

July 2022  
\$7.95

SCOUTING EQUIPMENT NUMBER, MAY, 1925

# Knife MAGAZINE

Visit Us Online At [KnifeMagazine.com](http://KnifeMagazine.com)

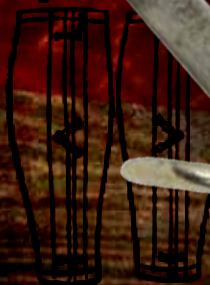
## RED, WHITE, AND BLUE UTILITY KNIVES

RED SILK LETTERS

BY DENNIS ELLINGSEN



SCOUT COAT  
(Use of coat optional  
with Co. uniform  
Independent)



SCOUT LEGGINGS  
(Optional as is coat)



METAL BADGE OF RANK

HAVERSACK

NUMERALS

Red Felt  
2" below  
Seam

LANYARD

OFFICIAL BELT

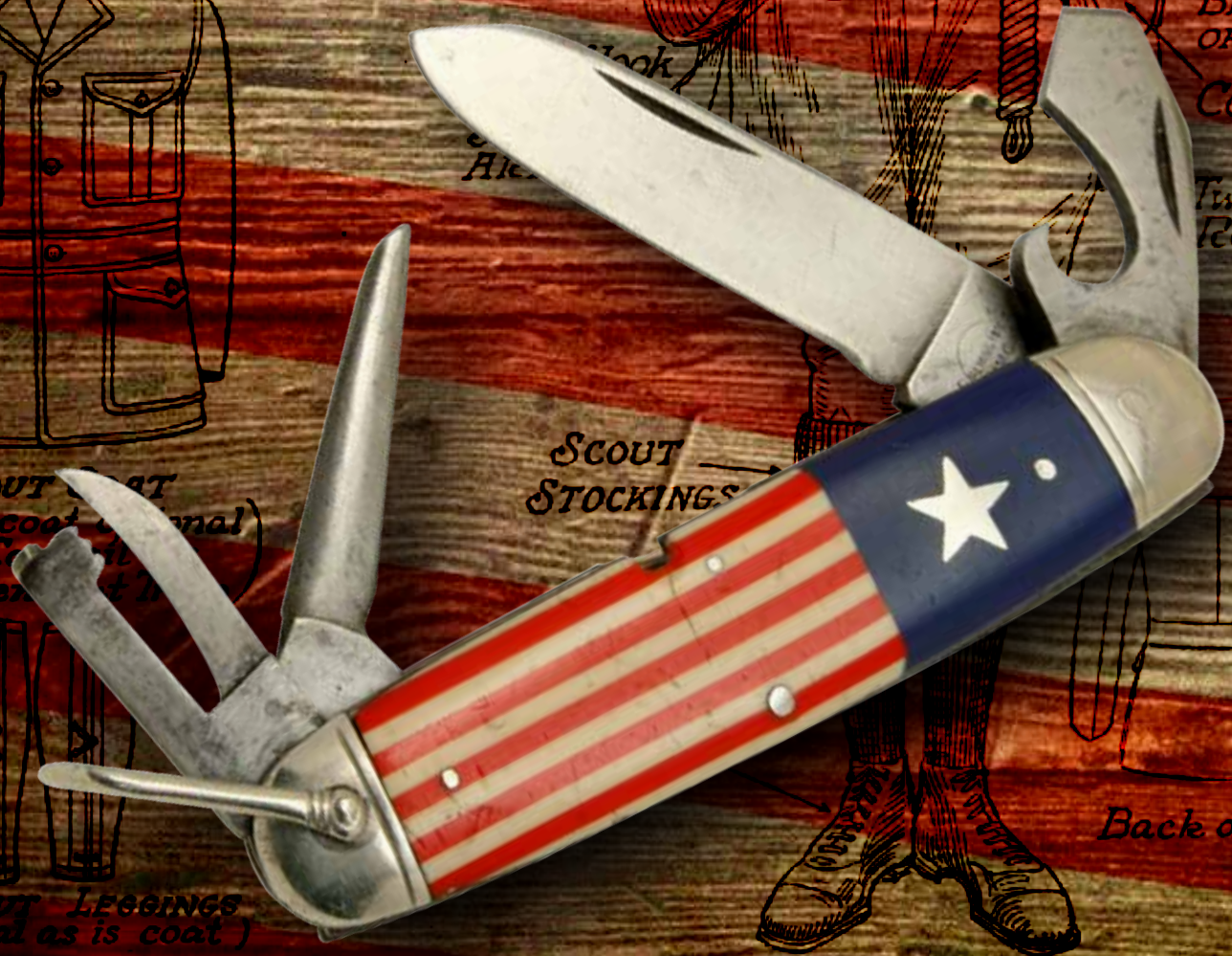
SLEEVE BADGE OF RANK

COOK KIT

TWINE OR ROPE

SCOUT STOCKINGS

Back of Coat



SEE PAGE 17 FOR THE RIGHT WAY TO WEAR OFFICIAL INSIGNIA

# RED, WHITE, AND BLUE UTILITY KNIVES

By DENNIS  
ELLINGSEN





***The RMS75 display box was offered to Remington dealers between 1921 and 1924. The “Golden Oak Box” came with 12 utility knives of which six were the Red - White - Blue (RWB) type.***

When you put the colors red, white and blue together, you think of the following: the United States of America, American baseball, apple pie, mom’s cooking, patriotism, and all the other things that are associated with this great country of ours.

Since early times people have displayed flags and shields to acknowledge their nationality or allegiances. In the United States we are proud to show our allegiance, nationality and patriotism with our flag which has the stars and stripes and the colors red, white and blue. The American flag, with its familiar pattern and colors,

has its roots going back to 1776; and the names George Washington and Betsy Ross exude patriotism at its best. And when you think of Uncle Sam, can you imagine him in any other than a suit comprised of the red, white and blue colors?

If we reflect back to the years before World War I, we see that the cutlery market in the United States was dominated by Germany. They had the best steel, quality, price and marketing. American cutlery was far behind in competitive sales. With the approaching advent of WWI (1914), Germany exported little if any steel products

abroad. How could they when they needed the steel for themselves for the War?

Germany’s loss of the War was a boon to the American cutlery business, and the 1920s were the heyday for American-made cutlery of all sorts. Marketing was brisk and new designs and ideas were implemented. The companies that were making firearms for the War soon diversified, and cutlery was now made by firearms manufacturers like Winchester and Remington. Those men who fought in the War had exhibited their patriotism. Those who supported the War effort also felt the re-



**Remington made five variations of the Red-White-Blue knives. The knife at above left, an RS3335, was the first knife offered, circa 1922. The larger RS3335 variations are more often seen with handles like the knife at above right, and can be found in the one piece can opener and the patented 1924 two piece version. This also applies to the R4235 junior size knife.**

surgence of faith and belief in the United States of America. The Boy Scouts of America had never been stronger, and everyone wanted to show their allegiance.

A few cutlery companies recognized this and looked for a knife that they could sell using the new found patriotic fervor. Thus ushered in the concept of the Red White and Blue (RWB) pocketknife. It was Remington Cutlery which was the first to use the celluloid Red, White and Blue handled pocketknife in their sales line.

#### **Celluloid**

Remington entered the cutlery market in 1921 and their efforts were very innovative. A RWB pocketknife had the colors impregnated into the celluloid handle material. Remington called this handle material pyremite (Py-Rem'-ite). Whether called Py-Rem-ite or celluloid, it was still the same material that was used for motion picture film. Celluloid was the first synthetic plastic material and was first made in 1856. In 1869 it saw its first use as a commercial product. This material was made from a mixture of cellulose nitrate and camphor. Because of its strength, toughness, luster, ability to be colored and low cost, it soon became a replacement in the manufacturing of billiard balls, brushes, combs, dentures, photographic film and shirt collar stays. If ignited, celluloid burns furiously and explosively. It is for this reason that it was discontinued in knife handles sometime in

the 1950s. Today there is only limited use of celluloid in such items as drafting triangles and ping pong balls.

During a trip to Camillus Cutlery many years ago, I was told that when Camillus used celluloid, it was housed in specially constructed buildings. An accidental explosion could easily level a building, so the roof was designed to minimize the effect of an explosion. The roofs were made of metal and were hinged on either side. If an explosion were to occur, the roof would blow out of the way, sparing the walls and minimizing the physical damage with this type of pop-off valve. Kind of like a giant jack-in-the-box. No one mentioned whether they ever had an explosion.

#### **Remington**

The first designed RWB knife by Remington appeared on a utility knife pattern that had a main blade, punch, one piece can opener blade and a combination screwdriver/cap lifter blade. The RWB celluloid handle had the stripes running from bolster to bolster. On the face side, in place of the shield, was a five pointed nickel silver star. The five pointed star has the same patriotic symbolism as the RWB colors. This indeed was an "All American knife."

Sometime between 1921 and 1924, Remington changed the handle design on the RWB knife. Instead of a continuous stripes from bolster to bolster, the new design had the stripes cover two thirds of the handle;



*The Remington R4235 junior sized knife came with pinched bolsters and can be found with the earlier one piece can opener and the 1924 patented can opener.*

and instead of a three color stripe it was now red and white. On the other third of the handle was a field of blue with a five pointed nickel silver star inlaid in the celluloid. This new design was definitely more eye appealing than the earlier design. Also the colors on these knives are more vibrant as I suspect that color fading might have been a problem. The early three color stripe Remington Utility RWB is considered the rarest of all these type knives. These older full striped knives have been found only in the larger 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch pattern.

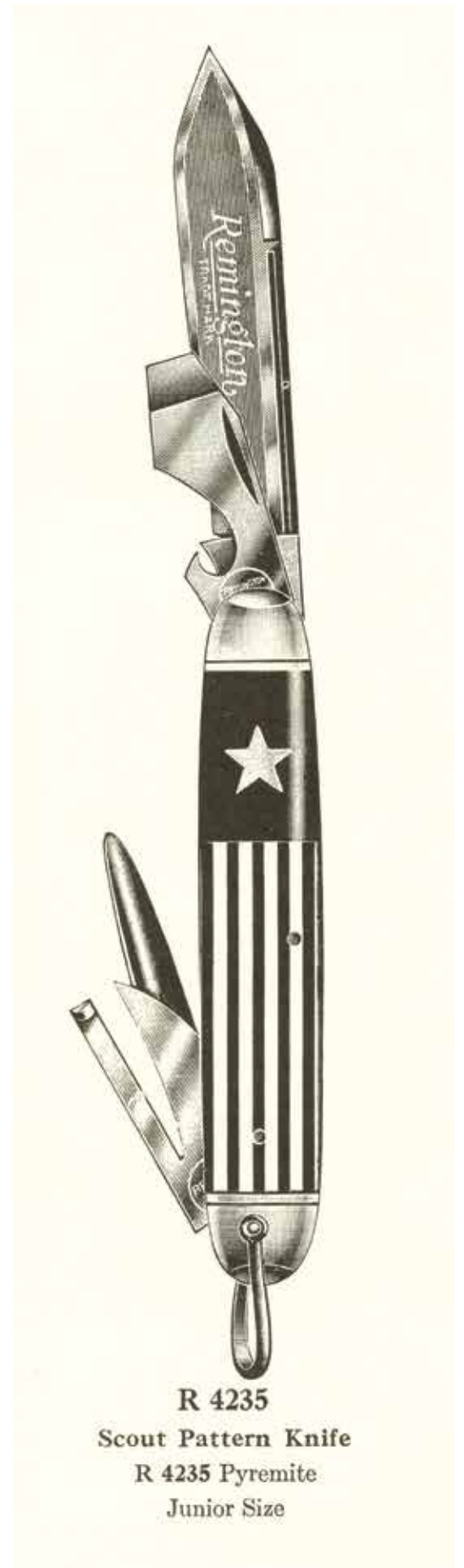
Remington RWB pattern utility knives

were made between 1921 and 1929. Over time the colors of the original Remington RWB knives have faded, and the white has turned to a mellow yellow, cream color. I can imagine that, when new, the colors were very bright and sprightly.

In the Remington two color stripe RWB, both the larger 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch and the “junior” 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inch utility pattern knives can be found. It should also be noted that there never were any official scout knives sanctioned by any of the scouting organizations for the RWB pattern knives. In other words, there are no RWB Official Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America or Camp Fire Girl knives. The Remington RWB junior knives are characterized with pinched and grooved bolsters, a bail and a spear blade, in addition to the typical can opener, punch and screwdriver blades. The variants to this “junior” pattern are clearly seen through the evolutionary Remington can opener. The one piece can opener (CO) was used between 1921 and 1924, and the two piece CO was used exclusively after 1924.

The smaller 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>” RWB knives were similar to the standard size 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>” knives, but with a few differences. The smaller knives always had pinched bolsters and were never made with the full three color stripe RWB handle. Another point worth mentioning is that the junior RWB has long pull nail nicks and nickel silver liners. The larger standard size RWB has brass liners and can be found with either long pull or short pull nail nicks. The junior RWB knives are pattern R4235, and the larger pattern is R3335. Note that the “5” denotes pyremite handles.

One of the most sought after Remington collectibles is the “Golden Oak Chest” counter display box that advertised Remington “Scout” Knives. When these boxes



*Remington’s “Junior Size” RS4235 looks much like the RS3335, but is both narrower and shorter at 3-3/8” closed.*

were supplied (1921-1924), they came with 12 utility pattern knives six of which were the red, white and blue. This box with knives was part number RMS75 and sold to dealers at \$13.50; the dealer suggested list price on a single RWB was \$1.75. The sales description of these knives to the dealers was interesting, as can be seen from the following: “Handles furnished in two styles of coverings (handles) – Stag and Py-Rem’-ite – both popular – the Py-



**Schrade made many a RWB handled knife. Many were suggestions toward the official scouting organizations. "Schrade Boy Scout Knife" and "Schrade Girl Scout Knife" could be found etched on the main blade. These knives were available with or without bails; as three or four blade options; junior size and as contract knives like the E. Weck tang marked knives.**

Rem'ite handle makes a strong appeal to the boys who like colors – they are easily located too, when laid on the ground - another strong feature."

**Schrade Cutlery**

Schrade Cutlery Company made a utility pattern knife that appears to have had handles made by the same celluloid handle material supplier that was used by Remington. This at least holds true for the



**Here's a view of the Schrade Cut. Co. three-blade utility knife at left, with all the blades open.**

three color stripe handle, as this was the only pattern RWB used by Schrade. One of the RWB knives that I have shows the etch on the main blade as "Schrade Boy Scout Knife." This etch tells us much about the marketing used for this type knife. The "Boy Scout" indicates that this was targeted at the younger male buying market. It was also on target to aim for the sales market that the Official Boy Scout movement had created.

But the Boy Scouts weren't the only scouting organization targeted by Schrade Cutlery Co. Their 1926 cutlery catalog offered a RWB utility knife called the Schrade Girl Scout Knife. This patriotic RWB knife was 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" long, as opposed to the larger boy scout knife that measured 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>".

Schrade Cutlery Co. was not a sanctioned, authorized supplier of Official



***This Schrade Cut. Co. RWB 4 blade utility knife is marked for E. Weck of New York City. Note that all of Schrade's RWB knives have full length red, white and blue stripes.***



***A Valley Forge Cutlery Co. RWB four-blade utility knife with a nickel silver star in the blue field.***

Scout knives but attempted to capture part of this very lucrative sales arena. By calling upon the RWB patriotic support and using the words "Boy Scout" and "Girl Scout", they were able to sell these knives. Schrade also did a cutesy trick in their catalog numbering system for the Red White and Blue knife. The 3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" pattern was the 9464US and the smaller 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" was the G9594US pattern number. Any guess why they used the US extension on the RWB knives?

**About the RWB Knives**

I have had several inquiries about the authenticity of the RWB handles based on irregularities in the celluloid. I have yet to see a perfect design pattern on these handles. Some of the stripes waver; some stripes start center and wander right or left; some appear smeared and some are blotched. That is the way they were made and apparently they were accepted as they

came out. Each RWB had its own personality.

It is my belief that all RWB knives were made between 1921 and 1928. Please remember that the Depression occurred in 1929, so it is unlikely that a non-utilitarian knife would be made during a time of financial hardship. I also suspect that the RWB knives were popular in the early 1920s following the Great War.

Although this article concerns itself with the utility pattern RWB knives, there were other RWB pocketknife patterns made; but the utility pattern seems to have been far more common.

The most collectible of the Red, White and Blues are certainly the Schrade Cutlery and the Remington. However other companies also made this design. The next most popular specimens bear the IKCO tang stamp. This was the early mark for Imperial Knife Company. Imperial made

both three blade and four blade utility pattern RWB knives. Those knives that I have seen have a shield placed in the center of the handle that bears the word "SCOUT." This is yet another attempt to lure business away from the official sanctioned knives offered by the scouting organizations. The IKCO knives do not have five point stars on them.

I have a Hartford Cut Co. RWB knife that looks suspiciously like it was made by Imperial. It was also suggested that Boker was a maker of the RWB, but I have yet to see one. German-made RWB knives were also made (Wadsworth), and it might be interesting to research when those knives were introduced into the American market place and what implied statement they were attempting to make. The Syracuse and Royal Brand names also appear on these knives.

The Red White Blue knives are one of my personal favorites in the "world of collect." There is a charm about them that makes you want to stick it in your pocket and walk down the street whistling the Star Spangled Banner or America the Beautiful. I have also noticed that I have never seen a mint version of this knife. RWB's were bought to be used, carried and shown. There are many that I have that look to have been overly loved. But ya ain't a gonna find them in any other shape. Dear Elayne has a Remington RWB in her purse. Some kind soul put new life into it by welding another blade onto the

*(Continued on page 40)*

## A LISTING OF RWB UTILITY KNIVES

I have attempted to list the variations in patterns and makers of the RWB that have come to my attention. This list only includes the utility "scout" type knives. Please note that the "RWB" designation refers to stripes that run full length on the handle. The "R&W" denotes that there is a blue field on the handle. This listing is not considered complete.

Brand	Pattern	Blades	Description	Model	Size
A.A. Fisher Co N.Y.	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Bridge Cutlery	utility	4	R&W stripes w/star on blue field	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
E. Weck & Sons	utility	4	RWB stripes w/star	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Hartford Cutlery Co.	utility	3	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
IKCO	utility	3	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
IKCO	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Imperial Knife Co.	utility	3	R&W stripes - Blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Imperial Knife Co.	utility	4	R&W stripes - Blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Remington	utility	4	RWB stripes w/star	R3335	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Remington	utility	4	R&W stripes w/star on blue field	R3335	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Remington	utility	4	R&W stripes w/star on blue field	R4235	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Royal Brand	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Schrade Cutlery	utility	4	RWB stripes w/star	9464US	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Schrade Cutlery	utility	4	RWB stripes w/star (no shackle)	G9594US	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Shapleigh Hardware	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field - DE in diamond	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Syracuse	utility	4	RWB stripes - "Scout Knife" shield	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
U.K. & R Co. Utica	utility	3	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
U.K. & R Co. Utica	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Union Knife Works	utility	4	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Valley Forge	utility	4	R&W stripes w/star on blue field	??	3 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "
Vanco Indianapolis	utility	3	R&W stripes - blue field "Scout on Shield"	??	3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "

tt  
ple



**Michael Yoh has been accumulating RWB knives for decades. I reached out to Mike for adding more names that could be found on RWB knives. I was taken aback at the quantity and also the method of storage. Neither of us have experienced off-gassing of the celluloid on RWB knives so this storage was acceptable. Try this with more volatile handled knives and may you rust in peace.**

*(Continued from page 11)*

main blade which had been broken in half. It isn't your "collector pretty;" but it is "PRETTY" and it works good too.

In the table on this page I have attempted to list the variations in patterns and makers of the RWB that have come to my attention. This list only includes the utility "scout" type knives and is not considered complete. When I contacted my good friend Michael Yoh about other RWB knives, the list grew. Crown, Crucible, Eversharp, Keen Kutter, Romo and Standard knives were added to the list.

There are also numerous variations of a given pattern for the variation collector. For example the Remington RWB can be found in the one or two piece can opener styles and with both long and short pull

nail nicks. It appears that the E. Weck RWB was made by Schrade. There are also pocketknife patterns other than utility knife patterns that were made, however these would be outside my collecting field. Neither Boker, Case nor Winchester made a RWB utility knife. Any knives that are found with these marks should be treated with doubt. Likewise there were NEVER any Official Scout pocketknives made with the RWB handles.

The RWB is sometimes called the flag handled knife, however that term is not found in older factory catalogs. It should be assumed that "Flag Handled Knives" is modern collector terminology. I have difficulty with this term, since I have a semaphore flag handled knife and also a knife with a Boy Scout carrying a flag. All can be classified as "flag" knives, so this term

might be confusing. I have limited myself to RWB or R-W-B or just good ole Red, White and Blue knives.

The majority of the RWB utility pattern knives have the standard main blade nail nick; however the IKCO, Royal Brand and Remington can be found with long pulls on the main blade. I have yet to see a genuine three blade Remington RWB knife, but I have seen several non-Remington frames with Remington blades placed in them. Seems like the Remington blades command more money than Imperial or IKCO.

On the subject of collector market today: I consider one of these knives found today in a rough-as-used condition a real find. It must be remembered that the target market for these RWB knives was the youngster along with the scouting organizations. Boys and girls who had one of these knives would be prone to use these knives rather than put them in a drawer and save them for Sunday only. This would account for the always "used" specimens found. Therefore rough and abused is correct.

Any knives that are machine polished to shiny are less desirable to me and do not represent the true historical aspects of this pattern knife. To clean is acceptable; to machine polish and dismantle for the sake of pretty is sacrilege. To restore to original is acceptable, but to restore to glitter is not.

Celluloid handled knives are prone to deterioration over time. Plain colored celluloid is more susceptible to off gassing, which attacks and rusts metal like bolsters and blades of pocketknives under the right conditions. Celluloid also cracks and destroys itself over time or when subjected to heat and sunlight. When celluloid has a binding agent with it like opaque coloring, the off gassing is minimal, if at all. I have never witnessed off gassing results on a RWB pocketknife. It can easily be proven to the contrary if one were to lay a RWB in the sun on hot days for a long period of time. But who would want to do that with a great collectible knife of historical worth? □