Use of Surplus Military Equipment by the Soil Surveyor

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Surplus military field equipment can be a useful addition to the equipment of a soil scientist. It is generally available in surplus stores and in places that sell camping equipment. There are a variety of different belts, packs, and containers which can be put together to satisfy the needs of the individual. Of course you can get more out of the equipment if it is used according to the way it was originally designed.

Many field soil scientists who have previously been in the military have encountered problems with the field equipment. This could be due to two major reasons. First is the fact that equipment is sized for the individual and that components were the wrong size for a particular shape or height making the equipment unsatisfactory. And the other part of the problem is that individual equipment has to be put together properly. If the equipment is not put together right it is almost a certainty that the user will get poor results—in fact the equipment may be downright uncomfortable.

Figure 1 shows the standard components of the individual field equipment. The first and most important part is the pistol belt (A). There are holes located around the belt where you can clip on various pieces of equipment. This feature is useful because then nothing will slide as you bend over while augering or using the soil probe. The pistol belt is adjustable for size but comes in two basic lengths. It is important to get the right size. There is one that is for average waistlines and another for those who are larger. Ammunition carriers (B) are available. They are the right size to carry a pH kit, water bottle, extra pencils, or whatever. The first-aid kit or compass carrier (C) can be used to carry a small water bottle or perhaps an acid bottle if the carrier is first treated with melted paraffin to prevent damage from spilled acid. An entrenching tool case (D) can be used to carry a notebook or a standard size colorbook. You may want to sew up the hole where the entrenching tool handle comes out to keep dust or dirt from getting into the notebook or colorbook. A canteen and cover

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