

## 1863 SPECIFICATIONS

*Assistant Commissary General of Subsistence - Lt. Col. C.L. Kilburn - Notes on Preparing Stores for the United States Army and on the Care of the Same, etc, with a few rules for Detecting Adulterations - Printed 1863*

### **Under Hard Bread**

Should be made of best quality of superfine, or what is usually known as extra superfine flour; or better, of extra and extra superfine, (half and half). Hard bread should be white, crisp, light and exhibit a flaky appearance when broken. If tough, solid and compact, is evident the fault is either in the stock, manufacture or baking; it should not present the appearance of dried paste. If tough and pasty, it is probably manufacture from grown wheat, or Spring wheat of an inferior kind. In all cases it should be thoroughly cooled and dried before packing. Kiln drying, where practicable, for long voyages, is particularly desirable; but if really and thoroughly dried in the oven, hard bread will keep just as well and its flavor is not destroyed. To make good hard bread, it is essential to employ steam; hand work will not do.

The dough should be mixed as dry as possible; this is, in fact, very essential, and too much stress can not be placed on it. Good stock, dry mixed, and thoroughly baked, (not dried or scalded) will necessarily give good hard bread. If salt is to be used, it should be mixed with the water used to mix the dough. Both salt and water should be clean. Bread put up with the preceding requirements should keep a year; but as a usual thing, our best bread as now made for army use, will keep only about three months. Good, bread, packed closely and compactly should not weigh, net, per barrel, more than 70 or 80 pounds; should it be heavier than 80 it indicates too much moisture. The thickness of the biscuit is important; it should not be so thick as to prevent proper drying, or so thin as to crumble in transportation. The quality of stock used for hard bread can be partially told by rules mentioned in the article 'Flour,' as far as they apply. The term 'sprung' is frequently used by bakers, by which is meant raised or flaky bread, indicating strong flour and sound stock. The cupidity of the contracting baker induces him to pack his bread as soon as it comes out of the oven, and before the moisture has been completely expelled by drying. Bread of this kind hangs on breaking; it will also be soft to the pressure of the finger nail when broken, whereas it should be crisp and brittle.

The packages should be thoroughly seasoned, (of wood imparting no taste or odor to the bread,) and reasonably tight. The usual method now adopted is to pack 50 pounds net, in basswood boxes, (sides, top and bottom 1/2 inch, ends 5/8 of an inch,) and of dimensions corresponding with the cutters used, and strapped at each end with light iron or wood. The bread should be packed on its edge compactly, so as not to shake.

Bread thoroughly baked, kiln dried, and packed in spirit casks, will keep a long time but it is an expensive method. If bread contains weevils, or is moldy, expose to the sun, and before re-packing it, rinse the barrel with whiskey.

### **Army Hardtack Recipe**

Ingredients:

- 4 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons salt
- Water (about 2 cups)
- Pre-heat oven to 375° F
- Makes about 10 pieces

Mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Add just enough water (less than two cups) so that the mixture will stick together, producing a dough that won't stick to hands, rolling pin or pan. Mix the dough by hand. Roll the dough out, shaping it roughly into a rectangle. Cut into the dough into squares about 3 x 3 inches and 1/2 inch thick.

After cutting the squares, press a pattern of four rows of four holes into each square, using a nail or other such object. Do not punch through the dough. The appearance you want is similar to that of a modern saltine cracker. Turn each square over and do the same thing to the other side.

Place the squares on an ungreased cookie sheet in the oven and bake for 30 minutes. Turn each piece over and bake for another 30 minutes. The crackers should be slightly brown on both sides.

The fresh crackers are easily broken but as they dry, they harden and assume the consistency of fired brick.