

# THE SWISS BLADE

Victorinox® Swiss Army Knife Collectors Society Newsletter

First Quarter 2017  
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## News & Views

We are pleased to offer the latest edition of our collectors' society newsletter. In this edition we are proud to offer the first installment of a series of articles about Alox knives. The author Nate Skipper is an enthusiastic collector of Alox models and has compiled a vast amount of information on this series of knives. I am also pleased to offer some information about the Elinox/Economy knife series produced by Victorinox since the late 1950s. We are fortunate in this issue to print a Victorinox tang stamp chart that was compiled by Uriel Omlin of Germany. This chart will be extremely helpful in helping collectors to determine the time period when specific models were made. The chart covers the total time frame of Victorinox history. We would be grateful if any of our members could help fill in some of the missing information on this chart.



**Above:** Coming soon - Knives with bails (shackle). We are gathering information on knives with the old style shackle. Any information from members would be helpful.

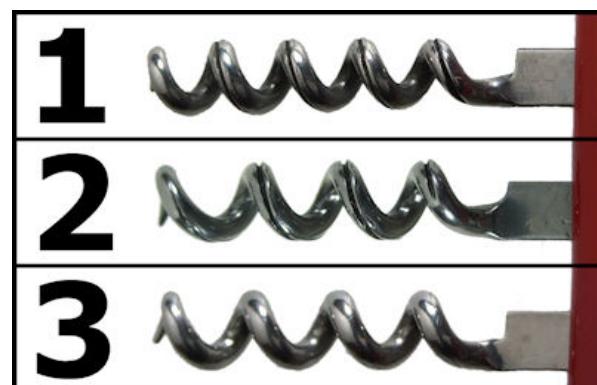
**Right:** Coming soon - A series about changes in SAK tools over the years.

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## New & Discontinued Items

We have learned that both the Angler and Fisherman models are being discontinued this year. It is also rumored that some of the Evolution/Evo Grip Delemont models may be altered or discontinued. Specific models will be announced when information becomes available. As of this printing, the factory has not yet announced the new color for the 2017 limited edition Alox series (Classic, Pioneer, Cadet) but strong rumors suggest that it will be a medium green color. Also in the works is a special one-hand trekker model with all black implements and (USA) US Army markings. A special limited edition Cybertool with carbon fiber handles is also being considered as a new product. We are also awaiting the introduction of a special wine opening knife with large locking blade, foil cutter, corkscrew and lever tool for easy cork removal. New designer classics will be released this spring.



## Victorinox Tang Stamps on Pocket Knives from 1884 – 2014 by Ulli

A1	A2	U1	V1	B12	B1
<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ</b>	<b>GESETZLICH GESCHÜTZT</b>	<b>ARMÉE SUISSE</b>	<b>VICTORIA 452/10.5</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>
1884 - 1931 MB, f; MB, b90° IC: single; U1; V1; Q2	1884 - MB, f; MB, b90°; SD, b90° IC: single; U1; V1; C2; D1; C1; C3; D2	1891 - 1901 SD, f IC: A1; A2	1891 - 1935 MB, f; SD, b90° IC: single; D1; D6; C3; C14; C10; C4	1909 - 1930 MB, f IC: single	1909 - 1930 MB, f; MB, b90°; MB, f180° IC: single; A11
A11	B6	Q2	B2	E1	U4
<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ</b>	<b>VICTORIA SWITZERLAND</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>	<b>INOX</b>	<b>MADE IN SWITZERLAND</b>
ca. 1909 - 1930 MB, b90° IC: B1	ca. 1920 - 1950 MB, f; MB, b90° IC: single	1921 - now MB, b IC: A1; A4; A7; C5; C8; C11	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, f IC: single	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, f IC: single; C1; D1	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, b IC: B3
D1	B3	C1	C2	D6	A9
<b>JNOXYD</b>	<b>VICTORIA INOXYD</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>JNOXYD</b>	<b>ELSENER SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>
ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; V1; B3	1923 - 1930 MB, f; MB, b; SB, f; CO, f IC: single; D1	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, b IC: E1; A2	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; A2	ca. 1923 - 1930 MB, b IC: V1	ca. 1930/1940 MB, f IC: single
A8	C3	B4	C14	D2	W4
<b>ELSENER SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>JNOXYD</b>	<b>FAB. SUISSE</b>
ca. 1930/1940 MB, f IC: single; W1	1931 - 1942 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; V2; Q3; A2	1931 - 1942 MB, f IC: single	1931 - 1942 MB, f IC: A10; V1	1931 - 1942 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; A2; W4	1931 - 1942 MB, f IC: D2
D3	A5	A4	A6	A3	B12
<b>INOXYD</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ SWISS MADE</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ SWISSMADE</b>	<b>ELSENER SWISS</b>	<b>HUGUENIN SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>
ca. 1930/1940 MB, b IC: A3	ca. 1930 - 1950 MB, f IC: D5; W1; D4	1932 - 1956 MB, f IC: Q1; Q3; Q4; Q5	ca. 1930/1940 MB, f IC: W1; D4	ca. 1930/1940 SD, f IC: D3	ca. 1930 - 1950 MB, f IC: single
W1	Q5	Q6	Q4	Q3	Q1
<b>SWISS MADE</b>	<b>P36</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>36P</b>	<b>48 P</b>	<b>P</b>
ca. 1930 - 1960 SD, f IC: A6; D4; A5; A8	ca. 1931 - 1960 MB, b IC: A4	ca. 1931 - 1960 MB, b IC:	ca. 1931 - 1960 MB, b IC: A4	ca. 1931 - 1960 MB, b IC: A4; C3	ca. 1931 - 1960 MB, b IC: single; A4; B11; V2
B10	B11	A10	V2	B8	B7
<b>VICTORIA SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>	<b>VICTORIA SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ</b>	<b>ARMÉE SUISSE</b>	<b>VICTORIA SWITZERLAND 471</b>	<b>VICTORIA 473/10 SWISSMADE</b>
ca. 1930 - 1950 MB, f IC: single	ca. 1930 - 1950 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; V2; Q1	1931 - 1942 MB, b90° IC: C14; V1	ca. 1935 - 1951 MB, f IC: C3; D4; D5; B11	ca. 1940 - 1970 MB, b IC: single; C5; R1	ca. 1940 - 1970 MB, f IC: single; C5; H2
B9	W3	W2	B5	C4	D5
<b>VICTORIA</b>	<b>SWISSMADE</b>	<b>SUISSE MADE</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>	<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>INOXYD</b>
1943 - 1951 MB, f IC: single	ca. 1943 - 1951 SD, b90° IC: B6	1943 - 1951 MB, f IC: C4	ca. 1943 - 1970 MB, f; MB, b; MB, b90° IC: single; C8; C10	1943 - 1951 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; W2; V1	1943 - 1951 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; C5; V2; A5; A6; W1

D4	U2	U3	V3	C8	C10
	<b>U.S.PAT. PEND.</b>		Armée Suisse	<b>VICTORINOX SWITZERLAND STAINLESS ROSTFREI</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>
1943 - 1951 MB, f; MB, b IC: single; C5; V2	1951 - 1953 CO, f IC: all between 1951 - 1971	1951 - 1971 CO, f IC: all between 1951 - 1971	ca. 1952 - 1986 MB, f IC: C14; W1	1952 - 1986 MB, f IC: single; P1; P3; P4; F2; G1; S1	1952 - 1986 MB, f IC: P1; P3; P4; B5
C14	C9	P4	F1	P3	F3
Victorinox Switzerland Stainless	<b>SWITZERLAND STAINLESS ROSTFREI</b>		<b>ELINOX SWITZERLAND STAINLESS ROSTFREI</b>	<b>VICTORIA OFFICIER SUISSE</b>	<b>ELINOX SWITZERLAND 2475</b>
ca. 1952 - 1986 MB, f; MB, b IC: P4; V3; W1	1952 - 1986 MB, b IC: H1	ca. 1957 - 1974 MB, b IC: C8; C14	1957 - MB, f IC: single	ca. 1957 - 1974 MB, b IC: C8; C6	1957 - MB, f IC: R1
G1	F2	R1	A7	P1	C12
		<b>ROSTFREI INOXYDABLE STAINLESS</b>	<b>ELSENER SCHWYZ VICTORIA</b>		<b>VICTORINOX ROSTFREI</b>
1957 - MB, f IC: C8	1957 - MB, f IC: C8	ca. 1957 - 1970 MB, b IC: F3; B8	1959 - 1973 MB, f IC: Q2	ca. 1974 - 2005 MB, b IC: C5; C8	1976 - 1986 MB, f IC: single
C7	U3	C5	U5	U4	H3
<b>VICTORINOX SWITZERLAND</b>	<b>PAT. PEND. MOD. DEP.</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWITZERLAND STAINLESS ROSTFREI</b>	<b>PATENTED</b>	<b>DE-GM 9305297</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWISS MADE STAINLESS</b>
1984 - MB, f IC: single	1986 - MB, b IC: C5	1986 - 2008 MB, f IC: single; P1; U3; U5; U4; S1	1986 - MB, b IC: C5	1993 - 2003 MB, b IC: C5	2005 - 2009 MB, f IC: P2
U4	H4	P2	C6	H1	C11
<b>PAT. PEND.</b>	<b>HOFFRITZ SWITZERLAND STAINLESS</b>	<b>OFFICIER SUISSE</b>	<b>HOFFRITZ SWITZERLAND STAINLESS ROSTFREI</b>	<b>HOFFRITZ</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWISS MADE</b>
2007 - CC, f IC: C5	? MB, f IC: single	ca. 2005 - MB, b IC: H3; H5	? MB, f IC: P3	? MB, f IC: C9	? MB, f IC: single
S1	H5	H2	C13	C14	C15
<b>ECONOMY</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWISS MADE STAINLESS</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWISS MADE STAINLESS</b>		<b>VICTORINOX</b>	<b>VICTORINOX SWISS MADE DELÉMONT</b>
? MB, b IC: C5	2009 - 2011 MB, f IC: P2	2011 - MB, f IC: single	2013 - MB, f IC: single	2014 - MB, f IC: single	2014 - MB, f; MB, f IC: single

## NON- AND POSSIBLE VICTORINOX TANG STAMPS

NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE
<b>ELSENER RAPPERSWIL</b>	<b>H.ELSENER</b>	<b>ELSENER</b>		<b>ELSENER EINSIEDELN</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>

**Legend:**

**MB** = main blade  
**SM** = small blade  
**SD** = screwdriver

**CC** = cigar cutter  
**CO** = can opener  
**f** = front

**b** = back  
**IC** = in combination with  
**?** = date unknown

## 2016 Club Knife

The club knife for 2016 is now available. It is a special edition dark blue handle 91mm Pioneer X with only three implements. These consist of a large blade, scissors and leather punch. The club logo appears on the engraving panel on the rear handle scale.

The year (Jahr 2016) is etched on the blade. It is presented in a special silver box imprinted with the club logo and 2016 date. It is the same box as used for club knives over the past several years. The knife is unique in that it is part of a new series of 91mm Alox knives with scissors. It is only the second time in more than 30 years that the factory has produced a full size Alox knife with scissors. The first was the Pioneer X, which is the standard Pioneer with scissors that was introduced in early 2016. The second is our 2016 club knife, which is a variation of the Pioneer X, but with fewer implements. Only 156 of these were produced exclusively for our collectors' club.

Revenue from the sales of these knives supports club activities and publications. Please contact [doug@freeportknife.comcastbiz.net](mailto:doug@freeportknife.comcastbiz.net) to order.



## Elinox/Economy Series Knives

During the late 1950s and 60s, the souvenir shops in Switzerland were inundated with cheaply made foreign pocket knives, some of which had a handle mark similar to the Swiss cross. In the late 1960s, successful litigation forced these foreign suppliers to cease using the Swiss emblem on these knives. The retail souvenir shops in Switzerland, however, continued to seek lower-priced pocket knives.

The answer for Victorinox was to develop a line that could be offered at a much lower price point than traditional Victorinox pocket knives. Economies of production including the elimination of the metallic cross and shield and use of a less expensive nylon handle contributed to the development of this lower-priced line. You will often find a hot stamp cross and shield in place of the metallic one and the handle sometimes has a rough surface just like the handles found on

contemporary 111mm lock blade knives. Most of this series of knives were sold in Europe, but limited numbers did find their way to other markets including the USA.



## A Collector's Guide to the Alox Pioneer Series – Part One

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Member No. 72

In 1957 and 1958, Victorinox introduced a new line of pocket knives with handles made of an aluminum alloy the Factory calls "Alox". This new line was consistent with their policy of providing knives for mundane, work-a-day purposes.

Over the years, the Alox series of knives have been offered in four different sizes, but only a few of the early ones were officially imported by the principal U.S. Importer. Most of the other early patterns, but perhaps not all, were brought into the U.S. by private "unofficial" importers, distributors, and large dealers, or sold into the U.S., or brought in by private persons traveling internationally.

The "unofficial" importers, distributors, and dealers apparently were free, or felt themselves free, to name the knives as they chose. This activity has created a good deal of confusion, and some conflict with names used, or later used, for officially imported knives.

Note: The names used herein, other than those used by the U.S. Importer; have been adopted from a c.1994 sales list ("1994 Price List") (without copyright notice) published by a large dealer (and apparently independent importer) in eastern U.S.

The Alox knives are a delight to collect and use, but to rationally collect among this daunting multitude requires a general frame work into which they can be sorted. My partitions are:

(i) **Soldiers.** The Soldier knives in Alox, Model of 1961 ("M 61") made for the Swiss Army (and, at one time, some for the Dutch Army, or perhaps others) were first issued for the year 1962 (represented by the tang stamp "62", on the reverse of the main blade), and the last of these for the year 2008 (tang stamp "08"). Soldiers are often collected as an independent series, and will not be covered below.

Note: The Swiss Soldier's Knife (Art. Nr. 0.8610.26) (old Cat. No. 5720; later Cat. No. 53929) is clearly a part of this Pioneer Series and would appear to be an adaptation of Sturdy Boy (*q.v.*).

(ii) **Smalls.** Smaller knives in Alox were offered in a limited number of patterns in the 84mm size, even a very few in 74/75mm and in 58mm. Examples of these sizes are current today. These smaller Alox knives interest many collectors; they too will not be covered.

(iii) **Ad Specifics.** The 91mm, the 84mm, and 58mm sizes, all have been used as the basis for "ad specific" (knives marked with logos or carrying advertisements) and "affinity" products, both in Europe and in North America; the 91mm size will be automatically covered, but not the others.

Note: "Affinity" is my term, to describe knives with the names of clubs, lodges, colleges, sports teams, etc, to show membership, association, preference, etc.

(iv) **"Irregulars".** Until recently, the Factory's practice of producing marked or even unique knives for distributors, was limited, but included Hoffritz in the U.S.

Since 2003, at least one dealer, and at least one "creator" of "irregular" models, have offered in the U.S. a small number of Alox knives, in small series, with eccentric names, in exotic colors, and sometimes in novel patterns, never used by the Factory.

Although, this activity was supported by the Factory, and it made its own contributions to this group, these will not receive further treatment in this paper.

(v) **"First Pioneer Series"**. Excluding knives referred to in parts (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) above, leaves the bulk of the 91mm Alox models, offered between the 1957-58 date and 2003 (which I shall call the "First Pioneer Series", sometimes abbreviated as "1stPS") for further examination.

(vi) **"Second Pioneer Series".** Beginning with its 2003 catalog, the U.S. Importer advertised a new Alox line (which I shall call the "Second Pioneer Series", sometimes

abbreviated as "2ndPS"); all of which were of the 91mm size like the previous series, used the same tools, but all handle material was "silver" in color.

There were, however, some slight differences in appearance; the most prominent was the adoption of the Swiss Shield, with the field filled with a red color ("2003 Shield") in place of the simple, equilateral Swiss Cross ("Cross") previously used. There were seven patterns not before offered in a U.S. catalog, and three patterns were carried over, *viz.*: Pioneer, Farmer, and Electrician.

The new models all had names, but these differed in all cases (except for the three patterns carried over) from names previously used by the "unofficial" importers of the 1stPS.

I have used as a primary source of my information an old photograph ("Old Photo"), at one time available on the Internet. The Old Photo depicts a total of 35 Alox knives, each of which is identified by a 4-digit number ("Old No."). I believe (for various reasons to lengthily to include here) that 20 of them constituted the entire First Pioneer Series when it was introduced, or shortly thereafter.

In preparing the following Check List, I have chosen not to list as separate models, knives with bail or key ring, except in one case where the Old Photo and the U.S. Importer made that distinction, *viz.* Sturdy Boy, and that same knife with bail or later with key ring, called Pioneer.

Since the First Pioneer Series and the Second Pioneer Series were so similar, I shall attempt to cover both series concurrently, although the Second Pioneer Series was only half as extensive as the First.

Major characteristics, applicable to all the First Pioneer Series, and applicable *pro tanto* to the Second, were:

(a) overall length closed, 91mm (3½ in.). One writer on the Internet has insisted that these be called "93mm", since he measured the knives and obtained that value. I have confirmed his measurement; however,

I shall continue to use the designation used in U.S. catalogs.

(b) the Alox handles were always textured in this size, which (I believe to be) the 1988 Factory Catalog called (in German) *gerippt* which translates as "ribbed", although "checkered" seems to me to be more descriptive. A Cross was embossed or stamped into the metal of the obverse of the handles of both red and silver models.

This checkered pattern with Cross (sometimes referred to as "old style [insert color as applicable] Alox with Cross") was designated by the suffix to the Factory's *Artikelnummer* (by ".20" when red in color, and ".27" when "silver.") In the Second Pioneer Series, there were no red or other colored knives initially; and knives in silver with the 2003 Shield are (sometimes referred to as "new style [insert color when needed] Alox with Shield"), were designated by the suffix ".26".

Note: *Artikelnummer* (*Art. Nr.*) is the German language term used in the 1988 Factory Catalog for the numbers used by the Factory for knife identification. The numbers are codes for the general configuration of the knife, its compliment of tools, color and handle material, and perhaps other information.

(c) Some knives of the 1stPS, had brass liners (separators); others had Alox; some had no liners at all. At this time, it is not known when that change occurred.

(d) Weight varied, from 40g to 80g, depending on pattern.

(e) There were relatively few (compared to Officer models) different blades or tools (collectively "Tools") in the entire series. When individual models are described later, tools will be designated by the numerals below:

(1) The main blade was a spear 70mm long and 14mm wide at maximum ("Large Blade"), same as used on the contemporaneous Soldier and other 91mm Alox models and continues today; however, the Large Blade it did not normally have the date of manufacture stamped on the reverse.

(2) The cap lifter/large screwdriver ("Cap Lifter") was the same as was used on the contemporaneous Soldier models, did not change, and the same continues today.

(3) The can opener/small screwdriver ("Can Opener") remained the same as well.

(4) The awl/reamer, however, did go through one major change. From introduction until 1961, a quarter-round, long (46mm), cone shape, sharply pointed tool was used which seems suitable only for piercing material, and perhaps should be referred to only as an awl or a "punch".

The second design, the same as used on the Soldier, Model of 1961, and continues today on Officer models and 91mm Alox models, is a long (40mm) triangular shape, slightly curved in section, with one edge sharpened to provide the "reaming" function ("Reamer"). The point is flat, about 1.5mm wide and sharpened. Since this change was made in the Soldier models marked for year 1962, it is reasonable to assume approximately that date for the corresponding change in the 1stPS.

The blade (1) and tools (2) (3), and (4), form the basic compliment (the "Basic Four") of several knives in this series, typified by the Pioneer which has this exact set.

(5) The familiar wood saw ("Wood Saw") appears on eight different models of the 1stPS and is the same as used on the current Officer and 91mm Alox models.

(6) The most unusual tool used in the First Pioneer Series (found on five models and is unique to this series) is what many writers, and I am included, would prefer to call a "bagging or sacking needle"; other names used are "large sewing needle" and "marlinespike" (herein I shall call it "Large Needle"). This tool is 70mm long, with an elongated eye (6mm) to accept a heavy thread.

(7) The "electrician's" or "cable" blade ("Cable Blade") was used on four related models. This is a short blade, rather like the "sheep's foot" blade frequently found on other

knives sold in America. This measures 38mm long, 13mm wide, with the front edge sharpened, and a semicircular cutout near the tang designed for "scrapping" wire to remove insulation.

(8) A small half-hawk, hook, or "pruning" blade ("Pruning Blade") was used on three different models. This is a short (38mm), curved blade (16mm wide), said to be useful in pruning branches of domestic shrubs and small trees; but, I might add, shaped almost exactly like the "foil removing" blades usually seen on "champaign" knives or bar-keepers tools.

(9) A narrow, fine tipped, "precision screw driver" ("Precision Screwdriver") is found on two related models. This tool is 41mm long, and 3mm wide at the thin tip.

(10) There was no small spear or clip blade ("Pen Blade") on any of these models, with one exception: Workman (*q.v.*), which, at different times, had either a small clip blade (44mm long) or small spear blade long (41mm).

(11) Only the Pioneer, as shown in the Old Catalog, had a bail; there were no key rings shown on any of the 91mm knives in the Old Photo.

(12) There were no bails used in the 2ndPS, and only two of ten had a key ring.

I have examined a specimen of what is now known as "Woodsman" with a bail, though not so shown in the Old Photo. Moreover, I also have seen specimens of other models of the 1stPS, that have the later key ring, and some without either bail or key ring. The explanation for this seemingly random inclusion lies in the offering by the Factory of "available options at additional cost".

NOTE: In the 1988 Factory Catalog, Woodsman was available with bail; Plowman, First Mate, Sturdy Boy, and Workman were available with key ring, in each case at extra cost; Farmer was available only with key ring at the base price; the others were not available with either option.

There follows a Check List of all the knives of the First Pioneer Series of which I am aware; and *in Italics, all the knives of the*

*Second Pioneer Series, as they appeared in the 2003 Catalog of the U.S. Importer, plus a few others released later:*

**SOLO [Old No. 2200]:** (Art. Nr. 0.8000.20); one layer. Tools: only 1; old style red Alox with Cross, without bail or key ring. The 1994 Price List indicated that the "retail price" was \$21.00; but the knife was available from that source for \$11.90.

*The model in this pattern, without key ring, in the 2ndPS, is 0.8000.26; called "Solo Alox" in the U.S., Cat. No. 53950. Introduced in 2003 with a List Price of \$18.00; and \$24.00 in 2010; this model was absent from the 2011 Catalog.*

**HELPER [Old No. 2201]:** (Art. Nr. 0.8010.27); one layer. Tools: only 7; old style silver Alox with Cross, without bail or key ring. The 1994 Price List indicated that the "retail price" was \$16.00; but the knife was available from that source for \$9.90. *This pattern is not represented in the 2ndPS.*

**APPRENTICE [Old No. 2202]:** (Art. Nr. 0.8020.27; one layer. Tools: 1 and 7; old style silver Alox with Cross, without bail or key ring. The 1994 Price List indicated that the "retail price" was \$20.00; but the knife was available from that source for \$12.90.

The model in this pattern, without key ring, in the 2ndPS, is 0.8020.26; called "Pioneer Apprentice" in the U.S., Cat. No. 53965. *Introduced in 2003 with a List Price of \$24.00; and \$30.00 in 2008; this model was absent from the 2010 Catalog.*

**SEAMAN [Old No. 2203]:** (Art. Nr. 0.8030.20); one layer. Tools: 1 and 6; old style red Alox with Cross, without bail or key ring. The 1994 Price List indicated that the "retail price" was \$32.00; but the knife was available from that source for \$20.90. *This pattern is not represented in the 2ndPS.*

**WOODSMAN [Old No. 2204]:** (Art. Nr. 0.8040.20); two layers. Tools: 1 and 5; old style red Alox with Cross, may have bail or key ring, or neither. The 1994 Price List indicated that the "retail price" was \$28.00; but the knife was available from that source for \$17.90. *This pattern is not represented in the 2ndPS.*

**Editor's Note:** To be continued in the next issue of *The Swiss Blade*.

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