

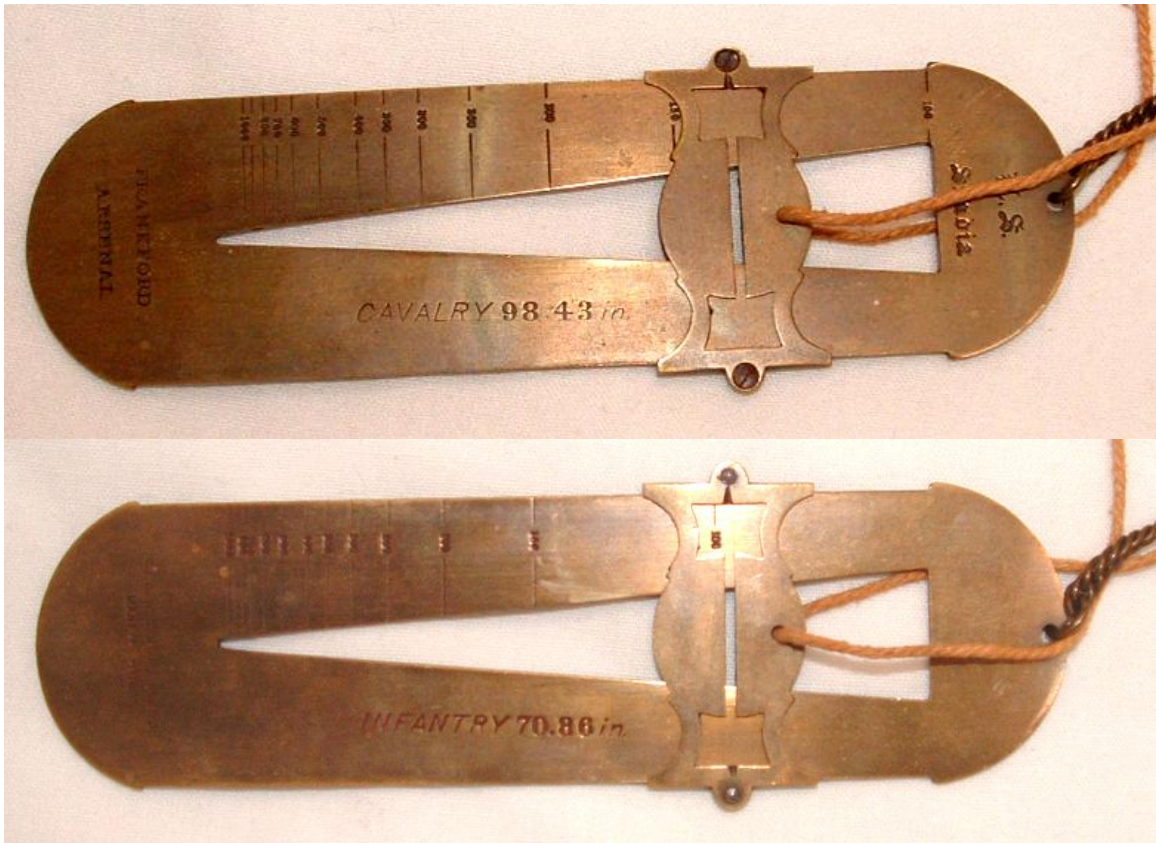
U.S. Army Stadia

Tenth Infantry Captain Henry Heth (later major general, CSA) wrote *A System of Target Practice* in 1858 and thus created the start of the army's marksmanship training program, although for a variety of reasons, most of the army ignored his book. Among Heth's awards were a brass stadia for a company's best shot, and a silver stadia for a regiment's shooting champion.



A soldier used a stadia to estimate the distance to a target, either a 6-foot standing man, or a 7-foot horse-mounted soldier. A soldier held the stadia in front of him by placing one end of a string between his teeth and stretching the string tight. The other end was fastened to the stadia. In this position the soldier moved a slide so that the top and bottom of the target appeared to just touch the top and bottom of a cutout triangle in the stadia's center. The soldier then read the range off of the markings on the stadia.

Stadia were marked FRANKFORD ARSENAL and *U. S. Stadia*, and were the property of a regiment. A soldier wore it like a medal for the year he was the company's shooting champion, but then the succeeding winner received the stadia. The chain and brass bar at the top of the stadia was to affix it to the uniform.



Above are the two sides of a brass company stadia, one marked CAVALRY and the other INFANTRY. The target was viewed through the central slot on the slide and the slide was moved until the top and bottom of the target just touched each edge of the triangle. The range to the target showed through rectangle at the stadia top. The regimental silver stadia was similar but also had ornate engravings.

For company contests, men fired four rounds each at 15 distances between 150 and 1,000 feet. Targets were circular, three feet in diameter with the center containing an 8-inch black circle. The winner had the greatest number of hits. In case of a tie, soldiers fired at a 600 foot target until the winner was decided.

Additional information on stadia and Heth's other prize is in *Marksmanship in the U.S. Army*, published by the University of Oklahoma Press.