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Medical-Sanitation & Hygiene

MILITARY SANITATION/HYGIENE

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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PRE-MODERN

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19TH CENTURY-EARLY 19TH CENTURY

Lull, George F. "The Days Gone By - Extracts from Old Sanitary Reports." Military Surgeon (Mar 1934): pp. 143-47. Per.
From Ft Abercrombie, Minnesota, 1858.

Phalen, James M. "General Winfield Scott-Sanitarian." Military Surgeon (Jun 1942): pp. 694-96. Per.
His famous 1832 order against drunkenness.

19TH CENTURY-CIVIL WAR (1861-65)

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Gilham, William. Manual of Instruction for the Volunteers and Militia of the United States. Phila: Desilver, 1861. pp. 650-51. U113G39.

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His rules for good health in the field.

19TH CENTURY-LATE 19TH CENTURY (SINCE 1865)

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Photos of Spanish-American-era soldiers caught w/their pants down.

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See also:

-Spanish-American War Veterans Survey, Arch

19TH CENTURY-TOILET TISSUE (Note on Earliest Use)

Our best searches among sources here have not uncovered the answer to the interesting question of what early soldiers used for toilet paper. We have quite simply failed to uncover primary or secondary evidence of the early product or method.

Earlier military manuals and treatises proved reticent on this subject, perhaps out of a sense of delicacy or possibly because the matter was considered self-evident. Various inventories of quartermaster stores through the Civil War included no items that appear suitable for the purpose in mind. To be sure, the New York City quartermaster inventory for 1865 did record the promising purchase of three quires of "paper, tissue," but this proved disappointing once it was learned that a quire equals one-tenth of a ream of 24 sheets. Never could so few have served so many. (QMG Rpt 1965, pp. 625 & 648-49)

For the record, commercial toilet tissue was in fact available in mid-19th century America. According to Joseph N. Kane's Famous First Facts (Wilson, 1950), p. 329, Gayetty's Medicated Paper was marketed in 1857 as a "perfectly pure" product, good for the "prevention of piles." Even more fascinating is that fact that Mr. Gayetty's name was watermarked on each sheet.

After printed sources we searched for pictorial evidence, which certainly would be conclusive, not to mention indelicate. However, the best offering of our photo archives are images of the Civil War prison camp at Andersonville depicting one of its open-air latrines and several inmates shown in flagrante delicto. Most unfortunately, the views are too distant to discern any pertinent details.

We must push ahead several more decades to find the first published mention of toilet paper in the U.S. Army. It appeared in War Department General Order 56 (3 Jul 1893), wherein the commodity itself was named forthrightly and authorized for purchase out of company funds. Within the decade following this initial authorization, toilet paper had become a commonplace term in Army publications and standard issue for enlisted men provided that they were stationed where there were "modern water-closets with sewer connections." The issue rate was a package of 1,000 sheets for each two enlisted men per month. (GO 22, 24 Feb 1900). The 1901 edition of Army Regulations fully institutionalized the issue of the tissue and thus laid the foundations of the modern Army.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY (to 1914)

Blackham, Robert J. Military Sanitation for Soldiers Serving in Hot Climates. London: Thacker, 1909. 143 p. UM411B54.

Great Britain. Army. Manual of Sanitation in Its Application to Military Life. London: HMSO, 1907. 52 p. UM400M36.

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Hoff, John V. Report on the Military Sanitation of the Russian Armies in the Far East, 1905. Wash, DC: War Dept MID, 1906. 283 p. UM106.1904-05.H6.

Lynch, Charles. "Sanitation as Practiced by the Japanese in the Japanese-Russian War." Lecture, AWC, 12 Apr 1906. 11 p. UM106.1904-05.L9.

Russell, Edmund P. III. "'Speaking of Annihilation': Mobilization for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-45." Journal of American History (Mar 1996): pp. 1505-29. Per.
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Collins, Charles H. "Conservation of Food in the United States Army, 1917-1919." Typescript, AWC Hist Sec Study No 37, 1943. 174 p. UC7033.1917.C69.
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"Disposal of Excreta in the Trenches." Military Surgeon (Jan 1918): pp. 75-84. Per.

Dunn, Lawrence H. "Delousing American Troops at Bordeaux, France, Prior to Their Embarkation for the United States." Military Surgeon (Nov 1922): pp. 546-59. Per.

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Lawrence, Joseph S. "A Study of the Aerobic Bacteria Found in Wounds Received on the Battlefield of the Somme." Military Surgeon (Feb 1918): pp. 149-53. Per.

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See Chaps I and VII.

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