

M1840 Heavy Cavalry Saber

The Model 1840 was supposed to be an improvement of the French 1822 Hussar model. As to its sobriquet, it was no doubt due to its being almost a pound heavier than the US M1833 Dragoon Sabre it replaced. However it was definitely needed at the time and the M1840 is only a few ounces heavier than the M1860, which was on the edge of being too light.

There were two curved French 1822 models as well. A heavy cavalry and a light. The heavy had an extra bar to the hilt and longer blade. The trials accepting the French 1822 model but the production bid going to S&K and Ames offered no real improvement in the form

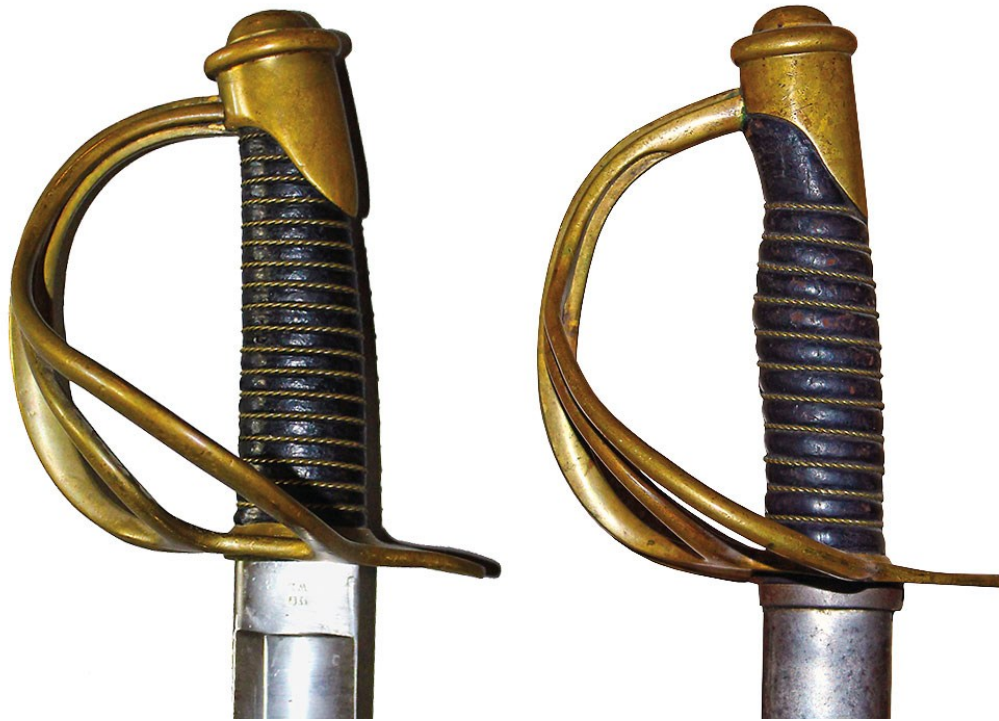
<https://civilwartalk.com/threads/the-old-wrist-breaker-saber.129033/>

[NOT a reference to Heavy vs Light Cavalry – this system not employed in the US]

While considering a replacement [for the 1833 pattern sabre], the U.S. Ordnance Department felt that the **Ames Sword Co.**, which produced the '33 Dragoon sabre, was incapable of turning out a suitable substitute, so they turned to England, France and Germany for swords [to trial].

Included were 2,000 of an 1822 French-patterned sabre for the cavalry, at the price of \$3 per blade. **Officially** dubbed the “**Cavalry sabre-Model of 1840**,” they first arrived in the U.S. in October 1841.

By 1844, however, Ames had shown that they were now capable of producing a better quality weapon than they previously had, so a contract for another 2,000 Model 1840 sabers was given to that Springfield, Massachusetts, firm. Although quantities were still insufficient for the War Department's needs for the Mexican War, a second contract for an additional 1,000 sabers was given to S&K in 1847. Nonetheless, Ames eventually supplied **23,700 of the '40-model sabre to the U.S. government between 1845 and 1858.**



The **1840 model “Heavy” cavalry saber (left)** varies slightly from the 1860 “Light” cavalry model (right) in that the ’40 model has a square-backed heavier, longer blade (about one inch longer), versus the ’60’s rounded-backed, and lighter and shorter blade. Most noticeable is the grip shape. The 1840’s grip is somewhat cone-shaped with a slight curve forward and wrapped with heavy cord, then leather-covered and wound with twisted brass wire, while the ’60’s handle has a swell in the center, and the twisted brass wire follows ridges in the grip, rather than being wrapped with the cord.

<https://truwestmagazine.com/article/old-wrist-breaker/>