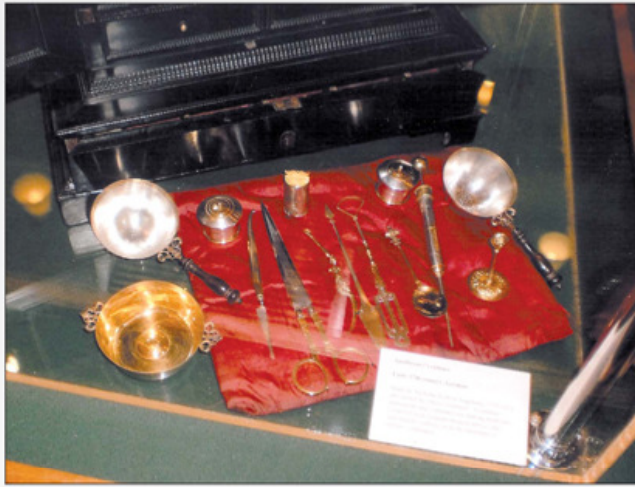


# A SOLDIER'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Early 17th century Apothecary's Cabinet belonging to a wealthy man, this cabinet includes surgical equipment as well as containers for pills, tonics and potions.



Soldiers were often idle spending time in the many taverns or hanging around the camp.



The inscription on the wooden beam at the front of the building by Tickford Bridge is dated 1615 and dedicates the hospital that once stood on this site to the people of the town from Queen Anne, (wife of James I and mother of Charles I).

Overcrowded living conditions, poor hygiene (most soldiers were louse-ridden) and streets with open sewers were a recipe for diseases many of which affected both men and horses inside the garrison - a huge military concern. Armies in the field were also badly affected with men often being taken 'more by disease than by the sword or bullet'.

Newport Pagnell's hospitals mainly served the poor, St Margaret's (assumed to have been near to St Margaret's Close) and St John's hospital near Tickford Bridge (rededicated in 1615 by King James I under the patronage of his wife Queen Anne). There was also a leper hospital near North Bridge.

Cromwell appointed a surgeon for each regiment and a barber-surgeon for each company, the latter took on grooming and wig-making to supplement

their living. Surgery was dangerous and survival rates low, battlefield injuries generally consisted of knife and sword cuts, broken bones, open wounds from artillery and amputation was often the only treatment. Surgeons extracted teeth, and assisted in childbirth to boost their income.

Gaming, gambling and women were popular forms of garrison entertainment. Painted draught, chess and backgammon boards were split and carried in soldiers' knap sacks; simple wooden-pieces were carried in drawstring cloth bags. Cheaply printed packs of cards made of rag paper did not have numbers but were 52 to a pack - printed political packs (those lampooning either side) were very popular during the War. Dice also provided many opportunities for gambling.

