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## **An Introduction To Civil War Military Swords**

**By Mary Murtha**

One of the most influential wars the United States ever participated in was the Civil War. Fought on the soil of America, this fierce battle pitted brothers and friends against each other. While firearms had already been invented, the military sword was the weapon of choice when fighting was close and personal. Here are some of the American manufacturers of military swords during the Civil War.

During the civil war, there was a variety of companies that manufactured military swords. These sharp blades were capable of inflicting mortal damage, and in the hands of a skilled swordsman, were more lethal than inaccurate rifles and other firearms.

The Ames Company produced military swords from 1832 - 1906. By the conclusion of the Civil War, this company had produced over 200,000 swords. Nathan P. Ames started the company and marked the manufactured blades with N.P. Ames. After his death, his brother James changed the markings to Ames Mfg. Co.

Swordmaker Christopher Roby was in business from 1861 - 1867. During his six year run, Roby churned out a line of cavalry sabers, musician swords, Non Commissioned Officer military swords and light artillery sabers. When the Civil War came to an end, the company went bankrupt.

The second largest producer of Civil War military swords in the United States was Mansfield and Lamb. The company, operating out of Rhode Island, was a textile outlet before the war broke out. Mansfield and Lamb only created one type of military sword - the M1860 saber.

New Jersey based sword maker Emerson and Silver had a five year run from 1860 - 1865. Records have led historians to estimate that the company produced nearly fifty thousand military swords during the war. When the fighting stopped, the company went belly-up.

The Philadelphia based company P.S. Justice had a catchy name and produced some fine Civil War swords. In 1861 alone, the company produced nearly 14,000 cavalry sabers and over 1,000 artillery sabers.

Tiffany & Co is one of the flagship jewelry stores in modern day New York City. When you walk in and see the amazing assortment of gems it is strange to consider that the same company once fashioned military swords for heavy fighting in the Civil War. The company created high-quality officer's swords and two different cavalry sabers.

Mary is fascinated with military history and military swords

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### **Japanese Military Swords—Rich In Tradition And Quality Of Construction**

**By Mary Murtha**

Ever since humans learned how to shape metal, the sword has been the weapon of choice for many warriors. It is a sturdy, durable weapon that has been a fixture in the hands of soldiers for thousands of years. Military swords have been used in combat in nearly every continent and come in a myriad of styles.

The process of creating traditional Japanese military swords is not really a process - it is an art. These swords are made using an intricate process developed by the Chinese and improved by the Japanese. The method involves an extraordinary amount of labor, and frequently, several workers would create swords through an assembly-line like process. The sword maker must heat, fold and hammer the metal until it reaches the desired thickness.

The steel used in Japanese military swords is thought to be the best for the creation of these deadly blades. Folding and hammering the metal enabled the steel to reach its strongest and most resilient state. Air bubbles were beaten out and the composition of the steel was turned uniform, thereby eliminating points of weakness.

Japanese military swords were only allowed to have a single edge; the dull side was for support. Up until the onset of World War II, the majority of Japanese military swords were made by hand. With industrialization and a need to mass produce, swords created during WWII were done so by machine.

It is interesting to note the quality of these blades drastically decreased as the progression of the war gradually turned against Japan. High quality military swords created at the beginning of the fighting were replaced with low quality swords made with poor materials as combat came to an end. American forces in the Pacific Ocean had created a stranglehold on Japan's ability to obtain resources and the quality of these weapons reflected it.

Today, with the modern weapons available to soldiers, military swords are no longer needed for combat. However, modern armies still produce swords for many of their troops as part of tradition.

There are still a handful of traditional Japanese military sword makers that work to keep the art alive.

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