

# 008000: Rucksacks

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## Erase Your Brain

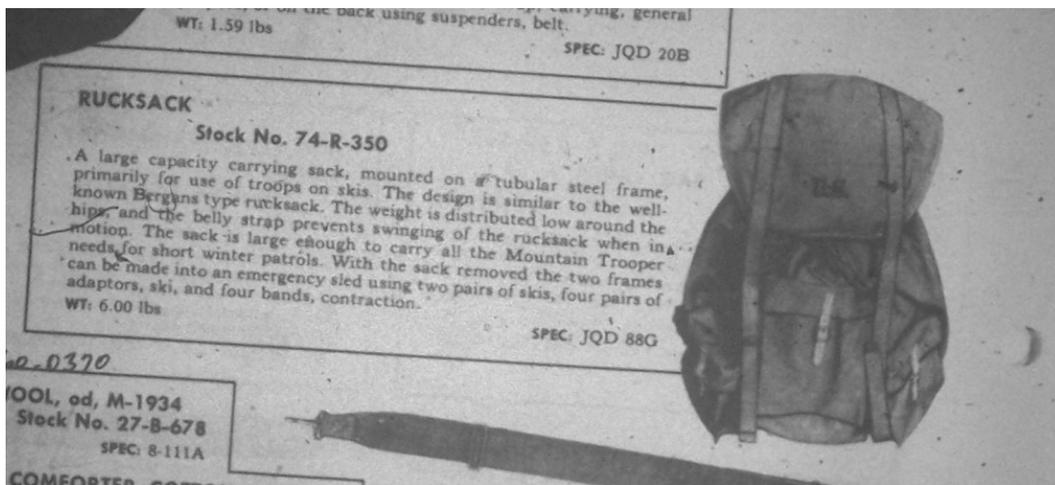
At least the part that knows what’s what with rucksacks. Unless your brain was loaded after this paper was out – in which case you might be fine.

Many companies produced rucksacks during World War II. Those that I have identified and the years that they manufactured rucksacks are listed in the table to the right. Once the companies completed their 1943 contracts, it appears that the QMC purchased no more rucksacks until 1951. If you have a rucksack made by a company not listed on this table or that was made between 1944 and 1950, please let me know.

Company	Year and Pattern Type				
	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
American Fabrics Co	-	88B	88F	-	-
Atlantic Products Corp	-	88B	-	-	-
Avery Mfg. Co	-	88B	88B,88F	-	-
Baker-Lockwood Mfg. Co.	1941	88B	88B	-	-
Hinson Mfg. Co.	-	88B	88B,88F	-	-
Lichtenberger-Ferguson Co.	-	-	88B	-	-
Lyon Coulson Inc.	-	88B	-	-	-
Meese Inc.	1941	88B	88B	-	-
Morrow & Douglass	-	88B	88B	-	-
Powers Co.	1941	1941	-	-	-
Protections Products Co.	-	88B	88F	-	-
Simmons Company	-	88B	-	-	-
Varied Mfg. Co. Inc.	-	88B	88B	-	-
Werner Siegmund Inc.	-	88B	88B	-	-

That view, as I type this, prevails. It’s wrong. Completely. Essentially it has the rucksacks made in 1942 as “JQD-88B” items, with canvas straps, and the rucksacks made in 1943 as “JQD-88F,” having leather straps. In order to account for 1943 dated rucksacks with canvas straps, it has “JQD-88B” rucksacks made in 1943 also. Skipping the “1941” and “1942,” we’re left with two revisions. Notice that all the “88F” rucksacks are from 1943? Keep that in mind.





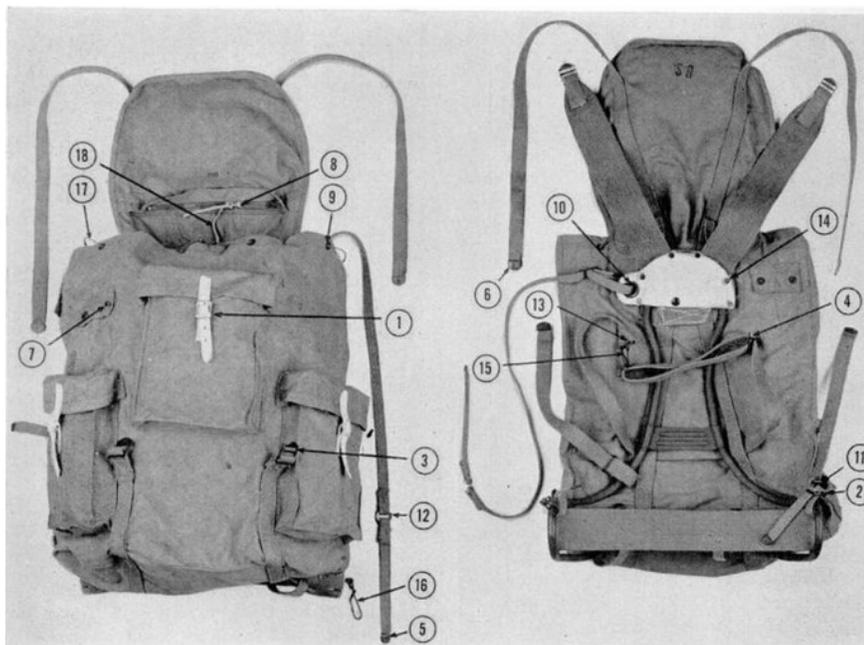
JQD-88G had canvas straps.

## 97. Rucksack

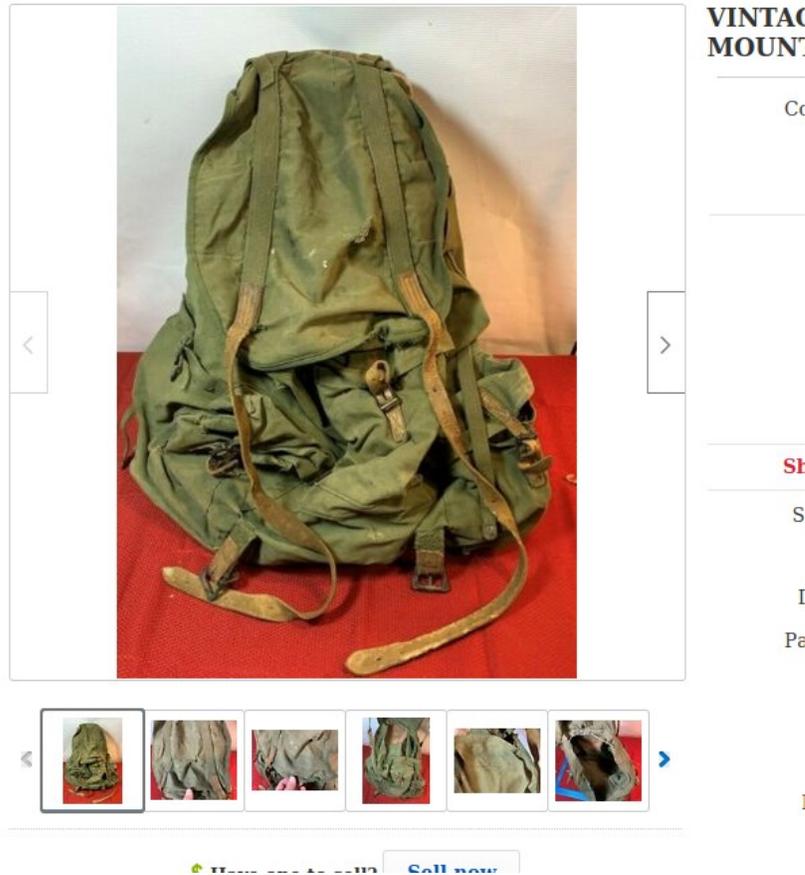
a. STOCK NUMBER. The stock number of the rucksack is 74-R-350.

b. SPECIFICATION. The specification is J. Q. D., No. 88H.

c. INSPECTION. (See fig. 125.) (1) *Fabric*. See



As did JQD-88H. Note the late frame – dating these to WW2. I know, the contracts were over during the war. JQD always made items in small quantities before contracting out.



VINTAGE  
MOUNTAIN

Co

SE

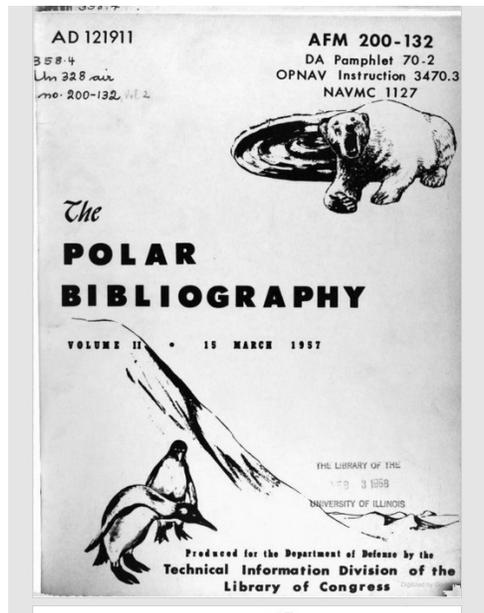
S

I

Pa

Buy now

The 1951 dated Protection Products rucksack. Not mine. Leather straps.



Now that's a cute polar bear. Let's look inside.

**U2226**

**Army Field Forces. Arctic Test Branch, Big Delta, Alaska.  
RUCKSACKS (ATB AND MTN & CW TNG CMD).  
July 25, 1953 [14]p. incl. illus. table. (Proj. no. 2537) AD 32780** **Unclassified**

**Twenty-two rucksacks (1952) and 22 rucksacks (M1942) were used by a rifle platoon on a series of**

56

Oh, goody. We're going to test rucksacks. The 1952 model and the (misnamed) M-1942. Which really shouldn't have a model date but let's not dally.

**field exercises in the vicinity of Northway, Alaska, during the period Jan. 6-Mar. 3, 1953 to determine whether they were suitable for Army Field Forces use in arctic and alpine terrain. The test rucksacks (M-52), which were designed to be more durable than the M1942 model, were provided with larger pockets and leather, rather than web, straps for securing the pockets and top of the rucksack. The M1942 rucksack was the unanimous choice of the test troops for reasons of its superior wearing comfort and durability. Results of the test indicated that it is more desirable to make minor modifications on the M1942 than to attempt to modify the test article. It is concluded that when the suggested modifications are made on the M1942 that it will be considered suitable for arctic use.**

**U2227**

The WW2 ones had canvas main straps. Is that a surprise? The "M-1942" won out. "It is concluded that when the suggested modifications are made on the M1942 that it will be considered suitable for arctic use." I wonder if the suggested modification is adding the leather straps like the 1952 one had?



It would go a long way in explaining how a rucksack made in 1942 has leather straps.

So, from where I sit, I'm pretty sure the entire "88B" and "88F" thing is wrong. The leather strap thing I'm much less certain of. It's a lot of educated guesses on my part. Only the actual specifications would really provide solid answers.

One last note on specification revisions: do not try to compare items to detect the changes. Might be something you'd not notice – heavier duck or something like that. Similarly, the “hardware” was contracted for separately and then provided to the makers. So buckles and frames and such were provided with the maker having no control over what they received.

DRAWERS DRAWERS UNDERSHIRTS			260	942	343
BASSICK CO			463		
PISTOLS	BRIDGEPORT	CONN	637	542	443
WIRE			103	942	143
ORDNANCE EQUIPMENT			55	942	
FRAMES RUCKSACK			52	243	343
BASTIAN BLESSING CO			847		

Like that. Bassick Co had a contract for frames. Meese, Powers, etc., were contracted to sew it together. Not to make or purchase frames and buckles. Even the straps were contracted for separately and provided. Makers were “cut and sew” shops with machine heavy enough to deal with heavy fabric. Shoe makers are common in contracts for duck items.

## Quantity

### *Versatile* RUCKSACKS

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**239,873 RUCKSACKS ALL NEW!**

A water-repellent canvas carrying sack or knapsack, ideal for scores of uses, especially where it's necessary to carry a full pack. Mounted on a tubular steel or aluminum frame to keep pack in shape. The sack has a large capacity, sufficient for all miscellaneous equipment needed on hunting, camping or fishing trips, such as bedding, netting, clothes, cooking utensils, etc. Weight is distributed low around the hips, and belly strap prevents swinging of the pack when in motion. Strong adjustable web shoulder or carrying straps hold pack securely to back, make heavy loads easy to carry. Has 1 large and 3 smaller pockets closed by flaps and straps. Olive drab. Stamped with "U. S."



Priority Groups	\$1.50 each ( 20 minimum)	
Wholesalers and Exporters*	1.50 each (1,000 minimum)	<i>Under the Public Benefit Program these low fixed prices are subject to 40% discount to educational and public health institutions that qualify under SPA Reg. 14.</i>
Small Retail Buyers	1.90 each ( 20 minimum)	
Large Retail Buyers	1.80 each ( 100 minimum)	

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**34,721 RUCKSACKS USED, BUT IN GOOD CONDITION**

The same type Rucksacks as described above, but these have seen some service. In good condition, and can be used "as is."	Priority Groups	\$1.08 each ( 20 minimum)
	Wholesalers and Exporters*	1.08 each (1,000 minimum)
	Small Retail Buyers	1.35 each ( 20 minimum)
	Large Retail Buyers	1.28 each ( 100 minimum)

*Under the public Benefit Program, these low fixed prices are subject to 40% discount to educational and public health institutions that qualify under SPA Reg. 14.*

This is a 30-day sale. The rucksacks advertised herein are subject to prior sale. All prices are F.O.B. location; all transportation charges collect. Orders will be filled in the following priority: (a) Priority Claimants; (b) Wholesaler's orders which contain the Wholesaler's Certification (See page 4); (c) small retail orders; (d) Large retail orders; (e) Exporters (See page 4).

\*To buy at this price, Wholesaler's order must contain the WHOLESALER'S CERTIFICATION, and exporter's order must contain the EXPORTER'S CERTIFICATION, and be signed by an authorized company official. (See page 4.)

**SAMPLES MAY BE INSPECTED IN ALL CONSUMER GOODS REGIONAL OFFICES. FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BUY AT FIXED PRICES, SEE PAGE 4.**

February 26, 1946 11

239,873 unused rucksacks is a lot of rucksacks. Given that there is no way they were going to raise enough “mountain troops” to use that many, something’s fishy.

Item	Declared to disposal agency	Shipping orders not yet received	Depot stocks	Total quantities become surplus under disposal levels of—		Declared under emergency levels	Remarks
				June 30, 1949	June 30, 1947		
Information as of.....	Jan. 7, 1946	Jan. 7, 1946	(1)				Depot stocks as of—
Boots, service, combat.	771,000	554,629	8,260,957	0	2,945,000	Quantities listed below are included in the figures of quantities to become surplus under disposal levels of June 30, 1947.	Jan. 18, 1946
Can, corrugated, nesting 10 gallons with cover (includes cans without covers and covers).....	16,316	16,166	98,577	25,770	60,075		Jan. 14, 1946
Parka, field pile.....	0	0	339,322	159,322	188,322		Jan. 18, 1946
Rucksacks.....	293,000	286,302	202,243	168,976	178,754		Do.
Tool Set, e/w tools, electricians.....	0	0	8,284	6,462	6,884		Jan. 14, 1946
Tool Set, e/w tools, carpenters, No. 2.....	0	0	10,022	1,791	4,381	Do.	
Boots, rubber, knee.....	(1)	(1)	81,187	0	133,290	33,290	Dec. 14, 1945
Boots, rubber, hip.....	(1)	(1)	146,159	68,881	102,078	33,197	Do.
Gloves, mosquito.....	(1)	(1)	973,000	347,000	689,000	342,000	Do.
Jumper, dungaree.....	(1)	(1)	164,424	51,675	104,882	53,207	Oct. 13, 1945
Socks, wool, heavy.....	971,000	918,479	8,141,000	0	4,183,000	1,000,000	Dec. 14, 1945
Trousers, dungaree.....	(1)	(1)	181,656	68,030	120,000	51,970	Oct. 13, 1945

1 Ordered declared, but report not yet received that this has been done.

I'll see your 293K and raise you more. 178K the next year and 168K two years later. This is only what is being dumped on the surplus market – doesn't include what they're keeping.

So why did they buy so many? Therein lies the very hard to solve riddle. I'll cover it quickly.

The OQMG and the Jeffersonville Quartermaster Depot, following this recommendation, co-operated with industry in developing a special type of carrier for arctic and mountain troops called the rucksack, based on the design of the Norse Pac. This was a large-capacity

OQMG and JQD are involved. This won't go well.

the weight of the whole pack was distributed low around the hips. Two of the frames, when detached from their sacks, could be attached to skis to form an emergency sled. A white cover for camouflage use in snowy country was issued with the rucksack.<sup>2</sup>

During the Attu operations, soldiers complained that the rucksack was too large and was extremely uncomfortable because it rested so heavily on the hips. The Quartermaster observer thought that the discomfort was caused by the frame and the improper packing of the rucksack. Even when heavier items were put on the top, however, the pack was "none too comfortable."<sup>3</sup> While there were no subsequent changes in the basic design, a number of modifications to increase the efficiency of the rucksack were made during the war years.

Tunnel troops also needed a specialized type

And it didn't go well. Poorly designed. The "two of the frames, when detached from their sacks, could be attached to skis to form an emergency sled." A gimmick feature that just added weight.

Other Ome Daiber inventions included Bird Cage crampons (lightweight, made of round metal stock welded together), the Pac-Jacket, and Sno-Seal. Ome manufactured Eddi developed a rucksack that was copied by the army, but Matie said, "They wrecked it. They took the way it hung on the back and they fouled it up and it wasn't comfortable. If "He was wearing them. I think. before anybody else around here." Matie showed me the "Dofner hook" (a complex looking rope descender) which Ome may have worked on.

Let's bump up the text size. "developed a rucksack that was copied by the army; but Matie said 'They wrecked it. They took the way it hung on the back and they fouled it up and it wasn't comfortable.'"

True that. Except Matie (Daiber, speaking about her father) is wrong on the army copying Ome's rucksack.

Simon Bolivar Buckner was in command in Alaska. He took a good hard look at the uniform items and field gear and wasn't satisfied. With pretty much any of it. He lit a fire for useful items and much development was undertaken. On the West Coast. "Pacific purchases" applied. Contracts were let for various items of uniform and equipment. At the same time, the QM itself was looking at cold weather equipment and uniform items. Two development tracks. So while the QM history claims that the OQMG and JQD were responding to Buckner's desires, that doesn't pan out based on all the other stuff he was after – which was developed on the West Coast. JQD was after army wide cold weather items. Thus, the massive purchases of rucksacks during the war – intended to be the standard cold weather pack.

Jensen-Byrd Company, Spokane, Washington.	109 Ski Boots.	734.95
Wilson Sporting Goods Co., Portland, Oregon.	554 Ski Boots.	2,690.40
Lipman Wolfe & Co., Portland, Oregon.	101 Ski Boots.	782.75
United States Rubber Co., Los Angeles, California.	Coats. 396	1,696.15
Hirsch-Weis Manufacturing Co., Portland, Oregon.	345 Coats.	3,188.46
Ralphs-Pugh Company, Inc., San Francisco, California.	546 Coats.	1,802.10
Warren-Soule-Fairhurst Co., Tacoma, Washington.	100 Coats.	312.96
Los Angeles Rubber & Asbestos Works, Los Angeles, California	422 Coats.	1,457.55

When they bought stuff for Alaska, during this era, it's pretty easy to detect. Pacific purchases.

S. H. Stusser Textile Co., Seattle, Washington.	500 Sleeping Bags.	3,750.00
Western Feather & Down Works, Los Angeles, California.	1,500 Sleeping Bags.	13,770.00
Washington Quilt Co., <b>Seattle, Washington</b>	1,500 Sleeping Bags.	15,750.00
Meier & Frank Co., Inc., Portland, Oregon.	125 pr. Skis.	1,138.85
The Beebe Co., Portland, Oregon.	94 pr. Skis.	519.09
The Beebe Co., Portland, Oregon.	94 pr. Ski Bindings.	352.00
Ome Daiber, Inc., Seattle, Washington	250 ea. Rucksacks.	2,575.00

Sometimes development items. Like that contract to Ome Daiber for 250 rucksacks. September 1941.

JQD didn't copy Daiber's rucksack. They also developed a Bergen pack. It just wasn't that good. That said, it was better than the other awful packs the army had during the war. The M-1928 is a bad joke.

In late 1941, JQD contracted out for rucksacks. How do we know it was JQD? The contracts were given to firms not on the West Coast. The early rucksacks are dated 1941 with some Powers ones dripping into 1942. These would be to a dated tentative specification with JQD-88 itself coming in March 1942.

# Department Of Defense Index of Specifications and Standards

## Numerical Canceled Listing (APPENDIX) Part IV



DODISS

1 July 2005

**CANCELED SECTION**

**DODISS NUMERICAL LISTING  
DETAIL SPECIFICATIONS**

Last Action	DOCUMENT NUMBER	DOCUMENT TITLE	Distribution	FSC/Area	MICA	Prep. Acty	Date
	MIL-R-1619A	RUCKSACK-M-1952 (USE MIL-R-43373)(CUST: GL SA 82) [REVIEW: 67 85 CT MC MD]	A	8465		GL	14-SEP-61
	MIL-R-1620	REPAIR OF SHOES, WOMEN S SERVICE AND FIELD(CUST: GL) [REVIEW: CT MI]	A	8435		GL	09-NOV-49
	MIL-W-1621	WORKSHOP-UNIT, KNOTTING AND BRAIDING(CUST: GL)	A	78GP		GL	09-NOV-49
	MIL-W-1622	WORKSHOP-UNIT, LEATHER-CRAFT(CUST: GL)	A	78GP		GL	14-NOV-49
	MIL-K-1623 NOT 1	KIT, TRANSPORT, ARTIST SKETCH(CUST: GL)	A	7830		GL	14-NOV-49

MIL-R-1619A, Rucksack, M-1952, was canceled on September 14<sup>th</sup> of 1961. Replaced by a later rucksack – MIL-R-43373. It lingered.





In 1963, they started developing items for Vietnam. What became the M-1965 hammock was developed as was an updated rucksack. Calling it the “M1952” is a bit odd as that specification had already been canceled.



Didn't stop them from using WW2 rucksacks. Which makes me wonder if that has leather straps? WW2 altered to what was the M-1952?

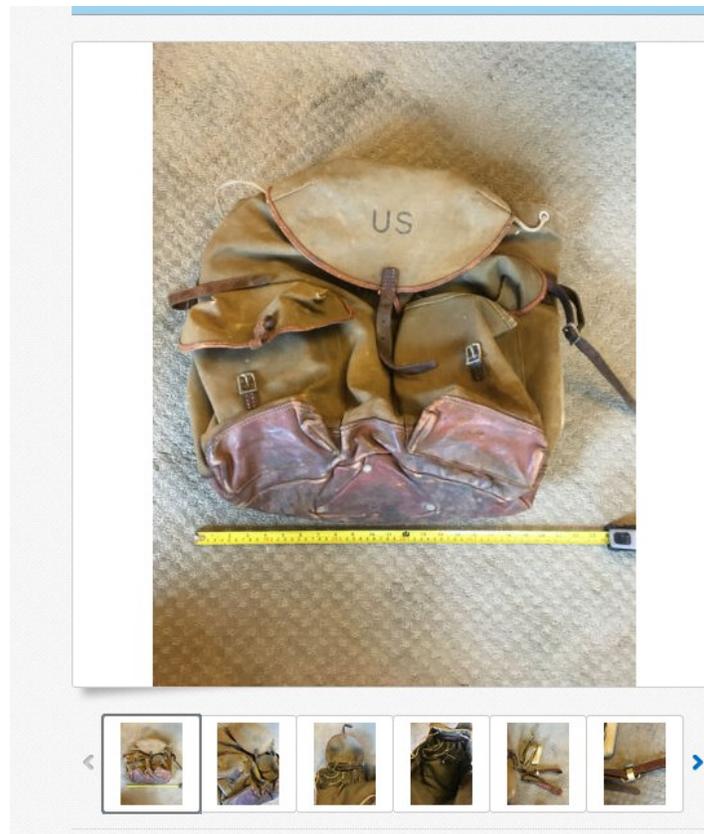
# Mysteries Unending

PAGE 58  
CONFIDENTIAL

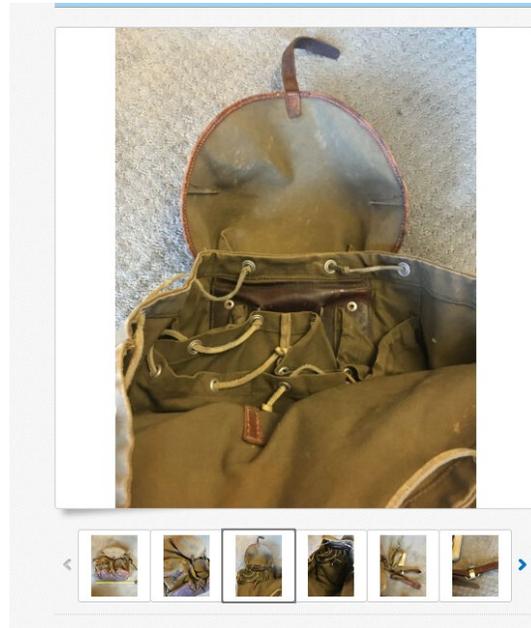
WAR SUPPLY CONTRACTS  
CUMULATIVE THROUGH FEBRUARY, 1943

NAME, LOCATION AND PRODUCT OF MANUFACTURER	AGENCY FOUR-DIGIT	VALUE (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)	AWARD DATE		COMPLETION DATE	
			MO.	YR.	MO.	YR.
ARMSTRONG FEATHERWEIGHT DECOYS INC RUCKSACKS HOUSTON TEX	A	61 61	8	42	8	43
ARMSTRONG FURNACE CO						

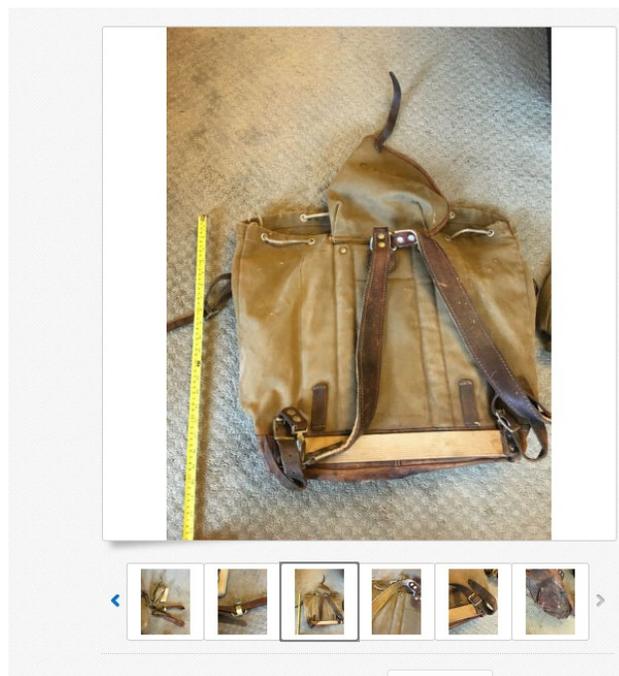
No idea. Never seen it.



From my experience, that thing screams "WW1!" I don't know, but it is kind of a rucksack. If I had to guess, I'd say WW1 and the Ordnance Department.



Kind of a duffel bag with pockets.



Lots of leather. Something Rock Island Arsenal was into.

**The End**

That's how I see it.