

WHUT IZZIT?

by Bernard Levine
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In the December 2010 column, we uncovered the history behind an all metal multi-blade knife with coined nickel silver handles. The handles depicted two German clergymen, Father Adolph Kolping and Monsignor Sebastian Georg Schaffer. That knife was made by Hugo Moser/Nachfolger of Solingen. It belongs to Mr. Tom McMurtry.

Now Mr. Brian Huegel of Pennsylvania has asked about a similar style knife, also with coined handles (probably nickel silver). However this one has portraits of TEN men, five on each side.



This knife was made by Balke & Schaaf, also of Solingen. That firm was founded in 1897, meaning the knife is no older than that date; most likely it dates circa 1905-1910. Balke & Schaaf was active into the 1970s. The reverse tang is marked with the firm's logo, a sheep on a plank (*Balken* means wooden beam or baulk, while *Schafe* means sheep). Blades are a spear, pen, scissors, screwdriver, and tin opener on top; a corkscrew and punch-reamer on the bottom.



The handle art is in a popularized Art Nouveau style (German *Jugendstil*), similar to the Moser knife. The detailed portrait busts are tied together by sprigs of laurel with leaves and berries, symbolizing victory. The ten men depicted are all Russian military heroes.

On the front handle:

The top two figures are Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky. Minin, full name Kuzma Minich Zakhariyev-Sukhoruky (died 1616) was a merchant from Nizhny Novgorod, who became a national hero for his role in defending the country against the Polish invasion in the early 17th century. Minin was chosen by the city merchants' guild to oversee the handling of the public funds donated by them to raise and equip the Second Volunteer Army. The army, led by prince Dmitry Pozharsky, was credited with clearing the Moscow Kremlin from Polish-Lithuanian forces on November 1, 1612. Minin distinguished himself as a skilled commander and was made a nobleman and member of the Boyar Duma under the newly elected Tsar Michael Romanov.

Dmitry Mikhaylovich Pozharsky (1577-1642) was a Rurikid prince, who led Russia's struggle for independence against Polish-Lithuanian invasion known as the Time of Troubles. He obtained from Mikhail I of Russia the title Saviour of the Motherland.



Pozharsky and Minin

The third man is Generalissimo Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov (1729-1800). He defeated the Turks at Ismail in 1791, defeated the Kosciuszko Uprising in Poland in 1794, and defeated the French Revolutionary armies in Italy in 1799. Even in retreat over the



Suvorov



Alps that winter, Suvorov extracted his army against seemingly impossible odds.

The fourth man commanded the first-line defense against Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Prince Mikhail Illarionovich Golenishchev-Kutuzov (1745-1813) was a student of Suvorov's. He had fought the Turks 1787-1782, and first faced Napoleon at Austerlitz in 1805. He fought the Turks again, 1806-1812, and then took charge of the defense of Moscow in 1812-1813. Napoleon captured the city... at the cost of almost his entire army, and of his hegemony over Europe. Kutuzov had learned from George Washington that it is not necessary to win battles in order to win a war.



Kutuzov

The fifth man is General Aleksey Petrovich Yermolov. He was an able commander and artillery general in the Napoleonic Wars, but was legendary for his brutality in the subjugation of the Caucasus region. He wrote, "I desire that the terror of my name shall guard our frontiers more potently than chains or fortresses." To this day his name is synonymous with evil in that part of the world.



Yermolov

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On the back handle:

The top figure is wearing a naval officer's cap, and is surrounded by a modern (circa 1910) battleship and signal pennants. He is Admiral Pavel Stepanovich Nakhimov (1802-1855). During the Crimean war Nakhimov annihilated

the Ottoman Turkish fleet at Sinope in 1853. During the siege of Sebastopol, he and V. A. Kornilov organized the defense of the city and its port, the home base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Nakhimov was knocked off by a sniper July 10, 1855.



Nakhimov

The second figure is his colleague, Vice Admiral Vladimir Alexeyevich Kornilov (1806-1854). He was killed in the Battle of Malakoff.



The fourth man is another key officer in that war, General Fyodor Radetzky (1820-1890), who commanded the successful defense of Shipka Pass.

Last but not least is General Mikhail Dmitrievich Skobelev (1843-1882). He was famous for his conquest of Central Asia and heroism during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Dressed in white uniform and mounted on a white horse, and always in the thickest of the fray, he was known and adored by his soldiers as the "White General" (and by the Turks as the "White Pasha").



Skobelev

Here is a jack knife from eBay that has nothing at all on the handles... no priests, no generals, not even a shield. The handles are just plain brown wood, cocobolo or possibly rosewood.

It is an easy-open barehead swell-end jack a bit over 3-1/2 inches long closed. It has brass liners and nickel silver bolsters.

The master blade is a wide sheepfoot, unusual as a main blade except in certain specialized patterns such as the New England whaler for cutting thin rope. That blade is tang stamped in four lines, HOLLEY/ MFG. CO./ LAKEVILLE/ CONN.

The same tang stamp is on the secondary blade, which is not something one sees in a pocketknife hardly ever at all. It is a weed digging blade.

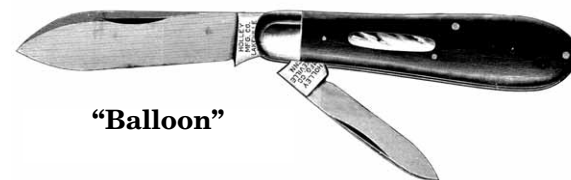


Holley was one of the great American makers of traditional pocketknife patterns, employing Sheffield trained cutlers to craft hand-made knives that look mass-produced. Alexander Hamilton Holley began producing pocketknives in 1844. He and two partners incorporated the firm a decade later as Holley Mfg. Co. That same year Holley was elected Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut. He became governor in 1857, serving about a year and a half.

The Holley factory was in Lakeville... in fact it still is, but now it is part of a state park. Knives were last made there in the 1930s. In his autobi-

ography, William F. Buckley, Jr., recalled learning to sail on the lake in Lakeville.

I have a reprint of a circa 1915 Holley catalog. It does not show this exact pattern, but it does show the swell-end handle die, which with typical Holley orneriness is called a "Balloon." Under the picture is a list of standard variations on the pattern -- little "Toy Balloons;" easy-openers; cap bolstered versions; steel lined versions. One version was the No. 31765 "Nurseryman's combination," with pruner, grafter, and budder blades. The present gardener's or groundskeeper's version might have been a special order, or might simply have been from a later time. And that sheepfoot blade might have been used for grafting, although it is about twice as wide as a standard grafting blade. Holley also made fixed blade budding and grafting knives.

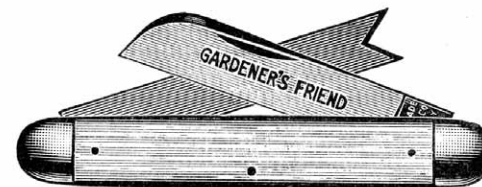


"Balloon"

Brass Lined.	
No. 21763	"Toy Balloon," handle 2 3/4 in. long. \$4.25 doz. net
" 22763	" " " " " " " " 4.25 " "
" 24763	" " " " " " " " 4.25 " "
" 29763	" " " " " " " " 8.25 " "
" 21765	" " " " " " " " 4.50 " "
" 22765	(Cut) " " " " " " " " 4.50 " "
" 24765	" " " " " " " " 4.50 " "
" 31765	Nurseryman's combination has pruner, grafter and budder blades. 7.50 " "
" 21765	Has Easy opener notch in handle. 4.50 " "
" 22765	" " " " " " " " 4.50 " "
" 24765	" " " " " " " " 4.75 " "

Steel Lined.	
No. 21766	" " " " " " " " \$3.75 doz. net
" 24766	" " " " " " " " 3.75 " "
" 21766	Easy opener. 3.75 " "
" 21767	Clip pt. pkt. blade. 4.00 " "
" 24767	" " " " " " " " 4.00 " "
"Capped Balloon"—Brass Lined.	
" 21775	" " " " " " " " \$5.25 doz. net
" 23775	" " " " " " " " 5.25 " "
" 24775	" " " " " " " " 5.25 " "
" 25775	" " " " " " " " 5.75 " "
" 24779	Clip pt. pkt. blade. 5.50 " "
" 25779	" " " " " " " " 6.00 " "

Schrade Cutlery Co. of Walden, New York, offered its own version of this pattern, introduced in 1938. The Gardener's Friend was a slim double-end equal-end jack knife 4 inches long closed. Its master blade was a true grafting blade: slim, straight edged, and beveled only on one side. Its handles were ivory grain celluloid.



No. G7324 1/2 W

Gardener's Knife—4 inches long; 2 blades (grafting blade flat on one side and special weeder blade); brass lined; nickel silver bolsters; cleaned inside; glaze finished blades; Ivory Celluloid handle.

Please send me an email to brlevine@ix.net.com, or mail paper correspondence to Whut Izzit, c/o Knife World, Box 3395, Knoxville TN 37927. Be sure to enclose either an email address, or a long self-addressed stamped envelope with your letter, and also a flatbed scan, photocopy, or photograph (on plain LIGHT GRAY or WHITE background please) of your knife. Do not write directly on the picture. Indicate the knife's handle material and its length (length CLOSED if it is a folder). Make enlarged images of all markings and indicate where they appear.



Kornilov on a 1989 stamp

The third man is Eduard Totleben (1818-1884), a German born military engineer in the Russian army. As a young lieutenant-colonel in the Crimean War, he took charge of the land defenses of Sebastopol (there were no fortifications on the land side), and was promoted to lieutenant-general for his work there. He later played a key role in the siege of Turkish held Plevna in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.



Totleben