

THE PATTERN 1908 WEB INFANTRY
EQUIPMENT.

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THE PATTERN 1908 WEB INFANTRY EQUIPMENT.

SECTION I.—GENERAL REMARKS.

The main principle underlying the design of the Pattern 1908 Equipment is the subdivision of the complete set into what may be called the "marching" and "fighting" portions. In the latter nothing is included which is not essential to the fighting efficiency of the soldier, and the articles composing it consist of—

Rifle (with sling).
Bayonet.
Ammunition.
Intrenching tool.
Water.

To these may be added such cooked food as can be carried in the haversack, together with an emergency ration and a spoon and fork.

Everything else which goes to complete the soldier's field kit is to be considered as surplus to his fighting requirements, and as such relegated to the "marching" portion of his equipment. Such articles comprise—

Great coat	Razor
Comforter cap	Comb
Spare pair of socks	Towel
Mess tin and cover	Soap
Tooth brush	Housewife
Shaving brush	Paybook

and are carried in a readily removable pack.

This arrangement allows of the soldier having normally with him the whole of his equipment, while, when an action is imminent, the pack and its contents can be discarded, and their place taken, if necessary, by extra ammunition in "emergency" bandoliers.

Some of the other features of the equipment are alluded to in the following remarks:—

(A) *The component parts of the equipment are all directly connected together.*—The result of this is that the whole of it can be taken off in one motion, and, unless it is required to be taken apart for any purpose, remains intact and ready for putting on again at a moment's notice. The advantages of such an arrangement are obvious. Men can turn out in barracks or camp fully equipped in a few moments, even in the dark. Separate articles have not to be hunted for, by no means an easy matter in a crowded tent; all that each man has to do is to seize his rifle and equipment and double to the place of assembly, and within a few seconds of his arrival there he is ready to march off.

Again, when a halt occurs on the line of march, every man can at once, if he wishes, divest himself of the whole of his load, resuming it the moment the order is given to fall in.

- (B) *The equipment is perfectly balanced.*—All former equipments have suffered from the defect that with no ammunition in the pouches in front, and with a pack or rolled great coat on the back, the weight of the latter pulls up the belt in front. In the 1908 equipment this does not occur; for no matter whether the cartridge carriers are full or empty, and whatever the contents of the pack may weigh, no movement of the equipment over the shoulders can, if it has been properly fitted, take place.
- (C) *There are no straps crossing the chest.*—This feature, taken in conjunction with that referred to in (B), accounts for the fact that the soldier can at all times march with his waistbelt undone, and every button of his coat unfastened. The advantages to be derived therefrom are too obvious to mention, but it should be clearly understood that the correct balance of the equipment is in no way impaired even under these conditions.
- (D) *Flexibility of the equipment.*—With the exception of the pack, which, when worn, must always be on the back, the articles carried by the soldier can be disposed in a variety of ways.

By means of the end pieces provided there are altogether four places in which the haversack, waterbottle, and intrenching tool can be carried, and their relative positions can therefore be varied at will. For example, assuming the pack to have been discarded, the haversack and waterbottle can be taken away from their normal positions on the hips, fastened together, and placed on the back. In this way the hips are freed from everything except the bayonet and intrenching tool, whereby the man's actions are less hampered, especially in rough or difficult country.

SECTION II.—DESCRIPTION OF THE EQUIPMENT.

The equipment is made throughout of specially waterproofed and woven webbing. The waterproofing process is applied to the yarn before it is dyed, and thereby produces a material more efficient in this respect than others which are treated after being made up. The result of the treatment is to render the material practically impervious to the weather, which might otherwise tend to make it hard or cause it to stretch and shrink.

All the buckles used with the equipment are of the tongueless or self-locking variety. With this description of buckle the free end of the strap is passed through the slot, over the central bar and under the horns of the other side of the buckle. (Plate I., Figs. 1 and 2.) The strap will then be found to be securely locked, and though it may be tightened up it will not slip back. The strap may either be threaded directly through the horns of the buckle, or one edge of it can be passed sideways in through the gate, the other edge being subsequently inserted by pinching up the web. (Plate I., Fig. 3.)

To unfasten the attachment all that is necessary to do is to pinch the edges of the strap together at a point just outside the horns of the buckle, when the web will pass freely out between the horns. (Plate I., Fig. 4.) The strap has then only to be pulled out through the slot.

The large buckle on the waistbelt is constructed somewhat differently from the others, being a double one; the principle involved is, however, just the same.

The component parts of the equipment consist of the following :--

- Plate II. . . {
- (a) Waistbelt.
 - (b) Frog.
 - (c) Braces (2).
 - (d) Cartridge carriers (1 left, 1 right).
 - (e) Pack.
 - (f) Supporting straps (2).
 - (g) Haversack.
 - (h) Waterbottle carrier.
 - (i) Intrenching tool carrier.

(a) *Waistbelt*.—This is issued in three sizes, large, medium, and small, the overall length of the webbing being 48, 44, and 40 inches respectively. The width in each case is the same, viz., 3 inches. It is fitted with a large buckle in front, and with two smaller buckles and two end pieces in the centre of the back. The length of the belt is adjustable about the buckle end.

(b) *Frog*.—This consists of a loop to slip on the waist belt, and a body fitted with two horizontal loops. The scabbard is inserted and pushed through until the stud on the outside comes out between the two loops.

(c) *Braces*.—These are interchangeable, and each consists of a strip of webbing 50 inches long and 2 inches wide. This width is increased to 3½ inches for a short distance about the middle of the brace in the older patterns. Each brace is provided with a sliding buckle for the attachment of the pack.

(d) *Cartridge Carriers*.—These are not interchangeable, one being reserved for the right and one for the left hand side; in all other respects they are identical.

Each consists of an assemblage of five 15-round pockets in two tiers with separate covers secured by means of snap fasteners. An upper and a lower stud are provided for each fastener to be employed respectively when the pocket is filled and empty. The interior of each pocket is divided by means of partitions into three receptacles, each holding one clip of five rounds.

The carrier is fitted with a double hook at each end for attaching it to the waistbelt, to which it is further secured by two narrow bands passing round the belt and snapped on to the studs on the lower front edge of the carrier. A buckle and end piece are fitted to the back, as also a narrower end piece set obliquely and protruding to the rear of the carrier.

(e) *Pack*.—This consists of a rectangular shaped sack, the dimensions of which are approximately 15" x 13" x 5" (4½" and 4" in older patterns). It is open at the top and is closed by a folding cover secured by two narrow straps. Weather flaps are provided which fold down under the cover. Two web loops are attached to the bottom of the pack, through which the supporting straps (f) are passed. A short suspension tab is fixed to each of the upper corners on the side nearest to the wearer's back, also small buckles to which are attached the upper ends of the supporting straps (f).

(f) *Supporting Straps*.—These are interchangeable, and each consists of a strip of 1-in. webbing 32 inches long, fitted with a buckle at one end.

(g) *Haversack*.—This consists of a rectangular bag of dimensions (approximate) 11 x 9 x 2 inches, and has a cover secured by two small straps and buckles. The interior is longitudinally divided by means of a partition. In older patterns this partition is not provided. The haversack is fitted on the back with two suspending tabs, at the ends with large buckles, and on the back with smaller buckles at the bottom corners. In older patterns these buckles are on the front.

The cover is fitted with a small buckle on the top and a loop in the front. In older patterns a stud is provided lower down on the haversack itself. These last-named attachments allow of the waterbottle being carried on the haversack under certain conditions.

(h) *Waterbottle Carrier*.—This consists of a skeleton framework in which the waterbottle is inserted and secured by a snapped on retaining strap. The carrier is fitted with two buckles for attachment to the end pieces of the equipment, and has a short extension piece for use when the waterbottle is carried on the front of the haversack (when the haversack is carried on the back in place of the pack, see Sec. III., 16).

(i) *Carriers, intrenching tool—Head, helve*.—The carrier for the head of the tool is bag-shaped, is made of the same material as the "pack," and fitted with short web closing strap with snap fastener; it is also fitted with two chapes and buckles for attaching the carrier to the front end of the right brace, and to the tab on the waistbelt on that side. In inserting the tool, it should be put into the carrier pick end first, and as horizontally as possible, to prevent the sharp edge being caught by the bottom of the bag.

The helve carrier is made in the form of two double loops of webbing connected by a chape, fitted with a buckle for fastening the carrier to the tab on the back of the frog. One set of the loops is passed over the bayonet scabbard, the helve is passed through the other, thus securely connecting the helve and bayonet scabbard together. The part of the top loop which passes round the helve is fitted with two brass eyeletted tips and a fastener. The helve is carried in front of the scabbard, as shown in Plate VII.

Plate II. shows the component parts of the equipment, and Plate III. an assembled set.

SECTION III.—TO ASSEMBLE THE EQUIPMENT.

As has been previously stated the design of the equipment admits of variations in the relative positions of certain portions of it, but the normal arrangement will be as now described.

- (1) Adjust the waistbelt until it is comfortably tight, taking care that when fastened the large buckle comes in the centre of the body in front, and that the two smaller buckles are in a perfectly central position at the back. When the belt is fastened there should be about 3 inches of the running end clear of the buckle. The "outside" of the belt is the side on which the rear buckles are fixed.

- (2) When the belt has been satisfactorily adjusted, lay it out on the ground, inside downwards and the large buckle to the right. Slip the bayonet frog over the tongue of the belt and bring it round to a position on the left-hand side so that it will hang, when the belt is put on, upon the left hip. The exact position will vary with the physique of the wearer, and can only be determined by experience.
- (3) Attach the cartridge carriers on the outside of the belt by passing the double hooks over and under the edges of the belt. Their position on the belt may, as in the case of the frog, vary with each man, but speaking generally, the rear double hooks should be set close up to the rear buckles on the belt. When the position has been determined, pass the small securing straps round the inside of the belt and snap them on to their studs.
- (4) Take one of the braces and secure one of its ends to one of the rear buckles on the belt, pulling it through the buckle until, in the case of an averagely tall man, it coincides with the fixed end piece on the belt. Pass the other end of the brace (taking care not to twist it) through the cartridge carrier buckle on the *opposite* side, and pull it through until it coincides likewise with the fixed end piece. Repeat this operation with the other brace.
- Although each of the braces is symmetrical, that is to say, is reversible fore and aft, it is essential that their sliding buckles should be on the rear part of the braces, and so disposed that the open sides are toward the intersection of the braces.
- (5) Try the equipment on in its present state, getting into it as if it were a waistcoat. If it has been properly fitted the belt should rest in its natural position all round the waist, while the braces should show no slack in them. The latter will be crossed behind and come down vertically in front, while four end pieces will hang below the belt on each side, two being to the front and two to the rear, and one of each pair on top of the other. Make any necessary adjustments, then remove the equipment, and lay it on the ground as before.
- (6) Attach the haversack by its large buckles to the two outer end pieces on the left-hand side. Adjust it so that it hangs in a convenient position on the left hip without interfering with the drawing or returning of the bayonet.
- (7) In a similar way attach the intrenching tool carrier to the inner end pieces on the right-hand side, adjusting it until it rests comfortably on the hip.
- (8) Then similarly attach the waterbottle carrier (with the water-bottle in it, and with the centre upright band secured at rear, as shown in Plate VIII.) to the outer end pieces on the same side, and adjust both carriers until they ride comfortably.

The equipment as it now stands represents the "fighting" portion, and will usually suffice for drills and manoeuvres. For marching order parades or on other occasions on which the pack has to be carried, proceed as follows:—

- (9) The table in the Appendix details the articles which are carried in the pack, and they call for careful packing if a neat and compact result is to be obtained. The mess tin should be the last article placed in the pack.

- 10) Lay the assembled equipment face downwards on the ground, and place the pack with the opening upwards upon it. Attach the buckle of one of the supporting straps to the narrow end pieces coming out from the back lower corner of one of the cartridge carriers, taking care that the buckle is as close up to the corner of the carrier as possible. Pass the end of the supporting strap through the web loop on the bottom of the pack, and lead it diagonally across the front of the pack up to the small buckle on the opposite suspension tab. Pass it through the buckle, pull it as tight as it will go, and secure it. Repeat the operation with the other strap (Plate IV.).

As the correct balance of the equipment depends almost entirely upon these supporting straps, it is very important that they should be as taut as possible, as they then bind the pack tightly to the main body of the equipment and prevent it shifting.

- (11) Adjust the sliding buckles on the braces so that they come naturally to the point of attachment of the suspension tabs on the pack. Pass the tabs through the sliding buckles on the braces; if properly fitted, the braces should now lie flat against the back of the pack, being neither slack nor in a state of strain, and the bottom of the pack should be on a level with the lower edge of the waistbelt.

The essential point to remember is that the weight of the pack is, in the first instance at any rate, carried by the narrow end pieces attached to the carriers, and not by the suspension tabs at the top of the pack. The function of these latter is to keep the pack from falling away from the body. After a short time, the weight of the pack slightly stretches the narrow end straps of the carriers, the weight then becoming partly transferred to the suspension tabs. If the whole or even the greater portion of the weight be allowed to be transferred to the suspension tabs, the essential merit of the design is sacrificed.

TO OPEN THE PACK WHEN ATTACHED.

- (12) Cast off the supporting straps from the buckles on the suspension tabs, loosen and open the cover.

TO RECLOSE THE PACK.

- (13) Secure the cover and refasten the supporting straps as before, taking care that they are drawn taut.

TO DISCARD THE PACK.

- (14) Cast off the lower ends of the supporting straps, and free the suspension tabs from the brace buckles. The pack will then drop off, the supporting straps remaining attached to it.

TO PUT THE PACK ON AGAIN.

- (15) Secure the suspension tabs to the brace buckles, cast off the upper ends of the supporting straps, secure the lower ends as before, and re-secure the upper ends to the suspension tabs, pulling them taut.

Of the operations numbered 12 to 15, number 14 is the only one which, after a little practice, can be carried out by the soldier unaided so long as the equipment is in position. Having regard however, to the speed and facility with which the whole equipment can be taken off and put on again, the simplest way of performing any one of these four operations is to take the equipment off, carry out what is required, and put it on again.

TO CARRY THE HAVERSACK AND WATERBOTTLE ON THE BACK.

- (16) Lay the equipment on the ground and remove the pack, water-bottle carrier, and haversack. Secure the cartridge carrier end pieces to the small buckles at the lower corners of the haversack. Draw the sliding buckles down the braces until they come into a convenient position opposite the fixed ends of the tabs with brass tips at the top of the haversack. Secure these tabs to the sliding buckles. The weight of the haversack should not be taken by these tabs, but by the lower corner buckles above mentioned. Lay the waterbottle carrier on the front of the haversack. If the waterbottle carrier is provided with the snap fastener and the haversack with the corresponding stud, snap the fastener on the stud and secure the extension piece on the carrier to the small buckle on the top of the haversack, pulling it well through.

If there be no snap fastener on the waterbottle carrier, a horizontal loop is provided on the flap of the haversack. This latter arrangement is provided in the latest makes of carrier and haversack (see paragraph (h), page 8). Withdraw the extension piece of the carrier from the loop in the web piece running round the upper portion of the waterbottle, pass it through the loop on the flap of the haversack, then through the carrier loop, and secure it to the buckle on the centre of the top of the haversack as before.

TO CARRY THE WATERBOTTLE, HAVERSACK, OR INTRENCHING TOOL SEPARATE FROM THE REST OF THE EQUIPMENT.

- (17) Separate one (or both if required) of the braces from the rest of the equipment, and attach it (or them) by the ends to the article (or articles) which it is desired to carry. The ordinary method of slinging across the shoulder can then be resorted to. (Plate VI.)

SECTION IV.—CARE AND PRESERVATION.

When the equipment has once been properly fitted to each man, it should be kept assembled as far as possible, although the pack need not always remain attached. It will be found convenient if, when a correct fit has been obtained, a light mark is made to show where each adjustment should always come. This saves trouble in case the equipment has to be taken apart and re-assembled.

The webbing should not be washed or treated with any description of dressing or preparation. Dust and mud (when dry) should be removed with an ordinary clothes brush. The metal work should not be polished but allowed to get dull, so as to avoid catching the rays of the sun.

SECTION V.—MARKING.

The web accoutrements are to be marked with $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. copper inlaid stamps and black marking paint, $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. brass or gun-metal stamps being used for regimental terminals.

APPENDIX.

TABLE OF WEIGHTS.

(A) Personal clothing, as worn by the soldier :—		(F) Articles carried in pack :—	
	lb. oz.		lb. oz.
Helmet	1 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	Greatcoat	6 5
Jacket, with field dressing	2 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	Socks	0 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Trousers	1 15	Comforter cap	0 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Jersey	1 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Mess tin and cover	1 6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Braces	0 4	Tooth brush	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Shirt	1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Boot laces	0 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Woollen belt	0 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	Housewife (fitted)	0 3
Socks	0 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	Towel and soap	0 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Boots	3 14	Razor and case	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Puttees	0 12 $\frac{1}{2}$	Shaving brush	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Clasp knife	0 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	Comb	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Drawers	1 2	Pay book	0 2
Total	15 0	Total	9 9
(B) Arms :—		(G) Rations and water :—	
Rifle, with sling	8 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	Water (in bottle)	2 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bayonet, scabbard, and frog	1 4 $\frac{3}{4}$	Emergency ration (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.) and portion of bread ration (say 12 oz.) carried in haversack	1 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total	9 8$\frac{1}{2}$	Portion of meat ration (say 12 oz.) carried in mess tin	0 12
(C) Ammunition :—		Total	4 4
150 rounds S.A.A.	9 13 $\frac{1}{2}$	<i>Marching Equipment.</i>	
(D) Intrenching tool and carriage (say)		(A) Personal clothing	15 0
3 0		(B) Arms	9 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
(E) Accoutrements :—		(C) Ammunition (150 rounds)	9 13 $\frac{1}{2}$
Waistbelt	0 13	(D) Intrenching tool	3 0
Two 75-round cartridge carriers	1 7	(E) Accoutrements	7 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Two braces	0 9	(F) Contents of pack	9 9
Pack (with supporting strap)	1 8	(G) Rations and water	4 4
Waterbottle (empty), with carrier	1 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	Total	58 4$\frac{1}{2}$
Haversack (17 oz.) with fork and spoon (4 oz.)	1 5	<i>Fighting Equipment.</i>	
Total	7 1$\frac{1}{2}$	Marching equipment	58 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
		Deduct pack and contents	12 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
			45 14$\frac{3}{4}$
		Add 120 rounds S.A.A. in two emergency bandoliers	7 14
		Total weight of fighting equipment (270 rounds)	53 12$\frac{3}{4}$

PLATE 1.



Fig. 1.

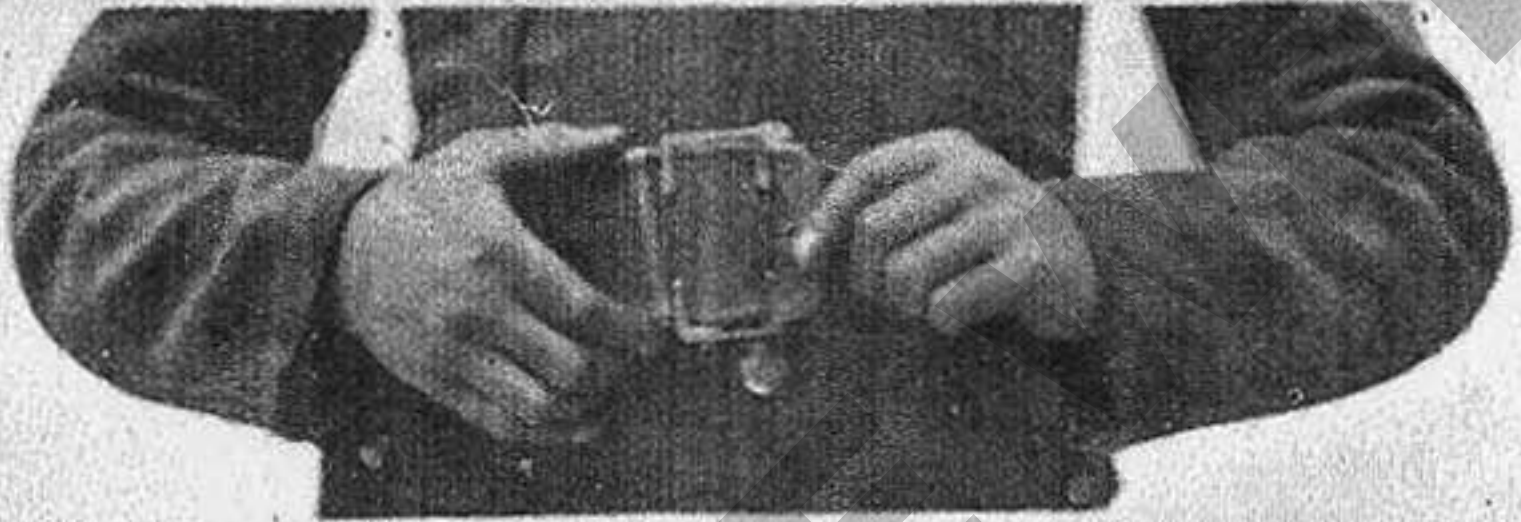


Fig. 2.

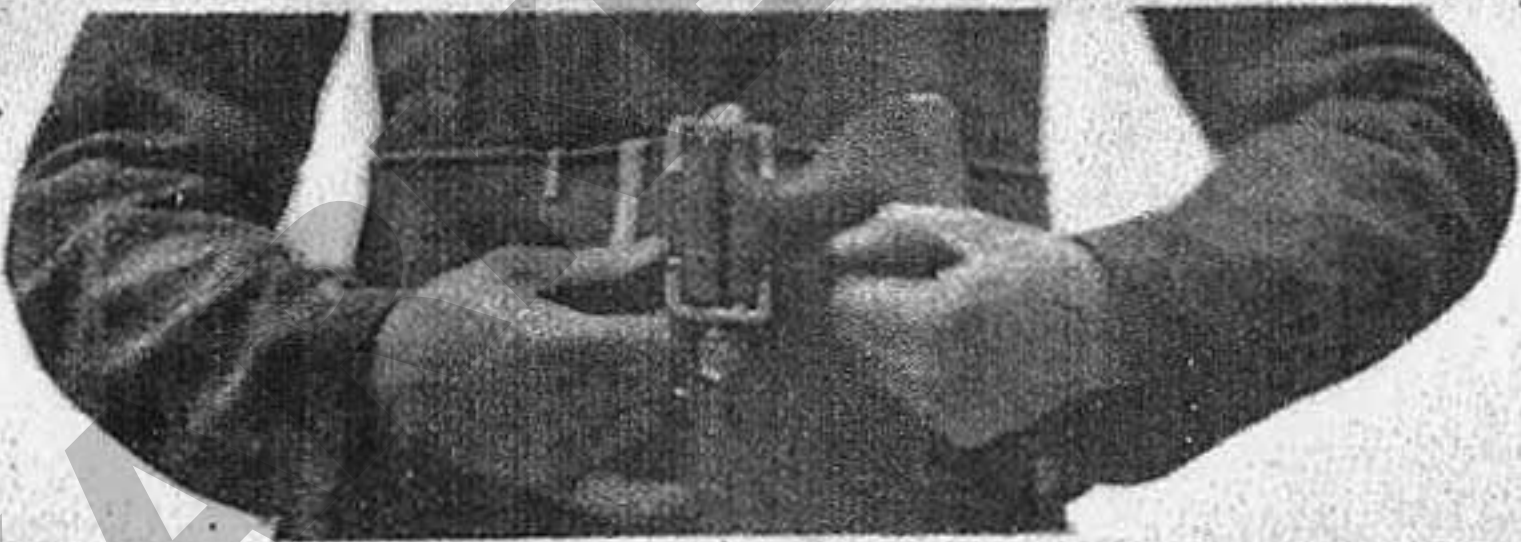


Fig. 3.

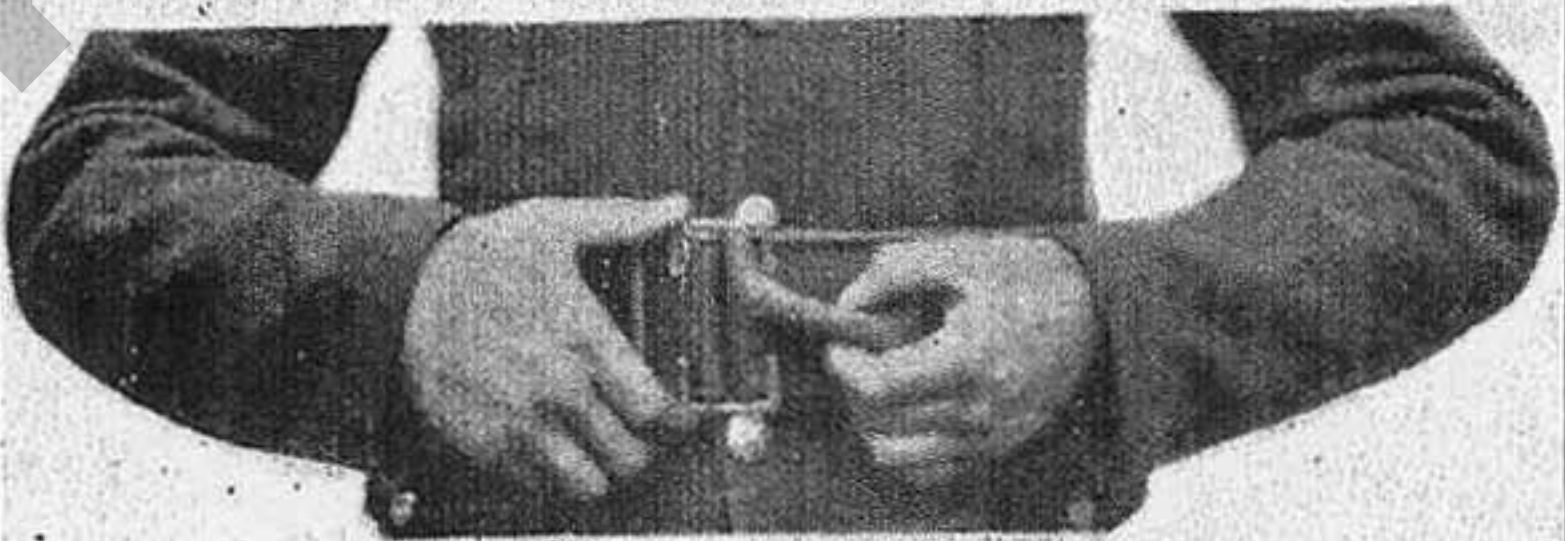
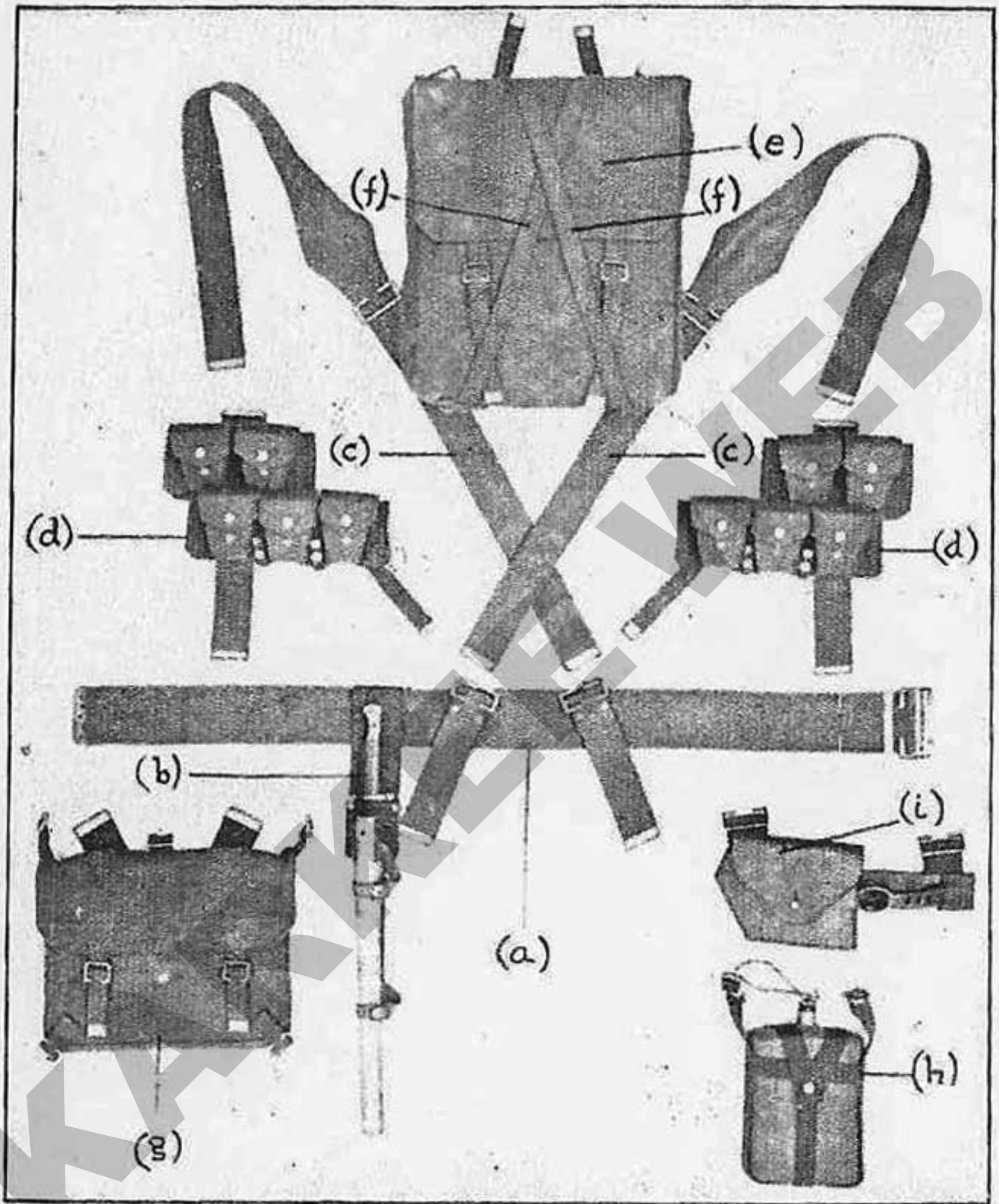


Fig. 4.

PLATE II.



(b) Intrenching tool helve is now carried *in front of scabbard*, *vide* Plate VII.

(c) Braces are now made of same width throughout.

(g) 1. Buckles shown at corners of haversacks are now in rear.

2. Stud in centre removed.

3. Web loop sown on front of cover.

(h) See plate VIII., showing method of fixing upright band in rear of carrier when water-bottle is carried on the hip. (Plate IV., Fig. 1.)

(i) Pattern modified, *vide* Plate VII.

All brass tips are now eyeletted.

PLATE III.



PLATE IV.—FIG. 1.



PLATE IV.—FIG. 2.



PLATE V.



PLATE VI.



PLATE VII.

(Showing Intrenching Implement and Carrier adopted 1st November, 1909; also method of carrying Intrenching Implement Helve.)



PLATE VIII.

(Showing method of securing centre upright band at rear of Water-bottle Carrier when the water-bottle is carried on the hip.)

