

Buying on a budget:

So, you've decided to join the 504th PIR. Firstly, Welcome! We're glad to have you begin your reenacting career with us! We know that starting this hobby can be a momentous, and often daunting, undertaking.

You may ask yourself a number of questions: 'Where do I start? Where do I buy? WHAT do I buy? Where do I buy from?

All are excellent questions and it can be enough to give one a headache. Especially when one sees the prices that can be associated with some of the gear. Fear not however! The following guide is designed to give you, as a new recruit, the tools to find deals for top quality gear at fractions of the price if you're buying it new.

We're lucky in a number of aspects in doing the H Co. 504 Impression. For one, unlike with German reenacting, there is a large amount of surplus from WWII that still survives. Wool Pants and Wool Shirts were made in the MILLIONS. Even in larger sizes, one can find them if they look hard enough. Webgear and equipment still survives in even greater quantities, some 75+ years later. In another aspect, nearly everything that you may have a hard time finding is reproduced by at least one company, many times by multiple companies. You have to be careful from WHERE you buy though, as not all reproductions are of the same quality. That is another article for another time, but note the scope of this article will only contain items that are authorized for use by the Board of Directors.

There are many ways to acquire gear, sometimes in brand new condition for fractions of what you would pay full retail price. In places like Facebook groups, Ebay, and Etsy are hidden numerous items you could be looking for, you just have to take the time to search. I'll go over how to search in all three and give you some tips though EBay and Etsy are roughly similar when it comes to searching. Let's start with Facebook groups.

Just like with any hobby, facebook has scores of groups where you can buy/sell/trade items. The same is true for reenactors, with most pages moderated by reenactors, geared towards different aspects of reenacting. One of those aspects are the buying/selling/trading of gear. Here are some of my go to groups in no particular order:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/124624634612307/>-WWII USGI Reenactor Sales Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/209799089217807/>-WWII Allied Airborne Trade/Sale

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/193936417452361/>- WWI WWII Buy/Sale/Trade

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129149667245938/>-WWII For Sale/Trade Forum

There are others that pop up and some that go away. For now these 4 above will get you started. Many times someone will post their item in multiple pages as well to make sure it's

seen. Here are some deals that I've come across in a mere 15 minutes of looking at these pages (as of May 2020):

1.) There is a M43 shovel with a repro carrier on Facebook for \$45. At the Front currently carries the Carrier itself for \$35 plus shipping and handling. For literally \$10 more dollars you get an original folding shovel!

2.) There is another post where a person is selling the following:

Original equipment belt, canteen/cup, first aid pouch, gas mask bag, M1941 Haversack, M1943 e tool and cover and reproduction canteen cover. All very serviceable. All for \$150.

Now let's go to At The Front and see how much all of these cost by themselves:

Cartridge belt-99.99, Canteen Cover only- 34.99, 1941 Haversack 99.99, 43 e tool cover-\$35 dollars, and the gas mask bag- 69.99. That's a total of 339.96 plus shipping and handling. so, for 150 dollars you're getting 339.96 worth of gear. Technically it's worth more because of the Canteen, canteen cup, and shovel. Let's say that all total it is worth \$400. You're literally saving 62% by taking the time to join a facebook group and do 10 minutes of searching.

3.) A Helmet Liner from Scott Meador, a well known maker and restorer of Helmet liners, for \$70 shipped. Looking on AT The Front, their partially restored Infantry Liner is \$99 plus S&H. Many are also dented and cracked in some places. Though you would also need a chin strap for your Liner, which is \$18 plus shipping from JMurray1944 [Parts – Page 2](#) you're still saving 11% on the liner PLUS you know exactly what you're getting.

4.) Currently there is a guy on the Facebook marketplace selling Corcoran Jump boots for 85\$+shipping. At The Front is currently selling the exact same boot for \$199. That's a 57% savings on the exact same boot that Corcoran sells on their website.

What if you can't find what you're looking for? The answer is to post an ISO.

ISO stands for 'In search of'. For example let's say that I'm looking for an unreinforced 42 jumpsuit. I'm a size 48 jacket, 38 Pant. I only want suits from ATF, WWII impressions, or DeBrebander from Europe. My post would look something like this:

'ISO unreinforced 42 Jump Uniform. Size 48-50 Chest, 38-40 Pants. Only from ATF, WWII impressions of DeBrabander. Any Condition is ok.'

Be very specific on what you're looking for. This helps people know what you're looking for and saves you and a potential seller time. You can also say what price you're willing to pay but i would advise against it because you can easily look up what a brand new suit costs from the

above makers. From there you can haggle if you feel the seller is being a little high. In my experience most sellers are very fair and many are simply looking to move items to make room for other ventures.

**DISCLAIMER:** Unfortunately just like in the real world, in reenacting there are some people that might have nefarious intentions. These are very few and far between, and I've been lucky that I haven't been taken advantage of, but others have. I ALWAYS recommend using PayPal for transactions and paying by Goods and Services rather than sending money using Friends and Family. Now if you know the seller very well (such as when we pay Don for mess) there's nothing wrong with that. There is an extra fee for this, but if you get screwed by a seller with unscrupulous intentions you can get your money back.

Ebay/Etsy

[https://www.ebay.com/b/WW-II-Collectibles/13977/bn\\_2311583](https://www.ebay.com/b/WW-II-Collectibles/13977/bn_2311583)

Here's where I start when looking on ebay. From here I do a search for what I'm looking for. I found my helmet I use most often by doing this. For \$100 shipped I acquired a Front Seam, Fixed Bale steel pot that was refurbished. A Steel Pot like this costs \$150 at J Murray, so you're saving 33%.

There's other ways to search as well. For example, watches. If you're looking for a wind up watch, search 'Vintage Wind up Watches.' It may take longer to find what you're looking for, but it will also be cheaper to find something rather than searching "WWII Watch"

The same is true for 'Vintage military uniform' vs 'WWII uniform,' or really any search you're looking for. If you're looking for a particular size item, such as how I found my original wool pants size 38, Search for something like 'WWII size 38 pants.' It will narrow down the search to the size you're looking for.

There's no limit to how you can find items. A previous member found an original raincoat by searching 'Vintage Rain Slicker.'