

FIG 2.

based on the author's firsthand experience and observation; there is no documented reference for this statement otherwise). Therefore, it seems likely that the change to the more generic "U. S." boss as specified in an 1863 Ordnance memorandum⁷ was effected for this reason. FIG 2 provides an example of the bridle bit described in the 1863 memorandum. This example was recovered at this same Civil War site as the M1859/61 specimen shown in FIG 1 and was recovered at that site in a ratio of 30:1. (This statement is based on an interview by the author with those individuals who recovered these artifacts).

be issued."⁵ This provision may have applied to the existing supply of bridle bits as well.

It is conceivable that as the Civil War continued it became logistically impossible to match equipment as required by the regulation. The number of mounted troops ultimately increased to 242 regiments with between 997 and 1,189 troops per regiment.⁶ The logistics problem presented by this regulation for an expanding mounted force may also explain why so many bridle bits excavated at Civil War sites which were occupied prior to 1863 by mounted troops of the United States Army have the bosses completely removed. (This statement is

Notes

1. Randy Steffen, *The Horse Soldier, 1776-1943*, vol. 2, *The Frontier, The Mexican War, The Civil War, The Indian Wars, 1851-1880* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 59.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 67.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium to the War of the Rebellion* (New York: Sagamore Press, Inc., Thomas Yoscliff Publishers, 1959).
7. Frederick P. Todd, *American Military Equipage, 1851-1872*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 248.

Pennsylvania Line Button, 1778-1779

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In the summer of 1986 Dr. Richard Michael Gramly conducted archeological field work on the cemetery of Fort Laurens, the Continental Army's westernmost post during the American Revolution. This site is owned and operated by The Ohio Historical Society. The cemetery's location was discovered during archeological work done in 1972-73 to uncover the fort's remains, but only one grave was excavated at that time.

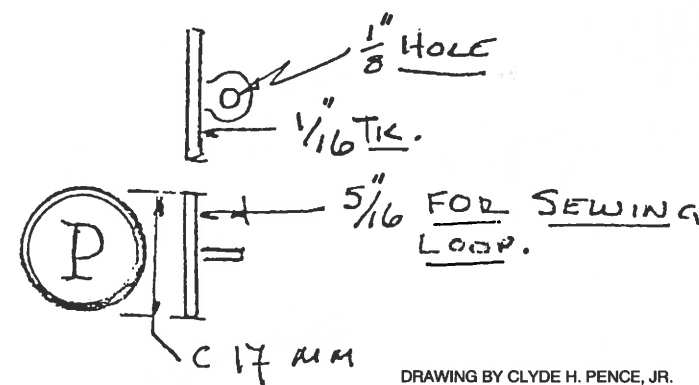
In one of the graves opened in 1986, an unusual one in that although normal-sized at the top, it widened to the bottom to hold two sets of remains, buttons of a type not previously seen

were found. On both sets of remains were found pewter buttons with a plain raised edge and a raised block "P" on the front, and a shank with a round eye on a neck cast on the rear. These buttons were all the same size. Many of these literally disintegrated on being touched, but some remained intact (FIGS 1 and 2).

Only three regiments of Continental regulars were present at the site during the construction and occupation of the fort: the 13th Virginia, Rawlings' Maryland Regiment, and the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment. Only the Virginia and Pennsylvania regiments had men who died there. (Also present at the site

during the same period were companies of Virginia and Pennsylvania militia, and some dragoons from North Carolina.) This information, along with the fact that on at least one occasion two members of the 8th Pennsylvania were killed in the same action against hostile Indians (there were well-defined tomahawk marks on both sets of remains in the grave mentioned, and there was clear evidence of scalping on one of the skulls), it seems logical to assume that these "P" buttons were worn by members of the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment sometime between the beginning of the construction of the fort in late November 1778 and its abandonment in August 1779.

However, I do not wish to imply that this was a regimental button particular to the 8th Pennsylvania, or that it was the only style button used by this unit during the time period already noted. In fact, in some sets of remains from other



graves uncovered during the same dig there were "P" buttons and a number of cloth-covered brass buttons. In a few instances these brass buttons were still attached to remains of cloth, and Dr. Gramly speculated in his preliminary report that "the soldiers may have worn linen-backed wool garments, likely uniform issue."¹

A very common practice during the Revolutionary War period was to provide buttons in two sizes: a large button, often 21-23mm in diameter, for regimental coats; and a smaller size, approximately 17mm diameter for small clothes (waistcoats, breeches, etc.). However, only one size "P"

button was found, of the 17mm diameter. This size, coupled with the number of these found versus the number of cloth-covered brass buttons discovered (on one set of remains there were 19 pewter "P" buttons and 27 of the brass variety), it is logical to assume that these "P" buttons were worn on small clothes, at least by the two individuals represented by the remains in the double grave.

What is the significance of this? While the original regiments raised in 1775 by Pennsylvania had distinctive regimental buttons that are well known (1st through 5th Pennsylvania Battalions and the Pennsylvania State Regiment), after the Pennsylvania Line was renumbered in 1776 no regimental buttons are known for these new or renumbered units. In clothing orders made by the Continental Congress to France in 1779, 550 dozen white metal buttons marked "P" are called for.² However, this order obviously post dates the deaths and burials at the Fort Laurens site. This may be a case of regulation following something already in common practice, as is often the case in military equipage. It is also important to note that while the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment was present at many forts in western Pennsylvania, including Forts McIntosh and Pitt, and while archaeology at these sites has turned up many buttons, including those marked "USA," buttons marked with a "P" have not yet been discovered, or at least the discovery has not yet been reported from any of these sites.

Buttons marked with a "P" have been found at the site of the 1778-79 Morristown encampment of Washington's army, and appear in Albert's *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*.³ The "P" buttons pictured in this title appear to be of a design cruder than those found at the Fort Laurens site, not having a raised edge and having the "P" not centered on the button's face. These pictured buttons do appear in two sizes, however: 21mm and 17mm. The text notes that the buttons pictured were excavated in 1933 from the site of the Pennsylvania Line's encampment during the Morristown, New Jersey encampment of 1778-1779. (This is the area of Morristown National Historical Park known as Jockey Hollow.) The text labels these "Pennsylvania militia buttons," but this is unlikely since most militia units were not uniformed, and the buttons were found in the remains of an encampment of regulars.

Notes

1. Dr. Richard Michael Gramly, "Summary of Archeological Fieldwork at the Fort Laurens State Memorial, Bolivar, Ohio, 23 June-5 August 1986." Unpublished typescript, The Ohio Historical Society.
2. René Chartrand, "American Uniforms Made in France, c. 1779," *MC&H*, XXXII, 4 (Winter 1980): 164-165; Detmar H. Finke and H. Charles McBarron, Jr., "Continental Army Uniform and Specifications, 1779-1781," *MC&H*, XIV, 2 (Summer 1962): 35-41.
3. Alphaeus H. Albert, *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons—Bicentennial Edition* (Boyertown, PA: Boyertown Publishing Co., 1976), 225.