World War Two, two-pieces appear to have fallen out of favour in the early post-war years as no example dated later than 1946 has been observed*".

In fact, these knives with steel bolsters are scarce and only seem to have been made in 1940 as no other dates have yet been observed by the joint authors, noting that Flook suggests that 1946 may be the final date of manufacture.



Maker: "↑ 1940" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener and "HARRISON FISHER CO LTD, SHEFFIELD" stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade. The shackle is copper.



Maker: "↑ 1940" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener and "JOSEPH WESTBY SHEFFIELD" stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade. The shackle is copper.

4.5 GROUP E: two-piece, with moulded bolsters.

These knives are much more common than the Group D knives above. They also show variations in the grip form, but most are found with a bolster moulded into the hexoid grip. Like the three-piece knives, by 1945 a bottle opener was included on the tin opener blade.



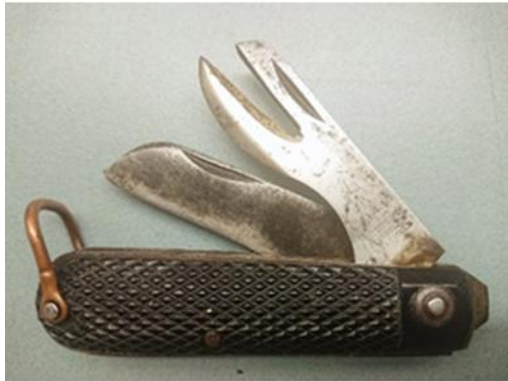
Maker: "J. RODGERS 6 NORFOLK ST SHEFFIELD *+" stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade. The pile side of the tin opener is stamped "↑ 1940" and is partially ground out. The grip is fully chequered with no moulded bolster. The shackle is copper with a boot lace for a lanyard.



A similar example, also by Joseph Rodgers and with slightly different flat scales has been noted dated 1939, see adjacent photos - [SOURCE](#): Martin Cook's files.



Maker: "G. BUTLER & Co. SHEFFIELD" stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade and the tin opener, and "MADE IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND" stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade. The pile side of the tin opener is stamped "↑ 1940". The shackle is copper.



Maker: "HERBERT ROBINSON SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade. The mark side of the tin opener is stamped "↑ 1941 HERBERT ROBINSON SHEFFIELD" over five lines. The shackle is copper.



Maker: H. ROBOTHAM & Co. SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of the main blade. Note the unusual recessed dimple pattern grips. The shackle is steel. There are no obvious military marks or date, but it is assumed early WW2 as Flook shows one by G. Ibberson dated 1941; plate 330 (page 143)



Maker: "↑ 1943 E. BLYDE & Co Ltd SHEFFIELD". This knife is included to show the thin grips which do not fully cover the steel liners, a feature of many WW2 knives with bexoid grips. It may be due to wartime economy or that the bexoid has shrunk over the years.



Maker: no name. There is some evidence of a ↑ pheon on the mark side of the tin opener but insufficient to say that it is legitimate. The shackle is steel.

This knife has many of the features shown in photo 4 "*Royal Signals, 1940 pattern BD Blouse knife by SSP 1943*" of [Appendix 1](#): Photos of knives in use ([here](#)).



Maker: "↑ S.S.P. 1943" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. S.S.P. is an abbreviation of 'Sheffield Steel Products'. The shackle is steel.

This knife is an example of the knives referenced above as being depicted "in use" in [Appendix 1](#).



Maker: "DAWES & BALL SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side of the blade, and the mark side of the tin opener is stamped "↑ 1945". The shackle is steel. This knife has a bottle opener on the tin opener blade - albeit that the 'claw' of the tin opener is broken.



Maker: "E. BLYDE & CO SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. Full chequered flat grips which are probably fibre, not bexoid. Steel shackle.

The tin opener blade has a bottle opener dating this knife to c. 1945-6, however the knife itself is not stamped with either a date or a ↑ pheon and therefore is likely to be a post-war commercial product.



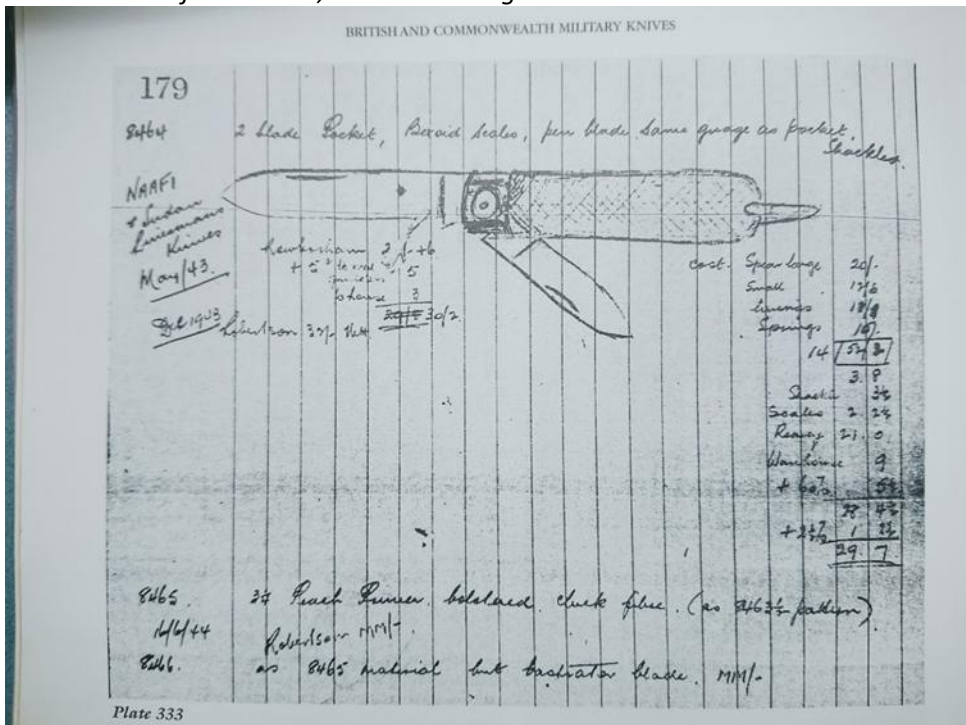
Maker: "WADE & BUTCHER SHEFFIELD ENGLAND" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener. Full chequered thick flat grips of a slightly different pattern and probably made from fibre. Steel shackle.

The tin opener blade has a bottle opener dating this knife to c. 1945-6. As with the above knife, the blades are not stamped with either a date or a ↑ pheon and therefore is likely to be a post-war commercial product. This knife appears to be unused.

4.6 GROUP F: NAAFI or Sudanese Linesman's knife

The sole source of this information is again Flook's B&CMK (page 143 - reproduced here courtesy of Ron Flook) where he refers to "... a cutlers day book for the firm "Maleham and Yeoman" in the following terms: "In this book a line illustration, reproduced as (333), shows this style of knife under the designation NAAFI (Navy, Army Air Force Institute) and Sudanese Linesman's Knife, with apparent orders for May and December 1943. The reference to NAAFI would appear to indicate that this organisation purchased these knives for sale to servicemen". In reality, it is probable that these knives were not "issue" knives but rather were "private purchase" items, as none of the known examples have a date stamp or a ↑ pheon.

The script above the text states "2 blade pocket, Bexoid scales, pen blade same gauge as pocket, Shackles". The two knives following are consistent with this description, particularly with regard to the "pen blade being the same gauge as pocket". The second knife appears to be identical to Flook's Plate 336 which he describes as "... a previously unrecorded version of the NAAFI knife having a sheep's foot main blade. This knife bears no indication of the maker, the blade being marked SHEFFIELD ENGLAND".





Maker: "THOMAS TURNER & Co. SHEFFIELD" with "ENCORE" trademark stamped on the mark side of the blade. The mark side of the secondary blade is stamped "SHEFFIELD ENGLAND". The shackle is steel. This knife appears to be identical to the that shown on Plate 335 of Flook (page 144) although there is some slight variation in blade dimensions: main blade 2.75 in., secondary blade 2.5 in. The closed length of the knife is 3.6 inches.



Maker: "VENTURE H. M. SLATER SHEFFIELD" stamped on the mark side tang of the main sheepfoot blade and "MADE IN SHEFFIELD ENGLAND" on the mark side tang of the secondary blade. The shackle is steel. This knife appears to be identical to that shown on Plate 336 of Flook (page 144) although there is some slight variation in blade dimensions: main blade 2.75 in., secondary blade 2.5 in. The closed length of the knife is 3.6 inches.



Maker: 'WILLIAM RODGERS SHEFFIELD' in 3 lines on the mark side tang of the single 2.5" blade. Steel shackle.

This knife is not in Flook but is almost identical to the "VENTURE H. M. SLATER" NAAFI knives described above, but with a single blade.

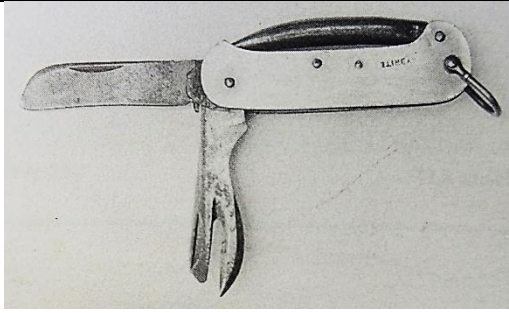
4.7 GROUP G: two-piece, all-metal knives

The third of the 'three distinct styles', this group of all-metal knives is described by Flook (page 145) in the following terms. "*All-metal knives underwent a brief period of manufacturing in 1939 – 1940, and then for some unknown reason they dropped out of favour until 1944*". "... the predominant manufacturer of these knives in the 1939 – 1940 period was George Ibberson. In these early years Ibberson made three different all-metal knives whose common feature was the STAYBRITE stamp on the scales."

"Staybrite" was the trade name given to 18/8 stainless steel (i.e. 18% chromium, 8% nickel) in 1924 by steelmakers Thomas Firth of Sheffield when they began to publicise this remarkable material that had been discovered, by chance, by their metallurgist Harry Brearley in 1913.

4.7.1 Early WW2 'Staybrite' Knives.

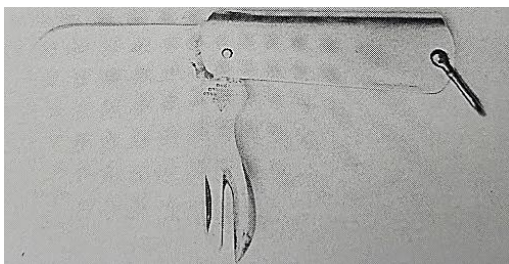
Based on the further details provided by Flook the following are the three all-metal knives made by George Ibberson and stamped "STAYBRITE".



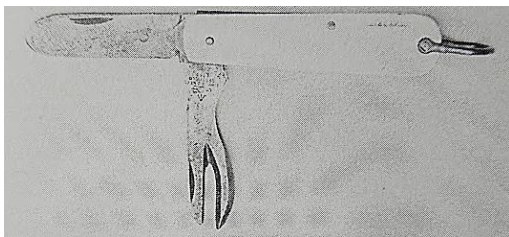
This illustration is copied from Plate 337 (page 144 of B&CMK). The accompanying text states *"This example utilises a canoe-shaped body fitted with main blade, can opener and marlin spike; the shackle is copper. Besides the STAYBRITE mark on the scales, the can opener is marked with the Ibberson name, the violin trademark and the date 1940. Another example dated 1939*

carries the W↑D mark on the marlin spike". This example is of course a 'three-piece' knife that is also relevant to the previous section "4.1 GROUP A" [here](#).

In regard to the other two knives made by George Ibberson and stamped STAYBRITE, Flook notes (page 145) *"Both of these knives are dated 1940 but use totally different forms of body construction, despite having the same blades"*.



This illustration is a copy of the bottom half of Plate 338 & 339 (page 145) and is referenced as 338. The relevant text states that *"(338) has a body formed out of one piece of metal which is folded over to give a rolled back;"* The knife bears the Ibberson name and trademark and STAYBRITE on the grip.



This illustration is a copy of the top half of Plate 338 & 339 (page 145) and is referenced as 339. The relevant text states that *"(338) has slab-sided grips of a style used later in the war"*. An important difference however is that the later all-metal knives were of the 'easy opener' style and included the

combined tin opener/bottle opener. The knife bears the Ibberson name and trademark and STAYBRITE on the grip.

The following knife is an example of the knife referenced as "338" above.



Maker: "↑ [violin trademark] G. IBBERSON & Co. SHEFFIELD 1941" is stamped on the mark side tang of the blade. The mark side scale is stamped "STAYBRITE". The shackle is steel. The body is formed out of one piece of metal which is folded over to give a rolled back.

Below is a comparison of four Ibberson 'Staybrite' knives. All of these varieties of Ibberson knives were made in the early years of WW2 and are rare knives which are challenging to find. Those with 1941 dates even more so.

Note that the 'rollback' knife at the top is dated 1941 and has a steel shackle, it is logical to assume that the other two styles of knife were also produced in 1941 also with steel shackles. Indeed, an example of the 3-piece knife with the 'canoe' shaped body has been observed with a 1941 date and steel shackle. To date no example of a 'slab sided' 2-piece knife dated 1941 has been observed.



1941 dated Ibberson 'rollback' with steel shackle

1940 dated Ibberson 'rollback' with copper shackle.

1940 dated Ibberson 'canoe' scales 3-piece knife including a marline spike, with copper shackle.

1940 dated Ibberson 'slab' sided knife with copper shackle.

4.7.2 [Late WW2 'Burma' Knives.](#)

Flook (page 145) provides a further elaboration regarding the all-metal knives in the following terms: *"After a gap in the production of metal knives an all-stainless pattern appeared in 1944. Known in the cutlery trade as the Burma Knife it was apparently designed to replace the more traditional pattern for use under corrosive conditions. The body shape of these knives is similar to (339) except that they have a cut-out in the body which gives access to the blade finger nicks. The can opener has the bottle opener attachment which appeared in most patterns at this time. Another interesting feature which appears on nearly all these knives is the OIL THE JOINTS marking which is still used today on stainless clasp knives"*.



Maker: "S.S.P. 1944 ↑" is stamped on the mark side of the tin opener, with the pheon being over-stamped with a reversed pheon to indicate that it has been 'sold out of service'. S.S.P is an abbreviation of 'Sheffield Steel Products'. The shackle is steel.

Other S.S.P. knives that date from 1944 had the "S.S.P. 1944 ↑" on the scale rather than on the tin opener, as on the knife shown below. As far as we know only S.S.P. and H.M. Slater made knives which are dated 1944.



I have another example of an S.S.P. made knife dated 1945 which is stamped “OIL THE JOINT” on the scale (all other makers use OIL THE JOINTS) and given the observation by Flook detailed above regarding such stamping, it may be that “OIL THE JOINTS” was added in 1945.



Collectors should note that these knives are prone to having a broken back spring and this should be checked prior to purchasing one.



Maker: “↑ 1945 WADE & BUTCHER SHEFFIELD, OIL THE JOINTS” on the scales. A standard ‘Burma’ knife with an original rope lanyard or “hairy string” as the troops called them.

Most of these ‘Burma’ knives will be found with a 1945 date and some interesting makers marks can be found as shown by the two examples below by Dawes & Ball and Joseph Rodgers.



4.8 GROUP H: Miscellaneous World War Two Clasp Knives

4.8.1 Easy Opener knives

This style of knife appears to have been a British military issue knife in the 1920s and 1930s and there is some speculation amongst collectors that in fact they were first introduced towards the end of WW1. This matter is discussed in detail in the companion Collector Note “British Military Clasp Knives – 1905 – 1939” (refer www.CASK.info). In regard to the following two knives (ref: Flook Plate 352 and Plate 354 page 149) Flook explains that “*While evidence exists to indicate that these knives were issued to the military during World War Two they do not comply in style with any of the usual patterns. Although made by a number of different manufacturers they are not common today, possible as a result of limited manufacturing effort.*”



Maker: "J. CLARKE & SON SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of both the main blade and the tin opener. It has a closed length of 4 ¼ inches (8.3cm), steel pins, liners, and shackle, and pressed leather scales. This knife appears to be identical to Flook's (352) however it is noted that the numbering of knives (352) and (354) in Flook's text is incorrect and needs to be reversed.



This illustration is a copy of Plate 354 (page 151) of Flook's B&CMK where it appears in the text as (352), noting however that the numbering of knives (352) and (354) in the text is incorrect and needs to be reversed. The description states that the knife "... is by Wade and Butcher whose name appears on both the main blade and the can opener. The

scales are fibre and the marlin spike is stamped with a service number 527401. Main blade is 3.25 inches and the overall length is 7.625 inches. Another example made George Wostenholm has its marlin spike marked with a W↑D stamp".



Maker: "WATTS SHEFFIELD" with W↑D on the marlin spike.

This one was shown by 'Jocknife' on the 'Military Knives & Daggers of the World' website on September 2, 2014, who said "It was issued to a Lowestoft Fisherman /Trawlerman (minehunting & clearance) during WW2, according to the seller, his

Grandson".

4.8.2 Watts Marline spike knife

Flook has one other example that is worth including in this "Miscellaneous World War Two Clasp Knives" section, being Plate 322 (page 143)



Maker: "↑ 1943 WATTS SHEFFIELD"

Blade 2.7", overall length 6.25". The shackle is steel.

Collectors should note that two-part knives like this are not uncommon but are found without the ↑ pheon and the WW2 dates and are probably not a military issue knife.



Flook's description and comment is as follows: "This unusual variant is fitted only with a main blade and marlin spike. Only two examples have been noted, both by Watts; one shown dates from 1944 and the other is dated 1943. What prompted the manufacture of

a knife without a can opener is unknown, but it is an amazing omission when one considers that such a feature had been fitted to Army Knives since at least the Boer War. Blade length 2.625 inches; overall length is 6.25 inches". One possible answer is that it was not intended for military use, but rather was issued to other government personnel such as home front workers including ARP or even the Home Guard.

4.8.3 Un-marked tin opener

Admittedly this next folder is not a knife, but rather a one blade tin opener. However, it has all the attributes of a mid WW2 soldier's tool. It is unmarked and quite unusual.



4.8.4 Electricians' knives

These knives are detailed in Flook's B&CMK under the heading "Electrician's Pocket knife" (ref page 155) and appear to have originated in the 1930's as a commercial knife. The military knife appears to date from the early 1940s examples with a **↑** pheen and WW2 dates of **1943** and **1944** have been noted. More modern knives, such as the example shown immediately below, are identical to the wartime knives with only slight variations in size (possibly due to different manufacturers tolerances). These knives have a screwdriver, file and cutting edge all on the one blade. The knife has a nickel bolster, and the scales are vulcanised fibre. Flook also notes a version with an additional pen blade by George Wostenholm (plate 370). These are in fact a 1930's commercial knife marketed by Wostenholm as 'The Knife for the Wireless Enthusiast' and having no military marks are unlikely to be military issue. See [Appendix 3 here](#).



Maker: "'A. WRIGHT & SON Ltd. SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of the blade, and the pile side is stamped "**↑ 1963**". The mark side scale is stamped with the NATO stores number "910-5285". The knife has pressed fibre scales, nickel silver bolsters, steel liners and pins.



A WW2 "**↑ 1944**" dated Electricians knife, the mark side tang stamped "IXL GEORGE WOSTENHOLM SHEFFIELD".

5 SPECIAL PURPOSE KNIVES

5.1 Dagger Jacks - tyre slasher knives, and similar

These knives are of significant interest to collectors of WW2 British military clasp knives, both because of their intended purpose as tool/weapon for special forces and because of their (varying) rarity. However, because a version of these knives was commercially produced by several Sheffield manufacturers from the 1950s and is still in production today, there is some disagreement amongst experts and collectors as to what constitutes

a legitimate WW2 product, and how to distinguish between such legitimate WW2 products and other products that are purported to be from WW2 but in fact are commercially produced knives from a much later date.

The purpose of this Section 5.1 of the Collector Note therefore is to review all of the evidence available in an endeavour to identify those matters that are not in dispute - that is, firstly to describe the two styles of knives that were made for the SOE in late 1943 and 1944, and secondly to discuss the other knives of a similar style that may have a WW2 military connection, or alternatively are clearly post-WW2 commercially produced products.

5.1.1 References and background information

I am familiar with four documentary references to the “tyre slasher knife and similar lock-back knives” – all written by the eminent UK collector and military knives expert Ron Flook. These references effectively plot the evolution of the knowledge of such knives spanning the period 1999 - 2022. The references are:

- The previously mentioned ([here](#)) “British and Commonwealth Military Knives”² (referenced in this Collector Note as B&CMK) published in 1999.
- An article in April 2009 edition of Knife World magazine having the title “Is it or Isn’t it SOE”³.
- An article in the September 2012 edition of Knife World magazine having the title “Makers of the SOE Knives Revealed”.
- “Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive” privately published by Flook in 2022⁴

In addition, we have access to file notes that Martin Cook created some years ago following discussions with the late collector and author Brian Moyse who had been researching SOE knives. Note that Brian Moyse is also quoted in the “OSS-SOE Escape Knives” Collector Note (www.CASK.info).

It is also important to note that Ron Flook has consistently maintained that original SOE knives were NOT marked. As recently as **August 11, 2023**, he commented on his website that “*In the 9th Feb I noted the SOE style lock knives with makers marks being sold as SOE, now within the last few weeks we have marked examples being sold as Commando Lock knives - they are not they are simply post war commercial knives.*”

Flook’s “**British and Commonwealth Military Knives**” was my introduction to the “tyre slasher” knife; it provided contextual information, including their connection to the wartime Special Operations Executive (SOE), and detailed that there were two versions, as follows (page 46): “*Documented for the first time over a decade ago by Pierre Lorain the SOE Tyre Slasher was only recently illustrated in H. Keith Melton’s ‘OSS Special Weapons and Equipment’. Although it is possible such knives did see service with the OSS, it was manufacture in England primarily for use by the SOE. Such SOE official issue knives, as one would expect, are unmarked [i.e. “sterile” .ed], but by a pure coincidence at least one manufacturer has been identified. In writing to John Watts Ltd ..., without prompting, this kind of knife was mentioned in their reply. Two versions of the knife exist, one with a moulded bolster and the other with a white metal bolster not unlike that found on the Electrician’s Pocket-knife. Whether Watts manufactured both versions is not known. The knife comprises a clip-pointed blade which locks into place and grips of chequered Bakelite or Bexoid. The grips on the version with the metal bolster are flatter than those on the other model. At the staple end of the knife there is a small folding hook-shaped blade which was designed for slashing the walls of tyres.*” Plates 93, 94 and 95 (page 46) illustrate the two versions.

5.1.2 The official SOE version



pattern without the tyre slasher blade having the title "KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK, S.B.- Single blade.

Knives, Dagger Jack Single Blade		
COMPANY	ORDER DATE	QUANTITY
Butler	11/20/43	10000
Holland	3/20/44	10000
Wostenholm	3/20/44	2880
Watts	5/22/44	4000
Holland	9/9/44	920
Watts	9/5/44	2000
Rodgers	3/27/52	1000
TOTALS:-		30800

Knives, Dagger Jack Double Blade		
COMPANY	ORDER DATE	QUANTITY
Butler	11/20/43	20000
Holland	3/20/44	10000
Rowbotham	2/5/44	25000
Rodgers	1/19/44	18000
Watts	5/22/44	6000
Watts	9/5/44	6000
Holland	9/9/44	2110
TOTALS:-		87110

Combined Totals, Both Types	
COMPANY	QUANTITY
Wostenholm	2880
Watts	18000
Rodgers	19000
Holland	23030
Rowbotham	25000
Butler	30000
TOTALS:-	117910

Flook's article in April 2009 edition of Knife World magazine having the title "Is it or Isn't it SOE" provides the first 'official' information regarding the production of SOE weapons – being a document titled "Descriptive Catalogue of Special devices and Supplies" dated 1944 and classified as "Top Secret". The importance of this article is that it recognised that in addition to the two versions of the tyre slasher knife (one with a moulded bolster and the other with a white metal bolster), there was also a separate pattern – being identical to the two tyre slasher versions (with the catalogue number of J 189) but without the tyre slasher blade (with the catalogue number J 137). Flook's article includes an illustration from the "Descriptive Catalogue ..." which shows the white metal bolster version of the tyre slasher pattern as having the title "KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK, D.B." ("D.B." being an abbreviation of 'double blade') and the

Flook's article in the September 2012 edition of Knife World magazine having the title "Makers of the SOE Knives Revealed" provided a further insight into the 'tyre slasher' narrative with publication of a table – see adjacent (compiled by Flook and copied from page 27 of the magazine) detailing the makers of all the tyre slasher style knives procured by SOE during WW2, being "Knives Dagger Jack Single Blade" and "Knives, Dagger Jack Double Blade" – with the latter being the "tyre slasher knife". Regarding this table Flook stated that "... the records of the Ministry of Supply did identify several makers and the contracts they received, and this information has been collected into the table on page 27".

Of interest is the timeframe for the production of the knives – the first order for both versions is to BUTLER dated November 20, 1943, and orders for other makers are spread over dates between January and September 1944, with the last wartime order being September 9, 1944. Flook in his more recently published book "Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive" also notes a date of March 1952 for a contract to RODGERS for 1000 "Knives Dagger Jack Single Blade" well after the end of WW2, although no explanation is given as to why such knives were required nearly 7 years after the end of WW2. Similarly, Flook is referenced in the "OSS/SOE Escape Knife" Collector Note (see www.CASK.info) in regard to the Joseph Rodgers & Sons "All-Purpose" Knife. According to Flook, documents in the UK National Archive indicates that "... in December 1952, a contract was placed with Joseph Rodgers for 250 of these knives" – assumed to be the "ALL-PURPOSE" knife which is the 'official' name of what we collectors call the OSS/SOE Escape Knife. I am unaware of any other documentation regarding this 1952 contract knife, and Flook also raises the question at the conclusion of his article: "... why and for whom

were knives associated with the SOE (which had been disbanded in 1946) still being ordered in 1952?”. I have no precise answer to such question – except to observe that the date 1952 corresponds with the start of the “Mau Mau” terrorist ‘uprising’ (independence movement) in the then British colony of Kenya, and perhaps the knives were considered by the UK Ministry of Supply as being suitable for UK military and/or police Special Branch personnel engaged in the conflict. Perhaps there is a similar connection in relation to the contract to RODGERS for 1000 “Knives Dagger Jack Single Blade” in March 1952?

Flook’s “**Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive**” privately published in 2022 provides an extended analysis (pages 10 – 23) of the document “*Descriptive Catalogue of Special devices and Supplies*” together with a copy of the original specification for both patterns of “KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK,” as described above, being “SPECIFICATION No. JS. 189 AND J 137”, and later amendment. It also includes the table (shown on the page above) that identifies the five manufacturers for the “KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK SINGLE BLADE” of which a total of 30800 were made, and five manufacturers for the “KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK DOUBLE BLADE” of which a total of 87110 were made. Flook also provides a photo for each of the two patterns showing the three variants of each. These six knives are all ‘sterile’ in that they accord with “SECTION IV – MARKING’ of the specification that states “No markings of any description are to appear on any part of the knives”.

Following is a copy of the photos in “**Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive**” (page 19) for each of the two patterns showing the three variants of each.



“(2.8) Three examples of Knives, Dagger Jack Single Blade. The example at the top has the recessed dimple pattern grip material that has been noted on some early WW2 Army jack knives”.



“(2.9) This shows examples of Knives, Dagger Jack Double Blade. Minor design features such as placement of Rivets may indicate manufacturing variation by the different makers. The knife at the top is the rare large version”.

By reference to the illustration on the previous page 20 above (and [here](#)), it appears that the “Knives, dagger jack, single blade” (i.e. without the tyre slasher blade) was in fact the earlier of the two versions as it has an earlier catalogue number, and also the “Description” of the double-blade version makes reference to the single-blade version, as follows “A folding knife, similar to the Knife Dagger Jack, Plain (Item No. 137) but with an additional Tyre Slashing Blade.”

Based on the information detailed above, it can be stated with a very high degree of certainty that the official SOE version lock-back knives – as produced for the SOE during

WW2 (from November 1943 to September 1944) had the following defining characteristics:

1. They were “sterile” – that is, “*No markings of any description are to appear on any part of the knives*”.
2. The main clip blade has a sharpened back edge to the clip section of the blade. This is the feature that defines this knife as a “Dagger” and therefore a weapon.
1. They could be either a single blade version or include a second “*small folding hook-shaped blade which was designed for slashing the walls of tyres*”.

The following two knives appears to be identical to the bottom knife in each of the illustrations immediately above, including the absence of “*markings of any description ... on any part of the knives*”.



Maker: not stated (i.e. “sterile”). Dagger Jack DB (double blade). Made for SOE clandestine military operations, such knives have no stamping and consequently are described as being “sterile”. Moulded bexoid scales and steel shackle. This knife has the small ‘tyre slasher’ blade folding out from the back end. This knife has a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip section of the clip point blade which is a defining characteristic of SOE ‘tyre slasher’ knives.



Maker: this knife is also a ‘sterile’ Dagger Jack SB (single blade). Moulded bexoid scales and steel shackle. This knife has a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip section of the main blade which is a defining characteristic of SOE knives. Fitted with a rope lanyard.

A final observation on this sub-section “*The official SOE version*” comes from well-known UK collector of military knives Neil Champion: “*Most of the manufacturer marked examples we see today are from makers who weren’t on the wartime Ministry of Supply contract records. Or the makers marks have been erased or partially removed by the unscrupulous to try and deceive the unwary.*”

5.1.3 Lock-back knives with a possible WW2 military connection

This second sub-section is probably the area where the legitimacy of a possible military connection is in contention. In establishing the parameters for this discussion, the following points are considered relevant:

1. This discussion is not about knives that were made for the SOE; all such knives have been discussed in the preceding sub-section 1.3. Therefore, primarily, it relates to single-blade lock-back style knives, as no examples of knives with the tyre slasher blade and a maker’s name are known to the joint authors of this Collector Note.
2. An interesting observation was made by Flook in the “*Is it or Isn’t it SOE*” article in the April 2009 edition of Knife World magazine, which states: “*Whilst a number of clandestine type weapons were undoubtedly available as private purchase,*

particularly for sale to Special Forces such as the SAS and Commandos, there is nothing to formally link such items to the SOE”.

3. For there to be a wartime connection, it follows that such “private purchase” versions would have been made by one of the six previously authorised SOE contractors, being: GEO. BUTLER & COMPANY LTD, J. B. HOLLAND, GEO. WOSTENHOLM & SON LTD., JOHN WATTS LTD., JOSEPH RODGERS & SONS LTD., and H. ROWBOTHAM & COMPANY LTD.
4. There have been suggestions from some collectors regarding the possibility that “tyre cutter” knives were in fact an issue knife to “*Special Forces such as the SAS and Commandos*” in the later stage of the war however to date no official evidence to support this has been located.
5. It follows that for such knife to be of value to ‘special forces’, especially as a weapon, the main clip blade would have the sharpened back edge to the clip section of the blade – and is therefore a ‘dagger’ - the same as the SOE model.

There is one further consideration regarding the possible military connection that is sourced from notes in Martin Cook’s files based on his discussions some years ago with the late collector and author Brian Moyses who had been researching SOE knives. Martin has recorded his conversation with Brian as follows:

Brian Moyses has told me: “Just recently I was able to make contact with a (high ranking) officer of the UK Military who has also been doing research on SOE stuff. He independently confirmed to me the same quantities and Sheffield cutlers that Ron had unearthed above. It would appear that a lot of documents were de-classified – 2000 or so”.

In addition, I asked him about makers marks and his answer was most interesting. He said: “The prevailing view in SOE at the beginning of their activities is that stores should be deniable and therefore not marked. By the end of the war the opposite view was held in order to make it quite clear that the stores were of British origin and not constructed by locals.”

Whilst this observation by Moyses is hearsay, it does give some credence to the possibility that the (assumed to be) “Dagger Jack Single Blade” knives were in use by military personnel “*by the end of the war*”, whether as issue knives or as private purchase items is not known. It is noted that Flook’s “*table detailing the makers of all the tyre slasher style knives procured by SOE during WW2*” (see [here](#)) covers a brief nine - month period from November 1943 to September 1944, plus one additional contract with RODGERS dated March 27, 1952. As this information was sourced by Ron Flook from Ministry of Supply records, it can be assumed that there were no other contracts issued by the Ministry for such knives between September 1944 and March 1952. If this is correct, it means that the SECTION IV – MARKING’ of the specification for the tyre slasher knives that states “*No markings of any description are to appear on any part of the knives*” would have to have been amended at some point towards the end of the nine-month to enable makers names to be stamped on the blades. Alternatively, the Ministry of Supply could have issued additional contracts (with a revised specification) that were recorded separately – that is they were not part of SOE activities and therefore were not covered by the Official Secrets Act. Perhaps it is more likely that such knives, if they existed at all, were commercially produced for ‘private purchase by military personnel.

The defining characteristics of “**Lock-back knives with a possible WW2 military connection**” are summarised as follows:

1. They would be marked with the name of one of the six previously authorised SOE contractors, being: BUTLER, HOLLAND, WOSTENHOLM, WATTS, RODGERS, and ROWBOTHAM.
2. the main clip blade would have the sharpened back edge to the clip section of the blade – and is therefore a ‘dagger’ - the same as the SOE model.

Neither of the joint authors of this Collector Note has an example of a “Lock-back knives with a possible WW2 military connection” in their respective collections that fully comply with these defining characteristics. Each of us however has an example that complies with one of the characteristics, being the “main clip blade has the sharpened back edge to the clip section of the blade”.



Maker: “CAMERON & Co. MADE IN ENGLAND” is stamped on the mark side tang of the blade. Moulded bexoid scales and steel shackle. Tweedale⁵ has no mention of Cameron & Co., and it is interesting that the stamping is “Made in England” with no mention of ‘Sheffield’. It is noted the blade has a sharpened back edge to the clip section which was also a requirement for the SOE version. I have another identical knife (with a broken backspring) with identical stamping.

The maker “CAMERON & Co.” is not one of the six authorised SOE contractors.



Maker: The mark side tang of the bowie blade is marked “NEEDHAM HILL ST. SHEFFIELD” and opposite “MADE IN ENGLAND”. It has a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip point blade and the grips are typical of late WW2 manufacture that are thin and don’t fully cover the metal liners. The maker “NEEDHAM HILL ST.” is not one of the six authorised SOE contractors.

The following knife does comply with the two defining characteristics for “Lock-back knives with a possible WW2 military connection” however the tyre slasher blade had been replaced with a sheepfoot blade. This odd knife has all the attributes of a WW2 issue knife but is more likely a wartime commercially made knife marketed to “*Special Forces such as the SAS and Commandos*”.



Maker: The mark side tang of the clip point blade is marked “WATTS SHEFFIELD ENGLAND”. This is a Dagger Jack DB pattern, but the tyre slasher blade had been replaced with a 2” sheepfoot blade. Note that unlike the tyre-slasher knife there is no recess in the scales to allow access to the nail nick of the minor blade. It has a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip section of the clip point blade. The maker “WATTS SHEFFIELD.” is one of the six authorised SOE contractors.

5.1.4 Lock-back knives with no military connection

These knives were manufactured in Sheffield probably from the late 1940s (or perhaps later?) and are still in production today – August 2023. They came in two styles – being 1) the **Electricians Knives** with a main clip point blade and a TL29 style combined wire-stripper/screwdriver tool both opening from one end, and 2) a copy of the standard “**Dagger, Jack Single Blade**” wartime knife.

The defining characteristics of these knives are:

1. A maker's name that is not usually one of the six previously authorised SOE contractors. Known examples of these knives are made by the following: A. Wright & Son Ltd., Lockwood Brothers, H Rowbotham (being the only maker that is named on the list of authorised contractors), W.H. Wragg, etc. .
2. They do not have a 'sharpened back edge' to the clip section of the blade.

I am not at all familiar with the "Electrician Knife", the only information I have is as follows: "These lock-back knives are still being made today and are sold commercially as Electricians knives."



Collectors are advised that the 2 blade knives with an additional screwdriver type blade, made by "H ROWBOTHAM & Co, SHEFFIELD LTD" and marked on the main blade "UKAEA" were made post WW2 for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and are not military knives. They are however apparently very collectable in the UK.

The following two knives all have a maker's name stamped on the mark side tang of the blade and do not have a 'sharpened back edge' to the clip section of the blade; they are therefore typically of recent manufacture.



Maker: "C++X [trademark] LOCKWOOD BROTHERS SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side of the blade. The pile side of the blade face is marked (possibly with an electric pen) "Z459". Moulded bexoid scales and steel shackle. This knife appears to be unused and unsharpened and therefore is probably of recent manufacture. It is also noted that Lockwood is not named on the list of Ministry of Supply contractors for the provision of the single blade knife. Also, this knife does not

have a 'sharpened back edge' to the clip section of the blade.



Maker: "A. WRIGHT & SON Ltd. SHEFFIELD" is stamped on the mark side tang of the blade. It has bexoid (or similar) scales, nickel silver bolsters and pins, and steel shackle. Tweedale notes that "A. Wright & Sons was established in **1947** at Midland Works," and that "It continued to sell pocket knives in 2022." This knife is definitely of post-war manufacture and is probably of recent manufacture. This knife does not have a 'sharpened back edge' to the clip section of

the blade.

Other examples currently being sold commercially are described as "1 blade heavy duty lock knife" and misleadingly as "Sheffield SHE022 British Army Clasp Folding Knife Pocket Folder".

5.1.5 Probable pre-WW2 example

The following knife in my collection has all of the characteristics of a Lock-back knife with no military connection and is probably of pre-WW2 manufacture.



Maker: The mark side tang is stamped with what appears to be a trademark “PREMIER LIFE TIME SHEFFIELD ENGLAND”, and the pile side tang is stamped “53K SHEFFIELD ENGLAND”. This is a high-quality knife with jugged and dyed bone scales, brass liners, nickel silver scales and pins, and a steel shackle, all of which are consistent with high quality pre-WW2 styles. There appears to be no mention of any of these marks in Tweedale⁶. Ron Flook, in his recently self-

published book “**Knives and Daggers of the SOE**” includes a photo (page 23) of a very similar knife captioned “(2.13) Possible model for Knife, Dagger, Jack”, with the suggestion that “*it is possible these reflect the type of commercial knife first used*”. It is noted that “PREMIER” was a trademark of Francis Newton & Sons. Tweedale notes that the company was wound up in 1932, but that in the same year “*Newton’s marks were bought by George Butler*”. Butler was one of the six manufacturers mentioned in the table of manufacturers for the “KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK SINGLE BLADE” as detailed in Flook’s “**Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive**” book noted previously in this section (see page [23 here](#) for names). This knife does not have a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip section of the blade.

Further, in his article in the September 2012 edition of Knife World magazine having the title “**Makers of the SOE Knives Revealed**” Ron Flook states (page 20) “*All of the preceding knives have black bexoid or plastic scales, but a version with jugged bone scales is known. The knife is totally unmarked and it seems possible that it is not a commercial version, as those commercial examples from post-WW2 carry makers marks. Whether or not this knife is a true SOE knife is unknown, but if it is the question remains as to which one of the six contractors for the single blade knife made it.*”

5.1.6 Conclusions

From the military clasp knife collectors’ perspective, the on-going challenge is to identify “Knives, Dagger Jack Single Blade” stamped with a maker’s name that potentially could have been private purchase items that belonged to WW2 serving military personnel – having regard to Ron Flook’s observation in his article “Is it or Isn’t it SOE” that “*Whilst a number of clandestine type weapons were undoubtedly available as private purchase, particularly for sale to Special Forces such as the SAS and Commandos, there is nothing to formally link such items to the SOE*”. Fortunately, Flook has provided the names of the makers of the “sterile’ SOE version, and it is possible that these same makers were either already (i.e. pre-WW2) making a commercial version of this knife, and/or made a commercial version during the war, that became a private purchase item. The makers listed by Flook are Butler, Holland, Wostenholm, and Watts. Rodgers is also included in the list however the date of the contract is March 1952 – well after the end of WW2. A possible indicator of whether a name-stamped single blade knife was a wartime commercial item aimed at “*Special Forces*” was the provision of a ‘sharpened back edge’ to the clip section of the clip point blade – which in-practice enabled the blade to be used as a dagger. In common with the four name-stamped single blade knives listed above, the CAMERON & CO. knife (see [here](#)) has the distinctive sharpened back edge and consequently there is a possibility that it was a ‘private purchase item. Cameron & Co. is not one of the companies named in the list of contractors for the SOE version, nor does Tweedale have any mention of the name, therefore it is possible that it was made by or for one of the named contractors.

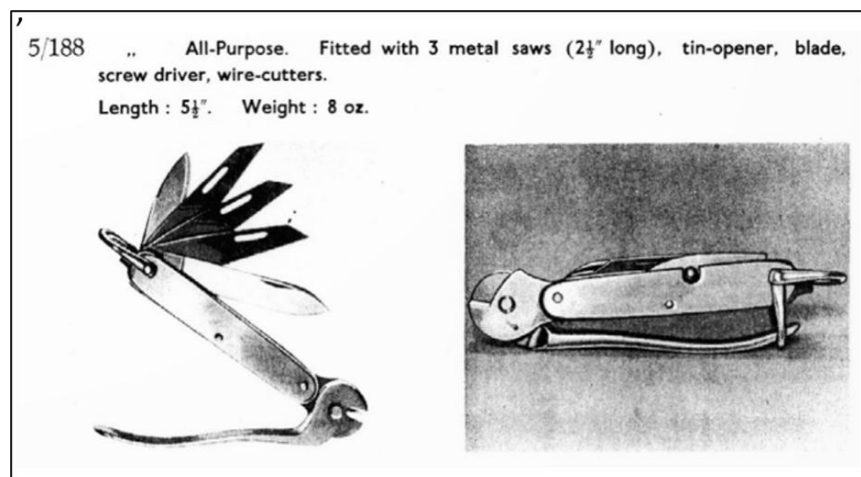
5.2 The SOE “Escape knife”

This is perhaps the best-known clasp knife to collectors of British military knives. It has been fully documented in the companion Collector Note “**The evolution of the OSS/SOE Escape Knife - a contrarian history**” (see www.CASK.info). The Collector Note reviews readily available sources in-order to document the process of evolution of the OSS/SOE Escape Knife (the “escape knife”) from its original form in the early 20th Century to its final form as an “*all purpose*” knife (commonly described as an “escape and evasion”) tool, produced for the UK Ministry of Supply and supplied to the UK Special Operations Executive (SOE), and to the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), between 1942 and 1945.



Maker: These knives are unmarked (sterile) however they are known to have been made primarily by Joseph Rodgers & Sons, with a smaller quantity made by Geo Ibberson. Some examples, (including this one) have been noted with the letter M stamped at the bottom of the inside arm of the wire cutter, however the reason for this is not known.

Much has been written over many years about the escape knife, some of which can be unintentionally misleading and not now supported by available evidence. For me, the primary reference regarding the escape knife was Ron Flook’s book “British and Commonwealth Military Knives” (refer page 48) and first published in 1999. More recent research undertaken by Flook of documents in the UK Public Records Office, as published in his article in the April 2009 edition of Knife World: “*Is it or Isn’t it SOE?*”, identifies a catalogue that provides precise details of the original escape knife, as having “*the catalog number of 5/188 along with a description of “KNIVES ALL-PURPOSE”* – see insert following:



For the collector, this is what an “SOE Escape knife” should look like. Any differentiation from this image (perhaps apart from the “Ibberson” version detailed in the previously mentioned “**OSS/SOE Escape Knife**” Collector Note) indicates that the knife is less than complete (e.g. broken sawblades, missing saw blades, etc.) or has been re-assembled from parts.

5.3 RAF Escape Boot Knife

These small single blade knives were contained within the 1943 RAF flying boots, which in the event that the airman was downed in enemy territory, the boots could be field converted to a normal looking shoe by removing the sheepskin tops. The knife was

contained in a pouch in the top of the boot and its use was to cut the stitching between the shoe and sheepskin top.

There are a few variations which all use the same distinctive body shape of rolled sheet metal which was usually blued and contains a small folding blade. No lanyard ring was fitted. These knives are scarce and collectable and always command high prices.

Flook, in *British & Commonwealth Military Knives* Page 148, suspects these knives; *“were possibly made by George Ibberson. This is an assumption based on the similarity in construction with the other Ibberson-made knives.”*

The photographs below of the three RAF Escape Boot Knives and the flying boots were downloaded from the internet.



1. Standard knife, blued body with a small 1.5" pen blade. Unmarked as all are.



2. This knife has a slightly larger body than those usually found, and with a 2.5" sheepfoot blade (worn).



3. Rarer examples have stainless steel bodies as shown in this example. Note the larger style sheep foot blade.

The following illustration dated 1943 shows RAF flying boot with the knife in situ and indicates where to cut the stitching.



5.4 RAF Clasp Knife

These are an RAF knife made by George Ibberson and Co. of Sheffield for the Beadon Tropical survival kit. They were made circa 1944-45. The body is a simple piece of folded steel with a spearpoint blade just under 4" long and a heavy rectangular spike blade of 3.6", no lanyard ring was fitted. The metal finish was either chemically blued or blackened.

Three types are known:

1. Marked examples have the left scale stamped with a crown over AM (Air Ministry) followed by 'G.I & Co' (George Ibberson & Co.) and the RAF stores code number '22P/11'. These were apparently issued as part of the Beadon flying suit and the tropical survival kit.



2. There are also unmarked examples which are sometimes wrongly described as SOE knives. Ron Flook in his book 'Knives & Daggers of the SOE' on page 83, says "*There is no evidence, even a circumstantial one, to link these knives to the SOE and to describe them as SOE or even OSS escape knives is incorrect.*"

3. A third type is known marked only 'MADE IN ENGLAND' presumably for export to the USA post WW2.

Around the year 2000 a lot of these knives were released as surplus onto the UK market however they are now scarce.



Maker: "G I & Co." for George Ibberson & Co. of Sheffield. The knife is also marked with a crown above 'AM' for Air Ministry and the RAF stores code of '22P/11'.

The knife has a chemically blackened finish and appears to be unissued.



Maker: Unmarked but made by George Ibberson for the RAF.

The knife has an overall blued finish which has been rubbed from the main blade over time.

5.5 British Gravity Knife

Perhaps the 'rarest of the rare' for collectors of British military clasp knives is the British Gravity Knife made by George Ibberson & Co. in the mid-years of WW2 (although no specific date has been identified, late 1943 appears to be appropriate for the start of production, and early 1944 when the first order for 30,00 pieces was completed). Flook's B&CMK (pages 40 and 41) provides a useful background, including that "*Production figures of some 150,000 have been quoted ...*", and that there is speculation that "*... they were never actually issued on a mass basis and those that were in store at the end of the war were broken up*". According to Flook "*Two versions exist: marked and unmarked. Unmarked specimens have been identified as being used by the SOE and OSS, the marked specimens for issue to Commandos and Paratroops*".



Maker: "*The blade is marked with the name and violin trademark of George Ibberson, along with the C.O.S.D./2195.*" [Quote from Flook in respect to knife shown on Plate 79 – page 41].

Flook also provided the following details: "*These knives also bear another less obvious mark: in the marlin spike recess there is stamped on the body of the knife a small serial number ...*". "*Blade length 4 inches, overall length fully opened is 10.125 inches*". The closed length is apparently 6 inches. The scales are chequered Bexoid. The knife illustrated above is not copied from Flook but was found by an internet search of Google images. It is however an excellent example of the "C.O.S.D./2194" knife "*for issue to Commandos and Paratroops*".

Ron Flook was/is also a regular contributor to the website '**Military Knives and daggers of the World**' and in one of his articles he made reference to pages from the "Combined Operations Services Department" (C.O.S.D.) referring to the British gravity knife made by Ibberson, as follows:

COSD/2194

KNIFE: SPECIAL PARACHUTE TYPE

PLATES
10 - 11
PAGE 103

This is a heavy duty knife and intended for all purposes. It can also be used as a killing knife. The blade is permanently retained between the scales until a trigger on the back is pushed forward with the thumb, when the blade slides forward and is retained in the 'open' position by pulling the trigger back with the thumb, thus this knife can be opened or closed with one hand.

A strong 'pick' is also provided on the side of the knife opposite the trigger.

The length of the blade is ... 4"
Overall size of Knife
when closed ... 6"

Page 103.

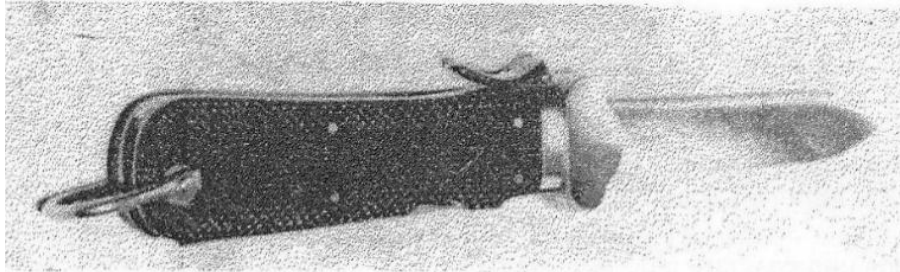


PLATE 10.
PARACHUTE KNIFE (OPEN). COSD/2194. PAGE 35.

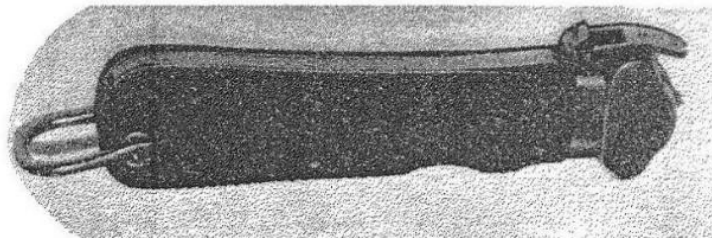


PLATE 11.
PARACHUTE KNIFE (CLOSED)

Flook provided the following National Archives reference number he used to access this COSD information:

1	2 cms	The National Archives	ins	1	1	2
Ref.: DEFE 2/1370		C405918				
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the National Archives' terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the 'Terms and Conditions of supply of the National Archives' leaflets						

All of this information sourced from the "Combined Operations Services Department" (COSD) was shown by Ron Flook on the "Military Knives & Daggers of the World" website some years ago.

In his introductory paragraph to the "British Gravity Knife" section of B&CMK (page 40) Flook notes that "these knives were fully documented for the first time by Frederick

Stephens”⁷ and a copy of the relevant pages are included in this Collector Note as [Appendix 4 here](#). Stephens notes that the first contract from the Ministry of Supply to Ibberson was for 30,000 knives [which were to be ‘sterile’. ed], and that a second contract followed for a further 30,000 knives which “*differed slightly from the first series in that the weapons were, this time, marked with the manufacturers name and a code number being the prefix initials C.O.S.D. ...*”. Both Flook and Stephens make mention that these knives were reputedly also made by Joseph Rodgers & Sons (under a subcontract from Ibberson) however no such examples have ever been identified. In terms of the total numbers of knives made, Stephens speculates that “*The combined total figure for the two companies possibly amounted to at least 150,000 examples and may have ultimately totalled a quarter of a million*”. Given the scarcity of these knives today, the question remains as to what happened to them. One theory is that they were all dumped in the North Sea at the end of the war!

Wikipedia also has useful background information on the “Ibberson gravity knife” and also on the “Flieger-Kappmesser / Luftwaffe Gravity Knife” from which it was copied. The following is sourced from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gravity_knife

Ibberson gravity knife

After British forces had captured numbers of Type I Flieger-Kappmesser, the British government approached George Ibberson & Co. of Sheffield, England, a knife and cutlery manufacturer, and requested production of a British version of the German Luftwaffe Gravity Knife for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and other clandestine warfare units. Under the initial wartime contract, George Ibberson & Co. made 500 gravity knives for issue to the SOE and other special forces. These Sheffield gravity knives had smooth wood or textured plastic scales, but were otherwise identical in features and operation to the Type I Flieger-Kappmesser, with a locking gravity-deployed blade and a folding rigging spike or awl. In the hands of British SOE agents, the Sheffield gravity knife was considered to be a secondary combat weapon. In addition to the knife blade, SOE close combat instructors found that the folding rigging spike was useful for silent killing of sentries by opening the carotid artery on the neck.

Comment: The Wikipedia article states that “*Under the initial wartime contract, George Ibberson & Co. made 500 gravity knives for issue to the SOE and other special forces*”, however no source for this figure is provided. Further, the article states that “*These Sheffield gravity knives had smooth wood or textured plastic scales ...*” whereas no evidence can be found that the British gravity knife ever had “smooth wood” scales.

Flieger-Kappmesser / Luftwaffe Gravity Knife (LGK)



German Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger-Messer or air force paratrooper knife

One of the most recognizable gravity knives is the World War II-era Flieger-Kappmesser (lit. 'flyer's cutting knife'), which utilizes a four-inch (100 mm) telescoping (OTF), gravity-propelled locking blade. First

produced in 1937, the often so called Fallschirmjägermesser (lit. 'paratrooper knife') was initially issued to German flight crews and paratroops, primarily for the purpose of cutting a trapped parachutist from his rigging in case he landed with a tangled parachute, or became entangled in trees or in the water with the shroud lines. The spike was used to untie knots while packing the parachutes. Luftwaffe air crew members used the knife to cut themselves out of their harnesses or cut through the aluminum hull of the aircraft after a crash landing. Though not intended for use as a fighting knife in the first place, the LGK was introduced to the 1st Skijäger Division and SS units on the Eastern Front to be used primarily as a close combat weapon from 1944 on.

The April 2023 edition of Knife Magazine⁸ contained a very detailed article: “**Searching For Facts: The Ibberson Gravity Knife**” written by BK Brooks. As stated by the author, the focus of the article “*is to explore the history of this rare and highly collectable World War II knife, and explore whether or not it qualifies as a U.S. military knife*”. It is very well-worth a read, however for the purposes of this Collector Note we have selected those parts that contribute the narrative detailed above. Regarding total production numbers, Brooks notes that Ron Flook advised him “ ... *although there is no record of the total production figures, Ibberson suggests that there were at least three contracts, none of which were for less than 30,000. As it happens I searched our National Archives for any records on these knives and found nothing*”. The following photo is copied directly from Brooks article and clearly shows the three versions of the marks found on British gravity Knives:



Three different marking styles that have been found on examples of Ibberson's British gravity knife. A fourth type is "sterile" - in other words, completely unmarked.

Regarding these marks, Brooks again makes reference to Ron Flook in the following terms: “*Flook's conclusion is that there were only two types of official issue knives: those that are unmarked and those marked with C.O.S.D. for Combined Operation Stores Depot. Those examples seen with the MADE IN ENGLAND mark were sold after WWII and so marked to comply with the country of origin requirements of the U.S. McKinley Tariff act.*”

6 ODDS & ENDS

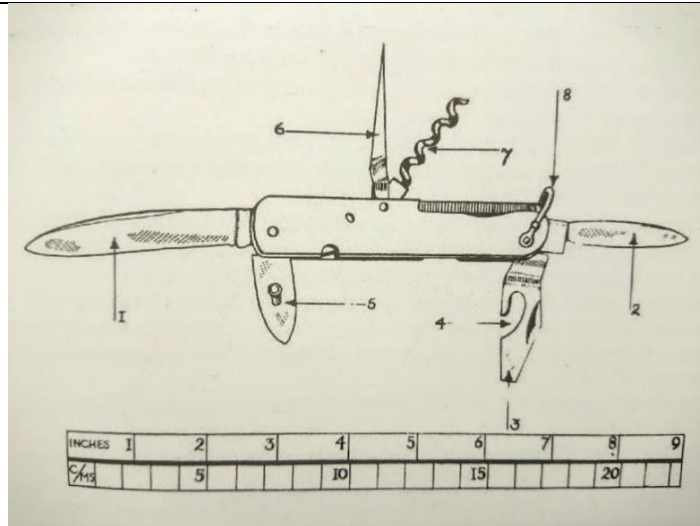
The following two knives certainly have a WW2 association however it is unclear, or is in dispute, as to whether they had a formal military connection.

6.1 Campaign knife

The only information I have on this knife is the previously mentioned “Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive”⁹ book published privately by Ron Flook in 2022, in the section “Part 2 - Station XII's SOE knives” (page 7) and is based on a series of information notes “uncovered by the late Brian Moyses” - see “Introduction” (page 1 of Flook's book).

For this knife Flook provides the following list of features together with an illustration titled “(2.4) Official drawing of the campaign knife”:

- 1) Three to four inch long, Nickel Silver sided with Lanyard Bail & 6 blades.
 - a) One large & one small blade
 - b) Tin opener, stud type.
 - c) Corkscrew
 - d) Triangular spike.
 - e) combined screwdriver/ Crown cap lifter
- 2) Evolved in 1941, from standard commercial patterns made by several Sheffield cutlers.
- 3) Total acquired around 2,150 from Butlers, and Walker & Hall, with the latter being the principal supplier.
- 4) Responsible at Station XII, Morland Fox & Howorth.



(2.4) Official drawing of the campaign knife

Flook's observations are as follows: "As far as I am aware there is no known example of such a knife with SOE provenance, however the official drawing of the knife shows it to be a commercial knife typical of the period. ...It is however interesting to note the use of the World War 1 period can opener a style that was dropped on Military knives by 1939".

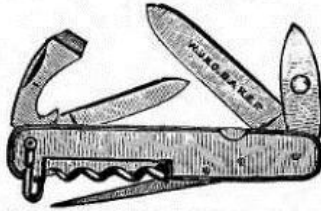
Flook provides the following illustration of a commercial knife of the period made by George Butler & Co., and asks the question "... was this style the inspiration for the campaign knife?" This is the exact knife referred to on page 10 of Ron Flook's book and is copied from the CASK Collector Note "**BRITISH PRIVATE PURCHASE MILITARY CLASP KNIVES- From the Boer War to First World War**" Section 8. "Post-First World War".



The knife has stag scales and brass liners and with a closed length of 4 ½ inches (10.8cm). The mark side tang of the main blade is stamped "[key logo] G. BUTLER & Co." and the pile side tang is stamped "SHEFFIELD [ART logo] ENGLAND. The pen blade, the tin opener and the cap lifter tangs are similarly stamped.

It is interesting to note that George Butler & Co. was one of the four Sheffield companies listed by Flook as makers of the "sterile" SOE tyre slasher knife - see Section 4.9.1. page 23 above, and [here](#)), and it is assumed that these same makers were already making a commercial version of this knife, (the others were, Holland, Wostenholm, and Watts).

Flook notes in "**Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive**" that the Ministry of Supply sought advice from the cutlery industry regarding commercially available knives that may be suitable use by SOE operatives, and it appears likely that Geo. Butler & Co. were successful in providing two patterns, being this "Campagne Knife" and the commercial version of the "KNIVES, DAGGER, JACK SINGLE BLADE" made by Francis Newton & Sons (under their Premier trademark), which by 1932 was owned by Butler – see knife on page 22 above and [here](#).



196—ALL-ROUND CAMP KNIFE. Good Finish. 4in. Metal Haft. Contains Spear Blade, Pen Blade, Screwdriver and Bottle Opener combined, Tin Opener, Corkscrew, Leather Spike, with Shackle. 14/6 each.*

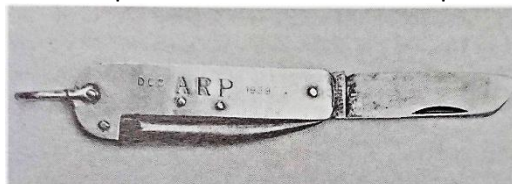
The “Private Purchase” Collector Note provides details of a selection of 6-blade utility knives dating to the post WW1 period, having a closed length in the 4 – 4 ½ inch range, primarily with metal scales. The distinguishing feature of this knife is that it is the only one that has the “tin opener, stud type” that was almost universal in British Military Clasp knives in WW1, whilst the others have a range

of different tin opener styles. Interestingly, the adjacent illustration is copied from the May 1939 cutlery catalogue of the Australian cutlery merchant **W. JNO. BAKER** which appears to have all the essential characteristics described by Flook. It is acknowledged that Baker was not a manufacturer but rather had the vast majority of their stock made under contract by Sheffield manufacturers. This suggests that this pattern was an existing stock item by at least one Sheffield manufacturer. This knife appears to have been first listed by Baker in their 1924 cutlery catalogue.

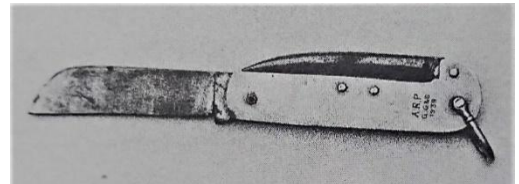
The challenge for collectors of military clasp knives is to find a Sheffield made knife (probably by “Butler, or Walker & Hall”) that has the same characteristics as the Baker knife detailed above and then endeavour to find a link to the SOE. Given that there appears to have been only “around 2,150” acquired by the Ministry of Supply for the SOE, this will be no easy task.

6.2 Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Knives

ARP knives are rare and therefore very collectable; under one scenario they were only made in 1939 - as examples by the two known makers have this date. Flook’s B&CMK provides details of these examples (page 147) made in Sheffield by Davenport Cutlery Company with one of the scales stamped “DCC ARP 1939” and the main blade is stamped SHEFFIELD ENGLAND (see Plate 344), and the second made by George Gill & Sons with one of the scales stamped ARP GG & S 1939 and the main blade stamped GEO GILL & SONS (see Plate 345). Both examples are all-metal, with a closed length of 9cm, containing a main sheepfoot blade and a marline spike.



SOURCE: Flook: B&CMK Plate 344 - Davenport Cutlery Company ARP 1939



SOURCE: Flook: B&CMK Plate 345 – GEO GILL & SONS ARP 1939



The adjacent example made by DCC is in [Martin Cook’s](#) collection.

With regard to Plate 344 above Flook states as follows “*This all-steel clasp knife was officially issued to the ARP (Air Raids Precautions) personnel during World War Two. Although the ARP was a civil defence organisation rather than military, the knife is an interesting example of a wartime official issue knife*”.

Australian collector and researcher [Kevin Coleman](#) has recently (July 2023) prepared an as-yet unpublished research paper having the title “**Air Raid Precautions Clasp Knife**”, which is included in his soon to be published (November 2023) book “**An Introduction to**

Collecting Military Clasp Knives ...". Kevin's Paper is primarily focussed, as he sees it, on an erroneous connection between ARP Knives and the very similar Girl Guide knives that were manufactured in Sheffield from at least the mid-1920s, rather than specifically on the validity of the claim that by Ron Flook that "*... the knife is an interesting example of a wartime official issue knife.*"

The introductory paragraph of Kevin's Research Paper clearly explains its purpose in the following terms:

"This paper examines the view held by some collectors and militaria dealers that the clasp knives stamped ARP 1939 and the Girl Guide clasp knives were one and the same and were issued to the ARP during World War Two".

Kevin's research included contact with UK organizations specializing in WW2 "Home Front" history, and specifically with the operators of a website "**Civil Defence Uniforms, Insignia Helmets and Equipment**" (ref: <https://www.ww2civildefence.co.uk>) which is described as "*an extensive resource covering all aspects of the British Civil Defence Services during the second world war*", who advised Kevin that to their knowledge no records had been found confirming that the ARP had ever been issued with an official clasp knife. According to Kevin "*They further advised that in their view the clasp knives produced by DCC & GGS, and stamped ARP were simply a way of marketing their knives to make a quick buck*".

From my perspective, given that no documentary evidence to the contrary exists, such as a specification for their design or an order for their manufacture, and given that there are no known examples that have the W↑D Government ownership stamp, it can be concluded that all "ARP" stamped knives were manufactured as a normal commercial opportunity by both the Davenport Cutlery Company and GEO GILL & SONS, as had been the common practice in Sheffield for the previous 150 years. Further, one reason that "*ARP knives are rare and therefore very collectable*" could be that they were not a commercial success and therefore production was discontinued in their first year - being 1939. My assumption is that "Air Raid Precautions" volunteers most likely already owned a pocketknife and had no desire to purchase a new knife that appeared to be modelled on the "Girl Guides knife" and that was no more 'fit for purpose' than the one they already had in their pocket. However, as indicated previously, the status of ARP knives is still a matter of contention amongst collectors.

7 WORLD WAR 2 INDIAN MILITARY CLASP KNIVES

The purpose of this section is to explain and differentiate between the three distinct styles of clasp knives issued to British military servicemen during World War 2 as detailed in this Collector Note above – on the one hand, and similar knives that were made in India and supplied to Indian troops – on the other.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive documentation of Indian-made military clasp knives, but rather uses such knives in the authors' collections to provide an overview of what is generally available – to assist in their identification. Appendix 5 [here](#) documents ten examples of Indian military clasp knives including descriptions and observations. The last two pages of the Appendix consists of list of known Indian manufacturers compiled by Martin Cook - and includes additional information provided by Neil Champion. Note that this list includes all known manufacturers – not just clasp knife makers.

Flook's B&CMK at page 211 provides a brief description of Indian "Pocket Knives", as follows "*Despite the large volume of production in Britain during World War Two it would appear that those for the forces in India were manufactured locally. The quality of these Indian -made knives is generally low, especially those with the red fibre grips. The later patterns with horn grips are more substantial.*" There follows two pages of examples of which three knives are of the British "GROUP A: three-piece (main blade, tin opener, and marlin spike) with steel bolsters" style knives previously detailed [here](#).

Further, the Facebook webpage for the “**Military Jack Knives from Around The World**” Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1802219413312074>) has a section that specifically focuses on “Indian Knives”, which is accessed from the home page, by clicking “Media”, then clicking “albums”, and then selecting “Indian Knives” for the display of 43 photos. The Introduction describes India made knives in the following terms “*Those chunky rough looking knives, with a snap like a crocodile, hand cut irregular chequering on the scales frequently cut through the scale rivets, and often unknown mysterious stamps*”. Of interest is that all but one of the knives shown are of the “*three-piece (main blade, tin opener, and marlin spike)*” style, with a majority having steel bolsters; those without bolsters have, in all cases, their pivot pins strengthened by the inclusion of a brass or steel washer. Also, there is one style of knife that differs from the others in that they are of the style commonly referred to be collectors as “easy openers” (see section “4.8.1. Easy Opener knives” [here](#), particularly the examples made by Wade and Butcher, and by Watts). The three examples shown on the Facebook webpage are dated 1927, 1939, and 1940 and have a spearpoint main blade, whereas all of the other examples on the webpage reflect the smaller design introduced to the British military in 1939.

8 CONCLUSIONS

This Collector Note describes the joint authors’ understanding regarding the range of clasp knives that were issued to (or available to) British military personnel during the Second World War (WW2) from 1939 to 1945. It is interesting to note the evolution of the style from the large three-piece pattern 6353/1905 clasp knife that was in service during WW1, and was supplied to troops who were sent to France and the Low Countries in 1939; to the smaller three-piece knife with moulded plastic scales and a more efficient tin opener that came into service in 1939; to the two-piece knife (no spike) that came into service in 1940 together with the modification to the tin opener in 1944 to include a bottle opener; to the major change to an all-metal style commencing in 1944 - initially to supply a knife that was more suited to jungle conditions, but which ultimately replaced all knives with moulded plastic scales in the immediate post-war period.

In addition, there was a small range of clasp knives that were designed for a specific military purpose and consequently were manufactured in far more limited numbers and as a result have a particular attraction for collectors.

This Collector Note does however reflect the sum of the knowledge of just two collectors (i.e. the joint authors), and therefore must be regarded as a first attempt to build on the knowledge initially gathered by Ron Flook and detailed in his seminal work “British and Commonwealth Knives” which has been liberally quoted in the Collector Note. It is now apparent however that there are other experts who are making valuable observations and contributions to websites such as the Facebook page “Military Jack Knives from Around the World” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1802219413312074/> that need to be acknowledged and recorded for posterity. To this end, any suggestions/contributions that fellow collectors may have that will improve the content of the Collector Note and thus expand the knowledge base will be most welcome, and I am sure will be greatly appreciated by all present and future collectors of BRITISH MILITARY CLASP KNIVES 1939 - 1945.

9 JOINT AUTHORS

Lawrie Wilson and Martin Cook

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOS OF KNIVES IN USE

Source: **The Perth Regiment of Canada** website by Gavin K. Watt Part 7 Clasp Knives.
<https://www.perthregiment.ca/copy-of-part-8-sten-1> (with permission).



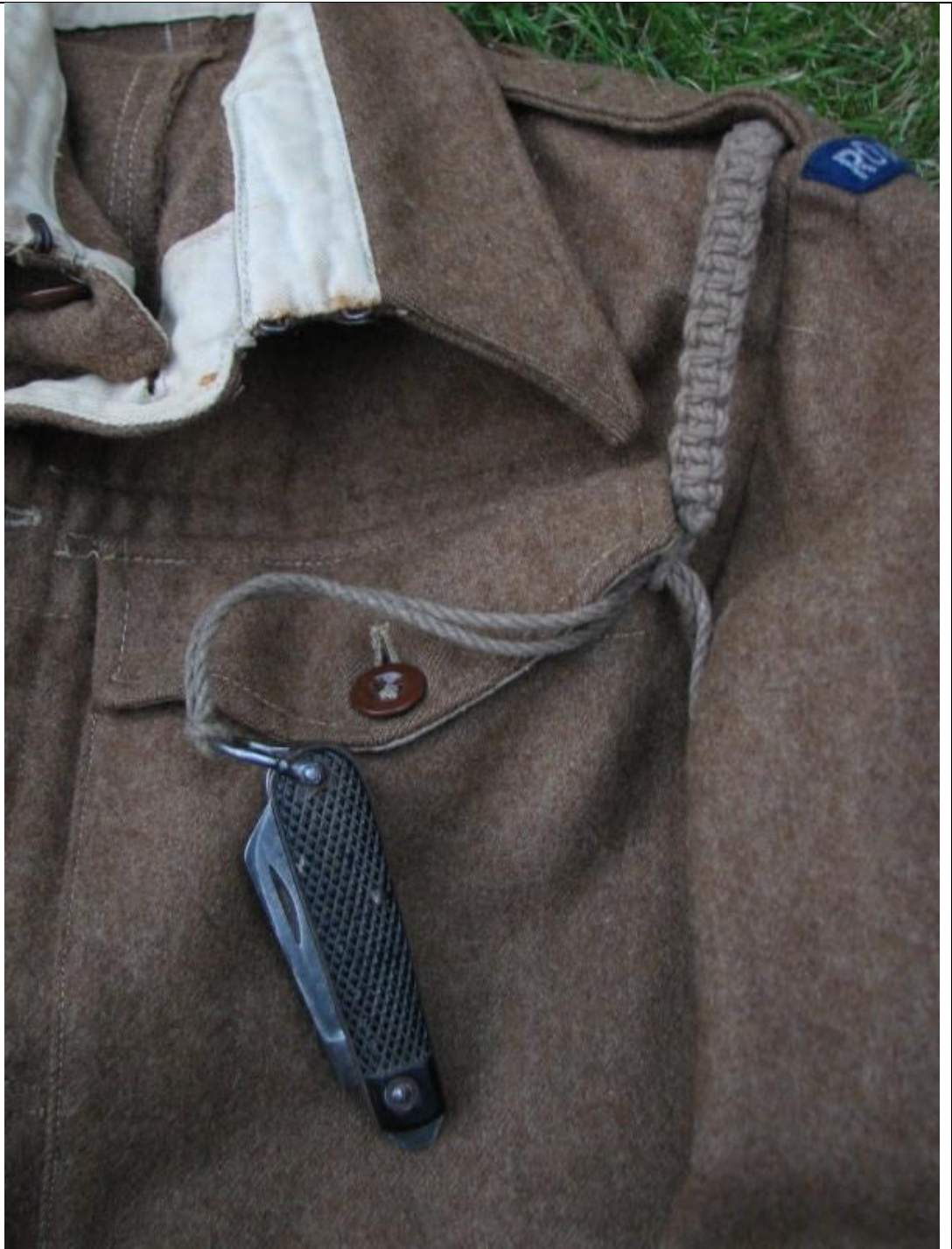
A Signalman and officer of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals digging a slit trench, Ifs, France, July 1944. This British knife is not hanging from a trousers' belt loop, but perhaps from a tab on a 'non-reg' leather belt. (LAC, PA115460)



A Sapper of 31st Field Coy, Royal Canadian Engineers organizes German prisoners captured at Boulogne, France, 18 September 1944. He wears a British clasp knife using a ring and hook system. (LAC, PA174406).



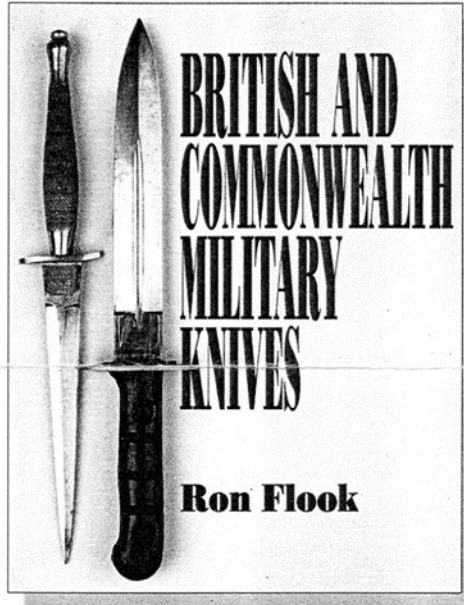
A sergeant of 14th Army Field Regiment, 2 Canadian Corps pretending to work on the breech of a 25 pounder Sexton Self Propelled gun wears his British clasp knife hung on a belt loop using what appears to be a purpose-built hook, Tilburg, Holland, 17 March 1945. (LAC, PA114378)



Royal Signals, 1940 pattern BD Blouse knife by SSP 1943

APPENDIX 2: COPY OF FLYER FOR RON FLOOK'S BOOK "BRITISH & COMMONWEALTH MILITARY KNIVES"

NEW BOOK INFORMATION



Imprint:

AIRLIFE

Title:

BRITISH AND COMMONWEALTH MILITARY KNIVES

Author:

Ron Flook

Publishing Date:

MAY 1999

Binding:

Casebound

Format:

246 x 189mm

Extent:

256 pages

Illustrations:

520 b/w photographs and 70 line drawings

ISBN:

1 85310 986 X

Price

£29.95

DESCRIPTION

This book presents the first major guide on those knives issued to and used by British and Commonwealth military personnel from approximately 1850 up until the present day, illustrating and describing over 500 knives. Many of the pieces are correctly identified or illustrated for the first time in any book. The book contains chapters on British knives including the Victorian, 1st and 2nd World Wars, SOE items, aircrew and Royal Navy knives, and items used by today's forces, Australian, Canadian, Indian and New Zealand knives. Within its text the book identifies or shows for the first time items such as the RAF commando knife, previously unrecorded patterns of Robbins of Dudley knives and the documented history of the commando knife in the post-World War II period.

THE AUTHOR

Ronald Flook is a Marine Electrical Engineer and is presently working in support of a major ship management contract. He has collected military knives for over 20 years, specialising over the last ten in British and Commonwealth. He has written and privately published *A Photographic Primer to Military Knives*, a guide to military knives from all over the world, which contained many pieces never previously described in print. He is a member of the Wilkinson Sword Collectors Society, United Kingdom Blade Association, and reflecting an interest in Japanese swords, the UK To-Ken Society. He lives near Bath.

KEY FEATURES:

- ★ Extensive coverage from Victorian era to present day
- ★ Vital reference with over 500 illustrations
- ★ Related title: *Japanese Military and Civil Swords and Dirks* (ISBN: 1 85310 986 X)

Trade Sales and Information Enquiries:

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101 Longden Road
Shrewsbury SY3 9EB
Shropshire, England
Tel: (01743) 235651
Fax: (01743) 232944

Please note: All specifications are subject to change without notice.

(68)

APPENDIX 3: DETAILS OF WOSTENHOLM'S 1930s 'THE KNIFE FOR THE WIRELESS ENTHUSIAST'

Useful Blade for General Purposes

WOSTENHOLM

GLASS CUTTER

File for Terminals and Cutting Wire.

Wire Scraper

Knife Edge

Insulation Remover

Screw Driver

Vulcanized Fibre Handle

"I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes."
Midsummer Night's Dream, II/1/175.

The Wostenholm I*XL WIRELESS KNIFE

The Knife for the Wireless Enthusiast.

If there's one person who needs a capable knife more than anyone else, it's the Electrician and Wireless Enthusiast. There's wire to be cut, screws to be dealt with, insulation to be scraped, terminals to be filed.

Made of the best possible material by skilled Sheffield workmen, this remarkable knife is a thoroughly dependable combination of pocket knife and tools.

No. 1664. Price 3/- each.

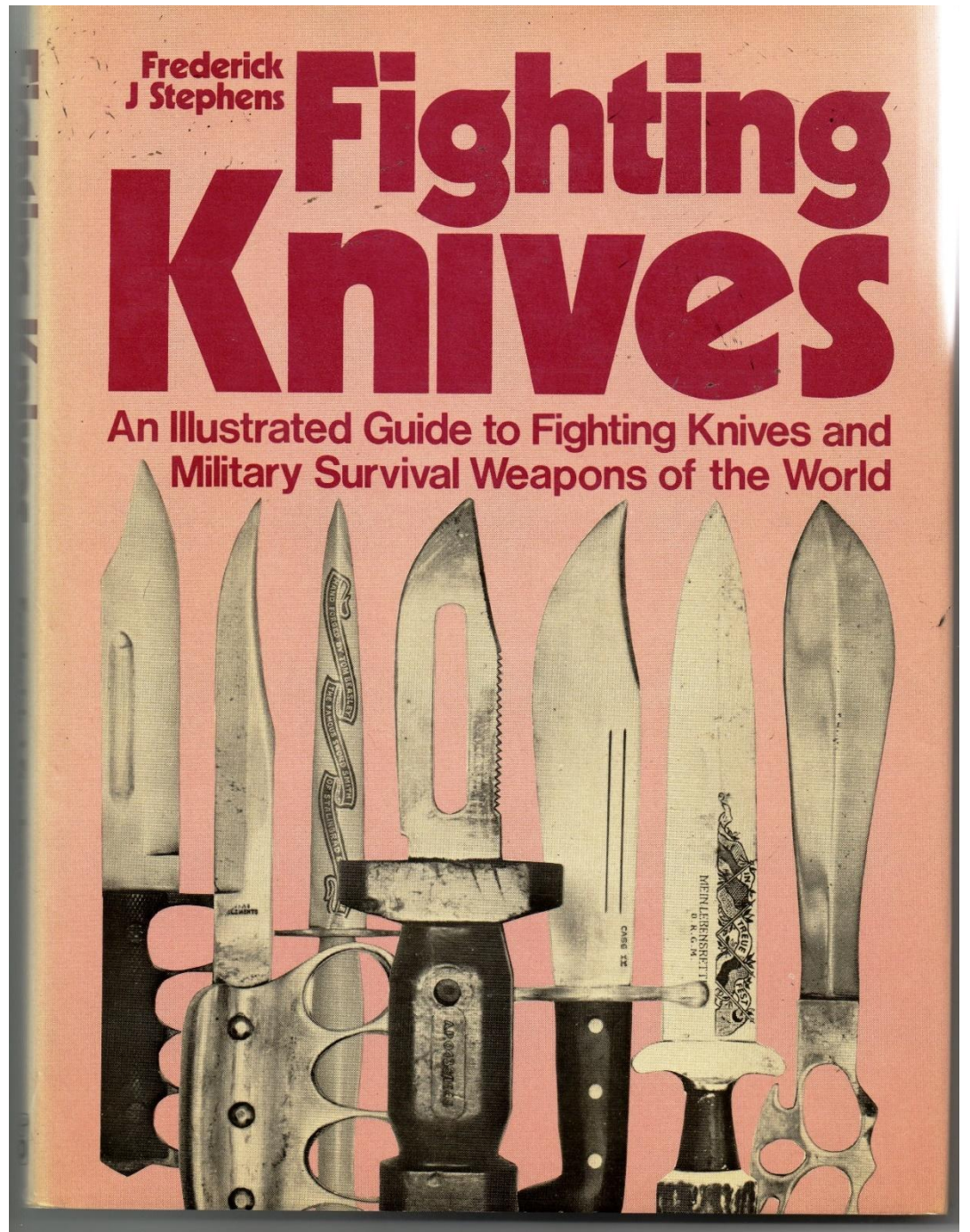
In his monthly report to the Branches of the Schools Radio Society, Mr. R. J. HIBBERD, Member I.R.E., F.R.S.A., of St. Paul's School, Dorking, the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, writes:—

"How many of us have ruined knives in scraping a piece of wire, or worse still, ruined knives belonging to other people? We have spoiled knives in trying to use them as screwdrivers and in putting them to use on various wireless jobs. I never realized a knife was made to deal with all these problems until I obtained one of WOSTENHOLM'S Electrician's Knives. Such a knife is undoubtedly the Wireless Constructor's greatest friend and help. It is designed as a knife, a screwdriver, a wire scraper and in fact will do a hundred and one jobs for you when you are making a set. It is an article of excellent quality and can be thoroughly recommended."

WASHINGTON WORKS, SHEFFIELD. ENGLAND. Established 1785.

5

APPENDIX 4. EXTRACT FROM FREDERICK STEPHEN'S BOOK "FIGHTING KNIVES" PAGES 60 – 62.



7.

The British Gravity Knife

During the 17th-19th centuries a tremendous amount of competitive trade stemmed from the great arms producing centres of Europe. Between Solingen, and Toledo, Milan and Sheffield, the rivalry in quality arms production became established, and the ultimate copying of each other's designs subsequently reared its head. One factor common to all the cutlers was that each recognized and appreciated the quality of the workmanship of his competitors. This led to the kind of rivalry where one man produced an item of exceptional quality, and a competitor bettered it — and emulation is, after all, the sincerest form of flattery.

In 1943, Britain was still struggling against Germany and her allies. The tides of fortune had changed since the days of Dunkirk, as the U.S.S.R. and the United States had come into the war against Germany, but the struggle to overcome German might within Europe continued.

So far as the British were concerned, the one military formation which was achieving decisive victories against the enemy at this time were the Commandos. The war in the air, at sea, and on the land in North Africa was being waged to and fro with alternate gains and losses, but slowly the tide was turning against the Germans, eroding their gains and bringing total defeat closer with each month.

The Commando raids undoubtedly worried Hitler and his General Staff, and caused the Germans not only to re-evaluate their assault techniques, but also produce a copy of the British Fairbairn-Sykes knife. The psychological effect of raiding parties visiting and departing from enemy shores, leaving behind rows of German corpses, was cause for concern. Small wonder that the Germans considered copying the technique, and that the British, concurrently, considered all possible means for bettering it.

The effectiveness of the Commandos' equipment was being constantly reviewed and assessed by the Ministry of Supply throughout the course of the war, and it was only a matter of time before military Intelligence became preoccupied with a German weapon which appeared to be not only superior to anything that the British produced, but which indeed appeared to be in a class of its own.

By mid 1943, the production of Fairbairn-Sykes knives had reached the stage where several manufacturers in Sheffield were turning them out, as well as the Wilkinson Sword Company in London. Production capacity was at full stretch and manufacturers were hard pressed to meet all requirements. New knives and designs were being projected and tried all the time, both to Government and private order. Some of these ideas existed only at the design stage, while others actually went into production.

The cutlery manufacturing firm of George Ibberson has been producing fine knives in Sheffield for almost 300

years. It is a company which has held a proud reputation in a city renowned for its cutlers; in 1913, Joseph Ibberson (in collaboration with the cutlery firm of Thomas Firth and Sons) produced the very first stainless steel tableware. This was the beginning of a technique and product which has since become so commonplace as to be taken for granted.

Towards the end of 1943, Mr. William G. Ibberson of George Ibberson & Co. Ltd., Sheffield, was called to London to discuss a matter of national importance in knife making. The summons came from Experimental Station 6, a department of the Ministry of Supply, which was responsible for the placing of contracts for Commando requirements. The company of Ibbersons had, for some time, been producing a varied selection of items necessary to the war effort and the armed services, not only knives, but cutting tools, shears, scissors, medical and surgical knives, heliographs, etc.

The Ministry of Supply had a very special project in mind for Mr. Ibberson. There was need of a very special type of knife, one which could be used effectively in the dual capacity of survival tool and killing weapon. The only drawback was the fact that the Germans had already produced it, but had not fully appreciated the potential of their own design. The man from the Ministry produced a strange-looking knife, quite unlike any British knife. 'We want you to produce these,' said the interviewer, 'and we want to know how quickly it can be done'. The knife was a German Flight Utility Knife — commonly known in later years as the *Fallschirmjägermesser* or Paratrooper's Knife.

In 1938, the German Army had started to expand at a rate unprecedented in European history. The mid 1930s had presented a number of astonishing changes in the classification of power. First the Germans had thrown off the shackles of the Treaty of Versailles 1919, and then expanded the armed forces, starting with the tank corps and the airforce. German Military strength developed at an alarming rate, as Germany assessed her own capability against her European neighbours. Early in 1930, Russia had started to expand her own airforce. The development was an extension of clandestine military aid provided to Russia in 1926, when the Germans undertook to provide military expertise for training purposes in exchange for training and developmental facilities in the Ukraine. At a time when Germany was hamstrung by the limitations of the so-called Treaty of Peace, the Russians and Germans were collaborating for their own gainful ends. It was a partnership that was to have far-reaching repercussions.

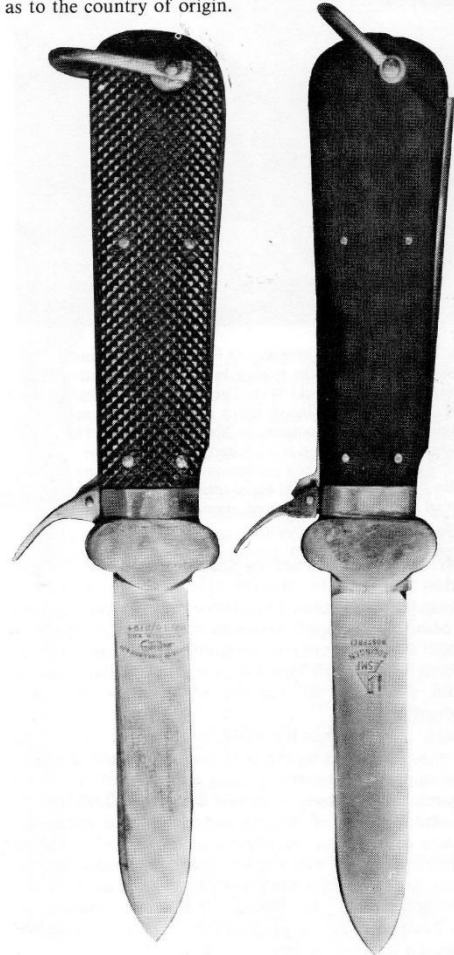
Russia was a vast domain, the greatest, perhaps, of all the modern territories, and hindered by her manifold multinational problems. To deal with the matter of

insurrection on a vast territorial domain, the Soviets developed a new, and unexpected technique of warfare, the paratrooper. Although the *Luftwaffe* (Air Arm) had come into being in 1936, paratroops had, provisionally, been relegated to the command of the German Army. Paratroops, it was reasoned, were Infantry dropped by the Air Force, and their status was accordingly established. It was not until 1936 that the OKH (Army High Command) gave any serious thought to equipment for paratroops, and it was then that the flight utility knife came into being. The design was simple and straightforward, a knife which could be effectively opened with one hand, and thus used to serve a man entangled in a parachute. The knife was ideal for that purpose. By about 1938 the responsibility for paratroops had changed from the army to the *Luftwaffe*. No longer was the air force required to consult the army on what troops to use and under what conditions; the airforce now dictated all the limitations, and the paratroops of the *Luftwaffe* soon replaced the shock troops of the Army. The paratrooper's gravity knife was soon to be re-styled the 'flight utility knife', and it was supplied as standard equipment to all flight crews as well as paratroopers. It was a good all-purpose tool with a gravity-operated blade — it could be opened with one hand, and the blade dropped into position, and it could be closed by a reversal of the same action. With the blade out of the way it was an ideal safe tool to carry in an aircraft, and by the time the Battle of Britain was over, a good many of these German knives had fallen into British hands.

Mr. Ibberson examined the German gravity knife, and considered the requirements he was about to undertake. The knife was ideally suited for a British purpose he was informed, and the men from the Ministry wanted to know how long it would take to get production under way. It was thought that it would take about six months to get all the necessary tooling-up completed for the knife to be brought into production. There were, however, some slight changes to be made in the design of the knife, and these were as follows:

The spike was to be made easier to draw open. This was the portion that would be best deployed in killing, and it was desirable that it be quick and easy to open. A mock demonstration of the technique was shown, in which the 'Commando' assailant crept upon his victim from the back, clamped his left hand over the victim's nose and mouth pulling the subject's head back to his left shoulder, and the spike was driven into the right side of the neck with the free hand. It was the classic assault, taught by Fairbairn and Sykes, which opened the large carotid artery in the neck. This, situated 1½ inches below the surface, and feeding the brain, was a vital artery. An opening wound to the carotid could cause loss of consciousness in about five seconds, and death within twelve seconds. The spike was totally suitable for this area of attack, whereas in the other main arterial regions, such as the subclavian or radial, the arteries were

reasonably well protected by the proximity of bone, and the F-S knife blade was more effective in dealing with them. This knife had a smooth wood grip. This could probably be improved, and it was requested that the new design be constructed with a checkered grip for better adhesion. Wood was acceptable if an alternative synthetic material was found to be unsuitable or not so durable, but as it happened, a synthetic material called Bexoid was found to be ideal for the grips. The knife was to be totally devoid of marks — giving absolutely no clue as to the country of origin.



292, 293. The Ibberson gravity knife, shown together with a German version produced by the Solingen Metal Fabrik plant.



294. Mr. William G. Ibberson, O.B.E., with a specimen condition example of the gravity knife which he produced during the Second World War. The painting in the background is of the original building in which a George Ibberson established a cutlery company in Sheffield in 1700. The building still stands, but is no longer occupied by the Ibberson Company. Their present premises, called the Violin Works (after the Ibberson trademark of a violin—granted in 1880), is an efficient, modern factory.

Mr. Ibberson returned to Sheffield with the German version of the knife, and the agreement to proceed to tool-up for production. The first contract agreed upon by the Ministry of Supply required a production figure of 30,000 examples, and they were wanted as soon as possible — although Mr. Ibberson had calculated that it would still take six months to complete the first production.

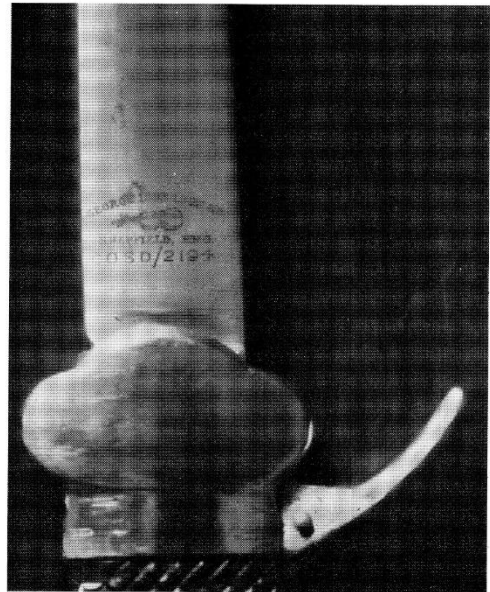
Early in 1944, when the Ibberson company was well on the way to completing the first contract, a new development came about regarding the gravity knives. The total requirement was going to exceed the initial 30,000 order, and the Ministry of Supply had decided to enlist the services of a second manufacturer. The firm of Joseph Rodgers, another well-known Sheffield establishment, had agreed to produce the gravity knife, and the Ministry of Supply asked the George Ibberson Company to help Rodgers to set up production with the minimum of delay. To this end, patterns, drawings, and gauges were loaned to the Joseph Rodgers Company.

The demand for the gravity knives was going to be

high, and virtually as soon as the first contract for 30,000 had been supplied a second contract for the same quantity was given to Ibbersons. The second batch production, however, differed slightly from the first series in that the weapons were, this time, marked with the manufacturer's name and a code number bearing the prefix initials C.O.S.D. (Command Supply Depot).

Unfortunately, the original total production figures for the knife produced by the Ibberson Company are no longer available, but Mr. William G. Ibberson informed the author that so far as he could recall, there were at least three contracts, none of which was for less than 30,000.

A conservative estimate for the total Ibberson production would be in the region of 100,000 examples; the figures for the Rodgers production are quite unknown, but probably amounted to at least 30,000 examples for one contract. The combined total figure for the two companies possibly amounted to at least 150,000 examples, and may have ultimately totalled a quarter of a million. Surprisingly, in view of this volume of production, the knives are extremely hard to find, which makes one wonder where they all are; perhaps still locked away in some military store. Certainly very few can be seen in collections. Stocks of the knife were sold out at the Ibberson factory years ago; indeed, the company retains only three examples — and they are not for sale.






295. A view of the Ibberson knife, showing the trademark etched upon the blade.



APPENDIX 5: EXAMPLES OF BRITISH PRE-PARTITION COLONIAL INDIA MADE CLASP KNIVES.

Examples of pre-partition (mid-August 1947) India made clasp knives assumed to be WW2 vintage, and possibly later (see example 1). It is difficult to determine the scales material (except possibly for Example 4), however buffalo horn is the best guess. The scales are often chequered after application shown by cuts through the pins. Usually very crude, but sometimes quite regular. Note no warping or lifting as is common with fibre scales.

MAKER: not known, possibly "S.K.S." – see stamping on pile side tang of main blade.

		<p>Stamping on mark side tang of tin opener - best guess: "CC/8 – 65 000027" (the 7 is unclear)</p>
<p>Closed length (including turnscrew) 4 inches (10.2cm). Scales: probably buffalo horn. Copper Shackle stamped "S" adjacent to pin.</p>		<p>Stamping on pile side tang of main blade – "S.K.S 1982"</p>

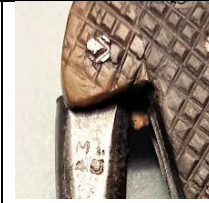
MAKER: not known

		<p>Stamping on mark side tang of tin opener "S.S.45"</p>
<p>Closed length (including turnscrew) 4 inches (10.2cm). Scales: probably buffalo horn. Copper Shackle</p>		<p>Stamping on mark side of spike - perhaps a 'spear head' mark.</p>

MAKER: Muckland Iron (& Steel works) Lahore



Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 7/8 inches (9.8cm). Scales: probably buffalo horn. Copper Shackle.



Stamping on mark side of spike – best guess: **"M. I. 40"**

Muckland Iron (& Steel works) Lahore, dated 1940



Stamping on pile side of spike: **F2**

MAKER: Nagpur Knife Factory



Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 3/4 inches (9.5cm). Scales: compressed hard fibre material. Copper Shackle



Stamping on mark side tang of main blade - **"N K F"**
Nagpur Knife Factory



Stamping on pile side of scale near the pivot pin - best guess:

"BA 57" 1942 stamped on mark side scale



Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 7/8 inches (9.8cm). Scales: compressed hard fibre material. Copper Shackle. Fluted steel bolsters

1941 stamped on mark side scale



1943 stamped on mark side scale

Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 7/8 inches (9.8cm). Scales: compressed hard fibre material. Copper Shackle. Flat steel bolsters

MAKER: **EMPIRE**



Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 7/8 inches (9.8cm). Scales: probably buffalo horn. Copper wire shackle.



EMPIRE stamped on the pile side tang of the main blade.

MAKER: **PUNJABSTICK & CUTLERY, NIZAMABAD**



Closed length (including turnscrew) 4 1/2 inches (11.4cm). Scales: compressed hard fibre material. Copper Shackle.



Stamping on mark side tang of main blade –

PUNJABSTICK & CUTLERY, NIZAMABAD



Stamping on mark side tang of main blade – **1940**. This knife

follows the style of the Sheffield-made “Easy Opener” knives that were issued to the British military 1920s to 1930s.

MAKER: not known.



Closed length (including turnscrew) 3 7/8 inches (9.8cm). Scales: compressed hard fibre material. Copper Shackle. Fluted steel bolsters.

It is assumed that this knife is a **fake**. It is possible that main blade is an original Joseph Rodgers & Sons Sheffield blade, however the body of the knife and the tin opener appear to be typically India made.

Regarding the possible authenticity of the main blade, Martin Cook contends that it is a fake as the stamping is on the pile side of the blade rather than the standard mark side, the letters/fonts on the 'Joseph Rodgers & Sons' are very odd looking, and are of different sizes, and that he has never seen a Rodgers blade so stamped. My thoughts are that it would be an expensive investment to make false dies for stamping on a cheap knife, and that I have a similar knife.

MAKER: not known, but most likely "DOWN BROS, BOROUGH" as stamped on the mark side tang, as Down Bros. were a surgical instrument maker with a factory in Borough, London. Other known makers were "J.H. Montague" - also a London maker. and MALEHAM AND YEOMAN who were Sheffield cutlery manufacturers.

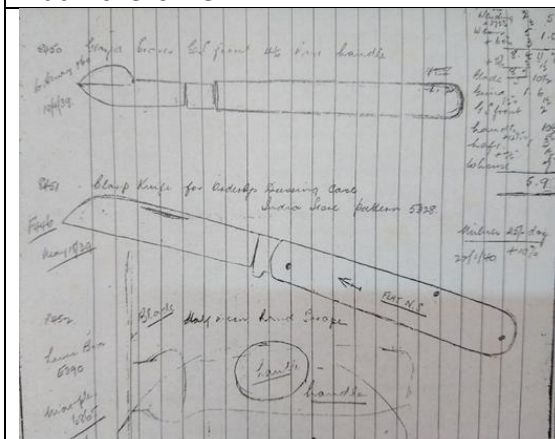


Closed length 4 3/4 inches (12.0cm). Scales: Flat nickel silver.



The ↑ over I stamp on the mark of the nickel silver scale is the "Indian Stores" mark.

This knife is in Martin Cook's collection.



The illustration opposite is copied from Flook's B&CMK - "Part Four INDIA" page 213 Plate 518 with the description "518 From the Maleham and Yeoman day book comes this illustration of a knife described as 'Clasp Knife for Orderly's Dressing Case, Indian Stores Pattern 5328'. The knife has a single sheep's-foot blade and flat nickel silver scales marked with ↑ over I." The sketch appears to be dated May 18, 1939.

Indian Edged Weapon Makers (i.e., not just Clasp knives)

AS & Sons Ltd - 1916 Kukri
ATD. = Army Traders Dehradun, - WW2 kukri, bowie ATD/43
ATD = from 1952 Army Traders Dharan
E. Boota Singh & Sons Rawalpindi
C.M.W. or Calcutta Metal Works - 1942 dated jack knife, WW2 kukris
Co. = Cossipore armoury/arsenal, WW1 kukri
DHW - WW1 kukri
D.1.Pb:15/42/3 - jack knife WW2
EMPIRE- WW2 jack knife.
FRIENDS & Co.- 1940 dated jack knife.
FW = Fort William Calcutta (inspection/ issue marks on many different arsenal made kukris)
F.D.C. '42 – jack knife WW2
G.C.F. 45. = The Jabalpur Gun Carriage Factory – machete, CA1945 leather sheath
Great Eastern War Works = makers mark in a circle kukri blade
G.D.B. & Co. - WW1 kukri dated 1917.
H.J. 44 – WW2 jack knife
HW 45. - WW2 kukri
I.S.D. = India Stores Dept. - 1916 dated Wilkinson made Indian Mountain Battery sword.
J.N.B.'43 - WW2 kukris dates 1941-44
K C WORKS, WAZIRABAD - large 6353 jack knife wood grips
MIL or MI = Mukand Iron (& Steel works) Lahore - Mk1 1942 Indian paratrooper knife
M.I.42 = Military Kukri Mk 2. model
Metal Industries Ltd, Shoranur, Kerala - Bowie knife
NKF. = Nagpur Knife Factory - WW2 jack knife
NIZAMABAD - large 6353 jack knife with wood grips, WW2 3pc Jack Knife.
N.W.R. = North Western Railways - India patt. No.1 Mk2* bayonet
Pioneer, Calcutta –WW2 maker, 1943 & 44 dated kukri
PUNJABSTICK & CUTLERY, NIZAMABAD 1940 - jack knife
QA = Queta
Queyoom Brothers -1944 dated kukri
Queera Bros - WW2 kukris
Rattam/1573 – WW2 clasp knife
R.F.I. = Rifle Factory Ishapore - India pattern No.1 Mk2*, Mk3* bayonets, kukri's
RP = Rawalpindi Arsenal
S&B 42 - jack knife WW2
S.S.45 and LD↑55 - jack knife WW2

Indian produced blade marks; I ↑, I↑ G or D or IG or SA.

20, 21 23 are Indian Govt inspection/ownership marks.

C↑15, C↑544 and P↑ are acceptance/inspectors marks.

Dates are stamped as for example: 1915 or 15, 1941 or M41,42,43,44,45.

Numerous variations of jack knives exist because production of small items was put out to commercial tender by the Supply Department rather than being made at government factories in India. The history of the Supply Department notes:

"The Department maintained registers of contractors by categories. Invitations to tender were normally issued to all contractors registered as competent to produce the store required. This method was mainly used for the vast range of miscellaneous engineering and general stores which could be produced by the small contractors and where there still remained an element of competition, viz., buttons, badges, knives, forks, spoons, scissors, hollow ware, padlocks, crockery, tables, chairs etc."

Collector Neil Champion notes "Most of these companies disappeared after VJ day and most records were "lost " especially following Partition and Independence".

Compiled By Martin R. Cook last updated 21.1.2023.

ENDNOTES

¹ Ron Flook: "*British and Commonwealth Military Knives*"¹ published by Howell Press, 1999

² As above.

³ Ron Flook: Article in April 2009 edition of Knife World magazine having the title "Is it or Isn't it SOE".

⁴ Ron Flook: "Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive" Printed as a Limited Edition and privately published in England by Ron Flook, Bath, Somerset, 2022.

⁵ Tweedale Geoffrey "Tweedale's Directory of Cutlery Manufacturers 1740 – 2020" Published by Geoffrey Tweedale, First Edition 2010.

⁶ Tweedale Geoffrey – as above

⁷ Stephens, Federick J., *Fighting knives*. Arms and Armour Press, London 1980.

⁸ Knife Magazine

⁹ Ron Flook: "Knives and Daggers of the Special Operations Executive" – as above.