

Remington Scouts

Historical Keys

by Dennis Ellingsen

Remington Cutlery Co. what intrigue this name presents to the knife collector! Whether you collect the Remington name or a particular pattern, you can't get away from those highly prized Remington collectables. As a collector of the utility knife pattern (scout type knives), I was very amazed to realize I had collected 25 variations of Remington knives, and I have a goal of locating at least 10 more variations. With as many variations as this, certain big questions arose as to the "why" of the many variations. My search for this "why" gave me an understanding of the evolution and the historical growth of this large cutlery manufacturer.

The end of World War I saw

companies like Winchester and Remington expanding to encompass the manufacture of firearm related items, namely cutlery. Remington's undertaking was certainly the most ambitious with 828 patterns shown in the 1925 catalog, along with a reported daily output of many thousands of pocket knives per day. Marketing had to be a key issue for survival in a highly competitive cutlery field, and Remington was a leader in this area. Advertising was highly prolific, distributors were nation wide and the updating of design to market whims was constantly evident. No other pattern of knife so graphically tells the history of Remington better than the scout/utility pattern. The key factor in this story has to do with the

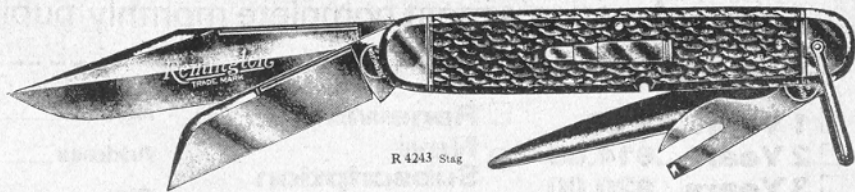
patented invention of a can opener, and keen marketing geared to the official scouting organizations.

1910 was the year that saw official incorporation of the scouting movement in America. New York Knife Company was the manufac-

turer for Official Scout Knives until 1921, at which time Ulster and Remington were authorized to make Official Scout Knives along with New York Knife Company. An Official Scout Knife had to follow the guide lines of the scouting organization in pat-

tern and workmanship and had to be authorized by the scouting organization. The Official Scouting Shield was displayed on the knife handle and the main blade was etched with the scout logo and emblem. This is the way that

Continued on page 4



The biggest and best Remington utility knife was the bullet. This pictures the one piece can opener design which dates pre 1924.

Continued from page 1

one can tell an Official Scout Knife from a utility knife—scout knives may be utility knives but not all utility knives are scout knife.

Remington's first Official Scout Knife had the acorn shield with the official emblem stamped within; this was followed by the shield in the form of the emblem (this was the most rare of the shield designs). (See Photo) These two shields were used til circa 1927. At that time the round shield with the scout emblem was used, until 1939. Up until 1924, the design of the pocket knife can opener had remained unchanged as a one piece design resembling a configuration of the letter D with the top section cut away. July 28, 1924 saw the introduction for patent of a revolutionary new design in can openers utilizing a two piece construction. Not only was this a new innovation of effectiveness, but also it was a new marketing tool. The two piece construction

consisted of two pieces of steel, of different qualities, riveted together to open rimmed or rimless cans. The lower cutting blade was made of a hard carbon steel which would retain a sharp cutting edge while the back or upper part was made of a softer and tougher spring steel. The actual patent number was not given until July 12, 1927; however, the new design was used as early as 1924, to call notice to this new special feature. No patent number could appear, but Remington's name was stamped on the upper blade of the can opener. With the issuance of a patent number in 1927, the patent number was also stamped on the can opener blade so as to discourage the copying of this very special concept.

With this basic information, let's try and tie it all together to make an historical evaluation.

1920 to 1924

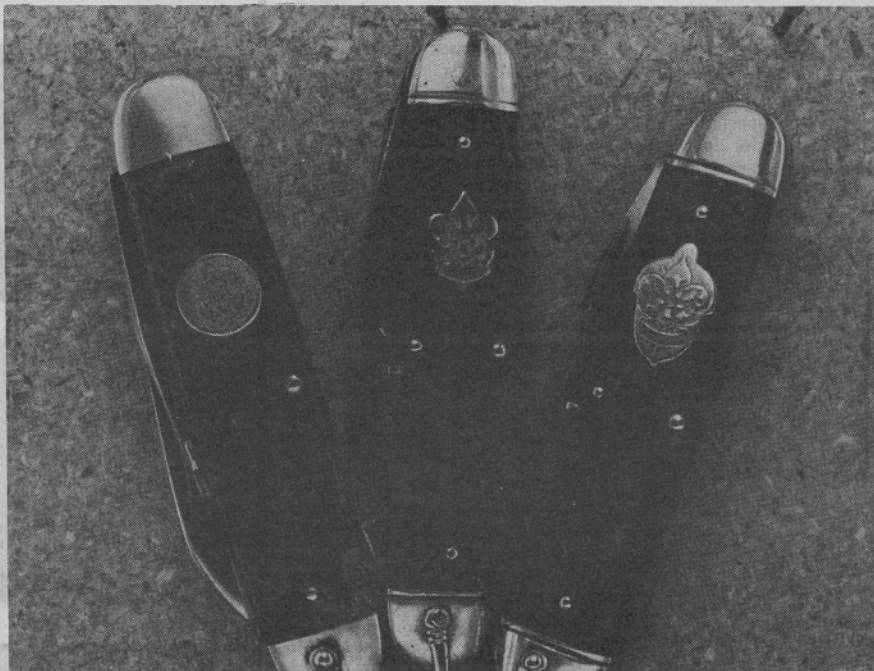
All can openers utilized the

Continued on page 5



HERE'S the Bird for K.P.—the Remington Camp Knife

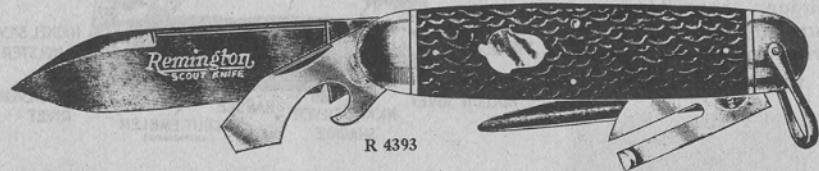
A Man's Knife—Remington Steel, made to the exacting Remington standards of quality and accuracy—with clean cutting edges that stay keen a long time.



The three Official Scouting Shields are clearly seen in this picture. Left to right, the 1927 to 1939 round shield, the rare outline emblem (a transition) and the pre 1927 acorn emblem.

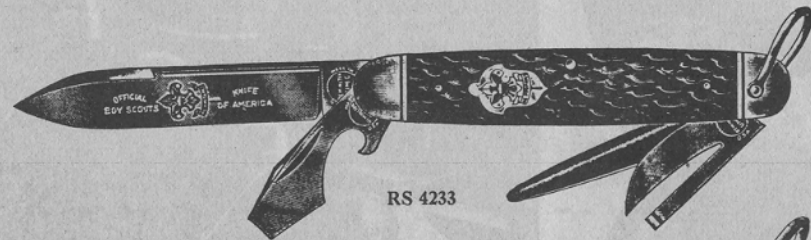


R 3335



R 4393

These are standard pre 1924 style non official scout knives. The red white and blue pattern was never used by the official scouting organizations. Its sales appeal was to the patriotic person of this era.



RS 4233



RS 3333

The official knives of the pre 1924 era are pictured with acorn shields in both standard and junior sizes. Of note here is the short stubby style screwdrivers and the one piece can opener.

Continued from page 4

one piece standard design while the official scout shields were in the acorn style. Within this period one can also find the junior official scouts and utility knives, the 6 bladed camper utility knife, standard size official and utility knives, red white and blue standard and junior size knives and the Remington 4 bladed bullet knife. Tang markings in this period all contain the UMC stamp.

1924 to 1927

All the can openers in this era were the two piece design and are stamped "Remington" only. The acorn official shield was still used with the transition to an outline emblem shield. It should be noted that all screwdriver blades prior to 1927 were a stubby style whereas the later style was 1/3 again longer. The same patterns as mentioned in the earlier era were still being made with special mention to the 6 bladed and bullet patterns utilizing the two piece Remington marked can opener.

1927 to 1932

The can opener again

keynoted this era, as the patent number, unavailable before 1927, was now found stamped on all can openers. This period was unique in the utility knife era as I have not found any red, white and blue utility patterns, 6 bladed patterns or bullet patterns with patent numbers. This period also introduced the Official Girl Scout Knife and the super rare Campfire Girl Official Knife. The UMC tang stamp can still be found on the main blade markings.

1932 to 1935

It was about 1932-1933 that DuPont entered the scene. This was to keep Remington alive following the Depression that saw cutlery firms like L.F. & C., New York Knife Co., Universal and Empire going out of business. New management and streamlining of the cutlery line brought about significant changes which aid in historically classifying the pocket knife line. The foremost change noted was the elimination of the UMC tang stamp, and all markings on their famous two piece can

Continued on page 6

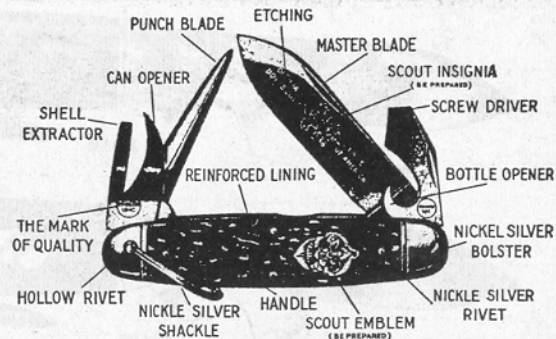
Continued from page 5
 opener. Simplicity in stamps simplified manufacturing problems. The lack of variations in patterns available were very evident at this time, and a slight deterioration of quality was also seen. It was also within this period that a concentrated effort was made in the kitchen cutlery market.

1935 to 1939

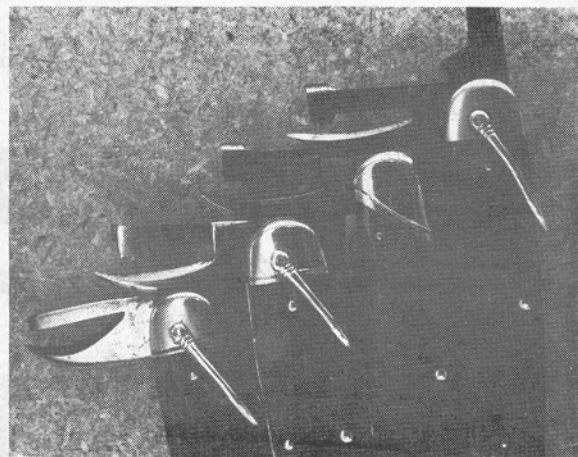
The most significant change in this era was the adoption of the Remington straight line tang marking which was no more than a line underscoring the Remington name on the main blade, either stamped plain or in a circle. It was also in this time period that the pattern numbers were placed on the back of the tang with ink rather than the customary

deep stamp. No markings can be found on the two piece can opener. Somewhere in this 1935 period came the three bladed Official Scout Knife which was never produced in their standard utility pattern. After much debate, I am of the opinion that Remington started to phase out the cutlery division in 1939 and complete-

Continued on page 7



The Remington counter display box, a prize to the collector. This is an early 1920 item and its survival to the 1980's is astonishing.



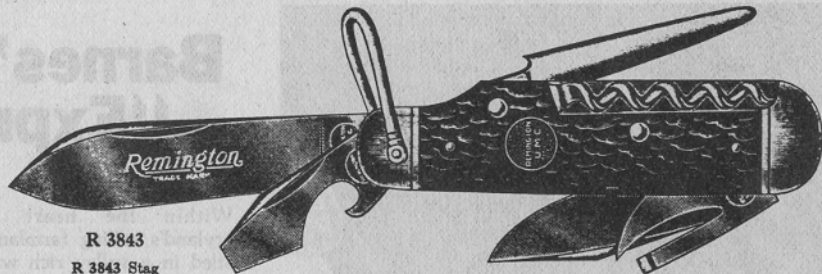
The major key to Remington utility knife history is in the development of the can opener. (L to R) one piece can opener (pre 1924), the two piece stamped Remington (pre 1927), the two piece can opener stamped Remington Pat. No.1635649 (pre 1933) and the two piece can opener with no stamping (pre 1939).

Continued from page 6

ly ceased pocket knife manufacture by 1940. So ended 20 years of quality cutlery.

The fascination for Remington pocket knives and related items has given our family 7 years of collecting enjoyment. Sometimes I consider the paper and the fragile items more important than the more sturdy knives. To find a paper carton which held half a dozen fine quality knives seems almost unbelievable, while the counter display aids for Remington are as good as owning any bullet. It is without saying that the most highly prized item in our collection is an oak box which held 12 knives. It was a counter display item of

the 1920's with a color painting of a scouting scene on one side and a picnic scene on the other; advertising the use of Remington scout/utility knives. Advertisements from magazines dated 1921 to 1930 have become another aid to collectors. As each year passes these perishables become more rare, and there is no better way to date and learn of a knife than thru advertisements. Factory records have been lost and almost all pertinent historical information has become conjecture or from these advertisements. If you want a challenge and a reward for your efforts, try going for those Remingtons, either steel or paper.



R 3843

R 3843 Stag

The six bladed utility/camper pattern is another eagerly sought pattern. Some collectors call the R3843 the counterpart to the bullet pattern because of the number similarity of 43 and because the shield represents the base of the bullet.