Civil War Hardtack

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of flour in a large bowl*
- 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar (Optional)**. This adds some “air” to the finished crackers and makes them a bit “less dense”. It does not create big air pockets and the crackers will still turn out quite hard. This ingredient can be omitted. Mix directly with flour.
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda (Optional)**
- 1.5 teaspoons of salt
- 1 cup of water

Dissolve the salt (and soda if used) in the cup of water before adding to the bowl of flour. Mix all ingredients well. Roll out dough 1/2-inch to 3/8-inch thick with a rolling pin. Because original, issued hardtack was uniform, by far the best results are obtained with a hardtack cutter. If a hardtack cutter is unavailable, cut the dough into squares approximately 3 inches by 3 inches and place on ungreased cookie sheet. Use a 1/8-inch diameter dowel to create sixteen holes in each cracker in a 4 by 4 pattern.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes at 450 degrees. When done, let air-dry for minimum of twenty-four hours, preferably more, before the crackers are placed into a bag or sealed container. Yield: 9 to 11 crackers.

* Period hardtack contractors used a flour known as “cracker flour”, which can be simulated by mixing one part pastry flour with three parts ordinary, unbleached flour.

** This ingredient is a popular “reenactor addition” to the recipe that was not present in Civil War hardtack. This ingredient will help make your crackers slightly more palatable but, for increased authenticity, omit this ingredient.