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# Military Collector & Historian

Vol. 72, No. 1

Spring 2020

Washington, DC

The purpose of the *Journal* is to disseminate information on the material culture, history, and traditions of members of the Armed Forces of the United States worldwide and other nations serving in the Western Hemisphere.

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Crew of an M24 tank along the Naktong River front, 17 August 1950. On the ground is Pfc. Rudolph Dotts, Egg Harbor City, N.J. gunner (center); Pvt. Maynard Linaweaver, Lundsburg, Kansas, cannoneer; and on top is Pfc. Hugh Goodwin, Decatur, Miss., tank commander. All are members of the 24th Reconnaissance, 24th Division. Photo by Sgt. Riley - DOD ID: HA-SC-98-06983, 111C6061 NARA FILE#: 111-C-6061





## The Flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion, 29th Division, American Expeditionary Force, World War I

Nicholas P. Ciotola

The New Jersey State House Flag Collection (SHFC) consists of 192 historical flags in care of the New Jersey State Museum and the State Capitol Joint Management Commission. The majority of these military flags constitute the National and regimental colors carried by New Jersey's volunteer infantry regiments in the Civil War, as well as artillery flags, cavalry guidons, flank markers, and captured Confederate battle flags and "Stars and Bars." The collection also contains thirty-four lesser known flags from the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. Of these flags, 111th Machine Gun Battalion flag stands out because of its provenance as a privately-funded presentation flag and for its connection to the anti-immigrant sentiment faced by German-Americans at the time of a war against their native land.



FIG 1. Organizational color (obverse), 111th Machine Gun Battalion, 1918, SHFC188, held in repository and curated by the New Jersey State Museum for the State Capitol Joint Management Commission.



Most of the World War I flags in the collection are national and regimental colors belonging to regiments of the 29th "Blue and Gray" Division and 78th "Lightning" Division. FIG 2 shows the National Color of the 114th U.S. Infantry Regiment, which organized on 11 October 1917 and was composed of men from the ranks of the 3d and 5th Regiments, New Jersey National Guard.<sup>1</sup> The 114th trained at Camp McClellan, near Anniston, Alabama, and formed part of the 57th Brigade, 29th Division. Made up of many New Jersey volunteers and draftees of the National Army, the 311th organized on 6–10 September 1917 and trained at newly-created Camp Dix, Burlington County, New Jersey. FIG 3 shows the regimental color of the 311th U.S. Infantry Regiment. It formed part of the 156th Brigade, 78th Division. These and other regiments received their colors while in camp and brought them overseas. Each regiment had a National Color and a regimental color. Unlike the Civil War, American World War I-era flags rarely saw the immediate battle front due to changing tactics brought about by the devastating weaponry of the first modern war. Instead, they remained behind the lines for use in camp and for ceremonial purposes. Still, some recommended flags to be always kept close at hand in case they needed to be brought out to "inspire enthusiasm and maintain morale."<sup>2</sup>



FIG 3. Regimental color (obverse), 311th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 1918, SHFC161, held in repository and curated by the New Jersey State Museum for the State Capitol Joint Management Commission.

FIG 2. (left) National Color (obverse), 114th U.S. Infantry Regiment, 1918, SHFC155, held in repository and curated by the New Jersey State Museum for the State Capitol Joint Management Commission.



The above colors represent two of the most common flag designs of the American Expeditionary Forces. The 114th National Color is a forty-eight-star Stars and Stripes, made of silk, with a field of thirteen alternating red and white stripes, knotted yellow silk fringe, and a canton containing five-pointed stars arranged in six rows, eight stars per row. This famous and long-standing forty-eight-star pattern was first adopted on 4 July 1912 and lasted until 3 July 1949. The 311th regimental color is a blue silk flag with the coat of arms of the United States, knotted yellow silk fringe, and the regiment name in white silk embroidered on a red scroll. The flag's dimensions conform to size specifications of 4 feet 4 inches on the hoist and 5 feet 6 inches on the fly. Both flags had accompanying cords of 8 feet 6 inches long with two tassels—The National Color having tassels of scarlet, white and blue silk; the regimental color having tassels of white and blue silk.<sup>3</sup> Both flags are believed to have been made in the manufacturing division of the Schuylkill Arsenal, Philadelphia, which was the flag-making hub of the Quartermaster Corps.<sup>4</sup> However, the standardized design allowed for the flags to be obtained by private flag manufacturers as needed.

The National Color of the 114th and regimental color of the 311th are but two examples of more than thirty flags in the collection that belonged to the 29th and 78th Divisions. The reason flags from these two divisions are housed by New Jersey stems from a War Department bulletin distributed after the Armistice. Issued on 17 February 1919, War Department Bulletin No. 6, Section III, called for the following action regarding the Disposition of the Colors:

Upon the disbanding of organizations which were originally National Guard or National Army organizations, their colors or standards and guidons will be delivered into the custody of the States from which the majority of the men originally came at the time the organizations were formed. The United States, however, will retain title to these colors, standards, and guidons. When units of The United States Army which are not identified with any particular State are to be demobilized, their colors or standards or guidons will be turned in to the Director of Purchase, Storage, and Traffic for safe-keeping.<sup>5</sup>

Formed from former New Jersey National Guard regiments, the 29th Division was made up of many men born in the Garden State, and also had soldiers from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The divisional nickname "Blue and Gray" stemmed from the fact its ranks were composed of soldiers from two states representing the Union in the American Civil War and two states representing the Confederacy.<sup>6</sup> The 29th Division used the taeguk (circle formed by two interlocking teardrops) as its symbol. One half of the symbol was Confederate gray; the other half was Union

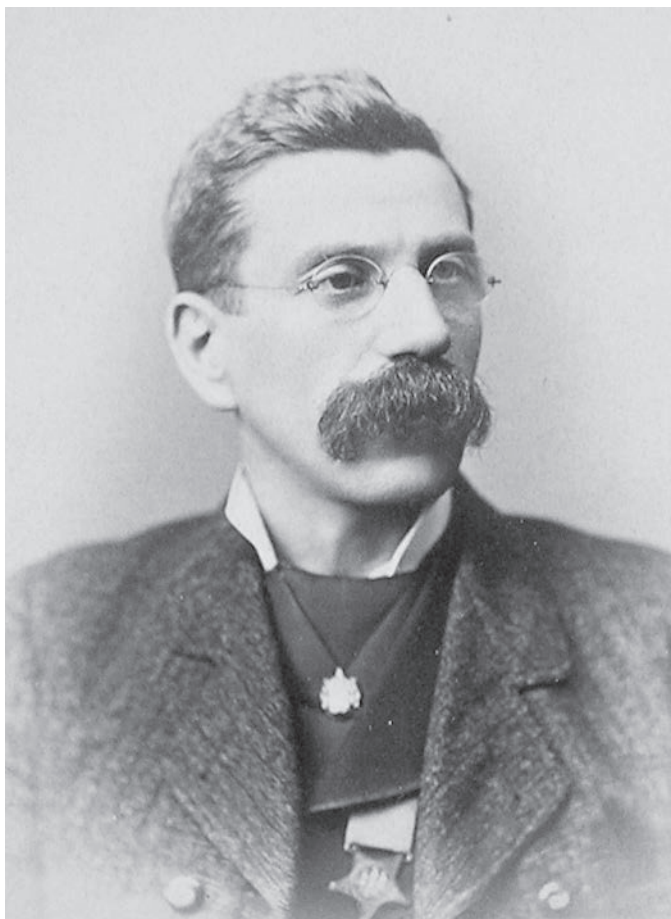


FIG 4. Ernst C. Stahl, circa 1865. Courtesy of the Aaron Wilkes Post 23, Trenton, New Jersey, New Jersey G.A.R. Archives; <http://www.lyoncamp.org/Wilkes23.htm>; (accessed 2 October 2019).

blue. The 78th Division, which organized and trained at New Jersey's Camp Dix, consisted of large numbers of National Army men from New Jersey.<sup>7</sup> Its "Lightning Division" nickname was the result of a contest at Camp Dix in which enlisted men submitted nearly one hundred suggestions to the *Camp Dix Times*. William Hicks and Lynn Shields came up with the winning submission. Their inspiration is believed to have been the famous "white lightning" applejack whiskey produced in central New Jersey.<sup>8</sup> Pursuant to the War Department Bulletin, a preponderance of New Jerseyans permitted the State of New Jersey to obtain many of the surviving colors from these two divisions after the Armistice.

The flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion has a design and history unlike any other in the collection. Its origin story is intertwined with the life and military career of Ernst C. Stahl, a German immigrant living in Trenton and a veteran of the American Civil War. Stahl was born in 1843 in Breslau, Silesia, then part of the Kingdom of Prussia; today Wrocław, Poland, and came to the United States at age seventeen.<sup>9</sup> He immediately enlisted in the 7th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment and later served in Battery C, 1st New Jersey Light Artillery. Stahl served through the end of the Civil War, rising steadily





in rank until being honorably mustered out on 19 June 1865 at Trenton.<sup>10</sup> After several years away, he returned to the city permanently in 1873 and took over as owner/editor of a German language newspaper titled *New Jersey Staats Journal*.<sup>11</sup> In 1896, Stahl was named Departmental Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in New Jersey and went on to represent the state at most of the national GAR encampments.<sup>12</sup> Though he only reached the rank of first lieutenant, the aging German immigrant civic leader came to be affectionately known throughout the city as “Colonel Stahl.”

By the time of the American intervention in World War I, Stahl had established himself as a prominent citizen of New Jersey’s capital city and a respected spokesman for the German-American community. Stahl’s background as a decorated Civil War veteran and GAR commander translated to his personal support for the war effort against the country of his birth. Like many parts of the country, New Jersey harbored strong anti-German sentiment in the lead-up to the American intervention in World War I—a sentiment that led one local municipality to famously change its name from German Valley to Long Valley.<sup>13</sup> Stahl hoped to use his veteran status and prominent reputation among native-born citizens to stem that sentiment. To show his personal patriotism and also demonstrate how German-speakers were not always the enemy, Stahl personally undertook a plan to purchase, procure and present a flag to a unit very dear to his heart—the 111th Machine Gun Battalion.

Following the April 1917 declaration of war against Germany, American officials engaged in heated discussions on how to best maximize the use of machine guns. One solution was the creation of “Machine Gun Battalions”; units that would improve efficiency and effectiveness by functioning as designated, flexible battalions that fully understood these new weapons of modern war and could be shifted quickly and easily in tactical support of other units as needed.<sup>14</sup> Formed in September 1917, the 111th Machine Gun Battalion was largely made up of national guardsmen from the 2d and 3d New Jersey National Guard Regiments. The battalion became part of the 57th Infantry Brigade and was one of three machine gun battalions associated with the 29th Division. In character with its “Blue and Gray” nickname, the division’s other two machine gun battalions (the 110th and 112th Machine Gun Battalions) both had large numbers of men from the Maryland National Guard.<sup>15</sup>

One of the New Jerseyans who composed the ranks of the 111th was Trenton resident Norman P. White, a grandson of Ernst Stahl. A former New Jersey national guardsman, White received a promotion from first sergeant, Company E, 113th U.S. Infantry to second lieutenant, Company B, 111th Machine Gun Battalion during the 29th Division’s training in Alabama.<sup>16</sup> By early 1918, officials in Trenton started to express concern White’s battalion and the New Jersey regiments at Camp McClellan had not

been supplied with their colors—a problem tied to the overwhelming logistical challenge of supplying a rapidly expanding and reorganizing military.<sup>17</sup> On 13 April 1918, a newspaper article in the *Trenton Evening Times* lamented how numerous regiments at Camp McClellan still had not received their flags. The article included a direct appeal by the 29th Division commander Maj. Gen. Charles G. Morton imploring the home states for help.

Only one regiment in the division, the 114th of New Jersey, has been supplied with regimental colors and unless some outside movement is started in the near future the soldiers of the 113th, 115th, and 116th Infantry Regiments, the 110th, 111th, and 113th Field Artillery, the 104th Engineers, 110th, 111th, and 112th Machine Gun Battalions, and several other outfits are pretty likely to go “over there” without colors... Major General Morton has requested newspaper correspondents to impress upon home folk the demand for quick action in this direction and it is hoped that the next fortnight will bring colors to every unit in the division.<sup>18</sup>

In New Jersey, a fundraising campaign drawing on public and private resources began almost immediately.<sup>19</sup> Within a month, numerous regimental colors costing \$800 per piece had been procured and personally delivered to Camp McClellan by New Jersey Governor Walter Evans Edge and a delegation of mayors from New Jersey’s largest cities.<sup>20</sup> The public appeal also reached and inspired Ernst Stahl, who personally set to work raising money to procure a flag for his grandson’s Machine Gun Battalion. Once he had acquired the funds, Stahl worked with New Jersey Adjutant General Frederick Gilkyson to obtain the flag. On the morning of 16 May 1918, Stahl left Trenton to personally deliver his gift to the Jersey boys in Camp McClellan.<sup>21</sup>

The flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion is an organizational color consisting of a blue field with unknotted yellow silk fringe, at the center of which is a red scroll containing the battalion name and “U.S.A.” embroidered in white silk. The same design is found on the reverse. The flag measures 5 feet 2 inches on the hoist and 5 feet 10 inches on the fly, making it a spot larger than the standard National and regimental colors carried by infantry regiments. Natural light exposure has resulted in several sun-bleached diagonal streaks across the blue silk field on the obverse—a permanent scar from when the flag was displayed for decades in the New Jersey State House still attached to its staff. The flag is covered by multiple rows of blue machine stitching in a rough zigzag pattern. Red silk stitching in a linear pattern is found in the embroidered scroll. These stitches are not original to the flag. They are “conservation” work from a later date. In 1930, a Daughters of the American Revolution campaign

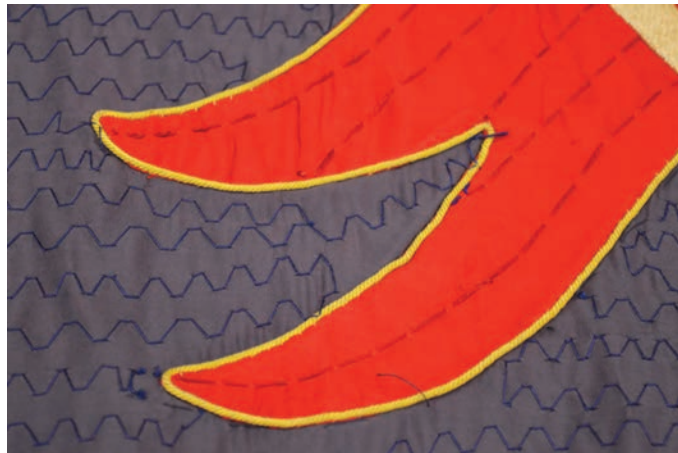


FIG 5. Stitching detail, organizational color of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion.

inspired the State of New Jersey to appropriate funds to save the deteriorating flags.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the 1930s, Katherine Fowler Richey was contracted to restore most of the Civil War flags in the collection.<sup>23</sup> The technique seen on the flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion does not match Fowler's style or stitch type. The zigzag stitches are closest to the work of New York seamstress Josephine Roser, who worked on several historical flag collections around the country in the 1960s.<sup>24</sup> It is possible Roser did the work on this flag, but no records exist to confirm this. Whoever performed the work, it was in an attempt to stabilize the flag and prevent shattering of the silk over time.

Colonel Stahl's flag traveled with the men of the 111th when they embarked for France in June 1918 with their 29th Division comrades and the rest of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). They also brought with them their National Color, which is number SHFC187 in the collection. The battalion's first active engagement involved relieving their French allies guarding a vast system of trenches in front of "no man's land," near Belfort, Haute Alsace, France.<sup>25</sup> Incorporated into the newly-formed American 1st Army, the 111th went on to participate in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The bloody, month-long engagement saw AEF forces fighting through rugged, hilly terrain with the objective of severing a vital German railroad link.<sup>26</sup>

Associated with the flag is a yellow silk streamer printed with the names and dates of these engagements: "Defense Sector, Haute Alsace, France, July 25–Sept 22, 1918; Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France, Oct. 8–Oct. 30, 1918." In 1890, Army policy stated battle honors were to be applied to silver bands (originally called rings) placed on the staffs (pikes) of flags. This replaced the earlier, Civil War-era practice of painting the battle honors directly on



FIG 6. Battle honor ribbon, organizational color of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion.

National Colors. The practice of using silver bands ceased, then restarted again just prior to World War I.<sup>27</sup> Due to the logistical difficulties of producing and distributing these silver bands before the units came home and demobilized, AEF Commander-in-Chief Gen. John J. Pershing suggested the use of silk ribbons (streamers) printed with battle honors instead. His suggestion was made official in General Orders 41.

Owing to the difficulty of having appropriate silver bands made and engraved in France in time to be presented to organizations before their departure for the United States, it has been decided that each organization entitled to credit for participation in battle shall be presented with a ribbon or ribbons with the names of battles printed thereon in lieu of the silver band. The silver band will be presented to the organization later by the War Department. Should the organization be demobilized before it is possible to deliver the band, it will be sent to the custodian of the colors or standard, who will cause the ribbon to be replaced by the proper silver band.<sup>28</sup>

On 24 March 1919, Pershing and his staff visited the 29th Division at Fresnes, France, to decorate their colors in this manner.<sup>29</sup> Multiple flags in the New Jersey collection—both from the 29th Division and the 78th Division, still have their ribbons. They exist in three colors; red, white, and yellow. The colors may reflect the type of regiment; infantry, engineer, signal corps, artillery, of the flag to which the ribbon was awarded, but this is only speculation and the exact meaning of the ribbon colors is not known.

The engagement names and dates on the yellow ribbon of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion match those as recorded in official sources, suggesting that the ribbon's association with this flag is correct.<sup>30</sup> However, the ribbons and flags were separated on several occasions during the mid-twentieth century and recordkeeping was poor. For this reason, it cannot be said with one hundred percent certainty this yellow ribbon belongs with the flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion. The flag's original ribbon may have been white, not yellow.<sup>31</sup> A further mystery involves whether or not New Jersey's flags ever received the silver bands. The Adjutant General of New Jersey reported that the staffs were indeed to be decorated with silver bands to complement the ribbons.<sup>32</sup> Although the staffs for all of the flags are indeed part of the collection, not a single one is adorned with a silver band. In August 1919, a shortage of silver led the War Department to a





FIG 7. Gen. John J. Pershing decorating the colors of the 29th Division, Fresnes, France, 24 March 1919, published in John Abrams Cutchins and George Scott Stewart (*History of the Twenty-ninth Division, "Blue and Gray."* 1917-1919 (Philadelphia, Press of MacCalla & Co., Inc. 1921), 262.

short-lived change in the method of displaying battle honors; campaign names were to be embroidered on the regimental colors themselves.<sup>33</sup> It is possible this silver shortage prevented the flags in the New Jersey collection from ever getting their bands.

The 111th Machine Gun Battalion returned to the United States in May 1919 and demobilized at Camp Dix. Almost immediately, the State of New Jersey received the flags of the 29th Division pursuant to the War Department's Disposition of the Colors bulletins. By summer, the state also started to receive flags from the New Jersey regiments in the 78th Division.<sup>34</sup> The flags were placed inside large glass cases in the New Jersey State House which already held the state's vast Civil War Flag Collection. The addition of the World War I flags inspired State Comptroller Newton A. B. Bugbee to propose New Jersey build a "Hall of Flags" museum to display the entire collection. Bugbee also implored the veteran community to send any additional colors to the capital city so they could be cared for by the state and housed in the proposed museum—a museum that was never built.<sup>35</sup>

Newspaper accounts suggest Ernst Stahl received the flag from the 111th Machine Gun Battalion after its return and demobilization at nearby Camp Dix and kept it in his possession until the following year. On 29 June 1920, Stahl joined Governor Edward I. Edwards at a ceremony in which the aging German-born Civil War veteran proudly presented the flag of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion as a permanent gift to his adopted home state and as a tangible, lasting reminder of the role played by his fellow New Jersey soldiers in their victory on the Western Front.<sup>36</sup>



FIG 8. An iconic photograph in the National Archives depicts the canine mascot of the 111th Machine Gun Battalion with an unnamed soldier of Company B, c. 1918. National Archives, photo 165-WW-472A-057.

#### Notes:

1. *Composition of National Guard Divisions and Disposition of Former National Guard Units, 1917* (Washington: GPO, 1918), 22; *War Department Annual Reports, 1918* (Washington: GPO, 1919), 1: 1194.
2. "The Flags of Our Army, Navy and Government Departments," *The National Geographic Magazine*, 32, no. 4 (October 1917): 308; *Trenton Evening Times*, 13 April 1918.
3. *Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1913, Corrected to April 15, 1917* (Washington: GPO, 1918), 57-66.
4. Henry G. Sharpe, *The Quartermaster Corps in the Year 1917 in the World War* (New York: The Century Co., 1921), 330-340; *Philadelphia in the World War, 1914-1919* (New York: Wynkoop Hellenbeck Crawford Co., 1922), 246.
5. War Department Bulletin No. 6, Section III, issued 17 February 1919, cited in *War Department Bulletins* (Washington: GPO, 1919). Further instruction on the disposition of colors was made in Bulletin No. 15, Section II, issued 28 April 1919.
6. John A. Cutchins and George Scott Stewart, Jr., *History of the Twenty-Ninth Division "Blue and Gray" 1917-1919* (Philadelphia:



- McCalls & Co., Inc., 1921), 16 (hereafter cited as Cutchins and Stewart, *History of the Twenty-Ninth*).
7. For the history of the 78th Division, see Thomas F. Meehan, ed., *History of the Seventy-Eighth Division in the World War 1917-18-19* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921).
  8. *Camp Dix Times*, 28 Mar. 1918 and 11 April 1918; *Trenton Evening Times*, 7 April 1918.
  9. *Trenton Evening Times*, 24 June 1921.
  10. William S. Stryker, *Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Trenton: John L. Murphy, 1876), 2: 1391.
  11. *Trenton Evening Times*, 4 Apr.; 1911.
  12. *Trenton Evening Times*, 14 June 1896; *Journal of the Fifty-Fifth National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic* (Washington: GPO, 1922), 234.
  13. Richard J. Connors, *New Jersey and the Great War, 1914-1919* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing Co., 2017), 50-51. An excellent study of the complex national climate towards German Americans and their reaction is Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974.)
  14. George T. Raach, *A Withering Fire: American Machine Gun Battalions in World War I* (St. Petersburg, FL: Booklocker.com, Inc., 2015), 16-19. The records of the 1st-366th Machine Gun Battalions are found in: File 120.9.4, Records of Other Tactical Units; Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), Record Group 120; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
  15. For the rosters and home states of the men of all three battalions see Millard E. Tydings, *The Machine Gunners of the Blue and Gray Division* (Aberdeen, MD: Harford Printing and Publishing Co., 1921).
  16. *Trenton Evening Times*, 18 November 1917.
  17. For the background on supplying the American Expeditionary Forces, see Leo P. Hirrel, *Supporting the Doughboys: U. S. Army Logistics and Personnel during World War I* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combined Studies Institute Press, 2017).
  18. *Trenton Evening Times*, 13 April 1918.
  19. *Trenton Evening Times*, 19 April 1918 and 9 May 1918.
  20. *Trench and Camp: The Birmingham News Edition for Camp McClellan*, 23 May 1918 and 30 May 1918.
  21. *Trenton Evening Times*, 16 May 1918.
  22. *Trenton Evening Times*, 15 Jun. 1930 and 14 Oct. 1930; *Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey 1931* (Trenton: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., 1931), 37-39; *Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey 1938-1939* (Jersey City: Scott Printing Co., 1939), 27.
  23. *Trenton Evening Times*, 18 Dec. 1931, 4 Jun. 1933, 6 May 1938, and 8 Aug. 1938. The papers of Katherine Fowler Richey are held in repository at the State Library of Massachusetts, Special Collections, Boston, Ms. Coll. 61, Fowler and Richey Family Papers, 1910-1985.
  24. For Roser's work on historic flags in Michigan and New York, see *Lansing State Journal*, 28 February 1965; and Sara C. Stevens, "The New York State Battle Flag Conservation Project: Ten Years Later" in *Textile Specialty Group Postprints* (Washington: American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 2010), 20: 81-86.
  25. *29th Division Summary of Operations in the World War* (Washington: GPO, 1944), 4-5.
  26. *Ibid.*, 6-27 and Cutchins and Stewart, *History of the Twenty-Ninth*, 144-202.
  27. John B. Wilson, Dan Elder and Danielle Giovannelli, *Campaign Streamers of the United States Army* (Arlington: Institute for Land Warfare, 2019), 6-11 (hereafter cited as Wilson et al., *Campaign Streamers*).
  28. General Orders No. 41, issued 4 March 1919, cited in *Index to General Orders and Bulletins, American Expeditionary Forces, January-March 1919* (Chaumont, France: A.G. Printing Department, 1919).
  29. Cutchins and Stewart, *History of the Twenty-Ninth*, 263-265.
  30. *Battle Participation of Organizations of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, Belgium and Italy, 1918-1918* (Washington: GPO, 1920), 19; and G. Waldo Browne, *The American Army in the World War: A Divisional Record of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe* (Manchester, NH: Overseas Book Company, 1921.), 132-134.
  31. For comparative purposes, the extant organizational color of the 110th Machine Gun Battalion (also of the 29th Division) was examined. This flag is held in repository by the State of Maryland, in care of Special Collections, Maryland State Archives. The blue silk flag of the 110th contains the embroidered coat of arms of the United States above the battalion name embroidered in white on a red scroll. The battle honor ribbon is white, not yellow. Maria Day and Megan Craynon to author, 30 September 2019 and 17 October 2019.
  32. *Reports of the Adjutant General of New Jersey, 1918-20* (Trenton: State of New Jersey, 1920), 42.
  33. Wilson et al., *Campaign Streamers*, 10.
  34. *Trenton Evening Times*, 4 August 1919.
  35. *Ibid.*, 17 July 1919 and 15 October 1919.
  36. *Ibid.*, 29 June 1919.

### CMH Journal Binders Needed

Does any member have surplus *Journal* binders, the blue ones with silver Company seal on the spine? Would like to acquire 6 to 10 binders if possible.

Also interested in Dingee-marked accoutrements and items related to LTC Rufus L. Baker, or Allegheny Arsenal.

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## Bvt. Brig. Gen. O. Charles Risdon's Uniform and its Applied Eagle Buttons: Dating Artifacts when the Civil War Reference Books Fall Short

*Michael R. Cunningham, Ph.D.*

At a Civil War show in Franklin, Tennessee, I was asked to evaluate whether a U.S. Army colonel's uniform grouping was from the Civil War or from a later decade (FIG 1). Such a query is always a challenge because American military officers wore blue frock coats throughout much of the nineteenth century and there are overlapping features in the uniforms worn from 1851 to 1894. Similar to the confusion surrounding Army chasseur caps (also known as kepis),<sup>1</sup> many blue frock coats are attributed to the Civil War that were actually made ten to thirty years later. Consequently, each uniform requires a careful assessment of details, including the nature and cut of the exterior and interior cloth, the format of the stitching, and the backmark on the buttons, in order to determine its period of use. Efforts to reliably date this colonel's uniform brought me up against the limitations of current reference books, led to research into the careers of four general officers and their uniforms, and produced new conclusions about an overlooked class of uniform buttons.

The colonel's uniform grouping that I was shown had a good but incomplete provenance. When I was consulted in 2012, the uniform was publicly displayed for sale by a well-known militaria dealer who had it on consignment from a private collector. I had previously noticed it at several prior Civil War shows I had attended in Ohio, Gettysburg, and other locations. In 2007, the grouping had been nationally advertised by Heritage Auction Co.<sup>2</sup> Prior to that, the set had been owned by the renowned federal infantry collector, John Henry Kurtz. A photograph of the uniform grouping's forage cap, credited to Kurtz, was published in Langelier & Loane's classic headgear book in 2002.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, due to John Henry's untimely passing in 2008, the lead back to earlier owners, such as the officer's descendants or a museum that deaccessioned it, was unavailable. Because that is not uncommon and the background information that is passed along can be unreliable, a focus on physical evidence to date an historical item is customary.

While there are quite a few reference books on Civil War federal uniforms containing excellent photographic surveys, (e.g., Lord,<sup>4</sup> Katcher,<sup>5</sup> Langelier,<sup>6</sup> Winey,<sup>7</sup> Woodward,<sup>8</sup> Coates, McAfee, and Troiani,<sup>9</sup> McAfee,<sup>1</sup> Troiani, Coates and McAfee,<sup>11</sup>) they all fell short by not providing definitive guidance on the evaluation and differential dating of nineteenth century U.S. Army



FIG 1. One of Orlando Charles Risdon's uniforms as colonel. Artifact on consignment for sale and photograph courtesy of Tommy Haas.



uniforms. More specifically, no reference book explained how to discriminate Civil War frock coats from those produced later in the century. Advanced uniform collectors however, have studied documented specimens and photographs to produce an informal set of positive indicators of likely Civil War production, all of which were present in this uniform grouping.

### **The Colonel's Uniform**

The frock coat under study had all of the hallmarks of a Civil War Officer's uniform. It had relatively narrow cuffs, with a span of  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches when laid flat, and wide sleeves with elbows ballooning to 10 inches in diameter. The collar was  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches tall in back. The body of the coat was  $16\frac{3}{4}$  inches tall along the button line and it had skirts that were  $21\frac{1}{4}$  inches long, extending to the knees. It was lined with silky wool material that had become a dark green color. It had a padded chest and tight waist. The waist of the frock included a short interior cloth belt with a gilt metal coat fastener of the type shown in the 1864 Schuyler, Hartley Graham catalog.<sup>1</sup> The embroidered colonel's shoulder straps had borders that were a narrow  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide. The dark blue trousers matched the coat in waist measurement, color, and weave. The trousers had two dog-ear front pockets that buttoned at the corners; it had no rear pockets. The legs of the trousers were loose and baggy, with knees that were  $11\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter. An 1862 patent-dated japanned buckle was positioned below the waistband in the rear. The trousers incorporated very narrow medium blue wool piping in the outside leg seams. There also were  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide thin leather liners on the inside edges of the cuffs to protect against boot wear. Completing the grouping, the uniform set included an officer's forage cap that was 5 inches tall in front with gilt chinstrap, black silk lining with a Paris maker's stamp, a black leather sword belt with an 1851 pattern cast eagle buckle and a crimson sash. Each item matched the quality and condition of the coat and trousers and pointed to Civil War era manufacturing for the ensemble.

### **Gen. Orlando Charles Risdon**

Of particular interest, the frock coat and trousers carried the period-inscribed name of the officer who owned them on a tab at the coat's neck and written on a trouser pocket: "Col. Charles Risdon." Colonel Risdon's first name was Orlando, but he did not appear to use it.<sup>13</sup> Risdon was born in Warrensville, Ohio, on 8 May 1840, and worked as a carpenter and wagon-maker in 1861. He began his military service in response to President Lincoln's first call for 75,000 volunteers to serve for three months following the secessionists' attack on Fort Sumter. On 22 April 1861, Risdon enlisted in Akron, Ohio, as a twenty-one-

year-old private in Company G of the 19th Ohio Volunteer Infantry (O.V.I.). That three-month unit was attached to Rosecrans's Brigade, Army of West Virginia. Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan assumed command of Union forces in western Virginia in June 1861 and led his troops at the Battle of Rich Mountain (West Virginia) on 11 July, giving Risdon a taste of victory. Risdon was mustered out of his first enlistment on 31 August 1861 in Columbus, Ohio.

After a brief hiatus, Risdon was commissioned first lieutenant of Company F, 42d Ohio Volunteer Infantry on 8 November 1861. Commanded by future President James A. Garfield, the 42d O.V.I. served in Sherman's Yazoo Expedition as part of the Army of the Tennessee. In the assault at Black River, near Vicksburg on 19 May 1863, Risdon suffered a wound that ended his career in the 42d Ohio. A casualty sheet in Risdon's military service records in the National Archives states the wound was to his right shoulder but his 1894 obituary in the *Ravenna, Ohio*, newspaper states he was "struck in the head by a bullet, knocking him off his horse and rendering him unconscious. He subsequently received a severe flesh wound in the hip from a bursting shell."<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of the location of his wounds, Charles Risdon's conduct as an officer was of sufficient merit that he was promoted three grades and commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the 3d Mississippi Regiment of African Descent, to date from 20 May 1863. That regiment's designation was changed to the 53d Regiment, U.S. Colored Infantry (USCI) on 11 March 1864, which coincided with the resignation of the regimental commander, Col. Richard H. Ballinger. A circular to the adjutant general on 12 March 1864 was signed by nineteen officers of the 53d USCI, who respectfully requested the appointment of Risdon to command.<sup>15</sup> He was promoted to colonel of the 53d USCI on 24 March.

The 53d USCI largely performed post and garrison duty at Haines Bluff, Mississippi, although it saw some action at Grand Gulf on 16 July 1864, and at White River on 22 October 1864. Risdon was mustered out of service on 8 March 1866. A recommendation of Risdon for brevet brigadier general dated 21 May 1866 noted, "The 53d U.S. Col. Inf. of which he was the Commander became through his intelligence and energy one of the best, if not the best Colored Infantry Regiments in the Dept. of Miss."<sup>16</sup> Risdon received the brevet generalship on 8 October 1866, to rank from 13 March 1865, for gallant and meritorious service in the Battles of Rich Mountain, Middle Creek, Tazewell, Arkansas Post, Chickasaw Bayou, Port Gibson, Champion Hill, Big Black River Bridge, and the Siege of Vicksburg.<sup>17</sup>

General Risdon pursued his post-war career in the familiar surroundings of Northeastern Ohio. He was a partner in a cheese manufacturing business in Shalersville from 1867 to 1873. While there, he married Nettie Crane on 18 December 1867, who gave him two daughters. He served as sheriff of Portage County for two terms and then bought an interest in a grocery store in Ravenna, Ohio.<sup>18</sup>





FIG 2. Col. Risdon, on the left. CdV. Orlando Charles Risdon Photograph Album, ocm46673703, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

Risdon was a charter member of the McIntosh Post # 327 of the Grand Army of the Republic and also was involved in the Masons and the Odd Fellows. On 30 November 1894, the gallant veteran passed away unexpectedly from apoplexy at the age of fifty-four in his home. He was buried in Ravenna's Maple Grove Cemetery, section A, lot 866.

The fact Risdon served as a field grade officer from 1863 to 1866 creates some ambiguity about when he wore the uniform under study. While some Civil War dealers and collectors like to imagine an identified uniform was worn in dozens of battles across the entire span of the war, the reality was clothing was periodically replaced. Per the Army Regulations of 1863, enlisted men were allowed to draw three new coats and five pairs of trousers every two years, as well as a new forage cap and uniform (Hardee) hat every year. Officer's purchased their uniforms from tailors and men's furnishing shops and generally updated their uniform at least once per year, either in a large city or through sutler's stock and mail order when they were serving in the field. It is prudent to assume a given identified uniform was obtained in the last year of a soldier's service and worn home at the end of his enlistment; but there are cases of soldiers sending home their battle-worn uniforms as souvenirs and of the multiple uniforms emerging from a soldier's estate being split up among heirs. As a result, the conclusion of given uniform is the last one worn by

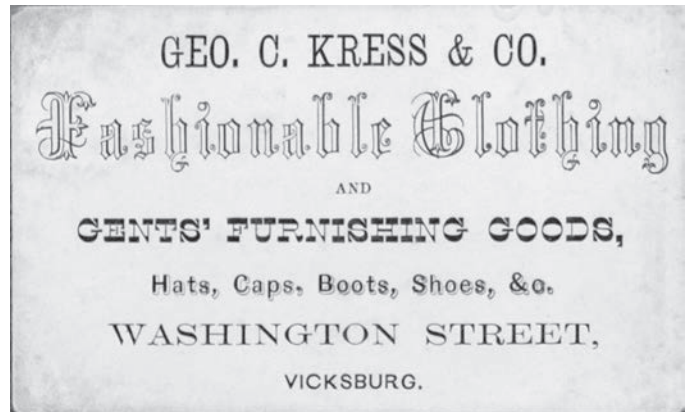


FIG 3. Geo. C. Kress, Vicksburg, business card. Orlando Charles Risdon papers, ocm1772516, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.



FIG 4. Col. Risdon, center, in camp. Orlando Charles Risdon Photograph Album, ocm46673703, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.



FIG 5. T. W. Sprague 1864 invoice for uniform items. Orlando Charles Risdon papers, ocm1772516, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.



FIG 6. T.W. Sprague label in Risdon frock coat. Photograph courtesy of the author.





FIG 7. Rutherford B. Hayes uniforms, courtesy of Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, Fremont, Ohio.

a veteran should be treated as a hypothesis requiring evaluation in each case, rather than simply assumed.

### General Risdon's Photographs

The Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) houses many of Risdon's military and personal papers, as well as his carte de visite (CdV) photograph album, field desk, chessboard, and other items donated by his descendants. Unfortunately, WRHS does not have Risdon's side arms, horse tack, headgear, or his several uniforms.<sup>19</sup> A WRHS CdV portrays Risdon in uniform with a brother officer who may be either Lt. Col. John F. Robinson, who ascended to that rank on 3 March 1864, or Lt. Col. Charles Elmer Compton, who was promoted on 9 December 1864 (FIG 2). In the CdV, Risdon is wearing colonel's shoulder straps and a double-breasted frock coat frock that differs from the one under study. The uniform in the CdV includes a non-regulation velvet collar; cuff seam parallel to the third cuff button; and dark trousers with a very light-colored cord. Risdon may have bought that uniform in Vicksburg immediately after his promotion to colonel. Risdon's papers in the WRHS archives include a business card from Geo. C. Kress who advertised "Fashionable Clothing and Gent's Furnishing Goods, Hats. Caps, Boots, Shoes &c., Washington St, Vicksburg" (FIG 3).

An albumen print also at WRHS shows a group of the officers of the 53d USCI, in which Colonel Risdon is seated in the center wearing a double-breasted jacket without shoulder straps, sky blue trousers and a slouch hat (FIG 4). A receipt in the WRHS dated 10 March 1864 from T. W. Sprague & Co. a prominent Cincinnati tailoring firm, sought remittance for a, "Jacket - Col Chas Risdon ... \$30.00," along with pairs of pants for "Capt. Frazier" (Capt. Andrew J. Frazier) and "Lt. Judd" (Lt. Marcus H.



FIG 8. Col. Chas. Risdon name tag in Risdon frock. Photograph courtesy of the author.

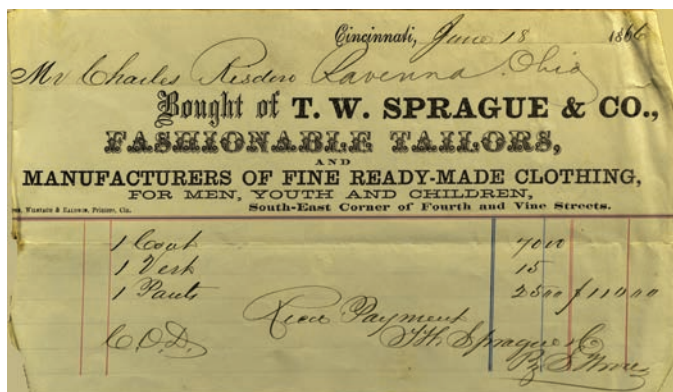


FIG 9. T. W. Sprague 1866 invoice for Risdon suit. Orlando Charles Risdon papers, ocm1772516, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

Judd, both of Co. C, 53d USCI) costing \$18 (FIG 5). Risdon probably was wearing that jacket in the group photo. Unfortunately, the location of Risdon's T. W. Sprague jacket, the light blue trousers and slouch hat shown in the albumen, as well as Risdon's frock coat and trousers shown in the CdV, are unknown.

### Thomas W. Sprague and Rutherford B. Hayes

The Risdon uniform under study carries the T. W. Sprague & Co. label (FIG 6). Thomas W. Sprague was born in Connecticut but was working as merchant tailor in Cincinnati by 1860, and was in business there until at least 1880.<sup>20</sup> T. W. Sprague was a popular source for uniforms for officers from Ohio.

The Sprague label in the Risdon uniform is identical to the labels in two frock coats worn by President Rutherford Birchard Hayes during his military service. Hayes enlisted on 7 June 1861 as a major in the 23d Ohio Infantry. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on 23 October 1861 and was wearing a field officer's frock coat tailored by Sprague when he was wounded in the left arm during the Battle of South Mountain on 14 September 1862, at the start of the Antietam Campaign (FIG 7). Hayes was promoted to colonel on 15 October 1862 and brigadier general on 19 October 1864. Hayes wore a brigadier general's frock coat made by Sprague following the latter promotion.<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, Hayes was brevetted to major general to rank from 13 March 1865 and was elected nineteenth President of the United States Hayes in 1876. William McKinley, twenty-fifth President of the U.S., served in the 23d Ohio under Hayes. Hayes' immediate successor in





FIG 10. Col. Risdon portrait, LOT 4192, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Buttons and uniform photographs courtesy of the author.

the presidency was Colonel Risdon's commander, fellow Ohioan James Garfield.

### Documentation and dating of the Risdon Colonel's uniform.

In the Risdon field officer's coat, the Sprague & Co. tailor's label is sewn to an extra piece of lining cloth at the back of the neck, on the underside of which is a strip of linen with the brown ink inscription: "Col. Chas. Risdon" (FIG 8). Had it been "Lt. Col." the coat could be dated from May 1863 to March 1864. The higher rank places the production between March 1864, when Risdon was promoted, and March 1866, when he was discharged. Risdon had two extended leaves of absence during his service in the 53d USCI, the first commencing on 20 September 1863 and the second on 19 March 1865. It is likely Risdon used the latter twenty-day leave to travel home to Ohio. Although he could have ordered the uniform by mail at an earlier date, it seems more likely Risdon bought a new uniform from T. W. Sprague while in Cincinnati in March 1865.

A receipt for the purchase of the colonel's frock coat under study was not located in the Risdon papers in the WRHS, although there was evidence he purchased more goods from Sprague after he left the Army. The Risdon WRHS archive includes a receipt from T. W. Sprague dated 18 June 1866 showing "Mr. Charles Risdon, Ravenna, Ohio" spent \$110 on a coat, vest, and pants (FIG 9). There are sound reasons to believe this was Risdon's business suit for his post-war life and not a colonel's uniform. Risdon had been out of the service for three months by June 1866, so it is unlikely he would have invested today's equivalent of \$1,500 in clothing suitable only for his former profession. In addition, as proper gentleman tailors, T. W. Sprague & Co. was careful to use appropriate titles. Their March 1864 receipt for the jacket referred to him as "Col." and the title "Col." was written with his name inside his frock coat and trousers. The June 1866 receipt referred to their loyal customer as "Mr." because that was correct for a civilian.

A third image of Risdon shows him still looking young



FIG 11. S & infantry, artillery, and cavalry applied eagle buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.



FIG 12. S&J infantry applied eagle button detail. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

and fit but with a longer beard than he wore in the CdV. In that cabinet photograph, Risdon is wearing the Sprague coat under study, with its distinctive eagle buttons with large shields (FIG 10). The Library of Congress dated that photo to "1861-1865" (LC-USZ62-99374), as did the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center's Military Order of the Loyal Legion collection, which also has a copy (Vol. 128, p. 6565).

The WRHS has a cabinet photograph of the same pose with the backmark of J. H. Oakley of Ravenna, Ohio. John H. Oakley was a veteran of the 7th Ohio Infantry and Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery, was discharged on 9 December 1864 and took up photography in January 1865. The Oakley image could have been taken during Risdon's leave in March 1865, and likely no later than Risdon's discharge in March 1866. It clearly demonstrates Risdon wore the colonel's uniform he had tailored by Sprague while he was in or returning from his military service and did not acquire it as a reminiscing veteran in the 1870s to 1890s. Moreover, if Risdon had acquired a uniform



for reunion, ceremonial, or sentimental reasons after 8 October 1866, it is likely it would have been a brigadier general's frock coat with the four sets of paired rows of buttons and velvet collar and cuffs specified for that rank.

The proposed March 1864 to March 1865 date for production of Risdon's colonel's uniform also is in line with the one to two years' worth of shine and wear visible on the seat and cuffs of the trousers. Such signs of use would not have been evident if the uniform was purchased in 1866 and worn for only a few months. Thus, everything about the Risdon colonel's uniform is consistent with creation in 1864-1865, except for a single discordant detail.

### S & J London Applied Eagle Buttons

Ironically, the dating dissonance concerning the Risdon uniform stems from the one area where there is an abundance of reference books: the uniform's buttons. The 2007 Heritage Auction description of the Risdon uniform stated it: "Retains all the original 'S. & J./ London' eagle I buttons with separately applied eagle I device. These are late war but unquestionably original to the coat and period." Although authoritatively asserted, the claim the buttons were "unquestionably original ... to the period" went beyond all available documentation. In reality, questions have been raised about the dating of this style of button, classified as Albert's GI92A5.<sup>22</sup> None of the military button reference books definitively categorize that button as from the Civil War period and some pronounce it to be from the 1870s. Because a uniform post-dates its latest intrinsic component and the buttons are sewn on with original thread, conclusively dating the Risdon uniform required properly dating the buttons. Doing so necessitated mastering the arcane literature and naming conventions of the button world.

Unlike most Civil War buttons in which the eagle is die stamped into a sheet brass face, Risdon's uniform buttons featured an eagle device that is a separate piece of die-struck metal affixed to the background. Available for the infantry, artillery and cavalry branches of service (I/A/C, FID 11), the five-piece buttons (eagle device, attaching flange, convex shell, back and shank) were expensive to make but resulted in a product with a high level of detail (FIG 12). Despite the bounty of information published on Civil War buttons, the reference books fell short by providing frustratingly little definitive information about this type of U.S. Infantry button, which are variously called "applied", "riveted" or "crowned" eagle buttons by different authors.

Visual inspection of the eagle on the S & J London button is consistent with other Civil War buttons. The wings are tall and majestic, soaring above the eagle's



FIG 13. Thomas Dale infantry, artillery, and cavalry applied eagle buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

head, with points approaching the 1030 and 1330 o'clock positions. By contrast, the eagle's neck is relatively short and curved. Although eagles with long and straight necks were produced both before and during the Civil War, they became particularly popular after the German victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. American post-war button eagle wings also tended to be shorter, with feathers rounded like a fan at the 0900 and 1500 positions. The only feature on the S & J London buttons that appears to be post-1865 is the shield, which is relatively large and has a textured background behind the prominent letter "I." Raised shields are seen on one-piece buttons from the 1840s (e.g., Albert's GI74; GI79D; AB2A). In addition, the flange to hold the eagle device to the button shell is attached behind the shield, so the shield needed to be relatively large and prominent rather than small and recessed.

Alphaeus (Dewy) Albert's pioneering book on American uniform buttons simply grouped all applied eagle buttons together, separated only into the infantry, artillery and cavalry branches of service and the maker's backmark. He describes this type of button as follows: "the spread eagle device is cut out and riveted to the 2 piece button, 23mm." Albert illustrates the AY84A category of applied eagle artillery buttons with the S & J London button (AY84A3); however, he represents the GI92A infantry buttons using a Thomas N. Dale button (GI92A1), and does not show the S & J London infantry button (GI92A5). Albert's CV7 category of riveted cavalry buttons also is not illustrated by the S & J London cavalry button (CV7E), and may be a Dale (CV7B).

McGuinn and Bazelon<sup>23</sup> attribute the S & J London branch of service buttons to the American firm of Steele & Johnson of Waterbury, Connecticut, a company that was in business from 1852 to 1920. They stated, "The 'London' probably means London Quality-not manufacture. B/m is on post-Civil War crowned eagle A, C&I buttons (AY84A3; CV7E; GI9215) (p. 107)." Those authors offer neither evidence the button was domestically produced rather





FIG 14. H. V. Allien, Pettibone, J. G. Haas, T.W & W applied eagle buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

than imported, nor do they provide references to support their claim the buttons were “post-Civil War”(p.107) or “c.1870’s” (p.124).

The S & J London infantry, cavalry and artillery buttons are not listed in Tice’s<sup>24</sup> button reference book, which sought to cover only the period of 1776 to 1865 and excluded buttons the author felt were post-war. Daniel Binder’s<sup>25</sup> button-dating book suggests all buttons from Albert’s GI1 and AY1 up to and including GI83 and AY76 are pre-1866. Wisely, Binder did address Albert’s higher numbered buttons in the heterogeneous categories of GI92, AY84 or CV7.

Although Tice and McGuinn may have had good reasons to believe the S & J London buttons were post-war, their reference books fell short by failing to document the basis for their conclusions. With all due respect to the authors, it would not have been prudent to conclude the Risdon uniform was “c. 1870” on either precedent or intuition alone. Instead, the possibility should be considered that the S & J London applied eagle buttons suffered from guilt by association, and were misdated by several authorities as a result of having been grouped by Albert amidst examples of definitely post-war applied eagle buttons.

### Thomas N. Dale and Other Applied Eagle Button Dealers

Ambiguity also exist about other applied eagle buttons. As noted above, Thomas N. Dale’s backmark appears on a range of such buttons (GI92A1, AY84A1, CV7B; FIG 13). A well-known New York City importer and distributor of militaria during the Civil War, Dale began in business in 1840, and lasted until 1883, according to Bazelon and McGuinn.<sup>27</sup> The informal consensus among button collectors, however, is D. Evans & Co. was the actual manufacturer of many of the buttons bearing the Dale backmark. McGuinn and Bazelon acknowledged a T. N. Dale/N.Y. “cuff eagle I, crowned” was “dug CW site” (p. 25). Despite that suggestion of Civil War period use, those authors inconsistently pronounced both the Dale GI92A and CV7B as “post-CW.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, while some applied eagle buttons were excavated from Civil War sites, those finds may not have been publicly reported in sufficient quantity to establish the pre-1866 dating to the satisfaction of the

button reference book authors.

In addition to the S & J London and the Thomas N. Dale products, the backmarks of six additional applied eagle I/A/C buttons were listed by Albert, four of which are shown (FIG 14). Albert’s information is supplemented by business information from Bazelon and McGuinn:

- 1) Applied eagle infantry button with the backmark of Henry V. Allien & Co./London & New York (GI92A2); in business 1877-circa 1883.
- 2) Applied eagle infantry, artillery and cavalry buttons with the backmark of Pettibone Bros./Mfg. Co. (GI92A3; AY84A2; CV7D); in business in Cincinnati 1871 – present.
- 3) Applied eagle infantry button with the backmark of Jacob Reed & Sons/Phil (GI92A4); in business 1824-1877 but pre-1865 buttons with that name are extremely rare.(not shown)
- 4) Applied eagle cavalry button with the backmark of Extra Rich Gilt/SMFGCO (CV7A) McGuinn & Bazelon attribute to Scovill Mfg. Co. ca. 1865-1870. (not shown)
- 5) Applied eagle cavalry button with the backmark of John G. Haas/Lancaster, Pa (CV7C); in business 1883 – circa 1900. Unlisted artillery shown. Provisionally designated AY84A4 in Albert’s nomenclature.
- 6) Applied eagle cavalry button with the backmark of T. W. & W./Paris (CV7F). McGuinn & Bazelon suggest Trelon, Weldon & Weill used that name from 1814 – 1865 but knowledgeable button collectors report the backmark continued to be used on post-war buttons. The eagle on the example shown looks like it may reflect the influence of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Unlisted infantry shown, provisionally designated GI92A6.

Eight additional makes of the applied eagle branch-of-service buttons, which were not listed in Albert, also were located during the course of this study (FIGs 15, 16). There is a good chance each example originally existed in infantry, cavalry, and artillery versions, but we will follow Albert in refraining from assigning numbers without a button in hand.

- 7) Applied eagle infantry button with the backmark “Fine Gold Plate”, likely made by Steele & Johnson. Backmark is found on war-time buttons (Albert GI85/88, Tice GI215A103). Provisionally designated GI92A7 in Albert’s nomenclature.
- 8) Applied eagle infantry button with the backmark of Schuyler, H & G. New-York in a raised mark depressed channel. It is labeled B4137 on Harry Ridgeway’s “Relicman” website.<sup>28</sup> Schuyler, Hartley & Graham were in business 1854-1878; Ridgeway speculated the button was produced by Scovill Mfg Co. circa 1850, whereas McGuinn & Bazelon describe the backmark as 1854-1865. Provisionally designated GI92A8.
- 9) Applied eagle artillery cuff button with the “Superior Quality” backmark. A set of four cuff buttons came from an estate along with four S&J London artillery coat



FIG 15. Fine Gold Plate, Schuyler H & Co., Superior Quality, Horstmann applied eagle buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.



FIG 16. Heiberger, OEHMS Acme Hall, Shannon & Miller, Waterbury Button Co. applied eagle buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

buttons. Comparison with S&J London cuff I button indicates they were produced by Steele & Johnson, who used the "Superior Quality" mark on other buttons. The shallow, less-than-crisp letters look late, but that could be a function of the minute size of the backmark on a cuff button. Provisionally designated AY84A5.

- 10) Applied eagle infantry button with the backmark of Horstmann, Philadelphia. Firm began making military items in 1829. McGuinn & Bazelon suggest the backmark is 1893 to 1947. Provisionally designated GI92A9.
- 11) Applied eagle artillery button with the backmark of Heiberger, Washington. McGuinn & Bazelon suggest that the principal entered the trade in 1851, changed firms in 1862, and the business continued until the 1930s. They suggest the example shown is a post-war backmark, and mention having observed a cuff C and cuff I. Provisionally designated AY84A6.
- 12) Applied eagle artillery cuff button with the backmark of Oehm's Acme Hall. Baltimore; in business 1889-1890. Provisionally designated AY84A7.
- 13) Applied eagle infantry cuff button with the backmark of Shannon & Miller, NY. In business 1866-1867. Provisionally designated GI92A10.
- 14) Applied eagle infantry cuff button with the backmark of Waterbury Button Co. Organized in 1849, with lineage going back to 1812, the company is still making buttons. The backmark shown is similar to a Waterbury backmark



FIG 17. Scovills & Co. button missing eagle, G. Floyd & Co. applied eagle Washington Grays button. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

that McGuinn and Bazelon describe as "c. 1890-post-1900." Provisionally designated GI92A11.

Thus, as the foregoing indicates, applied eagle I/A/C branch of service buttons bearing the marks of Henry V. Allien "Extra Rich Gilt," John G. Haas, Heiberger, Horstmann, Oehm's Acme Hall, Pettibone Bros., Shannon & Miller, and Waterbury were made by manufacturers operating in the post-war era. In addition, the back-marks of those buttons tend to be stark and unadorned with sans-serif letter styles that are characteristically late. The fact the majority of the applied eagle buttons have post-war makers or attributes may account for McGuinn and Bazelon's and Tice's belief all applied eagle buttons are post-war. Applied eagle buttons bearing the backmarks of S & J London, Thomas N. Dale, Fine Gold Plate, Schuyler, Hartley & Graham, and Superior Quality each offer the possibility they were made during the Civil War era. That prospect becomes more plausible when other evidence is considered.

### Pre-War Buttons with Applied Devices

The Risdon uniform buttons do not stand in lonely isolation as the only examples of applied eagle buttons that have a well-documented history pre-dating Appomattox. The Washington Grays button with an applied eagle bearing an A, is unquestionably pre-war. Helpfully brought to our attention by Daniel Binder, the Philadelphia militia button is found with the backmarks of Scovill & Co. of Waterbury. Connecticut (PA64A) and G. Floyd & Co. of Philadelphia (PA46A1) (FIG 17). McGuinn and Bazelon reported George Floyd & Co. was listed in the Philadelphia city directory as a dealer in gilded buttons only for the period of 1842-1844. The Floyd buttons appear to have been made by Scovill.

In addition, a rare Texas Consular button that bears an





FIG 18. Republic of Texas applied device button. Artifact and photograph courtesy of Gary Embrey.



FIG 19. George Armstrong Custer major general's frock coat. Photograph courtesy of Natalie Elder, Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

applied device adorns the front cover of Tice, Binder & Embrey.<sup>29</sup> That button includes a five-pointed star in the center, a ribbon above it proclaiming Republic of Texas, and a wreath below (FIG 18). Gary Embrey reported the button bears the backmark of Superfin/Paris/ L The "L" stands for Emile Larrivee, who was a fabricator in Paris at the address 2 Rue des Petits-Champs Voir Aussi Perfectionnee, and was in business from 1836 through 1885. The button was made for Henri Castro, a consular representative for the Republic of Texas about 1841-1842. Thus, at least two buttons with applied devices were in use even before the Mexican War.

Tice listed a mounted rifleman's "R" button with an S & J London backmark (RF 212/215A52) among those buttons he believed were made between 1842 and 1861. Unfortunately, that button is not illustrated in that reference work and an example could not be located, so whether or not it is an applied eagle cannot be determined.

#### Gen. George A. Custer's Uniforms and Buttons

While the Washington Grays and Republic of Texas buttons with applied devices are pre-Civil War, another type of Federal officer's button is firmly war-time. While writing this report and focusing narrowly on the infantry, artillery and cavalry branches of service buttons, I was startled to notice a detail in the photo of Gen. George Custer's uniform shown on the back cover of *Smithsonian Civil War: Inside the National Collection*<sup>30</sup> (FIG 19). Based on the distinctive shadows created by the prominent insignia, that frock coat appeared to display a set of general staff buttons with applied eagle devices. Made with an outer rim holding the top and bottom sections of the button together, the general staff button was used by federal general officers and other officers who served on their headquarters staff, as well as quite a few Confederates. The uniform in question was described as having been worn by Gen. George A. Custer during his wedding on 9 February 1864. The Smithsonian Institution graciously provided a close-up photo and confirmed the buttons were the applied eagle style and were backmarked Thomas N. Dale (FIG 20).

Albert illustrated the Dale applied eagle general staff button (GS7B, p. 294) but did not date it, which was not a goal of his book. Curiously, Albert's book overlooked the more common Dale general staff button that is conventionally produced with a stamped face (FIG 21). Gen. R. B. Hayes' uniform, made by T. W. Sprague and discussed earlier, is adorned with conventional Dale staff buttons. McGuinn and Bazelon list the Dale backmark on the GS7B, but do not venture an opinion about whether it is Civil War or later. Tice listed the Thomas N. Dale general staff button as his GS212A1 (p. 100), but did not



FIG 20. Close-up photograph of Thomas Dale applied eagle buttons on Custer frock coat. Photograph courtesy of Natalie Elder, Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.



FIG 21. Thomas N. Dale stamped (left) and applied eagle (right) general staff buttons. Artifacts and photographs courtesy of the author.

state whether he was referring to Albert's applied eagle Dale GS button (GS7B) or the conventionally stamped GS Dale button; Tice's photo looks like the latter. The follow-up book by Tice, Binder and Embrey did not address those buttons.

So, just as they did on the S & J London I/A/C buttons, the reference books fell short in describing and dating the applied eagle Dale general staff button. However, when a uniform is well-documented, as Gen. Custer's appeared to be, it can help to establish the date of its buttons, as I argue concerning the Risdon Colonel's coat. Unfortunately, with all due respect to the Smithsonian, the reference books fell short again, because the Custer wedding uniform



FIG 22. George Armstrong Custer as brigadier general and Elizabeth Bacon Custer, Library of Congress LC-BH831-702, Washington, D.C.

presented from that collection is a major general's frock coat, indicated by the two stars on each shoulder strap and three sets of three rows of buttons on the chest. However, George Custer had not attained the rank of major general by the date of his marriage to Elizabeth Bacon on 9 February 1864.

The adjutant general's records report Custer was brevetted "Major General of Volunteers" to date from 19 October, 1864 for "gallant and meritorious service in the battles of Winchester and Fisher's Hill, Va." He also was brevetted "Major General in the Regular Army" to date from 13 March 1865 "for gallant and meritorious service in the campaign ending in the surrender of the insurgent army of northern Virginia," and was promoted to "Major General of Volunteers" (without brevet) on 15 April 1865. Consistent with that timeline, Custer wore a brigadier general's uniform for his wedding, which is shown in the Library of Congress' period photograph LC-B831-702 (FIG 22).

Custer's major general uniform probably was acquired soon after he was informed of his first promotion to that rank and no later than 1 February 1866, when he was mustered out of the United States Volunteers and became Lt. colonel of the 7th U.S. Cavalry. A photograph of General Custer wearing what appears to be the Smithsonian's major general's frock coat with Dale staff buttons is shown





FIG 23. George Armstrong Custer as major general, Library of Congress, LC-DIG-cwppb-05341, Washington, D.C.

in Library of Congress photo LC-B813-1613 B and carries the creation date of both 4 January 1865 and 15 April 1865 (FIG 23).

### **Gen. Thomas Greely Stevenson's Uniform and Buttons**

With the Major General Custer frock dating no earlier than 19 October 1864 and the Colonel Risdon uniform possibly dating to as late as March 1865, the use of the applied eagle buttons seems limited to the last six months of open conflict. That is not the case however, with our final example, which is Brigadier General Stevenson's uniform from the collection of Michael Simens, a dealer and collector of fine antique arms and militaria (FIG 24). Thomas Greely Stevenson was a member of a prominent Boston militia company, the New England Guards, when the war began. He was promoted to major, assigned to Fort Independence, and was appointed the first colonel of the 24th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in 1861. Stevenson participated in Burnside's expedition to North Carolina, and in the capture of Roanoke Island and New Berne, in early 1862. He was appointed brigadier general in December 1862 (FIG 25). During the next summer, he assisted in the reduction of Morris Island and the assault on Battery Wagner. He was appointed by General



FIG 24. Thomas G. Stevenson brigadier general's coat. Artifact and photograph courtesy of Michael Simons.



FIG 25. Brig. Gen. Thomas G. Stevenson, CdV, Artifact and photograph courtesy of Michael Simons.

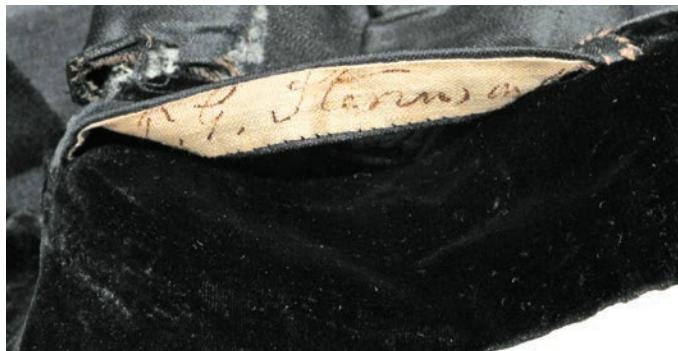


FIG 26. Name tag at neck of T. G. Stevenson frock coat, Artifact and photograph courtesy of Michael Simons.



FIG 27. Close-up of Thomas N. Dale applied eagle button on T. G. Stevenson frock coat. Artifact and photograph courtesy of Michael Simons.



FIG 28. Back of Thomas N. Dale applied eagle button on T. G. Stevenson frock coat. Artifact and photograph courtesy of Michael Simons.



FIG 29. General Staff button, S.J. & Co., London, courtesy William Stafford. Schuyler H & G, Scovill MFG Co. applied eagle General Staff buttons. Artifact and photograph courtesy of author.

Burnside to command the 1st division of the IX Corps. Tragically, on 10 May 1864, General Stevenson was killed on the Fredericksburg Road near Spotsylvania, Virginia. General Stevenson's frock coat bears his name on a tag at the neck (FIG 26), unmistakable signs of wear and a full set of Thomas N. Dale applied eagle general staff buttons (GS7B) that match those on General Custer's coat (FIGs 27,28).

With the General Stevenson frock coat dated to mid-1864 carrying applied eagle Dale general staff buttons, plus the General Custer frock with the same buttons dated to late 1864 or early 1865, and a colonel's coat dated to 1864 or 1865 that carries applied eagle S & J London infantry buttons, the evidence seems increasingly persuasive buttons with applied eagles were worn during the Civil War. Of course, that does not mean all applied eagle buttons with backmarks by manufacturers who were in business before 1866 qualify as Civil War. Just as it was invalid to categorize all applied eagle buttons as being late because some were made by post-war manufacturers, it is equally invalid to categorize all of the applied eagle buttons bearing backmarks from the war-time manufacturers as pre-1866. For each candidate for Civil War attribution, a documented coat bearing those buttons, an excavated specimen, or some other form of research evidence, is needed.

Albert listed a second applied eagle general staff button, GS11B, which has a backmark by S. J. & Co. London. A photograph contributed by noted general staff button collector William Stafford shows 4 arrows in the right talon and 26 stars (FIG 29). The S. J. & Co. London staff button has a slightly different maker's name and backmark from the S & J London applied eagle I/A/C buttons, and that backmark is listed by McGuinn & Bazelon as "c. 1864-66."<sup>32</sup> Tice does not list the S. J. & Co. London button in his GS220 category (where he listed another Albert GS11), and Binder does not cover general staff buttons in depth. Tice, Binder & Embry list it as a Waterbury Button Co.



variant.<sup>31</sup> Its use during the Civil War is uncertain at this writing.

### The Evolution of Style

An important point to note about dating cultural artifacts is change takes place at an uneven pace. A feature prevalent in a given era and produced by several manufacturers may initially have been introduced by a single creative entrepreneur several years earlier. In addition, scholars of Civil War material culture must recognize makers did not wait until the guns fell silent at Appomattox to offer style changes that later became characteristic of the Indian War era. Indeed, several stylistic features that are strongly associated with Indian War period uniforms made their first appearance before the end of the Civil War. For example, a low crown on a chasseur cap (i.e. less than three inches tall in front), a sleeve lining in a frock coat with multiple stripe widths, and a rear pocket on a pair of trousers are generally accurate indicators that an Army officer's cap, coat, or trousers were produced post-Civil War. Nevertheless, each of these features, while legitimate red flags for Civil War dating, are found on a very small number of well-documented Civil War items. As such, they should be classified as transitional features, despite the fact they were most common in the post-war period.

There had to be a first pair of officer's trousers with a rear pocket, just as there was a first U.S. Army officer's frock coat with applied eagle branch-of-service buttons. Of course, the presence of a transitional feature on a uniform demands especially careful examination of other signs and indicators. Reputable Civil War dealers and prudent collectors will not downplay or ignore such dating clues and will treat items that possess them as post-war until proven otherwise. When the reference books fall short, such proof may require years of research, as was the case with the Colonel Risdon uniform

### Conclusions about Buttons and Books

It is evident that applied eagle buttons were in use during the 1840s, largely disappeared from view in the 1850s and early 1860s, made a limited reappearance in the final years of the Civil War and then made a strong resurgence in the 1870s and 1880s. Thus, before applied eagle buttons enjoyed wide-spread popularity in the 1870s and 1880s, the evidence suggests a few forward-thinking button manufacturers offered a premium line of such buttons in 1864-1865 that appealed to officers with a taste for style, such as Generals Risdon, Custer, and Stevenson. Thus, I submit the applied eagle S & J London (GI92A5) branch of service buttons, and the Dale general staff (GS7B) buttons were transitional examples that were "ahead-of-their-time." The bold Civil War commanders who first chose such buttons for their tailored uniforms likely contributed to the wide-spread acceptance of the applied eagle buttons in the officer corps, and the buttons were manufactured by more than a dozen makers. In



FIG 30. Thomas N. Dale applied eagle staff button excavated at New Kent Court House, VA. Artifact courtesy of Norbert Spangler; photograph courtesy of William Stafford; Thomas Dale applied eagle Infantry button excavated in Excelsior Brigade camp, Brandy Station, VA. Artifact courtesy of Guy Spring; photograph courtesy of William Leigh.

addition, the large shields of the Civil War applied eagle buttons may have influenced acceptance of large shields on the simpler stamped-face officer's buttons during the Indian War period.

Although some progress in documenting applied eagle buttons has been made, the list is likely incomplete. As this article was nearing completion, two unlisted applied eagle general staff button surfaced (FIG 30). A GS button with three arrows in the left talon and twenty-four stars marked "Schuyler, H & G. New -York" has back stamping described by McGuinn & Bazelon as 1854-1865.<sup>33</sup> The S.H. & G button, tentatively numbered GS21A resembles—but is not identical to the Dale general staff button and could be from the late Civil War period. Finally, Company Fellow Stephen Osman presented a Scovill GS buttons that has the Dale-style spade shield and a backmark that McGuinn & Bazelon identify as 1864-1868.<sup>34</sup> Tentatively numbered GS21B, the Scoville button is extremely similar to the SH&G button, so Scoville likely was the maker of the former button.

Fully settling the dates ranges on applied eagle buttons requires more information. Perhaps detailed manufacturing records of button makers like Steele & Johnson, D. Evans, and their client Thomas Dale, will someday emerge. Additional identified uniforms with



original buttons also will be helpful, but a quantity of well-documented excavated relics would be even better. McGuinn & Bazelon's previously cited mention of a Dale "cuff eagle I, crowned" that was "dug CW site" was evidently not conclusive for them to date that category of buttons as Civil War.

During the initial stages of the present research, two excavated S & J London buttons were viewable online, but the source of one is unspecified and a query to the owner went unanswered.<sup>35</sup> The other example was found at post-war Fort Custer,<sup>36</sup> so neither specimen added dating clarity. A Dale general staff button with an applied eagle however, was excavated some twenty years ago at New Kent Court House, Virginia, by Norbert Spangler and was kindly brought to our attention in 2017 by William Stafford. Then, during the "Diggin' in Virginia XXXII" relic hunting event in Nov. 2018,<sup>37</sup> Guy Spring recovered a Dale applied eagle Infantry cuff button, which was graciously brought to our attention by William Leigh. The infantry button was found on a farm near Brandy Station that served as the 1863-1864 winter camp for the Excelsior Brigade. The button emerged from an out-of-the-way hillside that also yielded several three-ring Minié rounds, an Enfield oil can, and was about twenty feet from trash pit that contained part of a chasseur hat plate. Those circumstances all point to the likelihood the Dale button was lost during the war rather than as the result of the post-war perambulations of a veteran. These excavated specimens add further support to the war-time usage of applied eagle buttons (FIG 30). If the metal-detecting community continues to contribute additional data about the applied eagle buttons found in well-dated Civil War campsites and battlefields, the next generation of American military button reference books will be substantially enhanced.

Our initial judgment at the 2012 Franklin Civil War show that the Charles Risdon uniform dates from 1864 or early 1865 has been strengthened by this long exegesis into button dating. All evidence indicates the production and initial use of the Charles Risdon Colonel's uniform can accurately be attributed to the "Civil War period," traditionally defined as the time between the secession of South Carolina on 20 December 1860 and the surrender of the Trans-Mississippi Confederate army on 26 May 1865. Having made that determination, it might be appropriate to suggest the 1865 date may be overemphasized among historians and collectors. In fact, Congress did not actually declare the Civil War to be over until 1 February 1870, due to the need for continued U.S. military operations to deter terrorist violence by former Confederates against African-Americans in the Southern states.<sup>38</sup> As a consequence, any military artifact that was used between 1860 and 1870 can

legitimately be called "Civil War Era."

Currently, the 1866-1870 time-span is stigmatized by military collectors. In fact, Civil War militaria dealers have been known to discard information on soldiers' names associated with uniforms and accouterments used in the 1866-1870 period. Their reasoning is an unidentified artifact will create more interest and bring more money when touted as "Civil War" than an identified artifact that is labelled "Post-War." A change in the attitude of historians and collectors toward binary 1865 dating might contribute to better preservation of the history of 1866-1870 military artifacts.

A final point is the reference books always will fall short because our knowledge of both the Civil War and its artifacts is a work in progress to which each thoughtful collector and historian should contribute. Each public or private curator of historical artifacts has the patriotic duty to become a detective about his or her favorite items, by learning to scrutinize period photographs under magnification and drawing inferences from documents in archives. There is no substitute for original research, which means visiting museums, historical societies, and private collections of both nondug and excavated artifacts to compare and contrast examples. Doing such work cannot help but increase respect for such departed pioneers as Dewy Albert, Bill Albaugh, Duncan Campbell, Don Kloster, Frank Lord, Bill Mason, William McGuinn, Stan Phillips, Warren Tice, Frederick Todd, and the many other predecessors who gave use the invaluable Civil War reference books that we in the succeeding generations should hope to supplement.

### Acknowledgements

*Many thanks to prolific NSTCW contributor Dan Binder for his helpful comments on earlier drafts; Natalie Elder, Collections Manager, Division of Armed Forces History, National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution for her information on the Custer uniform; Ann Sindelar, Dean Zimmerman and Danielle Peck of the Western Reserve Historical Society for extraordinary helpfulness and access to the Orlando Charles Risdon material; Gary Embrey for his valuable information on the Texas Consular button; William Stafford of Generalstaffbuttons.com for volunteering the photo of his dug S&J London GS; Harry Ridgeway of Relicman.com for his highly useful Ridgeway Civil War Reference Library website that provided photos of the stamped Dale GS; Stephen Osman who provided photos of the Scovill GS; George Juneau for directing me to Michael Simens; Michael Simens for photos of the General Stevenson uniform; and William Leigh whose excellent CivilWarButtons.com website provided the Washington Grays button and who put me in touch with Guy Spring, who provided the Brandy Station button photo and location information.*





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## On Our Covers

René Chartrand

**Lowering the wounded, Mers el Kebir, 1943.**

This unusual view is of wounded men being transferred from a U.S. Navy ship with cables and winched down to ambulances that will take them to hospital. It was made at Mers el Kebir in Algeria during 1943. The original watercolor is signed and dated by the artist, William A. Bostick (1913–2007). The sailors on deck preparing to lower a wounded man on a stretcher wear various warm weather orders of dress. Mers el Kebir was a large naval base of the French Navy in Algeria that became famous on 3 July 1940. France had signed an armistice with Germany and Italy that came into effect on 25 June while Great Britain remained at war against the Axis. Judging a possible German takeover of the powerful French battleships was too much of a risk, the British government decided on the attack which seriously impaired the French fleet on 3 July. From November 1942, Operation Torch carried out by American, British Commonwealth, and Free French forces landed and secured French Algeria and Morocco. However, there would be more fighting in the Mediterranean later on as shown by this watercolor, which is now preserved in the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI. We wish to thank this institution for kindly making this image available.

René Chartrand

**American Bushmen, circa 1830–1835.**

This rarely seen plate was published in *A Collection of Interesting Subjects of Military Occurrences* by Thomas McLean at 26 Haymarket Street in London, England, around 1830. The artist William Heath (1794–1840), was a prolific creator of military scenes, notably battles during the Napoleonic wars. His often humorous *Military Occurrences* that covered several nations had only one plate on the United States titled “American Bushmen” showing volunteer militia riflemen, reproduced on this cover. The subject is not identified further but shows the riflemen in green uniforms having more or less scarlet trim, one wearing a peaked cap, another a shako and another a round hat.

While many American volunteer militia rifle units adopted grey uniforms during the 1820s, many others wore green. The data compiled in the Todd Albums and notebooks for the period mentions many units such as the Portland (Maine) Rifle Corps, the Manchester Guards (New Hampshire), the 1833 New York State Militia law for riflemen or the Wyoming (Pennsylvania) “Yagers,” to name a few. There is no information as to what information Heath might have had for this plate but it was obviously not from his imagination. He likely encountered British travelers who had seen American volunteer militia riflemen. Some of the many American state rifle volunteer militia companies likely had an appearance akin to the figures in this plate. The Todd Albums, with other plates in that volume, are now preserved in the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection in the John Hay Library at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. We acknowledge the kind assistance of Peter Harrington, curator of the collection.

René Chartrand







## “A Thorn in Their Side”: The 1st United States Infantry during the Sortie of Fort Erie, 17 September 1814

David C. Bennett

On 23 April 1814, three companies of the United States Army's oldest infantry regiment, the 1st U.S. Infantry, boarded six keel boats and departed from the St. Louis theater of operations. After spending almost six years on the far western frontier, parceled out across the Missouri and Illinois Territories, they were veterans of scores of small Indian raids—the siege of Fort Madison, the Peoria Indian Campaign, endless patrols, and campaigns against a relentless and shadowy enemy. They built more blockhouses than any of them wanted to remember. The officers and men also had to endure the stream of reports of defeats to the “American Arms” during the first two years of the war against Great Britain, including the surrender of Detroit and the massacre at Chicago. During August 1812, the regiment lost three of their seven companies in less than a week plus the company garrisoned at Fort Wayne and would remain there throughout the War of 1812. The survivors, a mere shadow of a regiment, three companies of about 220 men, had orders to aggressively recruit for the regiment in the East, as this could not be accomplished in the Western territories.<sup>1</sup>

Maj. Eli B. Clemson<sup>2</sup> wrote in late 1813 “... could not the few skeletons of the Co's of the 1st Infy. be removed from the frontier where they have served for years, be united and go to the scene of action?”<sup>3</sup> The January 1814 meeting between Major Clemson and Secretary of War John Armstrong, a former officer of the veteran 1st Infantry, served its intended purpose to obtain orders for active service. The three companies of the regiment previously stationed in the far west at Forts Osage, Madison, and Belle Fontaine, upon arrival at Pittsburgh on 3 July, found they were under orders to immediately march to join Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown<sup>4</sup>'s army, to serve as the “Left Division.” On that same summer day, the Left Division crossed the Niagara River and took Fort Erie, Upper Canada.<sup>5</sup>

After a hard and fatiguing march of three months and 1,500 miles, two companies of the 1st Infantry arrived at approximately 1500 hours on the afternoon of 25 July 1814 on the Canadian shore near Niagara Falls. The third company of the regiment was still across the Niagara River near Fort Schlosser, New York, waiting for the boats to return. Around 1700 hours, Lt. Col. Robert Carter Nicholas<sup>6</sup> of the 1st Infantry heard the distant sounds of a mighty battle and, without orders, immediately marched the two-company battalion into the bloodiest battle of the War of 1812—the Battle of Lundy's Lane. The regiment fought until about midnight with only the moon and the flash of muskets and artillery fire to illuminate the battlefield. After sustaining a 26 percent casualty rate,



FIG 1. Gen. Jacob Brown. [www.armyhistory.org](http://www.armyhistory.org).



FIG 2. Col. Robert Carter Nicholas. [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org).



FIG 3. Gen. Eleazer Ripley, US Mint bronze military medal 415, full-1A-700\_10.10-21279870-r-cccccc-6.

the 1st Infantry found itself at the head of the American column on 26 July, marching to reoccupy the battle ground, which lay within the roar of the great falls. General Brown, who had been wounded the night before, gave orders for the Army to abandon the battlefield and encamp. Additionally, Brown transferred command to Brig. Gen. Eleazer Ripley.<sup>7</sup> Wisely deciding he could not dislodge the British Army, which had retaken the heights following the Americans' retreat, Ripley ordered the Left Division to fall back. He asked permission to fall back to Buffalo, New York, which Brown fervently refused, ordering Ripley to Fort Erie to prepare for a siege.

Capt. John Cleves Symmes<sup>8</sup> of the 1st Infantry received orders to march toward Black Rock ferry, which, "I deemed a feint to draw the enemy after us to our advantage." By the morning of 28 July 1814, Symmes was in command of a piquet guard three miles below Fort Erie. Capt. James Fitzgibbon<sup>9</sup> of the British Army approached the piquet post under a white flag with dispatches for General Ripley. While awaiting a response, the two captains began to converse about the war, Captain Fitzgibbon added he "thought it an unhappy circumstance that nations so alike in manners and language and so well adapted for commercial intercourse should be at war."<sup>10</sup>

Captain Symmes, a nephew of Judge John Cleves Symmes, the first settler of Cincinnati, a fourteen-year-veteran of the Army, whose career was spent predominantly at small posts along the Mississippi River.



FIG 4. Capt. John Cleves Symmes, Jr. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

The captain was thirty-four years of age, of "middle stature, a slightly contracted brow, and bright blue eyes," and had once participated in a duel over the insulting slander of being called a "Green horn" by a fellow officer. Symmes would later gain fame for his innovative theory of concentric spheres, where one could sail into the center of the earth while his detractors labeled his plan the "Holes in the Poles." Captain Symmes responded to Captain Fitzgibbon he had not "intimately studied the cause," yet he felt the American Army needed a war. Symmes pointed out to his peer that the British Army "had been perfecting themselves in Spain and other places while we had been at peace for more than thirty years and it was high time we should practice and improve ourselves & I presumed they found by the battle of the other night that we were ... ." <sup>11</sup>

The American Army had already begun to enlarge and strengthen Fort Erie, which needed to be expanded into a larger fortified camp with the existing fort as a major bastion on the north side. The entire complex comprised of about thirty acres. Fort Erie anchored the north with the Douglass Battery facing the river. The Towson Battery on top of "Snake Hill," a low sand mound about twenty-five-feet high, secured the south. The parapet extended some 300 yards to the south west and then angled to the south another 342 yards before snaking around the Towson Battery another 76 yards. <sup>12</sup>

The 1st Infantry was encamped with the 2d Brigade near Snake Hill. Colonel Nicholas' servant cleverly pitched his tent behind the "butt end of a fallen tree," about twenty-five yards behind the enlisted men's tents, which would later fuel charges of cowardice against the colonel. The British had not yet begun to bombard the fort and traverses were not yet constructed to protect against the enemy shot, but would soon be added. In the mean time, Surgeon's Mate Samuel Muir of the 1st Infantry, had organized wagons to haul the wounded from Lundy's



FIG 5. Capt. James Fitzgibbon. [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).FIG 6. Gen. Sir Gordon Drummond. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com).

Lane, and was busy supervising their crossing over to the hospitals at Williamsville, New York.<sup>13</sup>

The main body of Maj. Gen. Gordon Drummond's<sup>14</sup> army, the "Right Division," arrived on 2 August 1814, and encamped about two miles below Fort Erie. Drummond decided to forgo a siege and force Ripley to fall back to Buffalo. Drummond sent a large force of 600 men across the river commanded by Col. John Tucker to attack the American naval yard and destroy military supplies and food stockpiled at Black Rock. This force was stopped by 240 riflemen under the command of Maj. Lodowick Morgan.<sup>15</sup> Drummond's aggressive attempt retrieve General Brown's supplies, most likely was the motive to order the 1st Regiment from Fort Erie to Black Rock in early August.<sup>16</sup>

The third company, the former Fort Madison garrison, had now joined the two other companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry. On 1 August, this company was disbanded; the men were transferred to Captain Symmes' Company and Capt. Thomas Hamilton<sup>17</sup>'s Company, who had taken command of the old Fort Belle Fontaine Company. The two reinforced companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry in Upper Canada were stationed at a log breastwork near the principal artillery battery at Black Rock. Some of the men of the regiment were actually assigned to serve with the artillery.<sup>18</sup>

During the night of 5 August, British engineers and

work parties started building their siege lines, supporting blockhouses, and leading to the construction of what would become known as Battery Number One. The first battery with an extended trench and picketed breastworks was completed by 12 August. The battery was located some 1,000 yards from the fort and contained four types of 24-pound guns and an eight-inch mortar. The following day the battery opened fire, initiating the daily bombardment of Fort Erie. Gen. Edmund P. Gaines<sup>19</sup> assumed command of the American line from General Ripley on 5 August.<sup>20</sup>

British Battery Number One received counter-battery fire from three U.S. schooners anchored in the river; they were *Ohio*, *Porcupine*, and *Somers*. *Ohio* was one of the two schooners that had transported the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry from Presque Isle, modern day Erie, Pennsylvania, to Fort Erie in July. The British sent a seventy-five-man force to attack the ships on the night of 12 August and captured two of the schooners. Pvt. Hugh McConnoughey of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry was on board *Ohio* when it was captured.<sup>21</sup>

Maj. Jacob Hindman<sup>22</sup> recalled General Gaines, during an alarm, ordered Colonel Nicholas to lead the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry from Black Rock into Fort Erie proper. This was accomplished on the night of 13 August. The bombardment began at sunrise that day and did not cease until about 2000 hours; however, when the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry regiment entered through the fort gate, which was exposed to

FIG 7. Gen. Edmund Pendleton Gaines. [www.picClick.com](http://www.picClick.com).

British artillery fire, their guns ceased firing about thirty minutes before and didn't resume until right after the men entered the fort. The unexpected lull in the firing was fortuitous for the men in the regiment. The most far reaching event for the 1st Infantry Regiment occurred when Colonel Nicholas balked at entering the Fort Erie main gate. Nicholas would later regret his comment to Major Hindman that his regiment would be "cut to pieces" if they entered through the gate. The American forces at Fort Erie suffered 10 killed and 35 wounded on 13 August.<sup>23</sup>

Over one thousand British troops assaulted the American positions on 15 August, attacking primarily at Snake Hill and directly upon Fort Erie. 1st Lt. Lewis Bissell<sup>24</sup> recalled the turning point in the battle occurred when the British "succeeded in taking a Bastion, and turned a 24 Pounder on us; the discharge of which set fire to some ammunition under the platform blowing up friend and foe together."<sup>25</sup> The assault was considered a major defeat for the British, who lost over 600 men during the attack compared to about 65 casualties for the U.S. forces. Though it is not clear when the 1st Infantry Regiment left Fort Erie and returned to Black Rock, it appears they were not present during the battle on 15 August. The official battle reports neither mention the 1st Infantry at Fort Erie on that day nor does Captain Symmes mention the attack in his journal.

FIG 8. Col. Daniel Bissell. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com).

Colonel Nicholas's comment to Major Hindman, a member of General Brown's staff, that his men would be "cut to pieces" on 13 August. Additionally, his reported remark Fort Erie was nothing "but a slaughter pen" did not set the colonel well in the eyes of General Brown. In addition, the unflattering official report of the regiment at Lundy's Lane by General Brown and the vicious rumors circulated by Gen. Daniel Bissell<sup>26</sup> against Nicholas, all contributed to an uneasy relationship between the field commander of the 1st Infantry, and his commanding general. General Brown did not want another cautious officer; he already had General Ripley in his army. In an era where military honor drove men to heroic bravery and carelessly exposing themselves to enemy fire, comments and actions such as Nicholas's were unwelcomed. Throughout the campaign, despite their achievements, the 1st Regiment would be ignored, their officers' names misspelled in reports and, overall, ignored. Soon after the attack on Fort Erie during 15 August, the 1st Infantry was consolidated with the 23d Infantry, and placed under the command of Col. William King of the 3d Rifle Regiment. Nicholas wrote to the secretary of war to complain of Major General Brown's false statements regarding the regiment's conduct at Lundy's Lane and also that his regiment had been stripped from him. Nicholas wrote, "I was out of camp upon other duty for some weeks, when



FIG 9. Gen. James Miller. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com).

the arrangement was made, I felt it to be such an outrage that I immediately repaired to camp." The colonel offered to endure any kind of inquiry the secretary of war might issue and he was "ready to stand or fall as it shall be found, correct or incorrect."<sup>27</sup> Captain Symmes, therefore, became the senior commander of the 1st Infantry Regiment on "The Canada Line" in the middle of August until he took furlough in December 1814.<sup>28</sup>

General Brown's report that the enlisted men "gave way" and had retreated during the Battle of Lundy's Lane had a profound impact upon the rank and file of the entire regiment which felt unfairly treated by their commanding general. Their colonel was remembered as "a military character, who always inspires his troops with heroic ardor; and who dares without fear of slander to use caution where he thinks caution advisable." In fact, the men had "about faced" on an order and only moved about thirty paces. As Symmes wrote, "They had nothing to flatter or please them, but the pleasure of recounting to one another, their engagements and arduous tours of duty." Colonel Nicholas wrote to the secretary of war complaining of General Brown's conduct against the regiment, "Due to my poor and unfortunate dead Soldiers [and] to the wounded and the maimed, to the honor of the Regiment I am compelled to make this statement."<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, the British had continued to add more

FIG 10. Gen. Peter Buell Porter. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com).

artillery batteries, plus expand and strengthen their siege lines. By 25 August, a second battery was completed; it was over 400 yards from their Battery Number One and 750 yards from Fort Erie. As the siege continued, the skirmishes against the picket posts of the contending forces became severe. In addition, the weather was changing dramatically, turning much cooler and rainy causing the sick lists of both armies to grow. On 30 August, the 24-pounder carronade and two long 18-pounders plus an eight-inch mortar opened fire upon the defenders at Fort Erie. The Americans returned counter fire so intense it caused the British engineers to build overhead cover for their guns. A British third battery was already under construction, which was only 400 yards from the fort. The British would eventually shift some of the artillery in Battery Number One. The strain on the men inside Fort Erie would become more than many men could stand, while the parade ground became a sea of mud, and the fort, indeed, became "nothing but a Slaughter pen."<sup>30</sup>

Even General Gaines, the hero who dealt out a sounding defeat to the British on 15 August, was not immune to the bombardment and severely wounded while sitting at his desk on the twenty-eighth. He was replaced with newly appointed Bvt. Brig. Gen. James Miller<sup>31</sup> until General Brown could resume command on 2 September. Brown had started to reinforce his troops in August, requesting



FIG 11. Maj. George Mercer Brooke. www.Tampapix.com.

thousands of New York Militia be called up for service.<sup>32</sup>

About 2 September, the 1st Infantry transferred from Black Rock back to Fort Erie, taking up their old positions near Snake Hill. When the regiment crossed over the river, Symmes was the last to enter the boats and the first to step onto the shore. Captain Symmes knew the men were looking to him, as the senior officer of the regiment. As he stepped out of the boat to shore, he fell to one knee which got stuck in the mud. "All eyes silently on me, after washing off the mud, I raised my head and shewed my countenance animated with the thought that I was to be particularly successful."<sup>33</sup>

At the time the 1st Infantry crossed the river, they expected to be fired upon by the enemy but "the enemy sent in a flag to the Fort which prevented them from firing on our crowded boats in crossing as they commonly did." However, the British artillery soon resumed a few hours after the 1st Infantry had crossed over. On the very next artillery shot, Symmes observed a 24-pound ball "came directly at my head but I happen to be facing and saw it as it came at a ricochet, I dodged it, it passed precisely over me and struck in the midst of several of our men who were digging a few yards behind me, it overset three of them without hurting them materially and bounded over into the river." Symmes made the best of the situation, turning toward the men he announced "they want to kill

me because I am to be a thorn in their side but this shews they cannot." Symmes admitted later "these roman like fancies excite confidence in the men and have good effect if well applied." No wonder the men and officers of the 1st Infantry all adored him.

General Ripley received intelligence early in September of a possible attack by the enemy on Towson's Battery, and the 1st Infantry was "charged with the only part that was not covered by breastworks, having only abatis, being that space between Towson's Battery and the river where the enemy had made so many repeated attempts."<sup>34</sup>

Captain Symmes recalled out of the sixteen nights at Fort Erie during the siege in September, thirteen of them were spent "on watch at the breastworks or on Piquet Guard in incessant rain."<sup>35</sup> On one piquet tour, one of his men was killed in action and five others were wounded "and presume we returned more than equal damage." On another, they sustained no casualties while inflicting one killed and one wounded against the enemy. These picket duels were frequently savage, both sides engaging the enemy as close as they could. Symmes and his company were left on piquet guard for a double tour just before 17 September; he remarked that this was a mark of confidence in him and his men.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, Nicholas was in charge of the British prisoners and deserters at Buffalo, and by 4 September, he was also forwarding the flood of incoming militia toward Fort Erie and arranging transport for spare muskets and supplies. Many of the men of the regiment were in hospitals at Buffalo and Williamsville, suffering from wounds, rheumatism, fevers and ruptures. The bombardment, weather, and strenuous work on the traverses were taking their toll. One soldier left behind was Pvt. Hickman Fielding, of Hamilton's company. He was enlisted by 1st Lt. Barony Vasquez at Pittsburg on 1 July 1814. The 4-foot 5-inch tall soldier was only twelve years old, and "learning music." He was left to tend the wounded at the general hospital in Buffalo "unable to perform the duties of a soldier in consequence of his youth." The relentless and savage bombardment of Fort Erie continued: Pvt. Robert Marchbank, Symmes' Company, was struck by a 24-pound cannon ball which took off his right foot on 8 September. Twenty minutes later, his fellow soldiers saw him carried to the hospital where Surgeon John Gale of the 23d Regiment amputated his leg about three inches above the ankle. On the same day, Sergeant Dutcher and Corporal Gardner of Symmes' Company both deserted.<sup>37</sup>

Over 1,500 New York Militiamen in Gen. Peter B. Porter's<sup>38</sup> Brigade crossed over to Canada on 9 September, and set up a camp south of Snake Hill. Brown brought over every unit he could spare except for some New York Militia which refused to cross. The weather continued to get colder with endless rain. After 9 September, the American artillery batteries increased their firing dramatically, while the British started to slack off due to increasing shortages in ammunition. On 16 September, pioneers cut out a trail





through the tree line west of the fort that stretched from the American lines near Snake Hill toward the British right flank, less than 200 yards from battery number three. Major General Drummond decided to lift the siege on the same day and he gave orders to start evacuating Batteries Two and Three. Yet General Brown had already made his decision to sortie out of Fort Erie to destroy the three British batteries.<sup>39</sup>

General Brown gave orders to clear out the Williamsville hospital of sick and wounded men, obviously to prepare for the results of his intended sortie. The day before the sortie, 16 September, at least fourteen men of the 1st Infantry regiment, among a total of “near 200,” departed for the hospital at Greenbush, New York. Colonel Nicholas, now in command at Williamsville, attempted to gain approval to “select the sick list of the 1st Regiment” who were ordered to march, but was “positively refused” by Doctor [Ezekiel W.?] Bull. Nicholas called it a “violation of the Laws of humanity” to force men to make the march who were “worn down by Fevers and other disorders to perfect Shadows rendering a bed a more fit place for them than any other.” The hospital department detached one doctor to go with the men, but would not give up any of their cooking utensils for the detachment of sick soldiers. On the same day, Nicholas turned over several British deserters and prisoners to a militia officer with orders to march them to Greenbush. The two columns marched separately yet were both traveling on the same road to the same destination.<sup>40</sup>

General Brown’s detailed and complicated plan was an attack against the British Batteries Three, Two, and One in that order; destroying all the guns they could while manhandling the British duty brigade. Each battery also had a blockhouse for support. Two separate columns would be formed for the sortie, plus a reserve. The primary assault column was led by General Porter who organized his force as two columns running parallel with each other, only about thirty yards apart. A frontal screen was composed of 200 men of the 1st and 4th Rifle Regiments with a few Indians. Porter’s left column comprised of New York Militia, their main function was to beat back the expected British counter attack. Porter’s right column, charged as the primary assault force was led by the engineer officer, Lt. Col. Eleazar Wood,<sup>41</sup> and comprised of the consolidated 1st and 23d Infantry commanded by Maj. George Mercer Brooke<sup>42</sup> and one platoon of dismounted dragoons, a total of 400 men. The 1st Infantry “headed the right column destined to storm the batteries ...and received the first fire [on] that day.”<sup>43</sup> The rest of the right column was comprised of New York Militia. In addition to General Porter’s column, there were two others. Once Porter’s command had taken Battery Three and was moving to Battery Two, an assault column commanded by General Miller with the 9th, 11th, and 19th Regiments would join in the attack. The reserves, commanded by General Ripley, was comprised of the 21st



FIG 12. Col. William A. Trimble. [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com).

Regiment and some companies of the 17th Regiment, they were placed to cover the attacking columns withdrawal back to the fort.

On 17 September 1814, the consolidated 1st and 23d Regiments paraded about mid-morning, Captain Symmes recalled Major Brooke “charged the men not to give back in the battle, I felt it a charge not due to such men and told him so at the instant.”<sup>44</sup> The 1st Infantry took more men into the sortie than reported that day fit for duty, “as many of the sick volunteered and none were on guard.” Captain Hamilton, who had missed Lundy’s lane, was laying sick at the hospital in Williamsville.<sup>45</sup>

The American artillery open a brisk fire upon the British lines as Porter’s column left Snake Hill and headed out on the trail cut through the woods toward the British lines, as a cold and foggy drizzle slowly turned over to a heavy rain. The British positions were manned by the De Watteville Regiment and the 8th Foot, standing in their rain soaked trenches. The surprise was complete; around 1430 in the afternoon, British Battery Three was quickly stormed, large numbers of prisoners were taken while a few others escaped, the carriages destroyed and a magazine blown up. Porter’s column then quickly moved on to the British Second Battery, attempting to manage the maze of muddy trenches, abates, and fallen timber amidst a driving rain storm, just as the British reserves had formed and were



mounting a counterattack. <sup>46</sup>

A division of the 1st infantry took place as they were moving toward Battery Two. General Porter was yelling out orders so fast, that only about thirty men of the 1st Infantry heard him and followed him along with a few riflemen, although he was expecting the entire column to follow. Porter's "ardent mind was on fire to have us fly to the batteries; so much so that he while repeating the orders struck Lt. John Shaw<sup>47</sup> with his sword." In the confusion, General Porter was wildly swinging his sword and struck Lieutenant Shaw, the 1st Infantry regimental adjutant, in the shoulder, cutting him down to the bone. This wound was never reported as wounded in action since received from friendly forces. Later, Shaw would ask for and receive "redress" personally from General Porter. The head of Porter's column comprised of only a few riflemen and one platoon of the 1st Infantry approached the second battery; the men surged forward to enter the battery. <sup>48</sup>

Captain Symmes recalled, "Sheltered as the enemy were by a partition in the Battery and the smoke and rain, most of them were enabled to retire on the opposite side from us and escaped." General Miller's column that had began to move once Porter had taken battery number three was now making contact with the head of Porter's column at Battery number two. Seeing the forces of Lt. Col. William A. Trimble<sup>49</sup> of the 19th "were then leading round them, which induced them to give up the contest while they could yet escape." <sup>50</sup>

Just as Symmes and his men pressed forward to the Second Battery, a private "seized my arm as we were approaching and said Captain Let us push into the Battery and in we went, in a body." This private received a bayonet through his sleeve of his coat. As 2d Lt. Hilary Brunot,<sup>51</sup> a recent graduate of West Point who just arrived on the frontier a few days before followed Captain Symmes into the battery: he received a ball shot through the centre of his hat crown and another pierced the tail of his coat. The first two officers to enter the second battery were Captain Symmes and Lieutenant Brunot, both of the 1st Infantry, they spiked the large carronade that was used for "shrapnel shot" with "rat tail files" and then damaged the "great mortar." The credit for this was given to brigade major 1st Lt. Donald Fraser<sup>52</sup> in error by General Porter; Fraser was not even in Battery number two but was wounded near it. Fraser would receive a brevet promotion based on Captain Symmes' actions. Symmes would later meet with Fraser in New York City who would admit that he was given the credit for spiking a gun in a battery that he never entered. <sup>53</sup>

When the regiment became separated near Battery Two, Lt. Lewis Bissell, "commanding the 2d attacking Platoon"

remained with the 23d Regiment and "covered himself with honor in a close contest with a British Regiment, which was the same action that Major Brookes received a brevet promotion for."<sup>54</sup> Lieutenant Bissell, recalled, "We soon reached a log block house, the cracks not chinked and filled with men, whose guns were resting on the logs, and firing on us, and our men rushed up, placing their guns on the same logs, firing on them, till they were all silenced." It was at the block house, Bissell recalled "here we lost a brave Officer who rashly climbed up top of the Block house and swinging his hat and hurraing was shot down." Indeed, Col. James Gibson,<sup>55</sup> 4th Rifle Regiment and a West Point graduate, was killed in action at Blockhouse Number Two. <sup>56</sup>

Symmes' detachment now moved on toward Battery Number One, which he described as "the hottest of the battle, between No. 2 and 1 Batteries." Symmes' detachment merged with men commanded by Lieutenant Bissell and the wounded Lieutenant Shaw, who continued "without a murmur" despite the sword cut to his shoulder. Symmes approached General Miller and enquired where he could act with the best advantage. While this was happening, in the confusion and tangle of trenches, abatis, mud, rain, and smoke from gunfire, some of the men in General Miller's command were moving toward the river, the general sent Symmes after them to bring them to "a small breast work." Symmes recalled he ran

amongst them between No. 2 and the river bank crying out Halt and return, Halt and return, you have left your General behind, they halted. I rushed half way up through the thick of them and extended my arms as if to sweep them back, crying at the same time will no body follow me, several followed saying I will, I will but the instant we turned the corner of the battery the whole fire of the enemy's half moon battery poured upon us like a shower of hail, how it happen that I did not then get shot is strange, I was several steps in front of the men following me and cannot say whether any of them got shot or not. <sup>57</sup>

Symmes went around the battery to the east side and found General Miller again. Miller ordered him to rally "a host of Militia who were pouring out of the battery and works and crossing the front ditch and abatis." Symmes rushed in among the militia waving his sword "like a returning tide they formed back again into the thicker woods from whence they came, General Miller near their head and I near his heels." The enemy continued a "scattering of fire" as Miller returned with men from the other columns all mixed together. The tangled American troops marched back at a brisk pace or as Symmes stated "rather long steps." As Symmes got back to the woods, the men reformed, and "soon after which the several corps wheeled by the rear and marched to the front." Lieutenant Bissell also remembered "our troops became some what scattered" and he was "publicly complimented on parade" by Major Brookes for his efforts in organizing the mixed units. Captain Symmes recalled that "as fast as I met the eyes of our men I gave them each individually a hearty



slap of the head and a congratulation on our success and honor.”<sup>58</sup>

The sortie had lasted about an hour. U.S. troops took over 500 casualties while the British had over 600. Among the killed in action of the 1st Infantry were Pvt. William Koogan, who had served at Fort Madison, and Pvt. Thomas Hair, who had served at Fort Belle Fontaine. Pvt. James Gamble of Symmes’ Company was mortally wounded. The regiment took about 100 men into the battle, and sustained 5 killed in action and 10 wounded. Symmes went to the hospital to see his wounded men, who were more disposed to “crowd of their victory like men in wine.” All of the officers of the 1st Infantry who went into the sortie, including Captain Symmes, and Lieutenants Bissell, Shaw, and Brunot, received no less than two flesh wounds and shots through their clothing. Most of the enlisted men of the regiment who were not killed or wounded sported bayonet or musket holes in their clothing and caps.<sup>59</sup>

The regiment would eventually be sent to Sackets Harbor in November, Symmes would ask for a furlough in December and it was “granted in a way not calculated to excite thanks.” The men and the officers of the regiment were proud of their record, from the banks of the Missouri and the Mississippi to the banks of the Niagara. Few regiments could boast of traveling so far, and gave no less than any other regiment, and moreover, without the credit for most of their accomplishments. The hardships endured during the siege of Fort Erie were suffered by the men for the rest of their lives. Many of the men received pensions, not just for wounds, but for numerous injuries and severe rheumatism due to extreme fatigue, inclement weather, and poor living conditions. General Brown’s official report of the sortie, mentioned Major Brooke “speaks in high terms of Captain Simms, Lieutenants Bissel, Shore, and Brinot of the 1st Infantry.” Every officer’s name was misspelled in the report and none received brevet promotions for the actions during the sortie. As Symmes was preparing to leave his company forever and depart on his furlough from Sackets Harbor, he was introduced to General Brown, for the first and last time.<sup>60</sup>

Four years later, on 17 September 1818, former Capt. Lewis Bissell, and now serving as a sutler in the Army at Fort Belle Fontaine, Missouri Territory, sat down to pen an affectionate letter to his former company commander, Capt. John C. Symmes:

What a contrast between the tranquil scenes of this day to the ever memorable 17th of September 1814, a day on which I cannot bestow a thought, but with mingled emotions of pride & regret. Pride at the success of our arms, but regret that so many of our heroes should fall: with pride at the applause gained by the 1st Regiment, on that day, but with regret that the same officer had not been in command of it during the whole Campaign, that commanded on that day.

Bissell continued, “I feel indignant that the distinguished services which you and your company on that day should



not only like many others, be but illy rewarded, but totally neglected.” Bissell continued to reflect upon the past, and fondly recalled their shared experiences during the Sortie of Fort Erie; he further stated to Symmes he felt “predestinated” that they were both at the very same moment, reflecting on the very same subject. The two officers had clearly formed an unbreakable bond forged by the terror and hardships of war. Bissell concluded his letter to his former captain, knowing that Symmes “would dwell with delight on storming the British Battery at Fort Erie, and that however seldom you may think of your then companions that you heard my thinking of them, with a feeling of friendship. If so, I can answer for one of them that this felling is reciprocal, and will only end with Life it self.”<sup>61</sup>

#### Notes:

1. Secretary of War to Delegate Hempstead, 23 March 1814, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, (Washington: GPO, 1949) 14: 746 ; Secretary of War to General Benjamin Howard, 6 April 1914, Ibid. 14: 750.
2. Eli Brady Clemson (circa 1780-1846) was commissioned a second lieutenant, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry from Pennsylvania, 3 March 1799. Promoted first lieutenant, 30 April 1800; captain, 4 March 1807; major, 20 January 1813; and lieutenant colonel 16th Infantry, 9 March 1814. Honorably discharged 15 June 1815. Appointed assistant commissary of issues, 27 August 1816. Resigned 1 December 1819.
3. Major Eli B. Clemson to Colonel Jacob Kingsbury 14 December 1813, Kingsbury Papers, L: 5, V22, 1813, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, MI.
4. Jacob Jennings Brown (1775-1828) was commissioned as a captain in the 108th regiment of the New York Militia, 1807; promoted to colonel, 1809; and brigadier general, 1811. Troops led by Brown defeated the British at the [Second Battle of Sacket's Harbor](#), 29 May 1813. Commissioned brigadier general, U.S. Army, 19 July 1813; major general, 24 January 1814; and served as commander-in-chief of the Army, 15 June 1815-24 February 1828. Died in service.
5. Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara 1814, America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2000), 164
6. Robert Carter Nicholas (1787-1856) was commissioned captain from Kentucky, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3 May 1808; Major, 3d Infantry, 3 September 1810; lieutenant colonel, 1st Infantry, 15 August 1812; colonel, 19th Infantry, 4 September 1814; transferred to the 8th Infantry, 17 May 1815. Resigned 20 April 1819.
7. Col. Robert C. Nicholas, Court Martial 1816, Record Group 153 National Archives, Washington, DC. Hereafter cited as Nicholas Court-martial; Returns of Killed and wounded in Battle or Engagements with Indians, British and Mexicans, 1790-1814, Eaton's Compendium, Record Group 94 National Archives, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Entry 71; Capt. Clemson / Capt. Symmes Company Descriptive Book, Records of Army Commands 1784-1821, no. 53/128, Record Group 98 National Archives, Washington, DC.
8. John Cleves Symmes, Jr. (1780-1829) was commissioned ensign from the Northwest Territory in the 1st Infantry, 26 March 1802. Promoted second lieutenant, 1 May 1804, first lieutenant, 29 July



1807; and captain, 20 January 1813. Resigned 15 June 1815.

9. James Fitzgibbon (1780-1863) enlisted in the Knight of Glin's Yeomanry Corps at age fifteen. He later joined the Tarbert Infantry Fencibles, an Irish home service regiment in 1798. He joined the British Army's 49th Regiment of Foot as a private soldier and later served as a Marine in the Battle of Copenhagen, for which he received the Naval General Service Medal. Returning to his regiment, was promoted to sergeant, and sent to Canada in 1802. In 1806, when he was the regiment's sergeant major, he was made an ensign and appointed regimental adjutant. In 1809, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. He was promoted captain, Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles., in 1813. After the war, he left the army and remained in Canada as a colonel in the militia. During the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837, FitzGibbon was appointed Acting Adjutant-General of Militia.
10. John C. Symmes Journal, DR-63, 9U Frontier War Papers, Drapers Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI. Hereafter cited as Symmes Journal.
11. Ibid.
12. Joseph Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned, The Battle for Fort Erie, 1814* (Baltimore: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company, 1992), 42. Hereafter cited as Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*.
13. Nicholas Court Martial.
14. General Sir Gordon Drummond (1772-1854) entered the British Army as an ensign with the 1st Foot in 1789. By 1794, he had attained the rank of junior lieutenant-colonel. He held the rank of colonel of the 8th Regiment of Foot. In 1801, Drummond had attained the rank of major general. In 1807. Following the end of the War of 1828, became Governor-General and Administrator of Canada.
15. Lodowick Morgan (1782-1814) was commissioned a second lieutenant, Rifle Regiment from Maryland on 3 May 1808. Promoted first lieutenant 21 May 1809; captain, 1 July, 1811; and major, 24 January 1814. He was killed action, 12 August 1814.
16. Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 47
17. Thomas Hamilton served as a private and sergeant in the 1st Infantry from 2 June 1809 to March 1806. He was commissioned ensign in the regiment 6 March 1806. Promoted second lieutenant, 1st Infantry, 1 June 1807; first lieutenant, 15 December 1808; Captain, 21 February 1814; and discharged 15 June 1815. Reinstated and assigned to the 6th Infantry, 17 May 1816. Transferred to the 5th Infantry, 29 April 1823. Brevetted major for ten years faithful service in one grade, 21 February 1824. Resigned, 16 August 1828.
18. Nicholas Court Martial ; Capt. Clemson / Capt. Symmes Company Descriptive Book, Records of Army Commands 1784-1821, no. 53/128, Record Group 98 National Archives, Washington, DC. Hereafter cited as Symmes Company Book.
19. Edmund Pendleton Gaines (1777-1849) was commissioned ensign from Tennessee, 6th Infantry 10 January 1799. Promoted second lieutenant, 3 March, 1799. Discharged, 15 June 1800. Reinstated, 4th Infantry, 16 February 1801. Transferred to 2d Infantry, 1 April 1802. Promoted first lieutenant, 27 April 1802; captain, 28 February 1807; major, 8th Infantry 24 March 1812; lieutenant colonel, 24th Infantry 6 July 1812. Colonel 25th Infantry, 12 March 1813 to 9 March 1814. Brigadier general, 9 March 1814; brevetted major general, 15 August 1814 for gallantry and good conduct in defeating the enemy at Fort Erie.
20. Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 57.
21. *Niles Register*, Baltimore, 6 August 1814; Ernest Cruikshank, ed., *The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier, 1814* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 4: 74, 75; Lewis Bissell to Elihu Shepard, 20 July 1866, Genealogy "B", Bissell Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Bissell to Shepard; List Prisoners of War, circa 1813 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2019, Roll 1); Records of the Office of the Adjutant General; Record Group 94; National Archives Building, Washington, DC
22. Jacob Hindman (1789-1827) was commissioned second lieutenant from Maryland, 5th Infantry, 3 May 1808. Promoted first lieutenant, 1 May 1810; captain, 2d Artillery, 2 July 182; major, 26 June 1813, Transferred to the Corps of Artillery 12 May 1814. Transferred to 2d Artillery, 1 June 1821. Brevetted lieutenant colonel, 15 August 1814, for distinguished service in the defense of Fort Erie and colonel, 17 May 1815, for distinguished service. Died in service, 17 February 1827.
23. Nicholas Court Martial.
24. Lewis Bissell (1789-1868) was commissioned second lieutenant from Connecticut, 1st Infantry, 12 December 1808. Promoted first lieutenant, 30 March 1814; captain, 30 June 1814. Transferred to the 3d Infantry, 17 May 1815 and to the 8th Infantry 2 December 1815. Resigned, 21 March 1817. Bissell was the nephew of Gen. Daniel Bissell.
25. Bissell to Shepard.
26. Daniel Bissell (1768-1833) served as a fifer, Connecticut State Militia, during the American Revolution. He was commissioned an ensign in the 1st Infantry Regiment on 11 April 1792. Promoted lieutenant, 3 January 1794; captain, 1 January 1799; lieutenant colonel 18 August 18, 1808. Promoted colonel, 5th Infantry, 15 August 1812 and brigadier general, 9 March 1814. Retained as colonel 1st Infantry, 17 May 1815. Bissell was honorably discharged from the Army on 1 June 1821.
27. Nicholas Court Martial.
28. Ibid.; Symmes Company Book.
29. John C. Symmes to William A. Trimble, 8 April 1815, 9U Frontier War Collection, Draper Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society; Nicholas Court Martial Hereafter cited as Symmes to Trimble; Kentucky Reporter, Louisville, 9 April 1821, 2WW, Symmes Papers, Drapers Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society
30. Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 67; Nicholas Court Martial
31. James Miller (1776-1851) served in the New Hampshire state militia and commanded an artillery battery before being commissioned major, 4th Infantry, 8 July 1808. Promoted lieutenant colonel, 5th Infantry, 30 November 1810. Transferred to the 6th Infantry, 14 September 1812. Promoted colonel, 21st Infantry, 9 March 1814. Brevetted colonel for distinguished service at Brownstown, Upper Canada, 9 August 1812, and brigadier general, 25 July 1814, for distinguished service at Niagara Falls, Upper Canada, Resigned, 1 June 1819.
32. Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 69.
33. Symmes Journal.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Lt. Col. Fleming to General Porter 4 September 1812, Cruikshank, *The Documentary History of the Campaign 4*: 443
38. Peter Buell Porter 1773-1844) In May 1812, he was assistant quartermaster general in the New York State Militia and later raised and commanded a brigade on volunteers. He ended the war with the rank of major general of New York Volunteers.
39. Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 78-79.





40. Williamsville [Hospital] First Infantry Sick Ca. 1814, Record Group 94 National Archives, Washington, DC Records of the Adjutant general office; Lt.Col. Nicholas to Col. Hugh Brady, September 17, 1814 Gardner papers, New York State Library.
41. Eleazer Derby Wood (1783-1814) entered the United States Military Academy at West Point on 17 May 1805 and graduated second lieutenant of engineers on 30 October 1806. Promoted first lieutenant 23 February 1808 and captain on 1 July 1812. Brevetted major, 6 May 1813, for distinguished service in the defense of Fort Meigs, OH, 6 May 1813, and lieutenant colonel for gallant conduct in the Battle of Niagara, Upper Canada, 25 July 1814. Killed in action in the sortie from Fort Erie, 17 September 1814.
42. George Mercer Brooke (1785-1851) was commissioned a first lieutenant, 5th Infantry, from Virginia, 3 May 1808. Promoted captain, 1 May 1810; major, 23d Infantry, 1 May 1814. Transferred to 8th Infantry, 27 January 1819; lieutenant colonel, 1 March 1819. Transferred to 4th Infantry 13 August 1819. Colonel, 5th Infantry, 15 July 1831. Brevetted lieutenant colonel for gallant conduct in the defense of Fort Erie, 17 September 1814, colonel for distinguished and meritorious service in the sortie from Fort Erie, 17 September 1814, brigadier general for ten years faithful service in one grade, 17 September 1824, and major general for meritorious conduct during the war with Mexico, 30 May 1848. Died in service, 9 March 1851.
43. Symmes to Trimble.
44. Symmes Journal.
45. Symmes to Trimble; Capt. Owens / Capt. Hamilton Company Descriptive Book, Records of Army Commands 1784-1821, no. 52, Record Group 98 National Archives, Washington, DC.
46. Barbuto, *Niagara 1814, America Invades Canada*, 274,279
47. John Shaw (1787-1819) was commissioned ensign, 1st Infantry, 22 April 1809. Promoted second lieutenant, 26 August 1812 and first lieutenant, 21 February 1814. Discharged, 15 June 1815. Reinstated in the light artillery, 17 May 1817. Died in service, 8 August 1819.
48. Symmes to Trimble.
49. William A. Trimble (1786-1821) served a major of Ohio volunteers, 1812-1813. Commissioned major from OH, 26th Infantry, 18 March 1813. Transferred to 19th Infantry, 12 May 1814; lieutenant colonel, 1st Infantry, 30 November 1814. Transferred to 8th Infantry, 17 May 1815. Brevetted lieutenant colonel, 17 September 1814, for gallant conduct in the sortie from Fort Erie. Resigned, 1 March 1819.
50. Symmes to Trimble..
51. Hillary Brunot (1795-1872) Entered West Point, 20 May 1813. Commissioned thirds lieutenant 1st Infantry 21 July 1814. Promoted second lieutenant 22 July 1814. Discharged, 15 June 1815. Reinstated, 3d Infantry, 2 December 1815. Promoted first lieutenant, 31 December 1818. Discharged, 1 June 1821.
52. Donald Fraser (1791-1860) was commissioned ensign from New York, 15th Infantry, 12 March 1812. Promoted second lieutenant, 13 March 1813. Deputy paymaster-general, 4 August 1813-17 March 1814. First lieutenant, 15th Infantry, 31 December 1813. Transferred to 8th Infantry, 17 May 1815. Transferred to Corps of Artillery, 13 March 1816. Brevetted captain, 25 July 1814, for gallant conduct in the Battle of Niagara. Brevetted major for gallant conduct in the sortie from Fort Erie, 17 September 1814. Resigned, 1 November 1816. Reinstated as major and paymasater, 29 October 1836. Resigned 17 November 1841.
53. Symmes to Trimble; [Louisville], *Kentucky Reporter*, 9 April 1821, 2WW, Symmes Papers, Drapers Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society; Brig. Gen. Porter to Major General Brown, 22 September 1814, John Brannan, *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States during the War with Great Britain* (Washington City: Way and Gideon, 1823), 436,437. Note Porter's report doesn't even mention the 1st Infantry as being present.

"Frazer was severely wounded by a musket ball while spiking a gun on the second battery."; Whitehorne, *While Washington Burned*, 8. The author in error says it was Lieutenant Riddle who "straddled" a 24-pound gun and spiked it thus receiving a brevet promotion.

54. Symmes to Trimble.
55. James Gibson (1790-1814) entered West Point, 20 October 1806. Commissioned first lieutenant, light artillery 12 December 1808. Promoted captain, 2 May 1810; major and assistant adjutant general, 2 April 1813; colonel and inspector general, 13 July 1813; colonel, 4th Rifle Regiment 21 February 1814. Killed in action at Fort Erie, 17 September 1814.
56. Bissell to Shepard.
57. Symmes Journal.
58. Symmes Journal ; Bissell to Shepard.
59. Symmes Journal.
60. Symmes Journal : Major General Brown to the Secretary of War, 29 September 1814, John Brannan, *Official Letters*, 449. Note in John Brannan, page 442, it states in error "and Major Brooks with the 23d and 21st Infantry," Brannan left the 1st Infantry out of the report even though it was in General Brown's original report. Brown also signaled out Col. Hugh Brady of the 22d Infantry at Buffalo, but no mention of Nicholas at Williamsville.
61. Lewis Bissell to John C. Symmes, Belle Fontaine, M.T. 17 September 1818, WW, Volume 1-4, DR-125, Symmes Papers, Drapers Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society.



"Coast Guard anti-saboteur patrol. A Coast Guard officer is shown at an East coast port with armed Coast Guardsmen in a jeep as he inspects the vigilant waterfront patrols that guard vital war supplies being shipped across. Valuable shipping must be protected on the piers as well as on the shipping lanes." Photo taken 1 January 1943, United States Office of War Information. Source Library of Congress.



## The Boston Light Infantry. Guests of the New York City Light Guard

Anthony Gero

*The following newspaper article is from the New York Daily Tribune, 18 October 1853.*

### MILITARY AND FIREMEN

#### MILITARY VISITORS

The Boston Light Infantry, "The Tigers," Capt. Ossian D Ashley, arrived in this City on Sunday morning, and put up at the corner of Broadway and Great Jones St., as the guests of the City Light Guard. They paraded the City yesterday afternoon, and a review by the Mayor took place at 4 o'clock, in front of the City Hall. Last evening, at 7 o'clock, they dined at the Astor House. The Company will leave the City this afternoon, at 5 o'clock for Stonington, thence to Providence, where a reception is to be given them by the Providence Light Infantry, Col. Brown. They leave Providence in the 11 o'clock train tomorrow, stopping at Roxbury, from where they march home, and are to be received on their arrival by the Boston City Guard, Capt. French. The Company numbers 57 muskets and seven officers. The following is a copy of their roster:

**CAPTAIN**—Ossian D. Ashley.

**LIEUTENANTS**—First, John X. Hall: Second, Charles O. Rogers: Third, W. W. Cook: Fourth, Albert Dodd.

**SERGEANTS**—L. D. Ashley, Thomas Lewis, R. A. Newell, Edward Fisk, A. O. Smith.

**CORPORALS**—T. H. Dugan, John D. Lilley, George H. Rivers, John Jordan.

**PRIVATES**—George F. Stratton, E. G. Quinnay, E. C. Lothrop, John Caddigan, Charles P. Prescott, George P. Wheeler, F. J. Stratton, A. [H. Bates, George Lovis, W. G. Dodd, A Richardson, E. W. Fisk, J. B. Richardson, Jr., E. W. Brown, C. L. Pierson, J. McDonna, J. M. Robinson, George A. Priest, J. C. Haskell, Frank Church, John King, E. F. Moore, S. S. Mooney, J. T. Ward, W. D. Park, A. H. King, H. J. Howe, S. H. Brown, Frank Adams, W. H. Lecain, Asa Law, C. W. Maynard, H. W. Keyes, T. A. Burditt, W. F. Davis, F. E. French, W. J. Severance, A. S. Currier, M. Weatherbee, J. B. Park, J. C. Daley, R. S. Bailey, J. B. Neale, W. Lock, L. Andrews, D. S. Hale, C. E. C. Hadley, B. S. Hayward, S. G. Harris.

**ADJUTANT**—Lieut. Col T. E. Chickering.

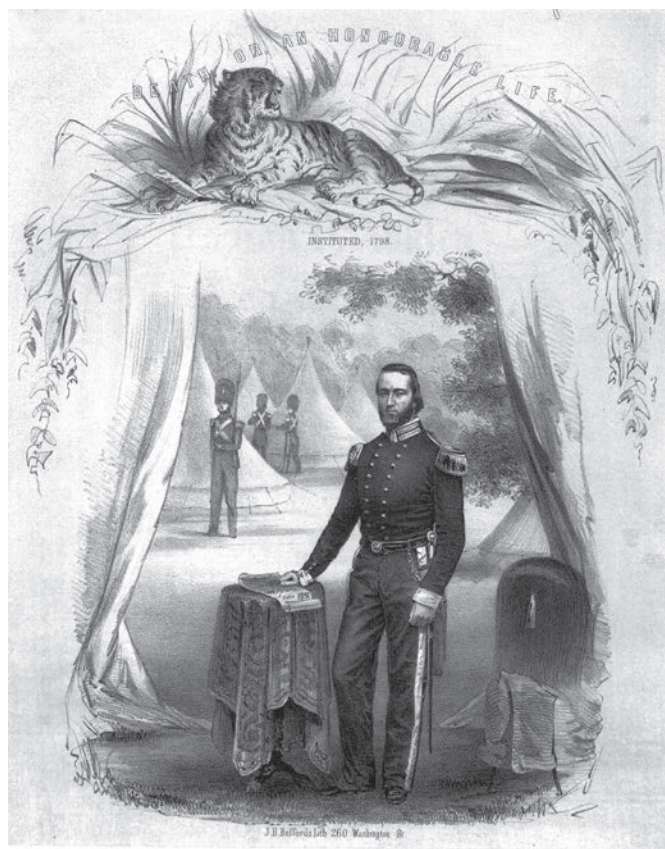
**QUARTERMASTER**—J. D. Wheelock.

**SURGEON**—R. L. Hinckley, M. D.

The company is uniformed in black coats and trousers relieved with white and gold trimmings, with white cross belts, black waist belts and bear skin caps, with fatigue jackets (blue), and both Hungarian and old style army fatigue caps. The members are mostly young men engaged in mercantile pursuits. The corps is generally known by the soubriquet of the "Tigers," and their breastplate is adorned with a tiger's head in bas relief, with the inscription, "B. L. I., 1798."

The Boston Light Infantry was formed in 1789, and first commanded by Hon. Daniel Sargent. Among its Captains have been Russell Sturgis, Esq., now a member of the banking house of Baring Brothers, in London; Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Major John C. Park, late District Attorney in Massachusetts; Capt. Parker H. Pierce, and many other distinguished gentlemen. The first parade

took place on the 18th of Oct., 1798, and the recurrence of the anniversary was availed of to celebrate it in New York. On two former occasions the Boston Light Infantry have been to this City, their first visit in Aug., 1826, under Captain H. Pierce, being the first opportunity the New Yorkers ever had of witnessing the appearance of a Boston company. On that occasion the Infantry reached this City on a Sunday, and intended to encamp in the Park, but such was the density of the crowd assembled to witness their disembarkation that they were obliged to refuse the invitation of Col. Kane, who acted in behalf of the New York State Militia and proceeded to Brooklyn, where they pitched their tents. During their stay, the Corporations of New York and Brooklyn honored them with public dinners, and Col. Arcularius, with his regiment of horse, and several military companies, tendered them civilities. Again, in July, 1844, while commanded by Major John C. Park, they visited this City, and established their headquarters at the Aster House. The New York Light Guard, Capt. Vincent; the Independent Tompkins Blues, Capt. Baxter, &c., extended the customary honors.



**BOSTON LIGHT INFANTRY.**  
M 20  
O. D. ASHLEY, COMMANDER.

FIG 1. Alonzo Bond, "Ashley's Quick Step." Oliver Ditson, Boston, 1861. Notated Music. <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihms.200000073>, accessed 8 August 2019.



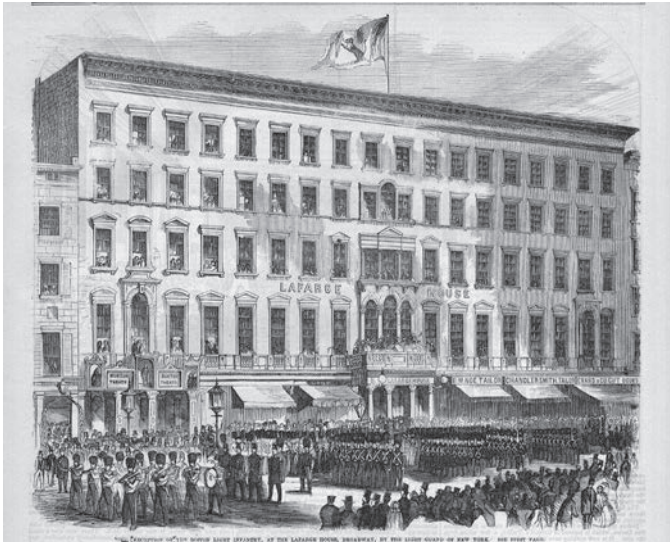


FIG 2. Reception of the Boston Light Guard at the LaFarge House. [www.pikclik.uk](http://www.pikclik.uk).



FIG 3. Boston Light Guard. [www.minecreekinfo.com](http://www.minecreekinfo.com).



25 April 1951: Pfc. Julius Van Den Stock of Company A, 32nd Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division with M1 or M2 Carbine, rests on a Chinese Communist bunker with a Soviet DP light machine gun, along the slope of Hill 902 north of Ip-Tong. Photo by Sgt. Bobby Bethune. NARA FILE#: 111-SC-365083.





FIG 1. A detail of Richard Short's drawing, "A View of the Cathedral, Jesuits College, and Recollet Friars Church, taken from the Gate of the Governor's House," engraved by P. Canot in 1761. The detail shows two officers of the 78th Foot (Fraser's Highlanders) at Quebec in 1760, believed to be the only pictorial record of the 78th Foot executed at the time of its short existence. Courtesy Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1970-188-12.





## An Interesting Regimental Order: Quebec, 1762

Earl John Chapman

Two 1762 orderly books of the 78th Regiment of Foot, Fraser's Highlanders, have survived. One book is held at the Library and Archives Canada (*Fonds John Nairne*); the other book is held in a private collection. These two books give a very good insight into the internal administration of Fraser's Highlanders during its time as a wartime garrison at Quebec.

The purpose of an orderly book was to record all of the orders affecting a given command. General Orders for each day would originate at army headquarters and, in the case of the infantry, the orders would filter down through the chain of command to individual battalions and then down to each company. At each level, the General Orders would be dictated to subordinates who would copy them into orderly books. This process ensured that a large number of highly duplicative books were being maintained within the army at any given time.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the full slate of orders for the day would be read aloud before the assembled men of each company. The books also contained "Regimental Orders," usually abbreviated to "R.O." and these refer to those orders originating at regimental headquarters with their content specific to each regiment.

For the 78th Foot, the years 1760 to 1763 passed uneventfully. While other regiments serving in North America were fighting Indians or storming Spanish fortresses in Havana, Fraser's Highlanders mounted guard duty in what was then known as the "Government of Quebec." Five companies of the 78th including the grenadier company were in garrison in the town proper. The "detachment" was under the command of Maj. John Campbell.<sup>2</sup> The remaining six "outside" companies were parceled out piecemeal to act as garrisons of small towns along the south shore from Lévis to Kamourasca, with outposts reaching out as far east as Rivière-du-Loup.

However, the monotonous guard duty, month after month, posed serious problems for commanders as discipline invariably slackened. By early May 1762, Major Campbell had had enough. His officers and men would have to be firmly told what would be expected of them in the future. On 11 May, he issued a R.O., which was to be considered as a Standing Order and read to the men "at least once a week in the presence of the Orderly Officer." Regimental discipline quickly improved when the alternative was punishment by the lash. A slightly edited version of this R.O. follows:

### R.O. Quebec, 11th May 1762<sup>3</sup>

Major Campbell observes that the non commissioned officers & private men of the Regiment do too often neglect to comply with orders given them from time to time, therefore he desires the following orders to be strictly comply'd with by the detachment of the Regiment under his command, & to be always regarded as standing orders for which purpose they are to be read & explain'd to the men by a serjeant of each company in presence of the orderly officer at least once a week.

Every soldier to be provided with a brush, weir [*sic*: wire, a.k.a. iron vent pick], worm, stopper, turn key screw & a rag for his arms, a hammer stall & flint cape of proper leather never to be taken off except when under arms or on duty;<sup>4</sup> 4 good shirts & stocks [*sic*: socks], one night cape, an ivory & horn comb for the hair, black ball & shoe brushes. The men for guard always to be well shav'd, have clean shirts, their hair ty'd behind & clubb'd if the hair will admit of it.

Their arms very clean, shoulder belts & cartridge boxes well blacked, & shoulder belt buckles brisks [*sic*: bright?]. Every soldier whether he is on duty or not to have his face, hands & knees well wash'd – his hair well comb'd, cut short on the top of his head & his locks short. His bonnet proper so as to reach his brows before, & as high as possible behind with the cockade fix'd so as the half of it may stand upright above the bonnet.<sup>5</sup> His plaid never to be worn but kilted;<sup>6</sup> the philebeg or little kilt to be always worn in the summer or harvest except upon duty or when the detachment are under arms. The soldiers to pay the same respect to all other officers as they do to their own. No man or woman to sell or retail any sort of liquor whatsoever without having his Excellency the Governor's leave & Major Campbell's in writing, & if any man is found guilty of selling any sort of liquor, even spruce beer, [he] shall most certainly undergo the utmost rigor of the military law, & shall forfeit all the liquor he has in his possession – if a woman is guilty she shall be flogg'd & drumm'd out of the Regiment.

Any non-commissioned officer or soldier who shall be seen drunk whether on duty or not shall be punished with the utmost rigor. No woman or sick man to lay a night in the barracks, how soon a soldier is taken sick he is immediately to be reported by the serjeant of his squad to the surgeon who is directly to send him to the hospital where he is to pay two shillings currency per week. Each company to be divided into three squads, one serjeant, one corporal to be appointed to each squad who shall be answerable to the commanding officer of the company that the men's quarters are always kept clean, that they mess regularly & keep their arms, accoutrements, ammunition, linen, & other necessary's in good order. Each company to be exercised twice a day, Sunday's excepted, in two squads – one composed of those who can exercise best, the other of the most awkward & that by serjeants and corporals who have a clear distinct voice, can handle their arms well, that have a great command of his temper & are not out of humor with clowns because they are awkward. They must first teach an easy & graceful manner of marching & pulling off their bonnets to officers, then proceed



by degrees to the manual & platoon exercise.<sup>7</sup> They must be made perfect in their manual, facings, & coming about upon the march. A good deal of time to be given to perform the manual, but the platoon exercise to be very quick.

The adjutant must be at great pains to instruct the non commission'd officers in their duty & they again must avoid gratifying any personal resentment on their command. They are to use the men kindly, but not with familiarity, never failing to report every breach of discipline of which comes to their knowledge in order that offenders may be brought to justice. As the discipline of the company's is much left to the captains & commanding officers of company's<sup>8</sup> it will be much for their honor & credit that their men are perfect & steady in every point of their duty. They are not only to attend themselves, but also all the subalterns must attend the drill instruction & encourage the men to learn the exercise & to prevent the drill serjeants & corporals from proceeding too hastily with the men by recommending tempor & attention. To the other [On the other hand] it is absolutely necessary that the non commission'd officers should never screen [sic] under a false notion of tenderness for any neglect of duty or breach of military order, for on their fidelity & diligence in a great measure the service depends, & is carried on.

The captains are to exact from their subalterns in all affairs of duty the same ceremony & attention as the colonel of the Regiment could do, & they are answerable that their company's are properly attended to by their subalterns & inferior officers that the men are kept clean & well lodg'd, that the sick are taken care of, & that the arms & accoutrements are always in the best repair. Duties of officers in quarters are to attend all parades, to visit the sick, to be attentive that the men are duly clear'd with, properly supply'd with necessary's & not impos'd upon in their accounts, that they mess regularly & to examine strictly the cloathing every time the company parades & bring about a proper neatness of dress which is very much wanted in this Regiment.

All officers to attend roll calling every evening & one officer per company every morning. The orderly officer to report to Major Campbell if any men are absent or drunk in order that they may be punish'd. The surgeon to visit the sick daily & to report their condition.

A picquet to mount this evening to consist of 1 subaltern, 1 serjeant, 1 corporal & 25 private men who are to be ready to perform all that is order'd by the garrison orders. The officer of the piquet to visit all the barracks between the hours of 11 forenoon & two in the afternoon to see if all the men are well lodg'd, clean, & that they all boil the pot, that the barracks are well clean'd, & to order the serjeants to have all the men's bedding air'd. The officer also is to visit the sick in [the] hospital & report daily their situation. Upon Sundays he is to examine that they are all neat & clean, the detachment paraded & march them to Church. The piquet to be relieved daily till further orders.

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#### Notes:

1. Prepared during a period without photocopiers or even pens other than goose quills, the daily process of orderly book maintenance was quite a logistical achievement.
2. A captain since January 1757, John served at Louisbourg in 1758 and ably commanded the Regiment on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. On 5 October 1760, he was promoted to major. As junior major, John reported to Maj. James Abercrombie, then commanding Fraser's Highlanders in Colonel Simon Fraser's extended absence.
3. Captain John Nairne's Orderly Book, Quebec Garrison, 78th Foot—8 May 1762 to 31 December 1762. Fonds John Nairne, LAC MG23, G III 23, v.4. The other extant 1762 Orderly Book also covered the Quebec Garrison of the 78th Foot from 9 May 1762 to 31 July 1762 and found in the private papers and correspondence of Lt. Malcolm Fraser, then adjutant of the 78th Foot.
4. A few of the many small items carried and used by the troops to clean, maintain and protect their muskets. These items were supplied by company officers at their own expense, or charged to the men. Other issued items, not mentioned above, include: a tin bottle for holding oil used to clean and lubricate the metalwork; and a piece of buff leather to polish the metal and brass.
5. Note this Order does not mention "bear skin tufts," just the cockade. It is not known when the 78th Foot adopted black bear skin tufts. As late as April 1761, the Royal Highland Regiment, then in Montreal, was still using "hair" cockades to adorn their bonnets. By this time the "hair" cockades had become rotten and discolored and were scheduled to be replaced with new black satin ribbon cockades later that year. However in late May 1761, company commanders of the Royal Highland Regiment were ordered to provide their men with "bear skin tufts" while still retaining the ribbon cockades. The bear skin tufts were not to exceed five inches in length and were to be "fixed inclining towards the crown of the bonnets." See Captain James Stewart's Orderly Book, BW Archives, Perth.
6. In other words, the belted plaid or great kilt (philamhor) was to be worn as a kilt, with a belt, and not as a cloak. The word "but" is really "bot," meaning "unless" or "without."
7. Essentially, the 'manual exercise' was the long, slow, and detailed sequence of movements endlessly drilled into the private soldier whereby he learned, by the numbers, how to load and fire his musket, to perform the bayonet drill, and to do a variety of ceremonial movements such as the clubbing or saluting with his firearm.
8. Here, Major Campbell is referring to lieutenants, as many captains were on leave back in Scotland.





*Parole Madrid. -*  
*Adjutant 2<sup>d</sup> Batt - - -* Capt. of the Day to Morrow Traver  
*Guard ... 1 - 1 - 5 - 1 - 70* Detail S. S. C. D. P.  
*R. O. For Guard to Morrow* Lieut. Wallcuter  
*Quebec 12<sup>th</sup> May 1762*  
*Parole Antwerp -* Capt. of the Day to Morrow Bayard  
*Adjutant 1<sup>st</sup> - - -* The Genl. Court Martial that sat yesterday  
 to sit again to Morrow at the orderly room at 10 o'clock  
 Capt. York of the Royal Artillery to be a member in place of Capt.  
 Goddard. *Witnessed*  
*R. O.* 11<sup>th</sup> May 1762  
 Major Campbell observe that the Non Commissioned Officers  
 & Private men of the Regiment do too often Neglect to comply  
 with orders given them from time to time, therefore he Desires the following  
 orders to be strictly comply'd with by the Detachment of the Regiment  
 under his Command, & to be allways regarded as standing orders  
 for which purpose they are to be read & explain'd to the men by a  
 Sergeant of each Company in presence of an Officer at least once  
 a week -  
 Every Soldier to be provided with a Bouch weir  
 worm Stopper Turn key screw & a rag for his arms, a hammer  
 stoke & flint cape of proper Leather never to be taken off  
 except when under arms, or on duty. 4 Good shirts & 2  
 one night cape, an Ivory & horn Comb for the hair, Black ball  
 & Shoe Brushes, The men for guard allways to be well shav'd  
 have Clean shirts their hair ty'd behind & Clubb'd of it will  
 admitt of it. -

FIG 2. Regimental Order, Quebec, 11 May 1762. Courtesy Fonds John Nairne, Library and Archives Canada, MG23-GIII23, v.4. Photo by the author.



The United States Navy, Los Angeles Campaign 1847





## The United States Navy, Los Angeles Campaign 1847

Plate No. 989

As forces mustered in the pueblo of San Diego in late December 1846, United States Navy officers and men joined with smaller numbers of Marines, dragoons, and volunteers preparing to launch a January expedition to Los Angeles to complete the final conquest of Mexican California. The campaign had begun almost half a year earlier with the Pacific Fleet's bloodless seizure of the capitol at Monterey. The rest of the province fell so quickly the conquest appeared complete by mid-August. But an autumn uprising in the south demanded a new campaign. During most of this time there were no Army units in California so significant numbers of naval personnel served ashore as infantry, cavalry, and field artillery and continued to do so during this last campaign.

Most naval officers and men adapted their uniforms to suit their new roles on land. Comdr. Samuel F. Du Pont of USS *Cyane* wrote to his wife:

If you were to see me mounted, with my Panama hat, blouse over my uniform coat, rifle across the saddle-bow, revolving pistol on one side, and my sword on the other, you would not recognize your peaceful husband.<sup>1</sup>

Du Pont's "blouse" was the blue flannel shirt worn by navy enlisted men. Seaman Joseph Downey reported that naval officers also wore these during the January march to Los Angeles.

In one thing ... were all uniform, they one and all wore Common Blue Flannel Shirts, rigged into a sort of short coat, decorated with pockets and buttons and a large Leather Belt to which they appended [*sic*] a pair of Pistols and a sword.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Du Pont who wore a blouse over his coat, Downey's account of pocket flaps and naval buttons suggest these officers adapted them to replace their coats in the field. They may also have transferred their undress rank insignia to these shirts. Although naval regulations describe white linen collars and cuffs on blue wool shirts, the Pacific Squadron's blouses appear to have been entirely blue with white tape trim and embroidered starts on the collar. The rest of these officers' campaign dress is less well known but their headgear included undress caps and white straw hats.<sup>3</sup>

Commo. Robert F. Stockton, who commanded the expedition, reported: "Our men were badly clothed, and their shoes generally made by themselves out of canvas."<sup>4</sup> The supply ships were long overdue and much the squadron's uniform supplies had been issued to volunteers and even Kearny's dragoons.

Most officers and seamen were on foot for the expedition, the crewmen organized into units by their arms: muskets, carbines, and pikes with pistols, while mounted sailors had Colt revolving rifles. There were perhaps 200 bayonets for a force nearly three times that size. Officers

had their swords and pistols and some, like their men, carried canvas haversacks and knapsacks.<sup>5</sup>

Commander Du Pont's sloop-of-war *Cyane* had spent the last many months cruising the western coast of Mexico but his crew appeared well dressed and equipped at the San Diego muster in late December 1846. Du Pont recalled:

We had on a former occasion a set of knapsacks made, and I had had the ship's name printed on them; they came famously opportune. A small haversack was added. They all had a certain cap I had allowed them to wear. Sixty-five had muskets (preferred after all to the new firearms), the other thirty-five, pikes and pistols.

DuPont probably meant the round blue wool caps that had been in use since at least the 1830s.<sup>6</sup>

The march took its toll and at the Battle of San Gabriel, Downey reported the seamen were, "[A] motley crowd, the greater portion of whom were ... shoeless and many of them shirtless, on short allowance of every thing but Beef." Nevertheless, the seamen were stalwart soldiers in this last, successful campaign to conquer California.

Art and Text: David W. Rickman

1. Samuel Francis Du Pont, *Extracts from Private Journal-Letters of Captain S. F. DuPont, While in Command of the Cyane, During the War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (Wilmington, DE: Ferris Bros., 1885): 42.
2. Joseph T. Downey, *The Cruise of the Portsmouth, 1845-1847; A Sailor's View of the Naval Conquest of California*, Howard Lamar, ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Library, 1958): 201.
3. See William H. Meyers, Dudley W. Knox, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Naval Sketches of the War in California: Reproducing Twenty-Eight Drawings Made in 1846-47* (New York: Random House, 1939). Also, *Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Navy of the United States* (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1841), 13.
4. *Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Communicating Copies of Commodore Stockton's Despatches relating to the Military and Naval Operations in California* (Washington, DC: The United States Senate, 1849), 31.
5. Downey states cutlasses were carried by the sailors who brought the survivors back from San Pasqual but not in his description of arms issued for the Los Angeles campaign. Downey, *The Cruise of the Portsmouth*: 172, 181-184.
6. DuPont, *Extracts from Private Journal-Letters*: 106-107. See also Stephen C. Rowan, "Recollections of the Mexican War: Taken from the Journal of Lieutenant Stephen C. Rowan, U.S. Navy, Executive Officer of the U.S.S. *Cyane*, Pacific Squadron, 1845-1848," ed., Geo. W. Tyler, *The Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, 14, no. 3 (1888): 547. For blue cloth caps, see James E. Marshall, "Uncle Sam's Slops: Notes on Clothing for the U.S. Navy Enlisted Men, 1830-1840." *MC&H*, 58, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 252-255; DuPont wrote in September 1846 his "sailor companies were furnished with fine army muskets and accouterments, in lieu of their old worn-out navy ones, and the still more worthless carbines." Du Pont, *Extracts from Private Journal-Letters*: 11.



71st Regiment Highland Light Infantry, officer, 1838





## 71st Regiment Highland Light Infantry, officer, 1838

Plate No. 990

This unit was raised in 1777 as the 73rd Regiment McLeod's Highlanders in the British Army and renumbered 71st in 1786. In March 1809, the regiment was officially converted into a light infantry unit and was officially styled the 71st Highland Light Infantry Regiment in April 1810. By the time six service companies of the regiment arrived at Quebec City from Ireland on 15 May 1838, the unit had over two dozen battle honours emblazoned on its colors proclaiming its distinguished conduct in many places such as Gibraltar, India, Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, and Waterloo. It was part of many British regular units sent to Canada as a result of the December 1837 Patriot Rebellions that had broken out in both Lower Canada (now Québec) and Upper Canada (Ontario). It was quickly suppressed, but authorities suspected that the seeds of another uprising were not extinguished and rushed some 10,000 troops to Canada. During the second rebellion, part of which broke out south of Montreal on 3 November 1838, one company of the 71st, on its way from Kingston to Montreal, was joined to a column assembled at Cornwall that, early on 10 November proceeded to Beauharnois, southwest of Montreal, which had been taken over by patriots. When the 600 or so patriots realised that they were considerably outnumbered by the 1200 Canadian volunteers and British regulars arriving, most fled. Some were braver, however, and fired a volley that killed a soldier of the 71st and wounded three others as they entered town. The patriots then ran off, were pursued, and the bodies of four of them were later found. The column secured the village and then marched towards Napierville, the rebel's HQ, to join Lt. Gen. Sir John Colborne's field force of 3300 regulars and attack the place. Again, the Patriots fled, the troops secured the village and it was the end of the short-lived second rebellion in Lower Canada. The 71st remained in garrison in the Montreal area until transferred to Grenada in the West Indies during October 1843. Meanwhile, the Reserve Battalion of the 71st had arrived in Montréal from Portsmouth since October 1842 and remained mostly in its area until May 1850 when transferred to Toronto. Two years later, it went to Kingston and, in September 1854, left Canada to join the British troops deployed in Crimea.<sup>1</sup>

The officer's uniform of the 71st was distinctive compared to most other Highland regiments in that it wore tartan trews rather than kilts and a light infantry shako rather than a feather bonnet. The officer's tartan plaid scarf was ordered put over the left shoulder since 17 February 1834 and the short-tailed "Highland" jacket ordered worn from 20 December of that year. The crimson silk sash worn by all British army officers was seemingly worn under the tartan sash and usually invisible although it could also be

worn over the right shoulder. The jacket was scarlet with pale buff collar and cuffs; gold buttons, wings, and lace. The trews and sash were of the Mackenzie tartan. The shako had black lace, cords, and vizor with a green-black ball pompon, gilt chin scales, and badges. The Model 1822 infantry officer's pattern sword with its gilt guard was carried until as late as the summer of 1839 when officers of the 71st in Montreal were reported as now having the steel-hilted Scottish claymore sword.<sup>2</sup>

We wish to thank kindly the National Historic Sites of Parks Canada in whose collection this watercolor now resides and was photographed by the author.

Art: Douglas Anderson

Text: René Chartrand

1. Henry T. Hildyard, *Historical Record of the 71st Regiment Highland Light Infantry* (London: Harrison, 1876): 76, 118-120; Richard Cannon, *Historical Record of the 71st Regiment Highland Light Infantry* (London: Parker, 1852): 47-48; Elinor Kyte Senior, *Redcoats & Patriots The Rebellions in Lower Canada 1837-1838* (Ottawa: Canada's Wings/Canadian War Museum, 1985): 187-191; John Hare, ed., *Les Patriotes* (Montreal: Libération, 1971): 187-190. According to Patriot J.-B. Prieur who was at engagement, it took place on the 9th and half of the patriots only had old fowlers without bayonets and the rest had various edged weapons made from farming tools.
2. Stations of the 71st Highland Regt. of Foot, War Office 380/4, The National Archives, Kew, UK; *Regulations for the dress of general, staff, and regimental officers of the army 1 August 1834* (London: Adjutant-General's Office, 1834): 145-147; Sumner Notes and watercolor of a young officer, 1830s, Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University (Providence RI); print dated 1832 by J. Folliot; print from Cannon's *Historical Record*; Brian Robison, *Swords of the British Army The Regulation Patterns 1788-1914* (London: Arms and Armour, 1975): 114-118; *New York Evening Post*, 27 July 1839 (with thanks to Tony Gero for sharing this). The uniform of NCOs, which was the same as enlisted meant except for rank badges, is shown on the back cover of the *Military Collector & Historian*, 62, no. 4 (Summer 2010).



Corps Royal de l'Artillerie, gunner, 1779–1786





## Corps Royal de l'Artillerie, gunner, 1779–1786

Plate No. 991

Following the Seven Years War, France proceeded to massive reforms into its armed forces aiming to make them the most effective and lethal in Europe. This brought considerable changes into the army's artillery service, the Corps Royal de l'Artillerie, which was, from 1765, totally restructured. It was routinely also called Royal-Artillerie. From the various battalions were organized seven regiments, named after the artillery academies at La Fère, Metz, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Besançon, Auxonne, and Toul that served as their depots. Each regiment had 20 companies and there were another 14 companies of "Ouvriers" (artisans) and miners for a total of 8,500 officers and men. In 1775, this was raised to 12,000 and, in 1778, the corps was augmented to 22,000 by adding seven provincial embodied militia regiments as a reserve. There were, in addition, over three thousand men who conducted the artillery trains. The reforms also involved important technological improvements with the gradual advent, from 1765, of the innovative artillery system conceived by General Gribeauval.

France entered the American War of Independence as the ally of the United States in the summer of 1778. Reinforcements of metropolitan troops to America had been sent since 1775 and, in 1777, a battalion of the Metz Artillery Regiment was sent to the West Indies. In May 1780, two companies of Metz and a battalion of Auxonne went to the United States as part of General Rochambeau's army with siege and field guns that performed very well at Yorktown in October 1781. Another four companies of Metz were also sent to the United States while a company of Grenoble went to Martinique that year and four companies of La Fère went to the West Indies in 1782. All came back to France in 1783.<sup>1</sup>

By the royal regulation of 21 February 1779, Royal-Artillerie private gunners wore the dark blue coat with dark blue collar, shoulder straps, and lapels; red cuffs, turn backs, and piping edging the collar, lapels, shoulder straps, and pocket flaps; seven brass buttons (stamped with the numeral 64) on each lapel, three at each cuff and below the right lapel; dark blue waistcoat and breeches; and black hat laced with black with a white cockade. Miners had the same uniform, but with *aurore* (orange) epaulets on the coat and waistcoat. "Ouvriers" had red lapels instead of blue on the coat and a red *pattellette* (small flap) on the waistcoat. White linen gaiters were worn for parades, black linen gaiters on service in summer, and black cloth gaiters in winter, each gaiter having 20 to 24 small buttons covered with white linen for white gaiters and with black leather for the black ones. Garters were of the color of the gaiter. Shirts and cravats were white. First privates, bombardiers, corporals, and sergeant had yellow,

aurore, and gold laces on the left sleeve. Officers wore gold epaulets. All were armed with muskets, bayonets, and hangers.<sup>2</sup>

This uniform was introduced after the highly resented May 1776 dress regulations because of its rather too innovative uniform that had introduced such items as a hat whose brims turned up was to have four corners, a short-tailed *habit-veste* (coat-waistcoat), a white belted *camisole* (belted waist length waistcoat). The 1779 regulation brought back the French style uniform with tricorns and long tails to everyone's satisfaction. There were, however, various details that differed as shown in contemporary prints and garments, notably regarding the cuffs, and these matters are presented in a separate illustrated article in the *Journal*.

The background of the plate shows, at left, a Gribeauval system lower caliber brass field gun on its carriage and, at right, an ammunition wagon with its spare wheel of the same system. They were painted "iron grey" that could have a more or less sky blue hue. Ironwork was painted black.

We are most grateful to Joseph C. Salamida for kindly making available and photographing the original watercolor of this plate in his collection. It is signed L. Rousselot who was one of the most notable French military artists of the mid-20th century.

Art: Lucien Rousselot

Text: René Chartrand

1. Louis Susane, *Histoire de l'Artillerie française* (Paris: 1874), 187-202, 278, 292-293, 311, 328-329; Robert A. Selig, *La Courageuse and La Contrebandière* (n.p.: 2008), 13-25.

2. *Règlement arrêté par le roi pour l'habillement et l'équipement de ses troupes, Du 31 Mai 1776* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1776), 2, 37-38; *Règlement arrêté par le roi pour l'habillement et l'équipement de ses troupes, Du 21 Février 1779* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1779), 11, 23-24; "Le variations de l'uniforme du Corps Royal de l'Artillerie 1756-1792," *Carnet de la Sabretache*, IV (1896), 460-469; V (1897), 28-29.



## TO THE EDITOR

**Erratum:** "A 1921 Photograph of Orderly Sergeants' Uniform, 369th..." *MC&H*, 71, no. 4 (Winter 2019).

Unfortunately, the title of this article contains a typo I inadvertently missed. It should read, "A 1921 Photograph of Orderly Sergeants' Uniforms, 369th Infantry, (the old **15th** New York), New York National Guard Solved." I regret this typo and submit the following for its correction in the *Journal's* Table of Contents and on page 369.

Anthony F. Gero



## REMINDER TO OUR WRITERS

In the vein of maintaining the *Journal's* reputation for accurate scholarly research, it is worthwhile to caution prospective authors as regards their citation of sources.

While convenient, wikipedia is **not** a *source*; it is a *conduit*. The site can certainly be useful to ferret out additional references, but these should be the citation. Anyone can edit a wikipedia page; it is far more desirable to find the original source of information.

Similarly, pinterest should be avoided as the cited source for imagery. As above, it is a *conduit* only. It takes a bit more digging to track the origin of a photo posted to this popular site, but it can be done and is highly recommended.

## THE LAST POST



**John Egger**

Fair Haven, New Jersey



### New Members, Spring 2020

Joshua Sponsky by Michael Bortner

David Sponsky by Michael Bortner

Jeffrey W. Judge by James P. Sweeney

David Schenne by David M. Sullivan

Antique Associates at W. Townsend, Inc  
by David M. Sullivan

New England Publishing Associates, Inc.

Robert Fitzgerald by James Crawford

Bobby Brown via CMH Online

Ken Molzahn via CMH Online

Michael Bennett via CMH Online

George Whittaker by Hayes Otoupalik

Jonathan Bennett via CMH Online

Edward Heinrichs via CMH Online





## Engagement at Deloges Bluff: 26-27 April 1864

Chuck Veit

The promising March-May 1864 Red River Campaign turned sour for the Union Army on 8 April at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads. The Federal rout convinced Gen. Nathaniel Banks it was impossible for him to capture Shreveport and it would be best to beat a hasty retreat. His sudden withdrawal left Adm. David Dixon Porter's (FIG 1) fleet isolated far behind enemy lines. The squadron's two hundred-mile descent to Alexandria—plagued by falling water and punctuated by enemy attacks—is a unique page in naval history. Sandwiched between two well-known episodes in the journey—the loss of the *Eastport* and the passage of the falls above Alexandria—is the lesser-known ambush at Deloges Bluff. This brief but murderous engagement nearly cost Admiral Porter his life—and did claim the lives of over two hundred sailors and civilians on board his ships.

The powerful twenty-ship squadron that had assembled at the mouth of the Red River in March—"the most formidable force ever collected in western waters"—had by the last week of April been winnowed down to two ironclads and four lightly-armored gunboats.<sup>1</sup> This remnant lay some thirty miles below Grand Ecore, struggling to yet again free the USS *Eastport*. The hole blown in her bow by a torpedo on 15 April had proven impossible to repair, and only constant pumping and towing (sometimes dragging) had allowed the Union sailors to bring her the last twenty miles. The sole bright spot in the past ten days was the relative absence of the Confederates, who were paying attention to Banks' army as it retreated to Alexandria. But on 26 April, the "butternuts" returned, and "were after us like a pack of wolves."<sup>2</sup>

That morning, the captain of *Eastport*, Seth Phelps (FIG 2), finally agreed to destroy his vessel. The latest struggle resulted in getting the ironclad off one pile of submerged logs only to jam her firmly atop another—with word that an impassible bed of trees lay only two hundred yards downstream. It was time to save at least the shallow-draft gunboats; even this would be a challenge as the water level in the river continued to fall. Already stripped of her guns and stores, *Eastport* was packed with forty barrels of powder and combustibles. At 1030, as the last of her officers boarded USS *Fort Hindman*, a force of 1,200 Confederates opened fire on the ships and attempted to rush USS *Cricket*, which was tied up along the bank. Although over half her crew was ashore gathering fence rails to feed the boiler fires, the watch on board was ready and opened up with grape and shrapnel. One sailor braved the musket fire and ran on deck with an axe to cut the hawser that tied the gunboat to the shore. Once free, *Cricket* drifted away from bank. Together with the guns of USS *Juliet* and *Fort Hindman*, she drove the rebels back after a one-hour fight.



FIG 1: David Dixon Porter, photo taken 1864. Naval History & Heritage Command NH64903.

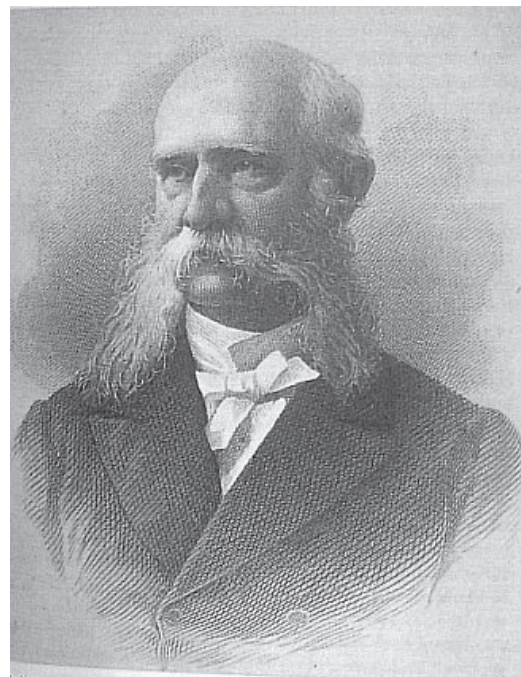


FIG 2: Seth L. Phelps, postwar image, public domain image.



After three attempts to detonate *Eastport* with a galvanic battery, Phelps ordered cotton powder trains laid. At 1410, he applied the match, dove into a waiting cutter, and barely escaped the destruction of the ironclad. The succession of blasts bent the trees along the banks and sent a clear signal to any Confederate forces in the area. That the enemy was gathering to make further attacks on the warships was verified by a rebel captured in the morning's fight, who claimed that the recent assault was made by only the vanguard of six thousand artillery and infantry that would give the ships a "warm reception" further down. At 1520, Admiral Porter returned from discussion with Phelps on board *Hindman*, and ordered *Cricket*—his flagship—to head downstream.

All three of the "warships" under Porter were, in reality, civilian river steamers designed for hauling cargo—not combat. Purchased by the Navy and thinly "armored" with eighth-inch iron plate over their wooden sides, they were called "tinclads" by the sailors—an indication of the value the crews assigned to the metal plating. Although reasonably proof against musket fire, tinclads did not fare as well when faced with cannon. They were, as Porter described them, "mere thread paper vessels."<sup>3</sup> *Cricket* and *Juliet* each carried a battery of six 24-pdr howitzers, while *Hindman* had six 8-inch smoothbores. All were around 150 feet long and varied in the beam between 28 and 30 feet (*Juliet* and *Cricket*) to 37 feet (*Hindman*). Crew strength of *Cricket* was fifty men; the similar crew of *Juliet* was augmented by the men of *Eastport*, and that of *Hindman* by her officers. The twenty-seven-man Marine detachment under Lt. Frank Church (FIG 3) that accompanied Porter was also detailed to the more spacious *Hindman* for this leg of the journey.

In addition to the naval personnel, the fleet had with it several hundred Negroes picked up at Grand Ecore, eager to take passage to "the land of freedom." Originally on *Eastport*, Porter had ordered them transferred to the two pump boats (*New Champion* and *Champion No. 5*) under the assumption that, in the event of an attack, enemy fire would be concentrated on the gunboats. He placed *New Champion* behind *Cricket*, *Champion No. 5* lashed alongside *Juliet* next, and *Hindman*—with Phelps in command—bringing up the rear. Confederate scouts saw the ships pull away from the wreck of *Eastport*, and orders were passed to Col. John H. Caudle of Maj. Gen. Camille Armand Polignac's division to set up an ambush near the confluence with the Cane River at Deloges Bluff (FIG 4).<sup>4</sup>

In the early afternoon of 26 April, the convoy steamed slowly down the Red River at six knots for twenty miles, with Admiral Porter coolly perched in a chair on *Cricket's* upper deck reading a book—and keeping one eye on the



FIG 3: Lt. Frank Church, Courtesy Dave Sullivan.

shoreline.<sup>5</sup> Just after passing the mouth of the Cane River at 1815, he spotted figures moving in the brush on the right bank. "Give those fellows in the bushes a two-second shell!" The crew of the boat howitzer mounted on the upper deck fired the round, which burst among the guerillas. The shot flushed the group of men and alerted Porter to the presence of a large force of Confederates. "Give them another dose!"<sup>6</sup> Before the sailors could respond, a volley of nineteen shells ripped into their small ship, causing it to stagger under the force of the explosions and "shattering *Cricket* in all her parts."<sup>7</sup> Cannon and musket fire erupted from the wooded bank, only twenty yards away. Within four minutes, half the crew was dead or wounded, their ship helpless and spinning in the current. In their wake, the masked battery savaged the remainder of the convoy as the flagship drifted away (FIG 5).

Porter dashed for the pilothouse and opened the door just as a shell struck, stunning him and wounding Thomas G. Drenning (FIG 6), the pilot, in the head. As blood streamed down Drenning's cheeks, he told Porter, "I am all right, sir, I won't give up the wheel." Another round exploded on the upper deck, killing the gun crew and leaving their bodies piled together around the howitzer.



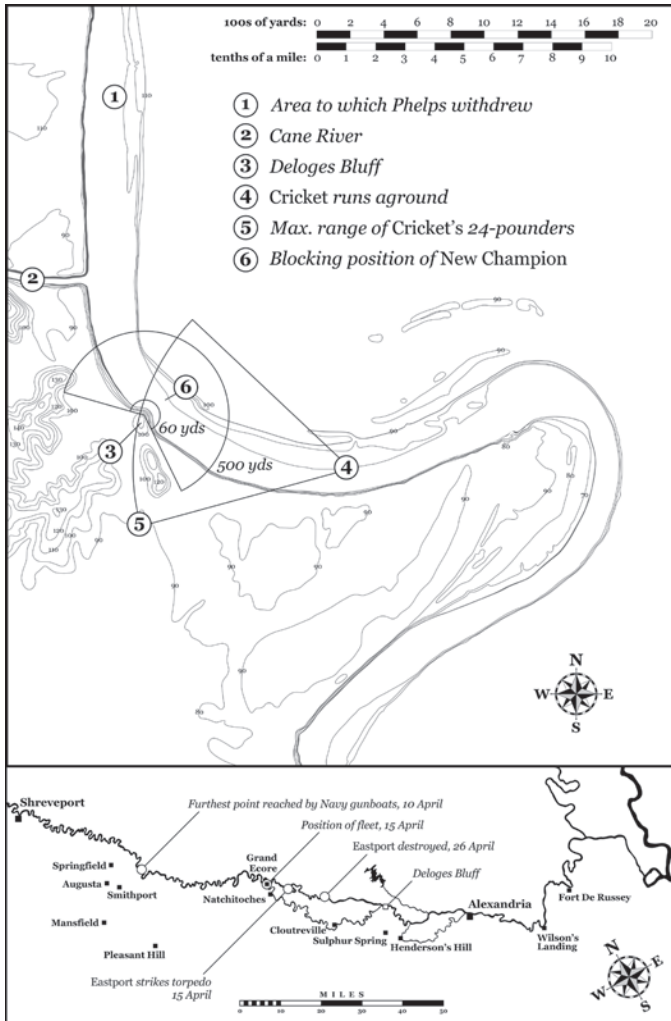


FIG 4: Map of the Deloges Bluff and the Red River below the bluff, author.



FIG 6: Thomas G. Drenning, 1870, Illinois Digital Archives 1981351.

As Porter recovered from the blast, he realized that the ship's engines had stopped and her guns were silent. The captain, Acting Master Henry H. Gorringe (FIG 7), rang the engine room bell to go ahead, telling Porter he wanted to bring *Cricket* around to bring her broadside to bear. Porter belayed this order, telling Gorringe "I doubt if there's anybody left to fire a gun." Instead he told Gorringe to run the battery, allowing the ship to drift downstream in the four-knot current, while he (Porter) made his way below to see what was wrong with their engine.<sup>8</sup>

As *Cricket* drifted under the bluff, she was, for a moment, safe from the artillery atop it; the musket fire from the estimated three thousand infantry, however, continued unabated. When the gunboat rounded the point and came again into the field of artillery fire, a second volley of nineteen shells struck her stern, raking through the vessel. Porter ran for the engine room, racing along the exposed starboard side of the ship. As he made his way aft, a rebel on the bank fired at him. Porter grabbed a musket

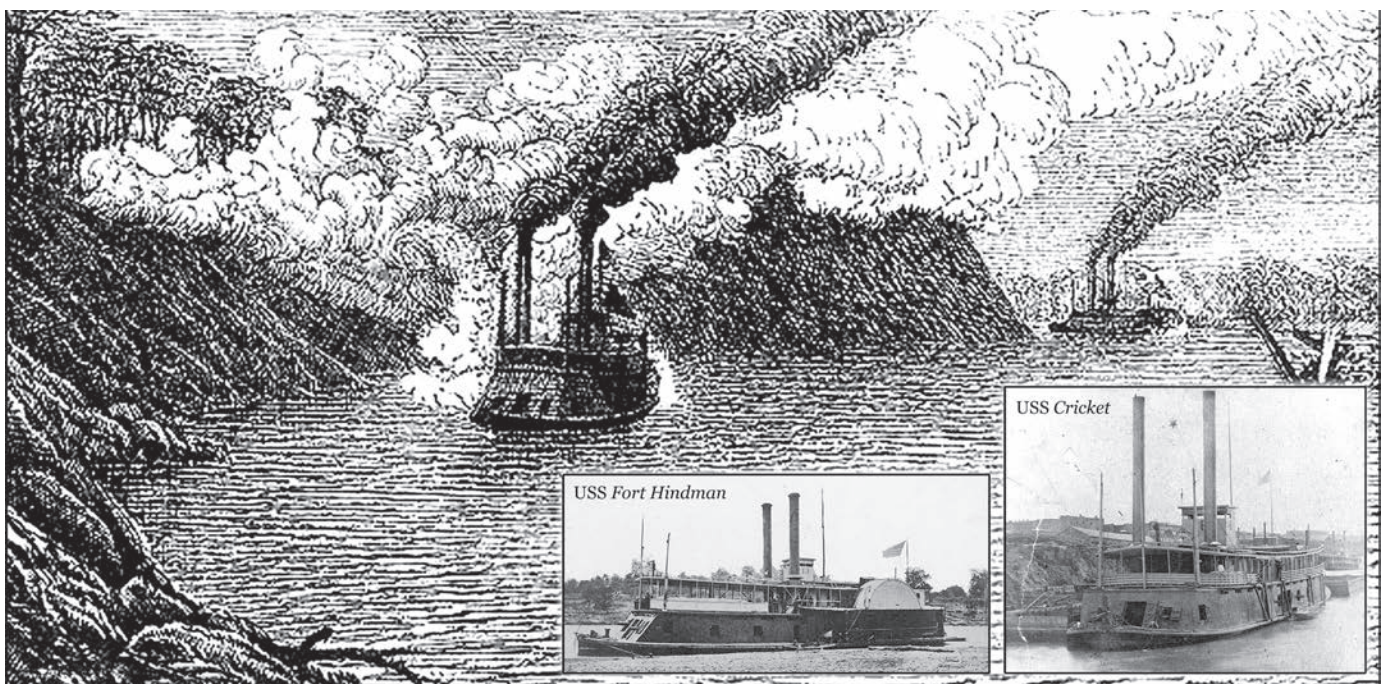


FIG 5: Period illustration of engagement at Deloges Bluff, Naval Historical Center.



FIG 7: Henry H. Gorringer, 1882, public domain image.

from a nearby sailor and took aim at the Confederate. At the last moment, he remembered that shooting people was not his job—ordering others to shoot people was. He handed the rifle back to the sailor, told him to shoot the rebel and watched as the man on the bank fell—one of only two documented Confederate casualties.<sup>9</sup>

The fighting deck of *Cricket* presented Porter a shocking scene: the dead and wounded of the two broadside guns lay strewn everywhere, the guns nearly all destroyed and “everything torn to pieces.”<sup>10</sup> Porter assembled the surviving crewmen—mostly “contrabands”<sup>11</sup>—and ordered, “Fire the guns off, even if you can’t hit anything. Don’t let them think we are hurt.” This would be the sole gun fired by *Cricket* after her first rounds, as there was no one else left to crew her battery.<sup>12</sup>

In the engine room, Porter found all but one fireman wounded, and the engineer dead. Second Assistant Engineer Charles Parks<sup>13</sup> had died as he responded to orders from the bridge, his hand on the steam throttle. In falling, he had turned the steam off. Porter turned it back on and the engines sprang to life. It was barely 1820. In

the past five minutes, *Cricket* had sustained twelve killed and nineteen wounded (most of these severely). A relative of Porter’s who had come on the expedition “to see sheol” (in the Hebrew Bible, a place of darkness to which all the dead go), told him that what he’d seen was “certainly next door to it,” and his curiosity was satisfied.<sup>14</sup> Despite being under power again, the tinclad quickly ran aground—within range of the enemy’s guns, but luckily out of sight behind the trees. She was hung up for the next hour, but not out of the battle.

Seeing *Cricket* adrift, Phelps in *Fort Hindman* worried Porter had been killed. The Confederates, however, were elated, and gave three cheers. They turned their attention to the next ship, *New Champion*, figuring the disabled flagship could be located and destroyed later.<sup>15</sup>

The rapid attack on *Cricket* had unnerved the pilot of *New Champion*, who backed furiously away from the stricken gunboat and directly into the oncoming *Juliet*, smashing her bow. The rebel gunners skewed their guns around and found the range on the *New Champion* with their first volley. Sadly, in addition to her crew, this ship carried about 150 of the fleeing contrabands picked up at Grand Ecore; many would never see the “land of freedom” they sought in running to the “Lincoln gunboats.” As *New Champion* and *Juliet* worked to untangle themselves, a 12-pdr shell pierced the boiler of the transport. A torrent of live steam hissed through the ship, killing a hundred freemen and crew instantly, and so scalding another eighty-seven that they died soon thereafter.<sup>16</sup> Not every casualty was the result of the boiler explosion—the people clinging to the wreck were easy targets for the Confederate infantry.<sup>17</sup> Porter later wrote “some of them may have got ashore, but we never saw any of them again.”<sup>18</sup> Confederate reports said only three people survived. This tragedy helped *Cricket* escape, as the cloud of steam hid the stricken ship while she drifted away.

The barrage that doomed *New Champion* also struck *Juliet*, cutting her tiller ropes, blasting the wheel out of the pilot’s hands, and slicing the steam line that provided power to her engines, as well as damaging the head of *Champion No. 5*’s rudder. While the gunners on board the warship returned fire, the civilian crew of the transport tied to her side tried desperately to escape. As their captain tried to turn about and flee upstream, they began cutting away the hawsers that tied their ship to *Juliet*. When the steam cleared, John S. Watson, Acting Master, USN, and captain of *Juliet*, was shocked to find his vessel turned sideways in the channel, under the full force of the Confederate batteries. The lifeless *New Champion* was also turned perpendicular to the bank, into which *Juliet* drifted and lodged. On *Hindman*, Phelps cursed at the three ships before him as he tried desperately to get closer to the enemy guns.<sup>19</sup>

Aboard *Juliet*, Watson saw the crew of *Champion No. 5* hacking at the ropes between the ships. He realized both the captain and pilot of the transport had abandoned





the wheelhouse, leaving both ships to drift towards the rebel guns. Watson—followed by *Juliet's* pilot, William Maitland—rushed down to the deck in time to prevent *No. 5's* crew from severing the last line. He did this by leveling his pistol at them and threatening to shoot any man who attempted to cut it. Some of *No. 5's* crew attempted to leap overboard, but were driven back by musket fire from *Fort Hindman* as Phelps—shouting through a speaking trumpet—warned that “deserters would be shot.”<sup>20</sup> Maitland “with great bravery and presence of mind,” leapt on board *No. 5* and ran to her pilothouse and took control of the transport. The two ships had by now drifted directly under the bluff—effectively out of range of the Confederates—buying them a few precious moments. Maitland turned *Champion No. 5* around and slowly towed the *Juliet* upstream and out of range.

Phelps, since the beginning of the fight, had been trying to get as close as possible to the bluff, both to shield the transports and damage the rebels as much as possible. Now, as *Juliet* moved past him, he dropped below her to cover her withdrawal. *Hindman* had already taken fire, one shot blowing a hole in her hull at the waterline, and now became the focus of the rebel artillerists. Lieutenant Church, USMC, was knocked to the deck by a shell fragment that struck his leg; this saved his life, for the next blast killed Act. Ens. Sylvester Pool of the *Eastport*, who stood next to the Marine; O.S. Joseph Scott was also badly wounded. Panic spread through the men on the gun deck—who, within but a few minutes, had witnessed the almost-certain destruction of *Cricket*, the hideous deaths of the crew and passengers of *New Champion*, fired upon the crew of *Champion No. 5* as they sought to abandon *Juliet*, and realized they themselves were now drawing closer to the batteries—and Phelps ran below. “I found it necessary to lay my hand upon my revolver and caution them that the first man who should flinch from his gun would receive its contents.”<sup>21</sup>

*Hindman* received some small help from an unexpected source—*Cricket's* single remaining “bulldog”<sup>22</sup> was barking—steadfastly pumping shells in the direction of the Confederate battery. At least one shot from the two tinclads struck home, as Capt. Florian O. Cornay, commander of the St. Mary's Cannoneers, was killed by a burst at this time.

Seeing the disabled *Juliet* and the transport pulling into the bank out of range upstream, Phelps brought *Hindman* around and withdrew to cover the other ships. The trio of battered vessels tied up one mile above the bluff. Phelps and his officers discussed what to do. It was decided to spend the night repairing the ships and run the batteries on the morrow; this would at least make navigation in the shallow river easier than it would be in the dark.

Shortly before sunset, as the gunfire ceased, powder on *Cricket's* gun deck ignited and the ship took fire. The flames were quickly extinguished and at 1830, the small vessel was able to free herself and proceed down the river. With

but a single gun working and half her crew out of action, she could not materially aid Phelps, and Porter decided to make for a prearranged rendezvous downstream where he hoped to find other gunboats of the squadron.

Throughout the night, in sight of the enemy, the crews worked to repair steam lines, rudders, wheel and tiller ropes, plug holes in their hulls, and buttress the most vulnerable parts of the three ships with bales of cotton transferred from *Juliet*. Occasionally, *Fort Hindman* fired her stern guns towards *New Champion* in hopes of preventing the Confederates from moving to midstream and blocking the channel. At 1930, Seaman Scott succumbed to his wounds.

Despite the periodic shelling by the Yankees, the Confederates managed to board *New Champion* and offload her stores. They then headed the transport out to mid-channel in hopes of blocking the river.

Downstream, Porter found the gunboats *Lexington* and *Osage* at 2130. Although anxious to help Phelps, Porter realized the gunfire upstream had ceased. The same concerns about the intricacies of the channel that prevented Phelps from running past Deloges Bluff in the dark convinced the admiral to wait for daybreak to send support.

With the dawn on 27 April, Confederate marksmen worked their way up the far bank and began “annoying” the Yankee sailors still hard at work on board Phelps' three ships. His men had been able to only partially repair *Juliet*—it was estimated her steam lines could be fixed by mid-morning, but the vessel's steering was too badly cut up to be made workable. She would have to be towed alongside *Fort Hindman*. Phelps' main concern was whether there would be room in the channel—which he expected to find blocked by *New Champion*—to allow the two gunboats to pass. Captain Phelps had also to deal with the mutinous officers and crew of *Champion No. 5*, who argued for leaving the transport behind and running the battery on board the Navy ships. Phelps refused, pointing out that the cotton bales loaded on her decks made her easily as well-protected as the gunboats; she was going through. He “therefore made her people go on board” and, to make certain of their compliance, relieved the captain and placed William Maitland (who volunteered) in charge. As a show of faith, Phelps left his personal belongings stowed on *No. 5*, where they had been loaded for passage.

*Fort Hindman* began shelling the woods in the area of the battery at 0530, and kept this up while work proceeded on the three vessels. A little past nine, the ships headed downstream, moving very slowly. At 0920, *Juliet* struck a snag that put a hole in her port bow below the waterline. Watson gave orders to prepare to abandon her,



but Phelps, seeing *Juliet* taking water, ordered a return upstream, where they quickly brought the leak under control using mattresses and planks. At 0930, the ships again pointed their bows downstream and approached the rebel batteries. It was Phelps' plan to not only engage the batteries, but to destroy *New Champion* as they passed.

No sign of the Confederates could be seen. At 0940, rebel sharpshooters began peppering the ships with musket fire, and at five hundred yards the main batteries opened up. Phelps saw *New Champion* to port near the northern bank of the river, partially blocking the channel, but believed he could get through. Suddenly two 24-pdr shots went through *Hindman's* pilot house, cutting her tiller ropes, partly disabling her wheel, and leaving her unmanageable (as well as wounding Lt. John Pearce, captain of the *Hindman*). The two gunboats, lashed side by side, spun in the current, striking their bows and then sterns on the banks. Unable to fire effectively (but firing nonetheless at whatever came into view), the gunboats could do little to protect the civilian ship, which consequently "suffered more severely than was anticipated."

On *Champion No. 5*, a shell wounded Maitland in both legs just as the ship pulled opposite the battery. The pilot dropped to his knees, unable to manage the wheel. The ship drifted into the Confederate bank, where another shell struck the pilot house and wounded Maitland in several places; another cut away the bell rope and speaking tube. The wounded pilot reached for another bell rope, rang astern, and backed the ship across the river, towards *New Champion*. Once alongside, the crew scrambled ashore and tried to flee, but all were captured. Her captain was dead and she was afire in her hold.<sup>23</sup>

Phelps was unable to destroy either of the civilian ships, and was satisfied to simply be able to get past *New Champion* and escape "waltzing, as I may say" (a reference to the side-to-side drift of the spinning vessels). *Juliet* was "much injured," having her rudder shot off and a shell strike her port crankshaft, which knocked out both cylinder heads on the engines. Happily, the gunfire did not result in many casualties. "It seemed as if Providence turned the shot through the crowds that it should do no harm. I saw them traverse her crowded decks and cannot understand how so little harm came of them." A shot that passed through the magazine and broke open several barrels of powder failed to ignite them. Riddled and with several holes beneath the waterline of *Fort Hindman*, the two gunboats made it past the batteries by 1000 hours with relatively few casualties, although Confederate sharpshooters continued to plague the gunboats for another hour.

Twelve miles below the bluff, Phelps was much relieved

to encounter *Neosho* at 1300, ordered upstream by Porter to support him, but arriving too late to be of any help. In her haste to reach Phelps, she had run aground. All of the sick and wounded were transferred on board *Neosho* and all three gunboats stood down river. *Cricket* was hours ahead of them, steaming under escort to Alexandria to care for her wounded and bury her dead. She was so cut up that Porter considered her all but defenseless against the batteries he expected to find en route.

*Cricket* had lost 24 dead and wounded, *Juliet* 15, and *Fort Hindman* 8. Confederate losses, officially, were but one man killed and one wounded; anecdotal evidence suggests there were "severe" losses among the infantry as the result of the Navy gunfire, but these cannot be proven. The greatest loss of life, of course, occurred on the pump boat *New Champion*, where all two hundred crew and passengers were killed by the hot steam, artillery, and musket fire. Her sister ship, *Champion No. 5*, lost two men killed, but the remainder of the crew captured. Admiral Porter, who considered this "the heaviest fire I ever witnessed," admitted that "the passage from Grand Ecore down could not be called a success."

*This chapter is excerpted from A Dog Before a Soldier: Almost-lost Episodes in the Navy's Civil War.*

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#### Notes:

1. Most of these vessels had been sent downstream as the water fell and the Army pulled back, not lost in combat.
2. Naval War Records Office, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1894-1922), I: 26, 61, hereafter *NOR*.
3. A very thin security paper invented in 1829 which had strands of thread running through it. Today, Porter would say "tissue paper" to make the same point.
4. The *NORs* call the site "DeLoach's Bluff" and it appears elsewhere as "Delouch's Bluff." However, modern maps correctly name the site after the local Deloges family, whose cemetery lies atop a rise just inland from the bluff.
5. This was either an act of bravado or foolishness. On 3 April, Act. Vol. Lt. Joseph P. Couthouy had been picked off by a rebel guerilla while directing fire on the deck of the USS *Chillicothe*—and Porter had written the letter informing Gideon Welles of his death. Confederate Maj. Gen. Richard Taylor, in fact, described his plan on 26 April to "keep up a constant fight with the gunboats, following them with sharpshooters and killing every man who exposes himself."
6. David Dixon Porter, *Incidents & Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1886), 241, hereafter, Porter, *Incidents*.
7. The actual size of the rebel force at Deloges Bluff has been questioned since the battle. Confederate General Taylor claimed—based on testimony of his Chief of Artillery, Colonel Brent—there were but four guns and two hundred infantry. But Brent was not actually on the field and histories from the individual batteries present indicate the number of guns was greater. The Val Verde Battery fielded five guns (three 6-pdrs and two recently-captured 12-pound rifled cannon); the 3d Louisiana Light Artillery (Benton's or Bell's Battery) brought two rifled guns; St. Mary's Cannoneers or Cornay's Battery (later the 1st Field Battery) had two 12-pound





and two 24-pound howitzers. This adds up to eleven recorded guns, and there may have been more. A Union pilot captured on 27 April testified two months later he overheard among the rebels the number was eighteen. In a private conversation with Porter following the war, Taylor supposedly informed the admiral he had had "three batteries of artillery and three thousand infantry pouring fire into the vessels all the time."

8. Porter, *Incidents*, 242.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Among the dead was Ann Johnson, wife of the ship's steward. Her name was listed in the *Daily National Intelligencer* among the dead aboard *Cricket* for 26 April, and her "rank" that of laundress. This situation was not common, but also not unknown aboard the ships of the Mississippi Squadron. A laundress was mentioned aboard the *Forest Rose* in March 1864 and orders to pay "authorized female contrabands" \$7 a month were issued to the Mississippi Marine Brigade in January of the same year. Perry Johnson, "Officer's Steward," is recorded on the 31 March 1864 muster sheet for *Cricket*, but is not shown on the subsequent 17 April sheet. Had he been killed after enlisting on 8 February?
11. "The whole ship's company of this little vessel amounted to but fifty persons, of whom one third were Negroes picked up along the Mississippi." David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York Sherman Publishing Co., 1886), 522.
12. Porter, *Incidents*, 242.
13. Lt. Frank Church was evidently a good friend of Parks, as his diary recounts, "April 29, 1864: I found when I got on board the *Cricket* that Engineer [Charles. P.] Parks had been killed and eight others. Cut a headboard to place over his grave." "April 30, 1864: Went over and placed the headboard over the grave of Mr. Parks, found him buried near the river where high water would wash the body out." "May 1, 1864: Went over this morning with a party of Negroes and removed the remains of Mr. Parks' body and found a nice place in the Cemetery under two large trees." *Civil War Marine: A Diary of the Red River Expedition, 1864*, edited and annotated by James P. Jones and Edward F. Keuchel (Washington, DC: History & Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1975), 53.
14. Porter, *Incidents*, 243. may also have been another "guest" aboard. Porter reports that upon leaving the engine room, he came upon a contraband named Bob "holding on to Mrs Holmes's horse." No officer or enlisted man named "Holmes" appears in the muster sheets. Was Mrs. Holmes a local Unionist fleeing aboard the gunboat?
15. Jay Slagle, *Ironclad Capt.: Seth Ledyard Phelps & the U.S. Navy, 1841-1864* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996), 374, hereafter Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*.
16. In the words of Colonel Brent, this "was probably the most fatal single shot fired during the war." *NOR*, I: 26, 177.
17. Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 375.
18. Porter, *Incidents*, 243.
19. Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 375.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. The nickname for the howitzers among the black crewmen. William Maitland, however, recovered from his eight wounds and was released by the Confederates two months later. Admiral Porter's comment of pilots in general, "I never knew a braver set of men," most surely applied to this man.
23. William Maitland, however, recovered from his eight wounds and was released by the Confederates two months later. Admiral Porter's comment of pilots in general, "I never knew a braver set of men," most surely applied to this man.

## There's a New Rank Insignia for the Military's Top Enlisted Advisor

Meghann Myers

Submitted by Peter McDermott

The senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff can be an E-9 from any of the services, but until now, hasn't had a distinctive rank insignia the way the sergeant major of the Army, master chief petty officer of Navy, sergeant major of the Marine Corps and chief master sergeant of the Air Force have.

As current SEAC Army Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell prepares to hand over responsibility to Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Ramon Colon-Lopez, he sported new insignia Monday on his Army Service Uniform. Going forward, he said, SEACs will have the same pattern nestled between their chevrons and rockers.

The insignia, featuring an eagle gripping three arrows—the chairman's signature logo—is surrounded by four stars, to represent the four-star officer the SEAC advises. The Institute of Army Heraldry consulted with representatives from all four services to create the design.

"This historic step gives this position irreversible momentum," Troxell told reporters in a Pentagon briefing.

—<https://www.militarytimes.com/>



Army Command Sgt. Maj. John Wayne Troxell, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. DoD Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. James K. McCann.



## 1866: African American Fenians, a Mystery to be Solved

Anthony F. Gero

Research efforts on the Fenians of 1866 have appeared in a variety of published sources.<sup>1</sup> Recently, several contemporary 1866 newspaper accounts have been located that hint men of African descent may have been involved in Fenian efforts. These contemporary references circumstantially suggest African American supported and may have joined the Fenians.

The first account is about Lincoln's funeral train and appeared in the *Daily Union Press* (Kentucky) that was reprinted by *The New York Daily Tribune* on 7 June 1866.<sup>2</sup> According to the Kentucky paper, the funeral train arrived in Columbus, Ohio, at around 0700. Once at the depot, the coffin was placed in a hearse and was escorted to the capital. Among those in the procession were "... the orders of Masons and Odd Fellows, and various other organizations, including the *Fenian Brotherhood (sic) and colored Masons, and colored benevolent associations* (that proceeded) through High street ... ." (My italics)

Although there is not a specific reference to African Americans in the Fenian Brotherhood, the "colored Masons, and colored benevolent associations" marched with the Fenians is noteworthy. This suggests perhaps there was an association given the groups paraded together that day.

The next item is a more direct reference to the efforts of African Americans to support the Fenian movement. On 7 June, *The New York Daily Tribune* also published this account:

## SECOND DISPATCH.

MALONE, Wednesday, June 6, 1866.

There was a parade of the Fenian forces at this point this morning, and seven regiments turned out. The various military evolutions were well performed. Several Court Martials (sic) for insubordination, etc, were held, and offenders punished. One man was strung up by the thumbs for refusing to obey orders . . . The Fenian patrols are doing good service in the cause of law and order. They are armed with large clubs ... . Three hundred and eighty Fenians arrived this afternoon from Potsdam ... . *The intelligence that the colored people tendered their services created great enthusiasm among the Fenians.* (My italics)<sup>3</sup>

This last sentence begs these questions: what colored people, where was the offer made, and what type of services were being offered? These questions could be answered by the next contemporary newspaper account.

On 8 June 1866 *The New York Daily Tribune* ran this short, but important, item:

## COLORED VOLUNTEERS OFFERED TO THE FENIANS.

PHILADELPHIA, Thursday, June 7, 1866

A deputation of colored men waited on the Committee of the Fenian Brotherhood this morning, and offered the services *one hundred able-bodies colored men, well-drilled soldiers, all of whom served in the late war,* (My italics) to march to the

Canadian border to fight for Irish liberty and independence.<sup>4</sup>

If one takes into account these newspaper versions and their time line, the evidence indicates there was an effort by men of color, former soldiers, to join the Fenian military. The location of this effort was centered in Philadelphia.

What has not yet been discovered is the so-called "smoking gun" of evidence that would substantiate these men actually marched to the Canadian border in 1866. This present article is offered in the hope other researchers may find confirming evidence these men of color did join the Fenian forces on the Canadian border.

Lastly on 6 June, according to *The New York Daily Tribune* of 12 June 1866, in an item entitled, "The Colored Men and the Fenians," reported:

... a large and influential meeting of colored men was held in the Masonic Hall, West Sixteenth-st (sic) on the evening of June 6, 1866. Elias B. Conover was appointed Chairman and John D. Bagwell, Secretary." In that meeting a resolution was submitted and unanimously adopted that among it provisions stated that "Whereas, It has been reported in the papers of the day, that delegations of colored men had offered their services to the leaders of the Fenian movement and Whereas, Such reports tend to convey the idea that the colored men of New-York are in favor of said Fenian movement, and Whereas, the reverse is the fact, therefore be it Resolved, That the colored men of New-York are now, as they ever have been in the past, law-abiding citizens ... will be on the side of law and order ... ." <sup>5</sup>

The motion also stated, although sympathetic to the plight of the Irish in Ireland, the colored men of New York City hoped the United States government would resolve it peacefully. One could assume the memory of the 1863 riots in New York City had influenced the African-American men of the city to adopt a less bellicose attitude than their fellow citizens in Philadelphia.

## Notes

1. For a start on the Fenian Brotherhood see: *Correspondence Relating to the Fenian Invasion, Printed by Order of Parliament*, (Ottawa: Hunger, Rose & Company, 1869), a booklet supplied to me by late Fellow Roger Sturcke; Christoph Mueller, "The Fenian Irish Army of Liberation, 1866," pl. 936, *MC&H*, 67, no 3 (Fall 2015): 228-229; Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle That Made Canada*, (Toronto: Allen Lane Canada, 2011).
2. *The New York Daily Tribune* was accessed on line in November of 2018 at the web site: [oldfultonpostcards.com](http://oldfultonpostcards.com) Note: Malone is a village in northern New York in Franklin County along the Canadian border with Quebec.
3. *The New York Daily Tribune* of 7 June, accessed on line October 2018 at the web site: [www.fultonhistory.com/](http://www.fultonhistory.com/).
4. *New York Daily Tribune* of 8 June 1866, accessed on line October 2018 at the web site: [oldfultonpostcards.com](http://oldfultonpostcards.com). Additionally, an Ogdensburg, New York, newspaper, *The Republican* also reported on this 7 June meeting of men of color in Philadelphia on 8 June 1866.
5. *New York Daily Tribune*, 12 June 1866, accessed on line October 2019 at the web site: [www.fultonhistory.com/](http://www.fultonhistory.com/).





## A Casualty of War: One of the Thousands Killed by Disease

David M. Sullivan

Twenty-year-old Charles E. Gatier, then employed as a druggist, enlisted at the Recruiting Rendezvous, Philadelphia, 6 October 1858, using the alias of Gustavus Morris, and joined Marine Barracks, Washington, on 9 October. He remained on drill until 10 May 1859 when he was detached to Marine Barracks, Philadelphia, there to join USS *Lancaster*. Joined USS *Lancaster* 10 May 1859. After a twenty-nine-month cruise aboard that ship, Gatier was detached when she returned to the United States and he and the rest of the Marine Guard joined Marine Barracks, Norfolk, 23 October 1861. He was transferred to Marine Barracks, Washington, 29 October 1861, where he was granted leave until 7 November, under orders to report to Marine Barracks, Philadelphia. He was a member of the Marine Guard sent aboard USS *Miami*, 5 February 1862.

On 5 February 1862, the woodenhulled gunboat was ordered to proceed to Ship Island, Mississippi, to join the "Mortar Flotilla" under the command of Cdr. David D. Porter, which was being organized to neutralize Confederate riverside forts during Admiral Farragut's impending attack on New Orleans. *Miami* reached Ship Island 19 March and headed for Pass a l'Outre where she entered the Mississippi to join Commander Porter's flotilla.

During the next few weeks she was busy preparing for the assault. On 13 April, *Miami* joined *Westfield*, *Clifton*, *Oneida*, and *Harriet Lane* and steamed up the Mississippi. A Confederate steamer exchanged fire with the Union ships before scurrying upriver to safety. Early in the morning, five days later, *Miami* towed three mortar schooners to predesignated positions below Forts St. Philip and Jackson where the Union ships bombarded the Confederate works, which guarded the approach to New Orleans. The shelling continued intermittently until it reached crescendo before dawn 24 April as Flag Officer Farragut led his deep draft, salt water fleet up the Mississippi in a daring dash past the forts.

*Miami* remained below with the mortar schooners providing covering fire for Farragut's ships as they ran the gauntlet of Confederate guns. When the Federal vessels had reached safety, *Miami* turned to transporting Army troops to their positions for launching an attack on the forts by land and continued the task until the forts surrendered to the Navy on the twenty-eighth. Two days later, Gatier wrote home with a description of the battle.

U S Gun Boat Miami  
Quarantine Ground  
April 30/62

Dear folks at home;

Your letter of the 2nd reached me yesterday and I hasten to reply to it. It found me enjoying mostly good health excepting the diarrhoea which troubles me a great deal. The water being very muddy which we are forced to drink brings on this disease.

We started up the river on the 16th April to take our positions for bombarding. We commenced bombarding Forts Jackson and St Phillipi on the 17th with Captain Porters mortar schooners, 21 in number and several Gun Boats; the *Miami* opening the program of the day by towing three mortar schooners up within range, when we ran rather close to the forts on account of our vessel shearing badly. They opened there batteries on us when shell and shot rained around us like so many hail stones; luckily no one was killed and but little or no damage done. We managed to get our division into range. We commenced the bombardment day and night until the morning of the 24th at 15 minutes before four o'clock when all the ships got under weigh and passed around the point under a raking fire from both forts and a large number of masked batteries. Fired on both forts and batteries and completely silenced the Guns on Forts Jackson (Note – the next page of the letter is missing.) The battle lasted 2 hours and 45 minutes. The mortar division then retired and we were then engaged in landing troops but still kept up the bombardment. After landing two regiments we were blessed with a sight which elicited a shout which echoed far and near; the glorious star spangled banner was flying in triumph over both forts and all the rebel possessions in the vicinity having surrendered to our superiority in force and materials.



FIG 1.  
Charles E. Gatier.  
Photograph in the  
pension certificate  
file of Louisa M.  
Gatier at the  
National Archives.



This is the greatest and most glorious victory gained during the war, more so for the gallant Navy as it was conducted and accomplished without a gun being fired by the army. I would not discribe the battle if I had time for I forgot myself altogether and could not see anything excepting when our balls exploded for we had command of four 24 lb howitzers and I tell you we made them fly. We throwed 360 shell in the first hour out of our gun, that is six in one minute; so you can tell the Dr. I think I complied with his request in regards to those G—D----- S—s of Bs; for I was captain of our gun on the occasion. There was only 48 killed during the whole engagement and about the same number wounded during the whole engagement. We had none killed in our ship. You must get some papers, Leslies or Harpers, and you will see what an awfull damage we all passed through. The Forts were surrendered on the 28th.

Gatier then paused in his writing and took it up again two days later.

New Orleans, May 1st

We then started up the river with a regiment of Indiana troops on board to garrison a two opposite New Orleans while almost all the rest of General Butler's division (14,000) were landed in and around New Orleans which had also struck there collars to the stars and stripes of our gallant Navy without having pluck enough to fire a gun against us. We were greeted coming up the river with repeated cheers as though they were glad we had gained the day.

They are had pressed for specie here using omnibus tickets for 5 and ten cent pieces. They have no bank notes, only confederate bond shin plasters from \$10 to 25¢. We took Gen [Johnson K.] Duncan and a col whose name I did not learn, prisoners and sent them to Ft Warren. Almost all the rebel troops took the oath to support the Union if called on; some o them enlisting on the spot; this shows pretty clearly that the most of them were pressed to fight against us. I will now draw this to a closehoping this will find you all enjoying good health.

N.B.

I wrote you a letter from Fort Monroe just on the eve of our departure; one from Ship Island and this is the second one from here. Did you receive none of those? Your letters will reach me if by directing as you did your last. Give my respects to all inquiring friends. Kiss all the children for me and love to all our folks.

Aurevoir.  
From your affectionate  
Son & Brother  
Charles E. Gatier' alias  
Gus. T. Morris.

I received yours of the 6th March today and as I had not sent my letter yet I thought I would let you know it. Since we came down here I have heard that we are to make out on another expedition which is forming to attack Fort Morgan in Mobile Bay to subjugate the City of Mobile, so I suppose we will leave in a few days for Ship Island to repair our damages. You will see by this that they keep us moving all the time up and down the river distant about 125 miles or more.

Charlie

Farragut ordered the Mortar Flotilla to Ship Island on 1 May, there to prepare for action against Mobile, Alabama. Porter left Ship Island with his steamers and USS *Sachem* on 7 May, heading for Mobile to prepare for an attack. After planting buoys to mark safe channels for Farragut's deepdraft ships, the steamers returned to Ship Island. On the tenth, Porter, who had remained off Mobile on blockade duty, reoccupied Pensacola, Florida, after it had been burned and abandoned by Confederate troops. Although most military and naval installations in the area had been destroyed or severely damaged by thorough Southern demolition work, Porter recognized the strategic advantages of Pensacola as a naval base and shifted his flotilla there from Ship Island.

Meanwhile, Farragut, upon returning from a daring expedition up the Mississippi to Vicksburg, had received "stringent orders to send a large force up the river" to join forces with Flag Officer Davis' western flotilla in clearing the entire Mississippi Valley. He accordingly sent for Porter's mortar schooners to "shell the heights of Vicksburg and Memphis [which] cannot be reached by our guns."

*Miami* reached New Orleans 7 June and spent the following fortnight towing schooners upriver. She reached Vicksburg on the twenty-first for a week's service moving schooners in and out of firing positions and shelling the cliffside batteries herself. On the twenty-eighth her guns engaged the Confederate cannon at rapid fire while Farragut's ships ran by the Vicksburg batteries to join the armed riverboats of Flag Officer Davis's Western Flotilla. The joining of the salt water and fresh water squadrons buoyed morale throughout the North; however, the strategic potential of the feat was largely nullified by a lack of ground forces to take and hold key points along the river. Farragut returned to the lower river on 15 July.

Gatier, who had served throughout the campaign with only a complaint of loose bowels, which was common among Farragut's fleet, fell ill with fever and was transferred to the Naval Hospital 16 July 1862. He died on 18 July 1862.

William Stanley, an immigrant from Ireland (1828-1922), enlisted as a private on 23 June 1857; reenlisted, 24 June 1861, 28 June 1865, 28 June 1869, and 28 June 1873. He was subaequently discharged as a sergeant under surgeon's certificate for disability on 5 April 1876. Two



months later, he was called upon to swear an affidavit in the matter of Gatier's mother's application for a pension. Stanley's affidavit stated:

He was orderly sergeant of the Guard aboard the U.S. Steamer *Miami*; she went into commission about January 1862 and one Gustavus Morris was picked out of the Philadelphia barracks as one of the guards having been then enlisted as a Marine.

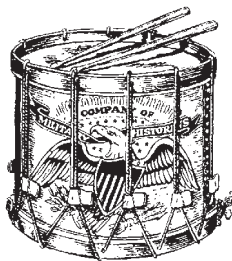
After they were ordered to the ship she went to New Orleans; after it fell, they then went to the fleet to Vicksburg and after the fight there on 28 June 1862, the guard was ordered on shore for picket duty for the Mortar Flotilla. They were there doing duty when the said Gustavus Morris was taken sick. He was one of the number who was doing picket duty and had chills and fever and was weak. He was on shore several days unfit for duty in the tent and affiant sent him to the *Miami* sick and when the affiant again went to the *Miami* Morris was still sick and to the best of the affiant's recollection he did not get well again, but died and was buried on shore at Pilot Town.<sup>1</sup>

John Lear was appointed mate, USN, 26 February 1861 and promoted acting master, 26 February 1862. He was honorably discharged 24 February 1864. He stated in his affidavit, he only became aware of Private Morris' true name when he was shown the photograph (FIG 1) by Morris' mother. He went on to say:

Gatier, alias Morris, while in the actual line of duty as a Marine, from exposure and hardships while on board ship, contracted epidemic fever known as swamp fever and that he became totally unfit for service and died at Pilot Town ... At the time he contracted the disease the steamer was on duty on the Mississippi River and the epidemic broke out when the vessel was on the Mississippi River at Vicksburg.<sup>2</sup>

#### Notes:

1. Pension certificate 2006 and associated documents contained in the case file of Louisa M. Gatier, mother of Charles E. Gatier, National Archives, Washington, DC.
2. Ibid.



#### MC&H Wanted

Seeking *Military Collector & Historian* Volume 58, #2, 2006. Somehow my copy was misplaced and I would like to buy a replacement.

Contact Bill Emerson.  
Phone 256-461-8782  
or email to  
[bemerson@knology.net](mailto:bemerson@knology.net)

Thanks for any help!



## An Infantry Regiment's Board of Inquiry About a Missing Pair of Cavalry Boots

Steven Baule

Among the more interesting items addressing the uniforms and equipment issued to the 117th Indiana Volunteers is a transcript of a Board of Inquiry ordered by Col. Thomas J. Brady who commanded the regiment during its entire service. The 117th Indiana was raised in the summer of 1863 and mustered into service in September for six months. The regiment served in Kentucky and East Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> The Board was ordered to review the "deficiencies of certain articles of clothing for which Lt. John A. Moorman<sup>2</sup> is responsible" on 18 January 1864, at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee.<sup>3</sup>

The Board of Inquiry made up of three officers, Capt. Hiram Braxton, 1st Lt. Jechonias Rutledge, and 2d Lt. Robert Denny, all from the 117th Indiana. The Board was called over the fact only 299 pairs of "cavalry boots—new" were included in which was supposed to include 300 pair of such boots. The boots were issued by AAQM Nathan C. Goodnow<sup>4</sup> of the 16th Illinois Cavalry at Tazewell, Tennessee on 17 January 1864. QMSgt. David J. Mitchell presented the invoice to the board and helped them inspect the packaging, which appeared to be intact and had not been tampered with. It was determined that the missing boots were not included and the error was made by the Army when issued.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear why the 117th Indiana Infantry received 300 pair of cavalry boots instead of infantry brogans.

#### Notes:

1. W. H. Terrell, Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana (Indianapolis: Samuel M. Douglas, 1866), 3: 204.
2. John A. Moorman of Winchester, IN, was commissioned as first lieutenant and quartermaster of the 117th Indiana on 20 August 1863. He remained with the regiment throughout its service. Terrell, 3: 201.
3. Recommendations from a Board of Inquiry, 18 January 1864, Lucy Ball Owsley Collection, Box 31, Folder 99, Collections of Minnetristra Cultural Center, Muncie, Indiana.
4. Nathan C. Goodnow (also Goodenow) was commissioned as the junior second lieutenant in Battery A, 2d Illinois Light Artillery in December 1862. He was promoted to captain in the 16th Illinois Cavalry in April 1863 for three years' service. He was detached as an ordnance officer at the Louisville, KY in April 1864. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the 16th Illinois Cavalry but wasn't mustered in at that rank at the end of the war. Illinois Civil War Muster and Description Database, Retrieved from <https://www.ilsos.gov/isaveterans/civilMusterSearch.do>.
5. Recommendations from a Board of Inquiry, 18 January 1864, Lucy Ball Owsley Collection, Box 31, Folder 99.



## THE MESSAGE CENTER

CMH HEADQUARTERS

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we begin the New Year, it is time to think about the 2020 Annual Meeting. We will be holding our meeting at the Crown Plaza, Princeton, New Jersey, where we were able to obtain a remarkable room rate of \$119 per night. The registration materials were sent out this past January and hopefully you already registered for what should be a fantastic meeting. I also find the meetings to be a great time to see “old” friends and meet new ones. In an effort to take advantage of the sites and varying activities in the greater Princeton, New Jersey, area you will see several excursions on Thursday, 12 April before our traditional welcome reception. For those of you who want to experience firing a variety of weapon styles, you may sign up to fire flintlock rifles, percussion fire arms, going on to arms of later historic vintages. You may also go and watch others try their hands with these arms should you not desire to give any a try or sign up for another excursion to the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle. On Friday, we will learn about the activities of the British forces in New Jersey during the American Revolution, followed by a field trip focusing on ten crucial days of the Revolution. On Saturday, we will enjoy a variety of lectures before our closing cocktail party and dinner banquet. For those of you who want more, several field trips are available for Sunday, 26 April.

We are also trying something new this year for our Company Fellows. On Wednesday, 22 April, the day before our Annual Meeting, there will be a special workshop program on ethics and various conservation techniques encountered with caring, repairing, and conserving arms, armor, and historical artifacts by Hermes Knauer, Conservator

Emeritus, from the Arms and Armory Department of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. This timely work session will be followed by the Fellows joining each other for an informal dinner. Several decades ago, the Company’s Fellows would gather once or twice a year for a few days of lectures and camaraderie. However, as attendance of the Fellows meetings declined over the years, the Fellows meetings were discontinued. Our approach this year is to seek a resurrection of a Fellows gathering in conjunction with our Company Annual Meeting. We thought we would try to capitalize on the Fellows who regularly come to our annual meetings and put forth a program just for them. We also want to determine if there is interest in restarting some sort of Fellows program that will be held with regularity. Overall, I think you will find the annual meeting to be another wonderful experience, jam packed with things to do and places to see.

I want to follow up on several points I made in my remarks in our last issue of the *Journal* (Vol. 71, No. 4, Winter 2019 at p. 358). I laid out the financial condition of the Company to you and the steps taken by your officers and governors to run a very tight ship that seeks to operate on a balanced budget. Since my last post, I am pleased to note a number of you expressed encouragement, coupled with financial support in the form of a tax-deductible monetary donation to the Company. Thank you. I want to specifically acknowledge one significant donation received to underwrite a financial award of \$300 to accompany the Emerson Award presented each year for the best article on military culture published in our *Journal*. The donor contributed restricted funds to make

the \$300 annual cash award for at least the next ten years.

The Company’s Board has formally adopted the Company of Military Historians Benefactor Program as a way to publicly recognize your gifts. Following these remarks, please read the description of our new program. We will begin to publicly recognize our contributors in each issue of the *Journal*, as well as on the Company’s website. Should you wish to make contributions throughout the year, we will continue to aggregate them for continuing recognition at the various giving levels. We are striving to run a break even organization that delivers exceptional value to our members. Thank you for helping us to ensure our continued success. This is your Company. Take an active part in it.

Craig D. Bell  
President





## Company of Military Historians Benefactor Program

### Become a Benefactor!

Support the Company above your membership level and know that 100% of your contribution goes directly to support the Company and its drive to be self-sustaining.

The Company of Military Historians is creating a Benefactor Sponsor Program to recognize donors who through monetary contributions, help make the Company a self-sustaining and financially strong nonprofit tax-exempt organization. Our purpose is to disseminate information and education on the material culture, history, and traditions of members of the Armed Forces of the United States worldwide and other nations serving in the Western Hemisphere. In recognition of your support, all Benefactors will be featured in each issue of our Journal as well as listed on the Company's website. As a publicly supported charity, your donations may also eligible to be claimed as a charitable contribution on your income tax return if you claim itemized deductions.

The Benefactor Program is a special donor society or group designed for those persons, families, corporations, and foundations who wish to support the Company on an annual basis with a substantial donation. The program requires a cumulative donation of \$250 (or more) in a calendar year. Giving levels including the following:

Division Commander	(\$5,000 or more)
<i>Craig Bell</i>	
Brigade Commander	(\$4,000 - \$4,999)
Battalion Commander	(\$3,000 - \$3,999)
<i>Bill Emerson</i>	
Company Commander	(\$2,000 - \$2,999)
Command Sergeant Major	(\$1,000 - \$1,999)
<i>Merle Cole, Marko Zlatich</i>	
Platoon Leader	(\$500 - \$999)
<i>Dr. Gordon Jones, Dave Sullivan, John Thillmann</i>	
Squad Leader	(\$250 - \$499)

The giving levels cover an entire calendar year so you do not have to make your entire gift at one time but can split it up over the year. As the cumulative amount of your donations during the year hit the threshold of the next giving level, we will move you up to the appropriate giving class for the amount of the cumulative donations received during the year and reflect the change in the next issue of the *Journal* and update the Company's website.

Donate today! The Company was founded in 1949 and is seventy years old this year. Please join us to ensure the Company will continue to be a permanent long-term organization dedicated to our mission to educate and inform in the areas of military material culture. We believe we are the only organization with this mission dedicated to the material culture of the Armed Forces. Donations should be mailed to the Company of Military Historians' Headquarters at Post Office Box 910, Rutland, MA 01543.

If you have any questions, please email the CMH Administrator at [cmhhq@aol.com](mailto:cmhhq@aol.com) or the CMH President at [cdbell@mcguirewoods.com](mailto:cdbell@mcguirewoods.com). Thank you!





## The "Alarm List" Company, Antrim, New Hampshire, 1812–1814: A Possible Uniform Template

Anthony F. Gero

Although the militia of New Hampshire and its military uniforms from the era of the War of 1812 has been partially researched, there is more to be uncovered.<sup>1</sup> A recent Internet search of the history of Antrim, New Hampshire, has uncovered some uniform data not previously known to many researchers and which is the subject of this present article.

In Rev. W. R. Cochrane's *History of the Town of Antrim*, page 204, he writes:

War was declared by the United States against England, June 18, 1812. On the seventeenth of December following, our State passed an act organizing a 'Volunteer Corps of Infantry,' only to resist invasion of New Hampshire and formed of those by law exempt from military duty. A company of this kind was formed in Antrim, and the fathers called it 'The Alarm List.' There were forty in the company, and most of them actually bore the scars of the Revolution. Their uniform was a large white frock thrown over their ordinary clothing. They paraded two or three times a month on Meeting-House Hill, under command of Capt. Peter Barker, with fife and drum, and they could be seen in their drill movements from miles away. Their heads were white as their frocks and they made a most stirring and imposing appearance ...<sup>2</sup>

The description of this exempted company or as the town fathers called it, "The Alarm List," suggests a uniform: "a large white frock." Since hunting frocks were quite common for military usage during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Antrim company's uniform description is a striking and specific example for an exempted company's dress during the War of 1812.<sup>3</sup>

The reference also opens up a window of possible exempt men's dress in other state militias in the region. For example, from 1812 to late 1814, New York State organized exempted men into units. These men are frequently referred to in New York State Governor Daniel Tompkins' correspondence as "Silver Greys," often with the town or region they were from in front of the term "Silver Greys."<sup>4</sup> As an example, in Cayuga County, New York, during the war, the "Aurelius Silver Greys" and the "Scipio Silver Greys" were raised.<sup>5</sup>

In a 6 June 1812 order, Tompkins hinted at a possible uniform for an exempted company in Otsego County: "... said company may uniform or not at their discretion, and may select and adopt such uniform as they think most economical and suitable. ..."<sup>6</sup> For decades, I had assumed most exempted men wore civilian dress when on duty since Tompkins' order was the only reference I had uncovered in my research on the New York State Militia (NYSM). With this testimonial to the Antrim Alarm List company wearing white frocks over their civilian clothing, a possible uniform template could be established and applied beyond New Hampshire. Coupled with what is

known on the use of frocks by military units, one can surmise exempted men, as veterans once again in the service of their home states, could have chosen to wear frocks in the NYSM, too as suggested by Tompkins "at their discretion ... as they think most economical and suitable. ..."

### Notes:

1. René Chartrand. "A Most Warlike Appearance," *Uniforms, Flags and Equipment of the United States Forces in the War of 1812* (Ottawa: Service Publications, 2011), 104–106 for references on the New Hampshire Militia from the 1790s through 1815. Additionally, see Anthony F. Gero, "An Account of the Mourning Dress in the New Hampshire Militia, ca. 1800," *MC&H*, 41, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 21–22; Anthony F. Gero, "Portsmouth Sea Fencibles and New Castle Sea Fencibles, New Hampshire Militia, 1808–1812," *MC&H*, 44, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 133–134; Anthony F. Gero, "Military Advertisements in the New Hampshire Patriot, 1809–1812," *MC&H*, 40, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 6–7.
2. Rev. W. R. Cochrane. *History of the Town of Antrim, New Hampshire: from its earliest settlement to June 27, 1877* (Manchester, NH: Mirror Steam Printing Press, 1880). Original copy found at the Harvard College library and now a Google-ebook, accessed via the Internet in October 2012. The Reverend Cochrane also has this to say about the militia from Antrim on page 203, "The Act of December 28, 1792 provided each regiment should have a company of grenadiers; meaning then, a uniformed company composed of large, tall, and selected men. There seems to have been no company of this kind in the Twenty-Sixth (*sic*—which was the regiment assigned to Antrim) until about 1807, when John McNeil of Hillsborough, succeeded in organizing the grenadiers ... . McNeil was six feet and six inches tall, and received no one to his company who was less than six feet in height. The uniform consisted of black coats gorgeously faced with red, tall caps, and brilliant plumes ... . (Eventually the company fell to just the men of Antrim by 1823) ... disbanding ... in 1851 ... ."
3. For the various styles of military frocks worn from 1779 to 1814, one can start with Marko Zlatich and Bill Younghusband, *Men-At-Arms Series: General Washington's Army: (2) 1779–1783* (Great Britain: Osprey: Reed International Books Ltd, 1995); Ed Gilbert, illustrated by Adam Hook, *Frontier Militiaman in the War of 1812: Southwestern Frontier* (Great Britain: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2008). For a recent study on the use of hunting frocks and frocks in the New York State Militia consult Anthony F. Gero, *Excelsior's Citizen Soldiers: The Uniforms and Equipage of the New York State Militia-1787–1847* (Auburn, NY: Jacobs Press, 2016).
4. Hugh Hastings, State Historian. *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of New York, 1807–1817*, Military: Volume I, II, III. (New York and Albany: Published by the State of New York from 1898–1902). Scattered through these three volumes are numerous references to exempted men formed into military units from 1809–1815.
5. See Anthony Gero and Roger Sturcke, *Cayugans in the Field, 1793–2003: Citizen Soldiers of Cayuga County, New York* (Auburn: Jacobs Press, 2004), 5.
6. For a more in-depth study of exempted units in the New York State Militia see Gero, *Excelsior's Citizen Soldiers*, Chapter Seven, in the section entitled "The Exempt Companies, 1809–1815 and 'The Silver Greys,'" 91–93.





## Winfield Scott's Attempted Pacification through Military Commissions and Councils of War and the *American Star*

Will Gorenfeld

Military Commissions and Councils of War were a hybrid form of courts-martial. They first burst upon the scene during the war with Mexico. In this conflict the Army of the infant United States republic found its soldiers spending a significant amount of time occupying a hostile nation. At the beginning of the war the sole form of military justice was the court-martial, which had been long established under the Articles of War.<sup>1</sup> Such military courts, however, had jurisdiction solely over soldiers and military contractors for crimes such as mutiny, desertion, or neglect of duty. The jurisdiction of courts-martial law did not extend to crimes committed by soldiers against civilians and vice versa—these were very array of encounters, which the Army found facing in occupied Mexico. To quote legal historian Erika Myers, the U.S. invasion of Mexico “necessitated new legal strategies.”<sup>2</sup>

When the war begun, Gen. Zachary “Rough and Ready” Taylor commanded U.S. forces fighting in Northern Mexico. From Matamoros to Monterey, Taylor’s invading troops plundered the land and frequently ran into attacks by guerillas. These attacks resulted in a cycle of further reprisals by the Army. Old Rough and Ready lacked the means to punish soldiers who, without justification, attacked Mexican noncombatants and pillaged their lands. The result was Northern Mexico became a hotbed of guerilla activity that distracted and pinned down a significant number of Taylor’s troops.<sup>3</sup> The result was later noted by an officer “the smiling villages which welcomed our troops on their upward march are now black and smoldering ruins.”<sup>4</sup>

The sequence of violence in Northern Mexico was partly due to under traditional military law, a court-martial panel had no jurisdiction over a soldier who assaulted a civilian. The conduct of Sgt. William C. Holbrook of Company E of the 3d Missouri during the war with Mexico typifies the type’s offences leading to Scott’s frustration with the state of military law.

After the battle at Santa Cruz de Rosales in 1848, the sergeant faced a general court-martial for having attempted to enter, while intoxicated, the home of a resident of the city of Chihuahua. The court-martial tribunal found it had jurisdiction over him as a drunken soldier and found Holbrook guilty of being drunk while on duty. However, it determined it had no jurisdiction over his forcible entry of a civilian’s home and dismissed the charge. Because of Holbrook’s prior service to the country at the Battles of Palo Alto, Resaca, Monterey, and Vera Cruz, Gen. Sterling Price, Holbrook’s commanding officer, annulled the charge.<sup>5</sup>

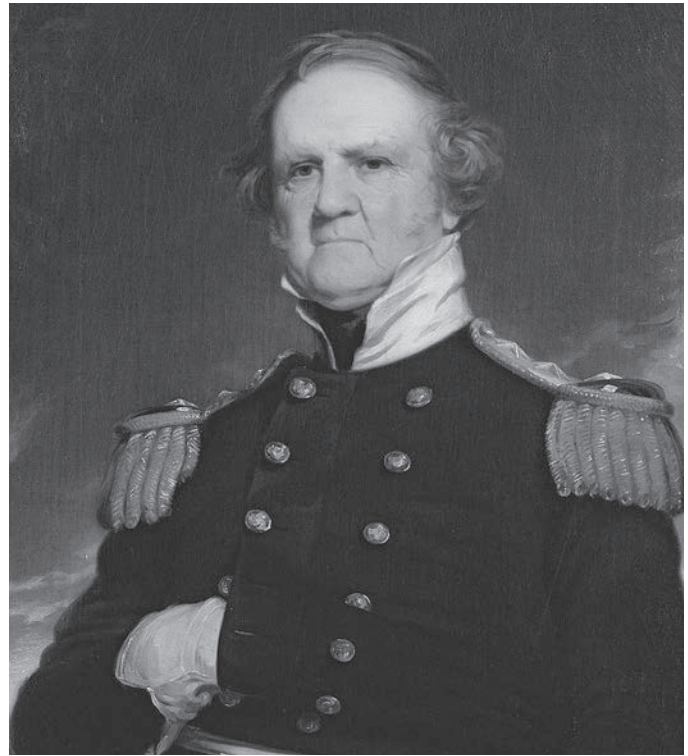


FIG 1. Gen. Winfield Scott.  
National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Gen. Winfield Scott (FIG 1) may have been the greatest general to have ever commanded the United States Army.<sup>6</sup> He landed his undersized, invading army at Vera Cruz with a full awareness of Taylor’s problems with angry civilians and feared for the safety of his small army. Scott realized he needed additional legal powers to deal with troublesome soldiers, as well as enemy agents and hostile civilians.<sup>7</sup> Congress, however, would not grant Scott the special power required to punish Mexicans who were committing crimes against his soldiers, and to punish his soldiers from harming innocent Mexican citizens.

Scott, who was trained as a lawyer, took it upon himself to set up Military Commissions and, later, Councils of War, set up under the generic “laws of war” to deal with the void in military laws. Scott enacted General Order 20, on 19 February 1847, giving the military jurisdiction to resolve a wide variety of matters ranging from murder to breaking up religious ceremonies.<sup>8</sup> Scott set up these tribunals to function under the vague “laws of war.” Councils of War differed from military commissions and courts-martial in their flexibility.<sup>9</sup> This provision allowed for the creation of military tribunals, which had jurisdiction over crimes committed by soldiers upon civilians, Mexican irregulars,



and Mexican recruiters who enticed American soldiers to go AWOL.<sup>10</sup>

Soldiers, who deserted upon the Mexican recruiters' promises of free land or upon grounds the war was being fought to destroy Catholicism, were subject to the jurisdiction of military law. If caught, these men were court-martialed and often subject to be executed. Under Scott's new law, military tribunals could now try those Mexicans who persuaded soldiers to desert.

Scott envisioned General Order 20 would manifest a policy of restraint upon ordinary citizens and would punish only those Mexicans who openly resisted and attacked the military.<sup>11</sup> Procedurally, these tribunals generally followed the rules governing practice in courts-martial hearings and expanded the jurisdiction of the Army and, potentially, reduced the possibilities for uprising. In practice "the verdicts of the Commissions were less severe than those of general courts martial."<sup>12</sup> Or, in the words of historian Myers, "Scott's new tribunals were part of what would now be called counter-insurgency."<sup>13</sup> Before war's end, Scott held over one hundred military commissions in central Mexico; and Col. Richard Mason (FIG 2) was to convene fifteen more such hearings in California.<sup>14</sup>

In summer 1847, a copy of Scott's General Order 20 was printed in a Mexican newspaper, which Colonel Mason discovered while in Santa Barbara, California. Having to routinely deal with bad behavior by citizens and soldiers in occupied California, the colonel was quick to sense the need to bring Scott's hybrid military commissions to the West Coast.<sup>15</sup> On 27 July, Colonel Mason issued his



FIG 2. Col. Richard Barnes Mason. [www.sfmuseum.org](http://www.sfmuseum.org).

Order No. 36, adopting Scott's system of military justice. In his order, Mason added a preamble warning soldiers they would be swiftly arrested and charged by a military commission for any crime they committed against a citizen.<sup>16</sup> The military trials of 1st Dragoons Bugler Felix Leggitt, Pvs. John Smith and John Stokely, and Mexican citizen Martin Tritschler (FIG 3), serve as examples of those court proceedings unique to the war with Mexico.

Martin Tritschler, an immigrant from Germany, was a clockmaker by trade. He employed several men in the town of Puebla. He had been an officer in the Puebla National Guard who had fought at the Battle of Cerro Gordo. Following the battle, Tritschler retreated to Puebla, a large city of eighty thousand with a grand cathedral and plaza.

Marching from Jalapa, Scott and his tired troops arrived in the beautiful mountain town of Puebla on 15 May. In Puebla, Scott rested his troops and waited for supplies and reinforcements to arrive preparatory for his attack on Mexico City. While he waited, writers and printers serving in his ranks foraged the town seeking a printing press, lead typeface, ink, and paper. On 12 June 1847 the first edition of the *American Star* (FIG 4) hit the streets of Puebla.<sup>17</sup>

There has been a long tradition in the U.S. Army for

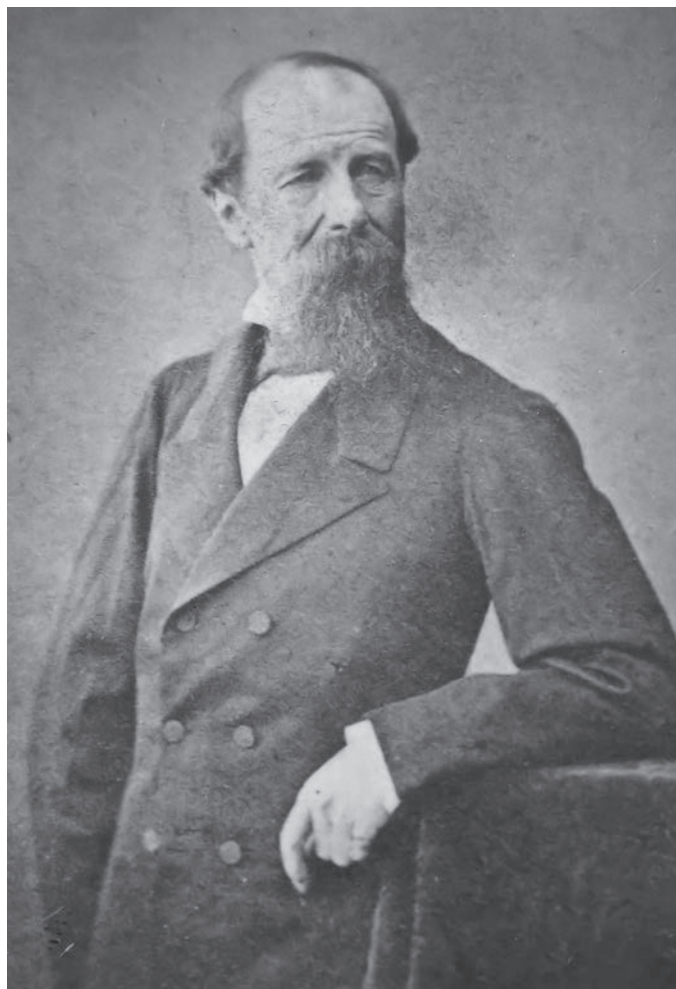


FIG 3. Martin Tritschler. [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org).



# AMERICAN STAR

VOL. 1. PUEBLA, (MEXICO) JUNE 20, 1847.

THE AMERICAN STAR—No. 2.  
Will be published on Tuesdays and Fridays, during the  
stay of the American Army at Puebla, by  
**PEOPLES, BARNARD & CALLAHAN.**

## OUR WARFARE.

It is now fourteen or fifteen months since our army left Corpus Christi for the Rio Grande, more than a year we have occupied portions of the Mexican territory, and in all of that time not an act of devastation or cruelty—not even a retaliatory act of the latter—can be traced up on our long line of operations. This we assert with a pride of heart that lies even above that right attributed to which, in times past, we were wont to hold ourselves.

On the 10th of May, 1846, our troops crossed the Rio Grande above Matamoros, took possession of and occupied that city. Its inhabitants, accustomed to acts of oppression and even cruelty from their own army, were almost terrified at the approach of ours; and many, whose means enabled them, left the place, and those who remained behind shut up their shops and houses, in the fear that the victors from Palo Alto and Resaca would sack the city; and when our advanced party entered the plaza few were to be seen in the streets. The precautionary measures of the commanding general in a manner restored confidence, and soon the citizens resumed their usual avocations—the shops and stores were opened, and a brisk trade sprung up in that city, which for months had been occupied by Mexican troops, and the subsistence of the inhabitants eaten out without repayment, until they were completely impoverished. As we said before, our appearance gave a happy impulse to trade, and soon the haggard looks of the citizens gave place to joyous and smiling faces; for we not only enriched Matamoros, but all the adjacent portions of Tamaulipas. We received nothing but what we paid for in cash, and at a high price—for the Mexicans soon learned to double and treble their estimates. Their prices we did not refuse to pay, until they became too exorbitant for endurance, and then we refused the high payment—nothing more. Not a house, not a

Sierra Madre to Tampico. On that whole route, Gen. Twiggs was particular that the rights and properties of the citizens should be respected. We were an employee of Capt. Robert Allen at the time, and can unhesitatingly assert that not a piece of property of any kind was consumed by that division that the owner's price was not paid. Corn fodder, grass, and even the wood with which the soldier's food was prepared, all was paid for from the U. S. treasury, and when we finally reached Tampico—a distance of near 600 miles—all could safely say that the people on the road had nothing to regret, and indeed that our stay with them had been so short.

After a sojourn of about six weeks in Tampico, where again our army chest disgorged a fair proportion of its contents, we repaired to Vera Cruz, which place, after a few days bombardment, surrendered to our arms. Much has been said by Mexicans of the cruelty of our commander in bombarding a city containing, as it did, a number of women and children. On this subject we believe the mass of the Mexican people are vastly ignorant—ignorant through the falsehoods and exaggerations that have been adduced to prejudice them against us. It was known for many weeks before we arrived with our fleet at Agoston Lizarlo that the city of Vera Cruz would be attacked, and many families left it in consequence. On the 12th or 13th of March most of our troops had effected a landing, and before the commencement of hostilities the removal of the women and children from the city was urged. It was unheeded. What was our commander to do? He had an expensive army—a fleet of over 500 vessels, and the sickly season approaching. It was taxing our humanity too far to suppose that a refusal to remove the women and children from the city—after being twice solicited—would prevent its being attacked. The result of that attack, it is well known, and no

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made a special effort to leave the citizenry undisturbed. It was observed in the *Star*: "Along the road from Jalapa to Puebla the same course of conduct marks our track, and at each night's resting place the quartermaster's purse was opened in repayment for everything furnished by the inhabitants."

With the arrival of Scott's army in Puebla, the general resumed his efforts of not disturbing noncombatants. Tritschler, meanwhile, resumed his efforts to assist Mexico in the war. On 17 June 1847, the Army arrested two men for passing out leaflets, attempting to entice U.S. soldiers to desert. One of these men was Martin Tritschler. He was seen circulating a printed sheet, written in English and German, which offered soldiers safe conduct to a nearby Mexican encampment and free land if they decided to desert. A story published in the *American Star* described the results of one these incidents:

Two persons, a Mexican and a German, have been arrested in this city for tampering with our soldiers and endeavoring to induce them to desert. One them, we hear, had a printed [*sic*] address (the one spoken of in our last), and the other was pointing out the beauties of the road to Atlixco. How well a rope would become the necks of these gentry? We would walk three squares to see them hung.

Immediately preceding the above story in the *Star* was an account of two dragoons who took "French leave" (deserted) who "thought they would better their conditions by repairing to the enemy's camp." These men soon "fell in with a party of the enemy, who stripped them of everything but their shirts." The "enemy" also "took their arms, mounted their fine American horses," even though the deserters had shown to them "a pass from a Mexican officer in Puebla." The article concludes "[t]his is the way they pay deserters for the arms and public property they take away from them."<sup>21</sup>

Recruiter Martin Tritschler was about to test Scott's newly created tribunal. On 24 June 1847, he was hauled before a military Council of War and charged with "Persuading or encouraging soldiers to desert the Army of the United States." He was also charged with working as a secret agent of the enemy. The five-man panel was presided over by Maj. Gen. John Quitman (FIG 5).<sup>22</sup> A transcript of the oral proceedings was not included among court documents obtained from the National Archives. It does not appear legal counsel represented Tritschler at the hearing. Following what appears to have been a summary hearing, the court found him guilty of both charges and specifications. The court ordered Tritschler to be "shot to death."<sup>23</sup>

The panel forwarded the results in the case for review by commanding General Scott. The general, however,

enlisted personnel to publish a newspaper or newsletter. Most readers are aware of *Stars & Stripes* of World War II fame. Few realize this newspaper had its beginnings in the Civil War and was revived for World War I. Long before *Stars & Stripes* there were a number of military newspapers extant in the war with Mexico.<sup>18</sup> For example, there was the single-issue *Santa Cruz Banner*, which was printed on a salvaged printing press after the capture of the pueblo of Santa Cruz de Rosales, the last battle of the Mexican War.<sup>19</sup> The *American Star* was a newspaper of much larger circulation, written and was printed by soldiers in Winfield Scott's army. Following Scott's forces into Mexico City the *Star* began publication there on 1 September 1847, using Mexican type set, which lacked a "w", and printers needed to substitute two "v"s. The paper eventually became a daily, and was published until 30 May 1848.<sup>20</sup>

The *American Star*, printed in both English and Spanish, provided useful information for both soldiers and civilians as it contained news reported elsewhere, battle reports, entertainment, and official notices. It also served as a powerful propaganda piece designed to calm the fears of conquered Mexicans. For example, the 20 June 1847 edition falsely boasted of the respect for civilians in Taylor's rapacious army and played down the deaths of citizens during Scott's bombardment of Vera Cruz.

On 19 April 1847, the day following Scott's victory at Cerro Gordo, the newspaper reported he ordered the release of most of the Mexicans taken prisoner in the battle. The real reason for the release was Scott lacked troops and facilities to guard a large number of prisoners of war. Upon his army's arrival at the town of Jalapa, Scott

FIG 4. *American Star*. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 5. Gen. John Quitman circa 1846. [www.aztequeclub.com](http://www.aztequeclub.com).

had misgivings over the case. In particular, he sensed most of the population of Puebla was outraged over the verdict and threatening to riot if Tritschler was executed. As mentioned, Scott wished to use his tribunals to win over the civilian population in Mexico lest they rise up and surround his small army. He carefully reviewed the transcript looking for any legal loophole which would spare Tritschler from execution. A trained attorney, Scott knew the insanity of an accused person would result in the suspension of all legal proceedings against him.<sup>24</sup> Despite there being any proof in the record of Tritschler's insanity, Scott found him to be insane and ordered his immediate release from custody. The "insane" watchmaker married in 1867 and fathered eight children, two of whom became archbishops.<sup>25</sup>

On the evening of 3 August 1847, Pvt. John Smith, Company C, 1st Dragoons, allegedly broke into the Los Angeles apartment shared by Lts. John Davidson and George Stoneman and carried off \$675.00. The Army arrested Smith and on 20 September 1847, and he was brought before a seven-member military commission headed by Capt. A. J. Smith, 1st Dragoons. Pvt. Smith pled not guilty to the charges of burglary and theft.<sup>26</sup>

Assistant Surgeon John S. Griffin was the judge advocate. In this position he had the responsibility of prosecuting the case as well as assisting the accused. To make matters more complicated, Private Smith, while awaiting trial, had failed in an attempt to commit suicide by taking a horse pistol and shooting himself in the heart. Somehow, he missed the heart but was seriously injured.

As the only doctor in town, Griffin treated the seriously wounded Smith. The private survived his gunshot wound only to face Griffin as both a prosecutor and a witness for the prosecution. Griffin briefly testified he, in the company of Lts. George Stoneman and John Davidson, returned with them from dinner to find the back door of their quarters ajar, a trunk located inside had been burglarized, and a sum of money taken.<sup>27</sup>

Mona Jurado, a servant who lived next door to the Stoneman and Davidson apartment, testified she observed two men in military uniforms knock several times upon the door to their apartment, go around to the rear of the building and, moments later, saw one of them leave from inside the dwelling.<sup>28</sup> The next witness was Lieutenant Stoneman. He attested around eight o'clock in the evening, he discovered his quarters had been forcibly entered and all of the money inside his trunk had been stolen.<sup>29</sup>

Peter Biggs, Captain Smith's slave, testified he met Privates Smith and Stokely and they told him they were down on their luck and the privates asked him if he knew where they might locate a "sight." (A location which could be burglarized.) He told them, being daily in the company of officers, he knew there was money inside of Lieutenant Stoneman's trunk. Biggs claims to have told Smith he would leave the back door of the apartment unlocked. Biggs met Smith after the burglary and was given some of the stolen money.<sup>30</sup>

Remarkably, the next witness was Pvt. John Stokely, a suspect who was under arrest for the same burglary.<sup>31</sup> Stokely stated while on guard duty the evening of the burglary, Smith met him and told him his intention to later enter Stoneman's quarters and steal money. Stokely admitted two weeks after the burglary he gave some of the stolen money to Biggs. The panel overruled Griffin's objection to the panel's question about whether the quarters were locked on the ground it might incriminate him. Stokely then testified the premises were open. At this juncture, the court granted Griffin's motion for adjournment upon the ground the accused is too weak to continue further was granted.<sup>32</sup>

Upon resumption of the proceedings, Pvt. John Chambers testified he saw Smith on the night on which the burglary occurred. He stated Smith had changed into blue pants without a stripe and a sailor's blue shirt, which the dragoons drew when they reached San Diego in December of 1846.<sup>33</sup>

The accused then submitted a written statement in which he noted this was the first instant in which he had ever been charged with a crime and begged for leniency.





He asserted "Pete" induced him to commit the crime and would not have committed the crime if Pete had not made these inducements.<sup>34</sup> Smith's cry for leniency fell on deaf ears. On 25 September 1847, the panel found Smith guilty and sentenced him to a term of five years in custody.<sup>35</sup>

On 2 November 1847, the panel considered the Stokely case. The case was pretty much tried along the same lines as the Smith case. Stokely faced the same burglary and theft charges. One difference in the proceedings was the revealing testimony offered by Sgt. R. J. Falls of the 1st Dragoons.<sup>36</sup> The sergeant testified Stokely had told him he had planned the crime, went to the scene, and then got cold feet. A few minutes later, Smith overtook him and stated he had taken the money and he would divide the funds with Stokely and Pete. Subsequently, Stokely stated to Smith he didn't want any of the money.<sup>37</sup> The testimony of Pvt. Jack Mosier confirmed this. He testified Smith had told him Stokely never knew about the stolen money.<sup>38</sup>

The prosecution called the now convicted Private Smith, who testified Stokely accompanied him to quarters occupied by Davidson and Stoneman, watched, but did not enter the quarters. He stated Stokely did not receive any of the stolen funds.<sup>39</sup> In his defense, Stokely called 2d Lt. J. M. H. Hollingsworth of the 7th New York Regiment. He testified Stokely assisted in Stoneman's efforts to recover the stolen funds.<sup>40</sup> He also had Sergeant Fales, Lieutenant Davidson and Captain Smith attest to his good character.<sup>41</sup>

The panel found Stokely guilty, but considering he was a good soldier and assisting in the recovery of a portion of the missing funds, it wished to be lenient in sentencing. Colonel Mason, acting through his adjutant Lt. William T. Sherman, 3d Artillery, would have no part of this and remanded the case for a sentence. On 9 December 1847, while confined in Los Angeles, Stokely, helplessly chained to a log, died when a fire consumed the makeshift guardhouse.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, back in occupied Mexico City, Bugler Felix Leggitt, a drunkard who was, a recently recruited member of Company K, 1st Dragoons, while on occupation duty in Mexico City, walked into his company's barracks room. There he found a Mexican stable hand standing there. Leggitt accused him of stealing his blanket and told him to leave the room. When the Mexican remained in the room, probably because he did not speak English, Leggitt drew a large caliber horse pistol out of his pommel holster and shot the unfortunate stable hand in the head. After firing the pistol he threw it across the room and then passed out. Felix's defense before a military tribunal was he was a kindly fellow, a good soldier and, being drunk, had no memory of the event. Under the Articles of War a court-martial panel did not have jurisdiction over a soldier who killed a civilian; Leggitt could not be court-martialed. However, he was subject to the jurisdiction of Scott's military commission.<sup>43</sup>

On 29 December 1847, Bugler Leggitt was tried before

a seven-member military commission panel presided over by Major Henry Bainbridge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The panel found Leggitt to be guilty and sentenced him to be executed. Three members of the tribunal requested the commanding general grant clemency on the ground of Leggitt's service and youth. General Scott, perhaps attempting to curb alcoholism running rampant among his soldiers and to punish the cold blooded murder of an innocent civilian, affirmed the sentence.<sup>44</sup> Leggitt was hung on January 5, 1848, becoming the only regular soldier to be hung for an atrocity committed against a civilian during the war.<sup>45</sup>

In the end, Scott's novel approach to military law resulted in his relatively small force having far less problems with Mexican irregulars than did General Zachary Taylor's unruly volunteer troops operating in Northern Mexico. These courts assisted Scott in conquering a peace and ending what had become an unpopular war. In the words of scholar Myer, Scott's fair-minded tribunals "helped change the culture of the army" and at the same time, served to decrease "offenses against civilians" and thus, largely destroyed the guerilla movement's "most effective recruiting tool."<sup>46</sup>

#### Notes:

1. Erika Myers, "Conquering Peace: Military Commissions as a Lawfare Strategy in the Mexican War," *American Journal of Criminal Law*, 35, no. 2 (2008): 201, 206, hereafter Myers, "Conquering Peace."
2. Stephen Vincent Benet, *A Treatise on Military Law and the Practice of Courts-Martial*, 203, hereafter Benet, *Treatise*; Myers, "Conquering Peace," 220.
3. Myers, "Conquering Peace," 226.
4. U.S. Congress, *Senate, Report of the Secretary of War*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1849-1850, ser. No. 558, pp. 43-44; see also Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 113.
5. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, NARA, microfilm roll 5, T-1115, roll 1, 10 and 22 May 1848. For a good example of the inability of military court to punish a soldier who killed a civilian see the case of Lt. Charles Wickliffe in William and John Gorenfeld, *Kearny's Dragoons Out West: The Birth of the U. S. Cavalry* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 170, hereafter Gorenfeld, *Kearney's Dragoons*.
6. Virginia born Winfield Scott entered the army in 1808 as a captain in the 1st Artillery. He rose rapidly and became major general in command of the army on 5 July 1841. Following his victory over a Mexican force, superior in numbers, the capture of Mexico City, and "conquering a peace," Scott continued as commanding general until his retirement on 1 November 1865. "Winfield Scott," Francis Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington: GPO, 1903) 2: 870, hereafter, Heitman, *Army Register*.



7. Benet, *Treatise*, 203.
8. Justin Smith, *The War With Mexico* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1919), 70; Chris Bray, *Court Martial: How Military Justice Has Shaped America from the Revolution to 9/11 and Beyond* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), 88.
9. Myers, "Conquering Peace," 229.
10. General Order 181 (1847); Myers, "Conquering Peace," 229, 237.
11. Myers, "Conquering Peace," 201, 220. Myers observes Scott's commissions helped him by "having far fewer problems with atrocities" than did Zachary Taylor's army in Northern Mexico, "helping him to avoid an insurgency that could have been fatal to his campaign." Ibid., 223.
12. Viola Warren, *Dragoons on Trial* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Books Shop, 1965), 78, hereafter, Warren, *Dragoons*.
13. Myers, "Conquering Peace," 206.
14. Ibid., 78.
15. Ibid., 8.
16. Ibid., 9.
17. Lota Spell, "The Anglo-Saxon Press in Mexico. 1846-1848," *The American Historical Review*, 38, no. 1(1932), 24, hereafter, Spell, "Anglo-Saxon Press."
18. Ibid.
19. Gorenfeld, *Kearny's Dragoons*, 348.
20. Spell, "Anglo-Saxon Press," 26.
21. Puebla, Mexico, *American Star*, 20 June 1846.
22. Gen. John Quitman of Mississippi had been a politician before the war. He volunteered when the war with Mexico was declared and served as a major general. At the end of the war, Quitman returned to civilian life. Heitman, *Army Register*, "John Quitman," 1: 812.
23. General Orders nos. 181, 187, Puebla, Mexico, 19 and 24 June 1847.
24. Benet, *Treatise*, 108.
25. Peter Stevens, *The Rogue's March: John Riley and the St. Patrick's Battalion* (New York: Brassey's, 1999), 226.
26. United States Army, Advocate General, RG 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General's Office, Entry 15, Court-Martial Files, Court-Martial Case File No. EE 643.
27. Warren, *Dragoons*, 21, 27-28.
28. Ibid., 25.
29. Ibid., 28.
30. Ibid., 29.
31. John Stokely, a native of Dayton, Ohio, had joined Company C of the 1st Dragoons on 2 February 1846. Remarkably, the judge advocate appears to not have advised him of his 5th Amendment right to remain silent. His testimony given in good was presumed to given with an implied promise of a pardon. See Benet, *Treatise*, 300.
32. Warren, *Dragoons*, 33.
33. Ibid., 36.
34. Ibid., 40.
35. Ibid., 41.
36. Sergeant Falls had re-enlisted in the dragoons on 1 January 1844, at Weston, Missouri.
37. Warren, *Dragoons*, 53.
38. Ibid., 61.
39. Ibid., 59.
40. Ibid., 61.
41. Ibid., 63.
42. Ibid., 68.
43. Court-martial of Felix Leggitt, United States Army, Advocate General, 2 November 1847, RG 153, Records of the Judge Advocate General's Office, Entry 15, Court-Martial Files, Court-Martial Case File GG-76.
44. "Experience teaches us that drunkenness is the prolific source of most serious offenses committed in the military." Benet, *Treatise*, 135.
45. Court-martial of Felix Leggitt.
46. Myers, "Conquering Peace," 223.



American searchlight crew and equipment in action on Somme front. 36" searchlight of high power showing arrangement of digging in for protection, also camouflaged earth works, plotting room and paraboloid sounding device for locating approaching planes by sound. Large Riker truck with generator built in front. Position near Gleeszy. Morris' War Photographs. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.





## Afghan Rail Advisory Team (ARAT)

Marc W. Sammis

During much of 2011, the first group of United States Department of Transportation personnel and U.S. Army Reservists worked with several Afghan Government officials, particularly members of the Ministry of Mines, to conduct a study for developing a national railroad system in Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan Railway Advisory Team (ARAT) consisted of 11 people: 2 U.S. Department of Transportation officials; 5 U.S. Army Reserve Railway Transporters; and 4 Afghan government officials. The team was to propose potential railroad operating models and structure of a Rail Authority for the Afghan Government. The team was not there to build or design the railroad, only to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of such an undertaking and advice which options might work in the country.

The purpose of the Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA), which is to operate the rail system similar to the U.S. Railway Authority, is to define and enforce regulations of all railroad standards and operating rules. The rail authority is to develop a standard approach to safety standards and regulations and provide a framework for safety.<sup>1</sup>

The demand for a railroad in Afghanistan (which has never had one before) is driven by the mining industry. Large amounts of gold, copper, zinc, tungsten, coal, iron

ore, and other minerals are available in remote areas. The railroad was to be used to move the ore from its fields to the smelters and refineries. The advisory team was to explain the options to the Afghan government officials.

Maj. Scott D. Meyer was commander of the first ARAT serving in Afghanistan from October 2011 through April 2012. Among his duties as OIC of ARAT were to regularly schedule conferences with several Afghan government ministries as well as non-government organizations. These conferences helped explain the status of the team and ARAT's goals of helping the Afghan government build a safe and viable railway system. While working with several government ministries, the team worked most closely with and was embedded with the Ministry of Mines.

Major Meyer was chosen due to his previous work with railroads and as a U.S. Army reservist assigned to the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Headquarters (SDDC HQ), G-3 DOD Railcar Management Team at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He was also the Multinational Force–Iraq (MNF–I's) Rail Officer in Iraq 2008–2009. The other members of the team were also chosen for their working knowledge and past experience with railroad work.

Although the team was only allowed to stay for six months



FIG 1. Major Meyer's coat with the Operation Enduring Freedom camouflage pattern.



FIG 2. Detail of the insignia on the left sleeve. These include the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), Rail Team tab and SDDC (Surface Deployment and Distribution Command) insignia. The rail team tab was for local wear only.



under Major Meyer's command, it proved so successful that Brigadier General Dorman, the Chief Logistician in Afghanistan at the time, requested follow-on teams. These teams would prove to be just as successful as the first team in its workings with the Afghan government. As of the time this article was written, the winter of 2014, three teams have gone to Afghanistan with a fourth team scheduled for the winter/spring of 2015. They continue to advise the Afghan Government.

#### Notes:

1. *Afghanistan Railway Advisory Team Rail Authority Proposed Models*, October 23, 2011, page 2.



FIG 3. Detail of the insignia on the right sleeve. These include the subdued reflective U.S. flag, and the NATO Rail Team insignia. The NATO insignia was for local wear only.



FIG 4. Group photo of the Afghanistan Rail Advisory Team (ARAT). Major Meyer is on the left.

## Third Cat-eye for a Weak Swimmer, U.S. Army Ranger Course, 1962–1963

Marc W. Sammis

The U.S. Army Transportation Museum, Fort Eustis, Virginia, received a collection of material from retired Lt. Col. John R. Manley. Among the items donated was an M-1951 field cap with three reflective "cat-eyes" sewn onto the back (FIG 1). This was unusual as normally there would normally be only two "cat-eyes." The third eye was sewn centered above the pair.

Having never seen this before, I contacted Manley and asked him the origins of the third cat eye.<sup>1</sup> He replied his Army career began in 1962 as an infantry officer. During his initial training he went to Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia, in the winter of 1962–1963. The cap was the one he wore during that training, part of which was a swim test which he failed three times, the maximum allowed. The third cat eye was referred to as a "weak swimmer tab" and was a warning to the instructors to keep him from being put on point during night patrols if there was a danger of water present. He stated the third eye didn't work. He was put on point one night and, as would be expected, he led the patrol off a ten-foot embankment into the Chattahoochee River. He stated his class was known as the "Frostbite Class" because there were fifty-three cases of frostbite during a two-day period.<sup>2</sup> Manley did pass Ranger School and was assigned to the 1st Battalion 41st Infantry (Mechanized), 2d Armored Division, before transferring to the Transportation Corps 1965. He retired in 1989.

#### Notes:

1. Author to John R. Manley, 24 June 2015.
2. John R Manley to author, 14 July, 2015.



FIG 1. Back view showing the position of the three cat eyes. Courtesy of US Army Transportation Museum.





## The Fenian Needham Conversion Rifle: A Tangible Piece of Irish, American, and Canadian History

*Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas and Ross Jones*

About thirty years ago, Graham Burnside, an internationally recognized firearms expert, and Company Member Edward A. Hull both wrote articles about the Needham Conversion rifle. Hull recently followed up his first report with yet another very informative study.<sup>1</sup> After these two first articles appeared, Company Fellow Norm Flayderman included the Needham rifle in his exhaustive guide to American antique firearms.<sup>2</sup> All of these articles were very welcomed, especially since the origins and the history of the Needham rifle had been clouded for more than 120 years.

Although these studies did much to dispel the misconceptions, myths, and erroneous information that had become accepted knowledge about the Needham Conversion Rifle, misunderstandings and questions concerning the rifle's origins, its development, its use, and its effectiveness, still exist. Indeed, in his groundbreaking article, Burnside invited future arms historians to delve into those areas where he had not been able to find much information. Many questions remained, or only partially answered, such as: Why are most of these Needham conversion rifles Bridesburgs? How did the Fenians get these Bridesburgs? What do the stock markings on Fenian guns signify? When were these markings applied, and who applied them? Why do many of these rifles appear to be "composite" or poorly assembled guns? How effective was the Needham's mechanism, in comparison with other breech loading systems? Why were the conversions done in Trenton? What was the history of this "locomotive works" where the conversions took place, and where was it located? How did the Fenians get the Needhams to the Canadian border? Why do some, but not all, of the guns have shortened, or spliced, fore stocks? How much actual practice did the Fenians have with the Needham rifle, before going into battle? Finally, one has to ask: How did these Needham rifles perform in combat?

Before going into the details necessary to answer these questions, the history of the Fenian movement must be addressed. Space and time, does not allow for an in-depth chronology of the Fenians and their activities in this article. Readers should review Christophe Mueller's recent article about the 1866 Fenian Raid,<sup>3</sup> and Wayne Colwell's 1988 article about the 1870 Fenian Raid, in the *Company Journal*.<sup>4</sup> The Fenian Brotherhood in the United States, and the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland, were founded concurrently in 1858 by two fugitives from the failed Irish "Rising" of 1848: John O'Mahony in New York, and James Stephens in Ireland.

Invoking the horrors of the Irish potato famine of the

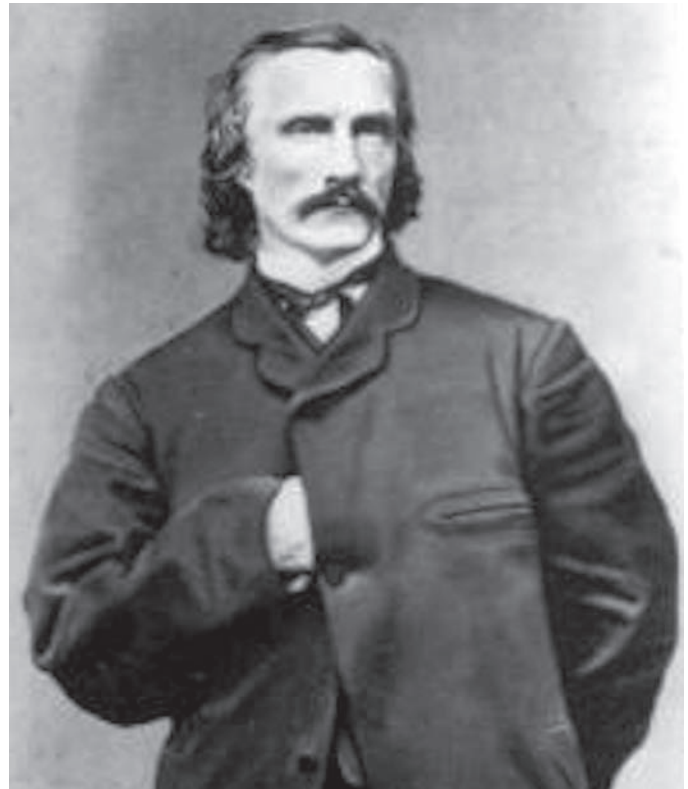


FIG 1. Fenian President John O'Mahony. History of Ireland.com.

1840s, and the subsequent emigration of millions of Irish families to the United States, Canada, and Australia, O'Mahony and his group were able to establish armed Fenian units in America prior to the Civil War, whose sworn purpose was to free Ireland from British rule. During the Civil War, these units fought valiantly on both sides, and membership in the Fenian Brotherhood quickly spread to other "Irish" units in both armies. At the end of the war, plans were being made to support another "Rising" in Ireland. The movement soon numbered in the many thousands and soon split into different factions with the majority of the Fenians instead supporting an attack on Canada.

Most emphatically, and unlike some historians have dismissively characterized them in recent years, the Fenians were anything other than a bunch of drunken Irishmen, who got some muskets and foolishly thought that they could conquer Canada—and hold it hostage for Ireland's freedom. They were not "easily repulsed" by the forces of the Crown.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the Fenian Raids were a significant international concern in the period just after the American Civil War.<sup>6</sup> The Fenians were serious about



their aim to conquer two of the major British holdings in North America—Upper Canada (or “Canada West,” now the province of Ontario) and Lower Canada (or “Canada East,” now the province of Quebec). The Fenians went to great lengths and considerable logistical efforts to seize the provinces. The Fenians were convinced they could gain a bargaining chip with Britain for Ireland’s freedom. Moreover, Fenian veterans of both the Union and Confederate armies fought side by side in Canada, just a year after the end of the American Civil War, and routed a brigade of Canadian militia at the battle of Ridgeway in 1866. Brave, dedicated, and very capable veteran soldiers, the Fenians were supported by an Irish-American and Irish immigrant population across the country that scrimped and saved from their meager earnings to buy Fenian bonds, in order to contribute to the Fenian war fund.<sup>7</sup>

It was this war fund that paid for 7,500 Springfield rifle muskets the Fenians contracted for in November 1865 with Alfred Jenks, and his son, Barton, at the Bridesburg manufacturing company, a factory that produced machinery for textile mills before and after the war near the federal arsenal at Frankford, in the greater Philadelphia area.<sup>8</sup> They were desperate for arms, and the Bridesburg works had produced more M1861 and M1863 “Springfield-Type” rifle muskets than any of the other twenty-some private contractors during the war.<sup>9</sup> Although Jenks and his son had fulfilled all of their contracts with the Union, and had even sold some guns to the government that previously had been rejected,<sup>10</sup> Jenks reportedly still had at least 7,500 rifle muskets—both M1861s and M1863s—on hand, or the parts to assemble them, to sell to the Fenians. Jenks was the only contractor who had a large supply of rifle muskets and parts on hand, and, unlike conventional supposition among some arms historians in recent years, there were not millions of surplus arms available for sale at the end of the Civil War. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton had forbidden the sale of surplus government arms at the end of the Civil War, out of fears concerning the current Mexican situation.<sup>11</sup> This potentially explosive dilemma had been brought about by French intrigues with the Mexican republic, when Napoleon III attempted to put the Hapsburg “Emperor” Maximilian I on the “throne” of Mexico.

The Fenian secretary of war in New York, Brig. Gen. Thomas W. “Fighting Tom” Sweeny, sent Col. Charles Carroll Tevis, the Fenian’s adjutant general, to negotiate for the rifle muskets with the Jenkses at Philadelphia in fall 1865. Both Sweeny and Tevis had seen hard service in the Union Army, and both of them were seasoned soldiers.<sup>12</sup> The contract called for the rifle muskets to



FIG 2. Brig. Gen. Thomas W. “Fighting Tom” Sweeny.  
iO.wp.com-stairnaheireann.net.

be delivered to Maj. William O’Reilly, the Fenian arms inspector in Philadelphia, by March 1866, so it must be presumed the Fenians were still collecting funds to pay for the guns—or that many of the Bridesburgs had to be assembled from leftover, or previously rejected, available parts, although the contract specifically stated that the muskets were already crated, and in storage. One of the telltale hallmarks of a Fenian Bridesburg is an “O” found on the lock plate of many of these muskets, just under the “E,” or the “S,” in “BRIDESBURG.” This marking is thought to be an indication of rejection by U.S. Army arms inspectors during the Civil War.<sup>13</sup>

According to a 20 December 1865 letter from Edward Archibald, the British consul in New York, to Canadian official Sir John Michel, an informer within the Fenian’s main office in New York, had stated to Archibald: “... he knows of 7,500 stand of arms stored in two or three different places in this city, [that were] purchased by O’Mahony, and for which my informant saw the money paid.”<sup>14</sup> This accumulation of arms pre-dates the first of the Bridesburg acquisitions by at least a month and most likely includes arms brought back from the Civil War by Fenian veterans. These arms may have been the ones marked with an “I [Shamrock] R” stamping in the stock, between the lock plate screws, since Fenian President John O’Mahony, and the supporters in his “wing,” acknowledged that the Fenians were the American version of the Irish Republican Brotherhood—founded and led by James Stephens in Ireland, and its aim was to establish an





FIG 3. Carroll Tevis. Patheos.com.

#### "Irish Republic."

By January 1866, a major difference in strategies, and deep personal animosities, had split the Fenian movement into three "wings": the "Stephens Wing" that advocated fighting only in Ireland; the "O'Mahony Wing" that did not want to start an uprising in Ireland, or an attack on Canada, until preparations were complete; and, the "Roberts Wing" that wanted to invade Canada as soon as the St. Lawrence River froze in the late fall and winter 1866. From this point on, the various holdings of Fenian arms appear to have become a contentious issue among the various factions within the organization. While O'Mahony had nominal control over the arms collected thus far, Sweeny, an adherent of the Roberts' Wing, was in control of the 7,500 Bridesburgs being acquired from Jenks—or at least 6,500 of them, as the first 1,000 guns were delivered in mid-January 1866.

While the Fenians were having uniforms made in New York and were buying surplus accouterments from equipment manufacturers (and even negotiating for field artillery),<sup>15</sup> the arms purchase by Sweeny and Tevis with Jenks hit a major snag.<sup>16</sup> Major O'Reilly reported Jenks now wanted an additional \$1,875 for the crates containing the muskets. Most of these twenty-gun crates were superfluous to the Fenians, since they were already busy building "large crates" (holding forty rifle-muskets) and "small crates" (holding twenty long arms) in which the rifle-muskets, disguised as "machinery," would then be shipped to an incredible array of Fenian organizers

and arms caches, from Massachusetts to Chicago, and as far south as Baltimore.<sup>17</sup> Although the Fenian leadership had convinced the rank and file of the movement the federal government would not interfere with their plans, Sweeny, Tevis, and O'Reilly were worried about federal agents discovering the Bridesburgs, if they were not disguised.<sup>18</sup> The muskets were then to be distributed at numerous points along the US-Canadian border. After a flurry of letters between the Fenians, their lawyer and the Jenkses, the Fenians paid for the existing crates, which was, in effect, a significant departure from the terms of the original November contract, as that contract had stated that the arms were already "crated and in storage," and did not mention any additional costs for the existing crates.<sup>19</sup>

In a letter to Tevis, John Arundel (the Fenian's lawyer), said he was afraid Jenks could be gouging the Fenian Brotherhoods, but Jenks had them over a barrel, as the Fenians could not afford any delays in arms delivery or the attendant press attention, if the disagreement became public, so the Fenians paid up.<sup>20</sup> Curiously, when O'Reilly opened the last group of the Jenks' crates for inspection, he found none of the 2,280 weapons in these crates had ramrods. Although the federal government later squashed the Fenian's hopes by an abrupt political "about-face," and stopped the Canadian invasion by invoking the Neutrality Act just as the Fenians assembled on the border, Jenks' associate, Joseph Mitchell, was able to get replacement ramrods from Springfield Armory over the course of a few days. Mitchell simply asked the U.S. Army's Chief of Ordnance, Bvt. Brig. Gen. A. B. Dyer, to order ramrods from the superintendent at Springfield Armory, Col. Theodore Laidley, and have them shipped to Bridesburg.<sup>21</sup>

After getting the first thousand muskets in January 1866, O'Reilly received the crates containing the rest of the Bridesburg rifle-muskets in March, April, and May 1866 and, after inspecting them (and most likely then stamping them with an "IN" between the lock plate screws), he hurriedly shipped them out in the new oversized crates, with the largest consignment of rifle-muskets going to Buffalo, New York.<sup>22</sup> A report from a British spy (British spies would prove to be a significant ingredient in the failure of all three Fenian Raids) noted that the guns in Buffalo were "full-ordered and in fine a form as I ever saw."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, those Fenian Bridesburg rifle-muskets that escaped confiscation by the U.S. government are beautiful examples of Civil War rifle-muskets.<sup>24</sup> Apparently, all 7,500 Bridesburgs were shipped out, although the total has been reported at 4,220—which was the number of guns reported as shipped by 3 May 1866 but did not include the



remaining 2,280 arms still awaiting shipment.<sup>25</sup>

The “large” and “small” crates then went out to Fenian agents, who, in turn, arranged for them to be shipped by rail to mustering points along the Canadian border where the muskets were to be issued to the arriving Fenians. Although Sweeny later reported the Bridesburgs were the only shoulder arms available to his forces, there were other arms available to the invading Fenians as one letter directed Fenians from New Orleans to disguise the arms that they were bringing to the battlefield and there had been no shipments of Bridesburgs anywhere south of Baltimore.<sup>26</sup>

Most of the Fenians’ weapons were seized by U.S. troops at the mustering points when the Johnson Administration made a policy “about-face” and declared the Fenians to be in violation of the Neutrality Act.<sup>27</sup> However, Col. John O’Neil (private 2d U.S. Dragoons 1857-1858; sergeant 1st U.S. Cavalry, 1861-1862; lieutenant, 5th Indiana Cavalry; and captain, 17th U.S. Colored Infantry, 1863-1865) and about one thousand men slipped over the border in the Niagara region with several wagonloads of extra Bridesburg muskets to arm successive reinforcements. When O’Neil realized these reinforcements were not forthcoming, he ordered the muskets destroyed. Some were burned, and others were thrown in Frenchman’s Creek near the Fenians’ first camp.<sup>28</sup> The next day, O’Neil’s forces met a brigade of Canadian Militia at Limestone Ridge near the hamlet of Ridgeway and after a stiff but brief battle, O’Neil’s Fenians thoroughly routed the Canadians. Realizing support was not forthcoming, O’Neil tried to slip back across the Niagara River but he and his men were intercepted by the USS *Michigan* and arrested after trouncing another Canadian force at Fort Erie. While the U.S. government paid the Fenians’ train fare back to their homes, federal troops confiscated most of their arms.

The guns were stored in several federal arsenals and forts and, according to Gen. George G. Meade’s report of October 1866, the guns were not being cared for properly and were rusting badly.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the Fenians were aware that their arms quickly were becoming unserviceable, and they petitioned the Johnson Administration for their return.<sup>30</sup> Understandably, the U.S. government declined to return the arms. However, when threatened with the loss of support by the Democratic “Irish Voting Bloc” in the impeachment fight with the “Radical Republicans” in Congress, the Johnson Administration caved in and returned all of the guns that had been confiscated to the Fenians by the end of 1866.<sup>31</sup>

At this point, the Fenians now had thousands of rusty muskets, with at least about a thousand of them never

having been cleaned since the fighting in the Niagara region six months earlier. Any military organization faced with such a problem would have organized a “working party,” disassembled the arms, cleaned the parts, and re-assembled the muskets. Undoubtedly, this is what the Fenians did. However, from the mixture of ill-fitting, and disparate, parts evident on most surviving Fenian rifle-muskets and Needham conversions, it is obvious the organizers of this effort relied on the assumption all of the gun parts were perfectly interchangeable. Anyone who has handled and examined quantities of Civil War muskets is aware most of the parts are *almost* interchangeable but some final fitting was required at the factory, especially with butt plates. It is not unusual to find badly pitted parts alongside pristine parts on Fenian muskets and Needham rifles and this apparently occurred when the guns were disassembled, cleaned, and reassembled, with the original parts not being reassembled on the same weapon. It would seem all of the barrel bands must have gone into one bin, all of the butt plates, etc., into another bin, and then, after cleaning, were put back on whichever musket stock was handy.<sup>32</sup>

At this point, the Fenians now had perhaps as many as ten thousand rifle muskets, with many, if not most, of them assembled with ill-fitting parts. By 1866, the era of the muzzle-loading rifle-musket was coming to an end and the Fenians realized the British were already re-arming their forces with rifle-muskets that had been converted into breechloaders—and they would be facing troops with rapid fire breechloaders on their next incursion into Canada. The British used the Snider-designed breech loading system (invented by an American, Jacob Snider) and it was a simple and effective way to convert their arms.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army had been developing a system to convert its muskets into breechloaders and had settled on an ingenious method that had been invented by Erskine S. Allin, the master armorer at Springfield Armory.<sup>33</sup> Although the Fenians tried to obtain the rights to use this “trapdoor” system, they were unsuccessful.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the Fenians turned to another system that had been offered to the state of New York in the breechloader conversion trials by two English brothers—Joseph and George Needham. The Needham’s system did not score well in the trials held by the New York state militia and it can only be supposed the Needham brothers were content to get whatever manufacturing royalties they could from whomever they could.<sup>35</sup>

Conversion to the Needham system involved cutting off the lower three inches of the barrel, threading it, and screwing in a new breech. The new breech had a side-swinging breechblock that was pivoted at the front. This pivot also held a half-moon shaped extractor that would move to the rear and stop at a 45-degree angle when the breechblock was shoved forward. In order to shove it forward, the shooter grasped a knurled knob at the rear of the breechblock between the right thumb and forefinger,





and, after placing the hammer at half cock, smartly opened the breech. When firing, the breechblock was locked by an unusual system. From a full cock position, a steel triangular wedge, pinned to the face of the hammer, fell into a slot forcing the spring-loaded firing pin forward, while locking the breech. The rear of the spring-loaded firing pin also slipped into an indentation at the rear of the breech in order to keep the breechblock in place before firing. After firing, the hammer was brought back to half cock, the breechblock was shoved forward, and the spent cartridge case was extracted from the chamber—but only part way. The firer then had to turn the rifle on its right side, hold the breechblock open with his left hand and presumably shake the rifle in order to eject the empty case.

The Needhams had produced several prototypes, and variants (mostly using Enfields), prior to the standardized system used by the Fenians.<sup>36</sup> The Fenian version certainly was rife with variations, since the muskets being converted already had been reassembled haphazardly after their cleaning in winter of 1866-1867. The only constant was the use of a M1863 hammer (regardless of the date on the lock plate, or the barrel band types) with its numbered wedge pinned into its face. While some rifles were complete as built and many others looked like rust-pitted “parts” guns, there were many different manufacturers’ names stamped on the lock plates.<sup>37</sup> Once the manufacturing rights were obtained, the next step was to find a place to convert the muskets to the Needham patent.

Patrick J. Meehan, a very controversial figure in Fenian circles, was designated to oversee the operation. He formed a company he called the “Pioneer Arms Works”<sup>38</sup> and apparently arranged to rent a portion of a former locomotive factory in Trenton, New Jersey.<sup>39</sup> This locomotive works had been founded in the early 1850s, and had produced a very unusual looking train engine that was called the “Monster,” in addition to railroad cars.<sup>40</sup> The term “monster,” in the context of the times, simply meant very large, or huge.<sup>41</sup> Prior to the standardization of the locomotive engine to the “American-Type” with its four small front wheels and four large driving wheels in the late 1850s, there were all sorts of odd-looking railroad engines in the United States. Apparently not a very popular design, the “Monster” was confined primarily to the Camden and Amboy line and a few other small railroads, in New Jersey.<sup>42</sup> The banking “panic” of 1857 saw the locomotive works financially collapse and by the outbreak of the Civil War a portion of the buildings in the complex on the banks of the Delaware River had been leased to a firm that electroplated metal ware.<sup>43</sup>

At the outbreak of the Civil War, a local businessman, James T. Hodge, joined with Addison M. Burt, an experienced railroad car builder recently returned north from Richmond, Virginia, and in a curious business arrangement they began producing M1861 rifle muskets, marked “U S TRENTON” for the federal government and the state of New Jersey in the former locomotive works.<sup>44</sup>

After the war, the former musket factory, or “armory” (the remnants of which are sited where “Cooper’s” restaurant and the parking lot for New Jersey state government buildings now stands, north of the stadium for the local “Thunders” baseball team)<sup>45</sup> and, presumably, with at least some, if not most, of its machinery intact, was rented by Meehan for the clandestine conversion of muzzle-loading muskets to breechloaders.<sup>46</sup>

Meehan’s operation was underway by 1868 and Alfred Cole was supervising the conversion process. He was assisted by a young German immigrant gun designer, Hugo Borchardt.<sup>47</sup> Borchardt later gained fame through his work with Sharps rifles and his basic semi-automatic pistol design proved to be the inspiration for the well-known German Luger pistol. There was no attempt to undo the damage from the earlier haphazard mixing of parts during the cleaning (“derustification”)<sup>48</sup> process as many, if not most, Needham conversion rifles have ill-fitting or mismatched parts as previously noted. The gunsmiths’ attention to detail in the manufacturing process is unknown but by using data from comparison tests to determine the ability of the rifles to chamber ammunition properly, it would appear there was some variation in dimensions between the various parts of the action and chamber.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, there were two different sizes of firing pins and there were two different breechblocks to accommodate them with the firing pin retaining screw hole drilled at different points. Based on data recorded from various Needhams, it seems the change from a “long” firing pin to a “short” striker took place somewhere between the serial numbers (found on the inside of the hammer, with a corresponding number found on the inner surface of the hammer wedge) of 153 and 236. This change was an improvement during the conversion process, and it may have been a result of firing pin breakage in the original design. In total, the Fenians converted 5,020 rifle-muskets into Needham breechloaders.<sup>50</sup>

At some point, those charged with shipping the Needhams to the secret arms caches along the New York and Vermont border recalled one of the most vexing problems that plagued the failed 1866 raid was federal authorities could easily identify crates full of shoulder arms. Since the crates had to be at least about five feet long and, in order to be portable for two men, had to measure over eighteen inches in width and depth, they were very recognizable. Crates meeting those sizes had been seized by federal troops in 1866, as they were unloaded from railroad cars in Cleveland, Buffalo, upstate New York, and Vermont.<sup>51</sup> A solution was to cut the fore end of the stocks under the middle band on both M1861 and M1863 rifle-



muskets, usually with a “V”-shaped cut, so the guns could be disassembled and shipped in crates no longer than the barrel—and marked as containing something other than firearms. Although most of these altered Needhams have a “V” cut, some have a straight cut, and while some are pegged, others are not.<sup>52</sup> The practice continued although the Fenians could not decide on a unanimous approach to this expedient. When a cache of Snider rifles was discovered after the 1882 Phoenix Park assassinations in Dublin, it was found the majority of them also had their fore stocks cut similar to the Fenian firearms.<sup>53</sup>

Needhams that were made from former M1863 rifle-muskets with their thinner barrel bands have been found with the stocks simply cut off a bit forward of the lowest barrel band as was done with post-Civil War “sporter” surplus musket muzzle-loaders.<sup>54</sup> Unlike muzzle-loading “sporters,” there are no tubes soldered under the barrel for a ramrod, since a ramrod is superfluous with a breechloader. This may or may not be a Fenian modification but since .58 center-fire ammunition had pretty well disappeared from the commercial market by the 1890s,<sup>55</sup> and the Fenians were even scrambling to find any quantities of .58 center-fire ammunition in 1870,<sup>56</sup> it would be hard to imagine a civilian hunter taking the effort to shorten the fore stock on his surplus Needham rifle. Conversely, shortening the stock in this manner would have been a definite advantage for the Fenians.

The Fenians shipped these altered and unaltered Needham conversion rifles, and thousands of rifle-muskets to secret arms caches and depots along the New York, New England, and Canadian border over a period of months in early 1870.<sup>57</sup> General O’Neil’s trusted right hand man, Col. Henri le Caron (actually Thomas Miller Beach), was in charge of the entire program. Unbeknownst to O’Neil, le Caron was a British spy and he later claimed he had engineered several efforts to sabotage the operation even before it had begun.<sup>58</sup> The guns were stowed away in the barns and cellars of Fenian supporters and sympathizers waiting for the signal to attack Canada again.<sup>59</sup>

To date, no documents have been found that indicate any of the Fenians who invaded Canada at Franklin, Vermont, had any prior training with Needham conversion rifles. The conversion program and the shipping efforts were all done in strict secrecy and if there were any Needham rifles sent to Fenian units across the country prior to the 1870 Raid, they were few in number and most likely were only made available for group instruction. This was not a case of converting the rifle-muskets into breechloaders in Trenton, distributing those guns to Fenian units in New York and New England for training, and the guns then being brought to the scene of action by men who had

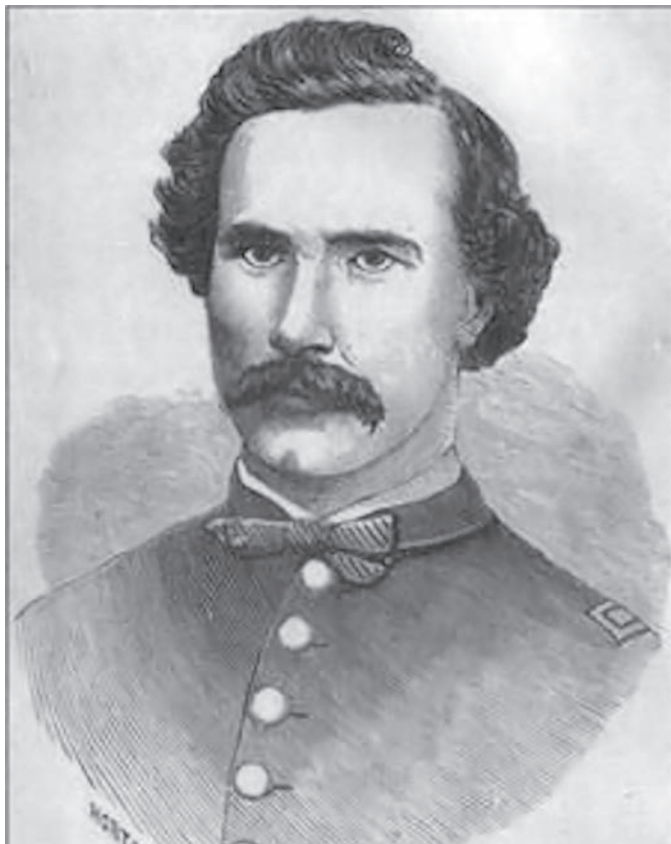


FIG 4. Colonel John O’Neill. [militaryhiatoynow.com](http://militaryhiatoynow.com)

trained with them. Far from it—the guns were issued to the Fenians from the backs of wagons, parked along the road to the battlefield, on the day before the battle, and to some of them on the day of the battle.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, the Fenian leadership was also scrambling to find caliber .58 center-fire cartridges for their Needhams.<sup>61</sup> The U.S. government had replaced the M1865 .58 center-fire round with the .50-70 cartridge in 1866. The short-lived .58 center-fire cartridge, in its several iterations was in short supply and difficult to find, at least in the quantities required by the Fenians.<sup>62</sup> According to fragmentary references in available documents and from recovered battlefield relics, the Fenians issued several different types of .58 center-fire rounds at the battle of Eccles Hill.

Although O’Neil expected many thousands of Fenians to mass on the border from Malone, New York, to Franklin, Vermont, in the last days of May 1870, only a fraction of that number actually arrived. There are many reasons for the low turnout,<sup>63</sup> but the small size of this group of only 800 to 1,000 men at Franklin dashed O’Neil’s hopes of a successful drive across Quebec to Montreal. Those who did arrive were issued rifles with which they had little, if any, familiarity, and a mixed lot of ammunition while marching to the battlefield at Eccles Hill.

Meanwhile, thanks to the energetic efforts of Asa Westover, a local farmer and the leader of the local Missisquoi home guard, the “Red Sashes” were armed





FIG 5. Thomas Miller Beach a.k.a Col. Henri le Caron.  
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with the latest version of the breech loading Ballard rifle.<sup>64</sup> The sharpshooters of this unit had positioned themselves at Eccles Hill to defend their homes. More home guardsmen arrived, some of them armed with Ball repeating carbines.<sup>65</sup> Quickly augmented by Canadian militiamen armed with .577 Snider breech loaders, they engaged the Fenians as they came over the border.<sup>66</sup> The battle lasted for six hours with the Canadians repulsing every Fenian advance.

As the battle went on, Canadian observers noted the Fenian fire slackened continually, until there was only sporadic fire at its conclusion.<sup>67</sup> From damaged and crushed cartridge cases recovered in recent years from the battlefield and from a series of actual tests conducted by the authors, it seems that the Needhams definitely had a propensity to jam when loading and unloading.<sup>68</sup> This was due to the inherent design flaws in the Needham system, differences in the tolerances in the mechanism, differences in the dimensions of the various .58 center fire cartridges available at the time, and the Fenian troops' unfamiliarity with the weapon.

During the initial stages of the battle, O'Neil had been arrested by U.S. Marshals and spirited away from the battlefield. The Fenians, sensing their forlorn hope of success, once again surrendered to U.S. authorities and were sent home with their train tickets paid for by Tammany Hall, but without any hope of regaining their arms. The recovered Needham rifles, rifle muskets, as well

as unassembled Needhams from the Trenton "armory" were sold at auction from Watervliet Arsenal in 1871.<sup>69</sup> While some Needhams were carried in the 1871 Fenian Raid on Manitoba from Pembina, Minnesota, the Fenians and their Needhams had parted ways. Some of the rifles were sold by surplus dealers to at least one militia unit in Georgia, a few to Irish-American organizations, a few to Panama, and the rest to civilians.<sup>70</sup> The Fenian Brotherhood went "underground" and morphed into the American support branch of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood—the *Clann na Gael*. As the *Clann na Gael*, the Fenians surfaced again to support the next Irish bid for freedom, the Easter Rising of 1916.<sup>71</sup>

The Needham conversion rifle was a sincere attempt by the Fenians to match technology with the Canadian Snider rifle but the Needhams did not stand up to the test—as a result of a flawed design, inconsistent machining, mixed ammunition, and a lack of prior training for those who were expected to fight with the gun. While Rudyard Kipling affectionately celebrated the Martini-Henry rifle in poem, the Boers proclaimed their trust in God and their Mausers, American soldiers sang, "Civilize 'em with a Krag," and Irish Volunteers sang wistful songs about their "Auld Howth Guns" in the Easter Rising, aside from a song about "My Old Fenian Gun" from the 1867 Rising in Ireland, there is no evidence an American Fenian ever praised his Needham conversion rifle in song or story. Nevertheless, the Needham Conversion rifle is the only firearm that was manufactured specifically to support the 800-year struggle for Irish independence, and, as such, it certainly deserves a well-earned niche in Irish, American, and Canadian history.

#### Acknowledgments:

*The authors are indebted to Ed Hull, for his guidance and suggestions, and also to Heather Darch, of the Missisquoi Museum, for not only introducing the authors to each other in 2017, but for allowing them to test several Needham rifles in the museum's collection. In addition, the authors thank Bill Adams, Jere Atchison, Jim Burgess, Jerry Coates, Cahil Converse, Paul Davies, Les Jensen, Vince Rausch, Jude Scott, and Lisa Traynor for their assistance in the preparation of this article.*



FIG 6. The Needham Conversion Rifle is the only firearm that was made specifically to support the 800-year old struggle for Irish independence. Courtesy of the author.

### Sidebar on “Fenian Arms Markings”

Most Fenian Needham conversion rifles have an “IN” stamped on their stocks, between their lock plate screws, while a few others have an “IR” marked in the same location, and some others have no markings at all. A few Needham rifles (and some Fenian rifle-muskets) also have U.S. inspectors’ markings. While a “smoking gun” document that would give the reason for this variance in their markings has yet to be discovered, it can be conjectured that the difference in these markings is a result of the factional infighting among the Fenian Brotherhood—the “split” that proved to be a prime ingredient for the failure of the Fenian Raids. Based on documents from the Sweeny Papers, and reports from U.S. Army officers, a probable scenario can be offered here.

O’Mahony and the Fenian Brotherhood (a.k.a. the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland) had been gathering arms since the organization’s founding in 1858, and the first Fenian units were openly drilling with arms in the United States before the Civil War. At the end of the Civil War, returning Union soldiers were allowed to purchase their muskets, and it must be assumed a number of Irish Fenian soldiers purchased their guns after their discharge and then offered up the guns to the Fenian cause. A “Muster Roll and Arms List” form (in “General Orders Number 2,”) drawn up by the Fenians’ Adjutant General, Charles Carroll Tevis in fall 1865, can be found in the Sweeny Papers. This document not only lists the abbreviations to be used for “Springfield-type” and Enfield rifle-muskets, Sharps rifles, Spencer rifles, and “Smoothbores,” etc., when filling out the form, but it also gives instructions to Fenian volunteers who are bringing their own personally-owned arms, and “loaning” them to the cause. At some point, these arms were most likely marked with a Fenian ownership marking of an “IR,” with a shamrock either between, or above, the “I” and the “R.” After the ill-considered and presumptive O’Mahony-led fiasco in Maine in May 1866 (when the ship carrying all of the arms for the abortive raid on New Brunswick was captured), Maj. Gen. George Meade reported the seized arms were “marked as being Fenian.” Since this raid was a premature effort of the “O’Mahony Wing,” it can be assumed these arms were marked with variations of the “IR” stock stamping.

Conversely, only one thousand of the newly purchased Bridesburg rifle-muskets were acquired in January 1866 (at the outset of the “split”), and subsequent deliveries did not begin until March 1866 (after the “split”), so the first lot of one thousand Bridesburgs most likely were also marked with the “IR” variation. The authors have examined examples of Bridesburg rifle-muskets,

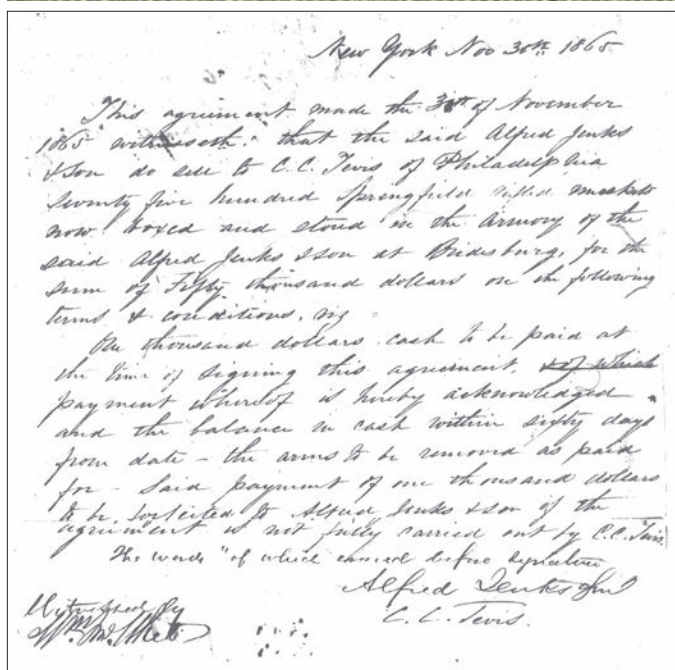


FIG 7. In November 1865, the Fenian Brotherhood negotiated for 7,500 rifle muskets with Alfred Jenks of the Bridesburg factory near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Sweeny Papers. Courtesy, New York Public Library.



FIG 8. In order to purchase arms, the Fenian Brotherhood sold bonds to Irish immigrant men and women. Hugh Crossen, Company Administrator David M. Sullivan’s grandfather, and a Navy veteran of the Civil War who had served aboard the USS Colorado, purchased this ten-dollar bond. Courtesy, Alessandro Ferzoco.





FIG 9. The Bridesburg rifle-muskets that Jenks sold to the Fenians were all first class arms. This example was found in the area of the 1866 Battle of Pigeon Hill. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 10. After an apparently haphazard cleaning program in 1867, the parts of many of the Fenians' muskets were mixed. This example was recovered after the 1870 Battle of Eccles Hill. Courtesy, Mississquoi Museum.



FIG 11. The authors agree with Graham Burnside's contention that "Cooper's" restaurant in Trenton occupies the remnants of the former locomotive works and later, musket factory, where the Fenians converted their rifle-muskets into Needham breechloaders.

FIG 12.

The Needham system had design flaws, and was inferior to both the Allin "Trapdoor" and the Snider conversion systems. Cartridge rims could easily slip past the extractor, when being loaded into the chamber. Courtesy of the author.

and Needham conversions marked like this. After the "split," it can be assumed the other 6,500 Bridesburgs that were being acquired by the "Roberts-Sweeny Wing," and being inspected by the Fenians' arms inspector, Maj. William O'Reilly, were marked with an "IN" (Irish Nation), in order to differentiate them from the "IR" (Irish Republic)-marked guns already in the hands of the "O'Mahony Wing." Thus, there are far more "IN"-marked Bridesburgs, than "IR"-marked examples and nearly all of the non-Bridesburg, "Springfield Type" Needham rifles (Springfields, Muirs, Mowrys, Savages, etc.) are either marked with an "IR" (being acquired prior to the "split"), or unmarked (being acquired after 1866.) In addition, all of the "non-Springfield"-type Fenian arms (Enfields, Belgian Minie Rifles, etc.) that have been examined by the authors have also been marked with an "IR."

In order to appease the Irish "voting bloc" of the Democratic Party during the 1866 Congressional battle with the "Radical Republicans," the Johnson Administration returned ALL of the Fenians' arms to them in fall 1866—those that had been seized in both the May (O'Mahony/New Brunswick,) and the June (Roberts-Sweeny/New York & Vermont) 1866 raids. Concurrently, the Fenians were also acquiring more "Springfield-type" guns from any number of sources and these arms would not have had any Fenian markings on them but would have borne U.S. inspectors' stamps. In addition, Jenks apparently used a mixture of leftover rejected and accepted parts when he assembled those Bridesburgs that were not already complete for the Fenians, so some of his rifle-muskets have U.S. Army inspectors' acceptance stamps on their various parts. From all of these "Springfield-Type" rifle-muskets, the Fenians selected those guns that would be converted into Needham breechloaders at the former locomotive/musket factory in Trenton, in anticipation of the 1870 Raid.







FIG 13. In order to disguise the Needham conversion rifles, the stocks were cut on many of them, so they could be shipped to the Vermont/Quebec border in small crates. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 14. The Fenians were struggling to find an adequate supply of .58 center fire ammunition for their Needham conversion rifles before the 1870 Raid, and apparently acquired an assortment of different types of cartridges. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 15. The authors conducted exhaustive tests to determine just how prone to jams the Needham conversion rifles really were. While some Needhams chambered cartridges satisfactorily, far more of them tended to jam. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 16. The "IN" marking was applied to 6,500 of the Bridesburg rifle-muskets that Jenks delivered to the Fenians in March, April, and May 1866. Courtesy of the author.



FIG 17. The "IR" with the shamrock marking was applied to those shoulder arms acquired by the "O'Mahony Wing" of the Fenians before May 1866, and to the first 1,000 "Bridesburg" rifle muskets acquired from Jenks in January 1866. Courtesy of the author.

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4. Wayne Colwell and Francis Back, "Irish Republican Army (Fenian Brotherhood) Vermont/Quebec Border, May 1870," *MC&H*, 40, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 53.
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- 5-7, hereafter MacDonald, *Troublous Times*; Dr Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle That Made Canada* (Toronto: The Penguin Group, 2011), xxxvi—xxxviii, hereafter Vronsky, *Ridgeway*.
7. D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 112-113.
  8. Contract between Alfred Jenks and Charles C. Tevis, New York, 30 November 1865, Thomas William Sweeny Papers, MNN: \*ZZ-14606, New York Public Library, hereafter Sweeny Papers. Although the Jenks' company was headquartered at 65 Front Street in downtown Philadelphia, the actual factory was at the northeast corner of Bridesburg, a suburb north of the city. According to the town's history in its municipal website, the Jenks' mansion was at the foot of Pratt Street in Bridesburg, while the factory itself—the site of which is now a parking lot—was just across the creek from Frankford Arsenal. Caution: If you value the preservation of your marriage, do not insist on taking your bride to visit "historically significant parking lots" in Bridesburg and Trenton.
  9. William B. Edwards, *Civil War Guns* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Company, 1962), 46-47, hereafter Edwards, *Civil War Guns*.
  10. Robert M. Reilly, *United States Military Small Arms* (Baton Rouge: The Eagle Press, 1970), 77-78.
  11. John Y Simon, ed. *Ulysses S Grant Papers of Ulysses S Grant* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1988), 16: xxiv.
  12. Cork-born Brig. Gen. Thomas William Sweeny enlisted in the New York Militia and volunteered for service in the Mexican War, during which he lost his right arm. Gaining a regular commission, he served in the West, and then fought gallantly for the Union in the Western Theater during the Civil War, where he was wounded several times. By the end of the Civil War, he had risen to the rank of brigadier general, and went AWOL to serve as the Fenian Brotherhood's secretary of war in 1865-1866. Col. (later Brig. Gen.) Charles Carroll Tevis was commissioned after graduation from West Point in 1849 and pursued a colorful, swashbuckling military career, serving in the U.S. Army, the Ottoman Army, the Union Army, the Fenian Army (as adjutant general), and in the armies of Egypt, the Papal States, and France (during the Franco-Prussian War), finally ending up as a war correspondent. (Biographical information garnered from multiple sources.)
  13. Telephone conversation with Earle J Coates on Bridesburg products, 11 July 2017.
  14. D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 96.
  15. Series of letters to and from T. Sweeny and W. O'Reilly, January-April 1866, Sweeny Papers. In one undated letter, an "F. W. Armstrong," of New York, had contracted to supply ten thousand full sets of infantry accouterments, while on 12 January 1866, Weinman, Gregory & Co agreed to supply twenty thousand knapsacks and 4,100 shelter halves.
  16. Letter from W. O'Reilly to C. Tevis, 12 April 1866, Sweeny Papers.
  17. Letter from W. O'Reilly to T. Sweeny, 30 April 1866, Sweeny Papers.
  18. Letter from W. O'Reilly to T. Sweeny 14 April 1866, Sweeny papers.
  19. Contract between Alfred Jenks and Charles C. Tevis, New York, 30 November 1865, Sweeny Papers.
  20. Letters from J. Arundel to C. Tevis and T. Sweeny, 12 and 14 April 1866, Sweeny Papers.
  21. Letter from W. O'Reilly to T. Sweeny, 3 May 1866, Sweeny Papers.
  22. Letters from W. O'Reilly to T. Sweeny, 30 April, 3 May and 5 May 1866.
  23. D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 149.
  24. Bridesburg rifle-muskets recovered in 1866 from both the Ridgeway Battlefield area in Ontario (Fort Erie Historical Museum) and the Pigeon Hill Battlefield in Quebec (Ross Jones Collection) are perfect, as built, and issued, weapons, unlike the muskets that were later disassembled, cleaned, and reassembled by the Fenians in 1867.
  25. The total number of Bridesburgs acquired by the Fenians from Jenks was 7,500. Fr. D'Arcy only included the 3 May 1866 letter (noting 4,220 muskets) in his book and did not include, or perhaps missed, the earlier, and later, documents in the Sweeny papers.
  26. Letter from Maj. Eugene J. Courtney, Assistant Adjutant General, Fenian Brotherhood, to Capt. J. W. Dempsey, New Orleans, Sweeny Papers, as quoted in Kenneth L Smith-Christmas & Ross Jones, "Louisiana Fenians," *MC&H*, 70, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 286-287. In the Sweeny Papers, there is an unsigned and undated list of arms of all types, to include Enfields, Spencers, "metallic cartridge" carbines, etc. Although it is not known whether the Fenians actually acquired these guns, the number of muskets required to arm the massed Fenians on the border for the invasion (and noted in Hull, *Arms Heritage*, 7) would indicate that they most likely purchased them.
  27. MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 112-116.
  28. Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, 47.
  29. Maj. Gen. George G Meade Report, Headquarters, Department of the East, Philadelphia PA, 12 October 1866 (as contained in Edwin Stanton, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Army* (Washington DC: GPO, 1866), 42.
  30. Hull, *Man at Arms*, 36.
  31. *Ibid.*, 36.
  32. When the authors embarked on this study, they constructed a matrix of the Fenian shoulder weapons they had already found, and added to it over the course of the study, ending up at nearly twenty Needham rifles and Fenian "Springfield Type" rifle muskets—either observed directly, or from photographs and descriptions in publications, or in advertisements or websites on the internet. One of the most puzzling aspects of this study was finding a wide array of disparate parts on most of the arms. While some parts on a single gun were pristine, others were badly pitted, and the components were often a jumble of M1861 and M1863 parts. Initially, the authors surmised Jenks must have sold battlefield salvaged, or "parts guns" to the Fenians, but with the realization that the Fenians had to "de-rustify" the guns when they were returned to them, it became obvious the disparities were a result of a badly-managed arms cleaning program. At this time, some muskets apparently were also fitted with crude new rear sights, as some federal officers later reported they had removed sights (and, later, firing pins from Needhams) when the guns were confiscated, as a means to demilitarize the muskets.
  33. Bvt. Brig. Gen. A. B. Dyer, Chief of Ordnance, "Report of the Board of Ordnance," in *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1865* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1866.) This lengthy, and detailed, report relates the processes by which the Allin conversion system was tested, and adopted.
  34. Hull, *Man at Arms*, 36.
  35. *Ibid.*, 36.
  36. *Ibid.*, 35.
  37. At present, the authors have found Needham rifles converted from both M1861 and M1864 rifle-muskets originally made by the Bridesburg, Mowry, Savage, New York (Sarson & Roberts), Springfield, Norwich, and Providence arms manufacturing companies.
  38. Hull, *Arms Heritage*, 8-9.
  39. D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 315-317. Although no documents have survived, or have yet been located, that specifically state the location of the "Pioneer Arms Works," (the effort was a secret operation), it is the authors' opinion it was in the former locomotive, and later, musket factory, as that was the only "armory" in Trenton at that time. Graham Burnside had come to this same conclusion in his seminal article.
  40. Fred H Colvin, "Locomotive Building in the United States,"



*Railway and Locomotive Engineering*, 15, no. 2 (February 1902), 22, and 15, no. 3 (March 1902), 26. In 1853, Van Cleve & McCann organized the Trenton Locomotive Works in Trenton, N. J. Afterwards, Isaac Dripps left the Camden & Amboy Railroad to join them and became a member of the firm. They built the “Monster” class of engines for Camden & Amboy and Belvidere & Delaware Railroads, as well as standard eight-wheelers, with valve motion outside.

41. The term “monster” is also used extensively in contemporaneous newspaper articles, when referring to anything very large, to include Fenian rallies.
42. See Colvin, note 40, above.
43. John O Raum, *History of the City of Trenton, New Jersey: Embracing a Period of Nearly Two Hundred Years ...* (Trenton, NJ: W. T. Nicholson & Co, 1871), 247.
44. Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, 46.
45. The surviving remnant of the factory is “Cooper’s” restaurant and events venue, just to the south of the US Route 30 Bridge in Trenton. A period map in the collection of the Burlington County NJ Historical Society shows an image of the works on its margin, and indicates its location. The authors thank Educational Curator Jeff Macechak, of the Burlington County Historical Society, for his assistance in identifying this location.
46. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 335.
47. Ibid., 317, and Hull, *Arms Heritage*, 10-11.
48. This is a newly coined word by the authors—use it at your peril.
49. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 315. During this period, there were several types of .58 center-fire ammunition in existence, to include the Benet internally-primed cartridge; the externally-primed Berdan, Morse, and Roberts cartridges; as well as the .577 Snider round for which the prototype Needham originally was most likely chambered—but all with differing dimensions, and available in limited quantities. The authors conducted exhaustive tests to determine which cartridge fits best in the Needham, but the tests only proved that any of the cartridges can easily slip past the open, angled half-moon extractor when loading, resulting in a jam that often requires two men to clear it, since the Needham, unlike the Allin “Trapdoor” system, does not have a mechanism to hold the breech open.
50. This was the total number of conversions, as reported to Canadian authorities by the English spy, Henri le Caron, who was in charge of the Fenian armaments distribution program. See D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 212-404, and Hull, *Man at Arms* 38-39.
51. McDonald, *Troublous Times*, 114, and D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 163.
52. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 367. During the course of this study, the authors found several styles of cutting and pegging fore stocks on Needham rifles. Apparently, not all of the fore stocks of the Needham rifles sent to the border for the invasion at Eccle’s Hill were cut, as an 1864-dated Bridesburg/Needham that was carried there by Fenian P. J. Crowe, of Ware, MA, has its fore stock intact (Cahil Converse Collection.) Moreover, the preponderance of arms sent to Vermont and New York were full-length rifle-muskets (see O’Neil’s Report, 1870), so there were plenty of long crates, in addition to the “short” crates.
53. Old Bailey Proceedings Online ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 8.0, accessed 07 October 2019), July 1882, trial of THOMAS WALSH (38) (t18820731-790). An extract relates there were “altogether 277 rifles like this—210 of them had the stock cut through at the second band like this one, so that when put together the middle band would bind the barrel to the stock—the stocks were not cut of 67—there were 276 bayonets and they were ordinary military, and not sword-bayonets—the rifles are complete when they are put together.”
54. This example is in one of the authors’ collections. This observation is based on several other “sporter” Needhams that the authors had seen prior to embarking on this study. The half-stock 1864 Bridesburg/Needham in the author’s collection was also missing its firing pin and spring, as well as its rear sight, when it was acquired from the family who had owned it for generations. This is an indication of a gun that was seized by U.S. forces, and “demilitarized,” rather than being a former hunting rifle.
55. Joseph J Schroeder Jr., *Montgomery Ward & Company Catalogue and Buyers’ Guide, Number 56, Fall & Winter 1894-5* (Northfield IL: The Gun Digest Company, 1970), 436-466. While this catalog offers more than 120 different fixed rifle and pistol cartridges of every imaginable make and caliber, from .22BB to .50-110-300 Winchester Express, there are no .58 center-fire cartridges listed in it.
56. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 335.
57. Ibid., 336-337 and John O’Neil, *Official Report of Gen John O’Neil, President of the Fenian Brotherhood On The Attempt to Invade Canada* (New York: John J. Foster, 1870.), 15-16, hereafter, O’Neil Report. In his final report, written while in jail facing trial, O’Neil gives a detailed tally of the numbers of muskets and breechloaders being shipped to locations on the border. These were shipped in long, and short, crates.
58. Hull, *Man at Arms*, 37-38.
59. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 323. In the Congressional Report of 1870, the auditors of the U.S. Treasury list payments made to local farmers for transporting weapons that were seized from caches after the battle to St. Albans for shipment to Watervliet Arsenal.
60. MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 160. In his Final Report, O’Neil cites this as one of the causes of the failure at Eccle’s Hill, as well as the Fenians’ unfamiliarity with breechloaders—or with any firearms, as the preponderance of “new” (1870) Fenians, were not Civil War veterans.
61. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 344, 348.
62. Ibid., 351. As noted above, there were several types of .58 center-fire cartridges in existence, but all were of differing dimensions—from the short Benet, to the long Snider—and it appears that the Fenians acquired whatever .58 caliber ammunition they could find.
63. O’Neil Report, 9-16.
64. Charles J Purdon, “The Ballard of the Red Sashes,” *Arms Collecting*, 31, no. 4, November 1993), 121-124. The unit was so named for the red sashes that they wore with their civilian garb, so they would not be mistaken for Fenians.
65. Ibid., photograph on page 123. Recent research has revealed a local businessman had also armed some of his employees with Ball carbines.
66. Aside from the “Red Sashes,” Canadian forces at the actual battle included a troop of Montreal Cavalry, elements of the 3d (“Victoria Rifles”) Battalion, and most of the 60th “Missisquoi” Battalion (from MacDonald, *Troublous Times*.)
67. MacDonald, *Troublous Times*, 167-168.
68. While an academic, or professional, archaeological survey has not yet been conducted on the battlefield at Eccle’s Hill, relic hunters are known to have recovered crushed empty .58 center-fire shell casings. In addition, small lots of unfired .58 center-fire cartridges of differing types have been recovered from structures in the local area. The authors performed a battery of tests on at least eight Needham conversion rifles, and the results were totally inconsistent between rifle and cartridge. While some Needham rifles have no issues when loading cartridges, or extracting spent cases, many of them do, regardless of which ammunition was used in which rifle.
69. Hull, *Man at Arms*, 38.
70. Ibid., 39, and D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 381.
71. D’Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, 407-411.





## Color Sgt. Leopold Karpeles, Medal of Honor Recipient

*John O. Curtis*

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Kingdom of Bohemia abutted the Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary, as well as the affiliation of German States. Prague was the capital of Bohemia. Following the cessation of World War I, the map of Europe was redrawn to welcome the Republic of Czechoslovakia which included the former Bohemia with Prague as its capital.

Leopold Karpeles was born in Prague on 9 September 1838 into a Jewish family. He was the second son of Joachim Marcus Karpeles, a cloth manufacturer, and Susanna Karpeles. Both Leopold and his older brother, Emil, attended Catholic school. The private school may have been perceived as superior to public school as it was fairly common in those days. At age eleven, Leopold left Prague to follow Emil to Galveston, Texas in 1849.<sup>1</sup>

Leopold readily became an expert western rider emulating cowboys and eager for acceptance into a rough new order of men and horses. Mexican bandits crossed the Rio Grande to loot merchandise from the caravans of Galveston merchants. Emil was such a merchant. Another threat was bands of marauding Indians. Leopold is said to have joined the early force of Texas Rangers and was one of the youngest and most effective of the Rangers. If he did ride with the Rangers, it was unofficially. He also served in the Brownsville Guard.

Between tours of duty, Leopold returned to Galveston where he and Emil would inevitably clash. Many issues escalated quarrels but a major problem was religion. Leopold believed ardently in Judaism and its philosophy while Emil remained a staunch Roman Catholic. Slavery was also another problem. Leopold abhorred the practice and expressed his abolitionist views. Emil was comfortable with the Southern system.

By 1860, the entire country was seriously divided over the slavery issue. Liberal thinkers like Leopold defied Southern tradition and posed a threat to the region's economic system. The growing hostility between the Karpeles brothers obliterated their earlier devotion to one another. Leopold was more than a mere nuisance and Emil began exploring possible options to rid himself of his brother. He chose the most civilized means and implemented a move far away from Texas for Leopold, all the way to Springfield, Massachusetts, to work in a dry goods store. In New England his anti-slavery brother would find compatible opinions and probably never trouble him again.

Departure from the Texas climate, landscape, his associates in the militia and their values was a wrench. His life on horseback had been an adventure that satisfied his restless nature. He journeyed via New York to Springfield, a major industrial center in the Connecticut River Valley



FIG 1. Leopold Karpeles  
adam-geibel\_primarysourcehistory.wordpress.com.

where differences were addressed with written and spoken dialogue rather than with frontier violence. He soon discovered liberal Northerners feared that American civilization and the U.S. Constitution were threatened by the Southerners adamant adherence to their "Peculiar Institution."

Samuel B. Spooner of Springfield became his closest friend and introduced him to many key abolitionist figures, including those involved in the "Underground Railroad."<sup>2</sup> With Spooner's encouragement and guidance, he explored written sources to understand the dynamics of the bitter confrontation. Abraham Lincoln was his idol and he made a pact with himself to support Lincoln's ideals in every possible way.

The Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, an island in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, on 12 and 13 April, 1861 started the Civil War. President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to bear arms. Karpeles solemnly pledged himself to support the Northern cause and its flag which, during the first half of the nineteenth century, became the most revered symbol of this country and its doctrines. The flag assumed an almost holy stature.

Karpeles and Sam Spooner discussed the ways in which they wished to serve their country. Sam desired a position of leadership. Karpeles, characteristically, sought a role



FIG 2. CVHM-94.13. Model 1858 Civil War Union soldier's forage cap, also called a "Bummer's Cap" since so many were worn by Sherman's men on the March Through Georgia. Made of dark blue wool with a black leather visor. There is a leather sweatband and a linen lining inside.. Brass buttons secure the black leather strap from side to side just above the visor. Brass Regiment numbers (57) were fastened on top of the cap and the brass bugle horn, the symbol of the Infantry, (partially visible at right) should be mounted on the front of the cap. According to appraisers, who placed values on the Karpeles Family gifts, this cap is a reproduction and probably dates from the years when Leopold was most active in the G.A.R. Provenance: Donor is the great- grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Model 1858 Forage Cap, 1861-1865. Used by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. 94.13.

that would require total dedication to his principals regardless of danger. Full of pride for his adopted land, Karpeles vowed to protect its sacred symbol with all that he had to offer: his very life.<sup>3</sup>

Military units of the nineteenth century lacked in communications ability. "The colors" not only served as a moral and visible support, the flag also provided a rallying point on which troops relied. Amidst the noise, smoke, and confusion of battle, the color bearer could effectively communicate the direction of regimental or company movements. On a negative note, the loss of the colors to the enemy was demoralizing. The flag was the symbolic prize that mattered more than mere mortals.

Leopold Karpeles enlisted in the 46th Massachusetts Regiment and commenced training at Camp Banks in Springfield on 24 September 1862. His closest friend, Sam Spooner, was captain of a company, while Karpeles was appointed regimental color bearer as he had desired and he was rapidly promoted to corporal. He was fully aware of the danger and realized he would frequently be a primary target. Color bearers were regularly replaced

several times within a single battle. The loss of flag bearers was so great, there are few examples of one man surviving throughout the war. The 46th Regiment was raised largely in Hampden County and the enlistment was for only nine months. In the early months of the war optimism was high on both sides.

The 46th Regiment departed camp on 5 November and proceeded to Boston where coastal transports were boarded for North Carolina. New Bern was reached on 15 November and the regiment was assigned to Col. H. C. Lee's Brigade. After serving his full enlistment on the battlefields of North Carolina, Karpeles was honorably discharged in July 1863. Of his service in the Battles of Kingston, Whitehall, and Goldsborough, his superior wrote "he bore the State colors. The promptness with which he came upon the line of battle, and the firmness with which stood his ground, though, his flag was several times pierced by bullets from the enemy, were so conspicuous as to be the subject of remark and recommendation."

Leopold returned to Springfield and attempted to resume a normal civilian life. There may have been elements of envy and jealousy inherent in accusations that were circulated. This verbatim excerpt from the *Springfield Republican* newspaper for 8 March 1864 casts a positive light on ex- Corporal Karpeles:

Our opinion regarding the loyalty of Leopold Karpeles of this City, a warrant for whose arrest has been issued for alleged selling of arms and ammunition to the rebels, is backed by a note from Col. Shurtleff of the late 46th Regiment. Col. Shurtleff says: —Karpeles was a member of the regiment lately under my command, and served with so much zeal and fidelity as to gain my commendation and the good opinion of his comrades in arms. I am very sure that no member of his regiment will give credence to any report affecting his past or present loyalty, and I very gladly give, for the reestablishment of his reputation in the community, my assurance that I am convinced that I had no soldier under my command more devoted to the cause in which we were serving than Karpeles.

This statement was evidently successful in putting an end to the false rumors and accusations.

In summer 1863, criticism was rampant over Lincoln's poor judgment in having created six and nine month terms of service. It was reasoned longer service would provide more seasoned troops to fight an enemy army of limited and diminishing resources. Karpeles returned briefly to Springfield and worked days at Mayer and Levy's Store. Karpeles was restless as a civilian and wrote and thought about his past experiences and speculated about future ones. He noted the generals often outwitted themselves rather than their adversaries. The men of their own army often become their enemies. The last statement is strangely prophetic because of the circumstances that would be the reason for Karpeles being so severely wounded that he would endure a significant disability for the rest of this years.





When Lincoln requested an additional muster of 300,000 troops in October 1863, Karpeles had already decided to reenlist. On 7 March 1864, he was mustered into Company I, 57th Regiment in Springfield and transferred into Company E on 10 March. The men trained at Camp Wool near Worcester, Massachusetts. The historian Warren Wilkinson, in his book *Mother May You Never See the Sights I have Seen: The Fifty-Seventh Massachusetts Veteran Volunteers in the Army of the Potomac 1864-1865*:

The men of the 57th came from eighteen states and thirteen foreign countries and reflected the diverse and dynamic America of their time. They ranged in ages from fifteen to forty-five, and most were in their mid-twenties. They were predominantly poor and Irish. Author Wilkinson publishes the company roster, in which Leopold Karpeles' nationality is cited as Hungarian. Only about twenty-five of the regiment were seasoned veterans and the 57th's corporals and sergeants [Karpeles was promoted to sergeant on April 14] were used to help train raw recruits.

On 18 April, the 928 men of the 57th Regiment left Worcester and on 20 April reached Annapolis where they joined the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, IX Army Corps. The march resumed on 23 April and the troops were formally reviewed in Washington by President Lincoln. Leopold was impressed by the grandeur of the parade but even more by the stark simplicity of the reviewer. He would remember the experience forever. He had been given the chance to bear his nation's most valued symbol in front of the man who had inspired him to dedicate himself to the cause of freedom. The regiment left Washington and "marched well for a new regiment" and reached Rappahannock Station. The 57th was thrust into the heaviest action almost immediately. The 57th sustained the second greatest loss of killed and wounded of all the Civil War regiments, being surpassed only by the 2d Wisconsin, which was in the field four times as long. The 57th was made a component of the IX Army Corps under Gen. Ambrose Burnside and would receive orders directly from Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. This first conflict experienced by this virtually green regiment was one of the bloodiest battles ever witnessed—the Second Battle of the Wilderness. For the first time, Generals Grant and Lee were opposing one another.

Marching in picture book style, the men struggled through trees and undergrowth. Advancing through knots of ardent veterans huddled on the ground, the 57th was shot to pieces. In the opening hour of the battle, almost half of the regiment's combat strength was killed, wounded, or missing. The left wing of the Union Army crumpled and disintegrated under fire from two Confederate corps. Stephen Minot Ward, in his *War Diary Memoirs*, emphatically declared, "The Wilderness surpassed anything ever imagined and was the hottest action he had ever seen." It has been suggested the Wilderness marked the point where the North began its slow march



FIG 3. CVHM-94.12. Civil War Corps Badge, Union Army XVIII Corps. In diamond shape of a quatrefoil, having engraved decoration around the border. There is a red enameled star in the center. There is blue enameled text in each of the points, with white dots and a blue border just inside the engraved border. The text reads: "Co. A, 46th REG'T, MVM." There is a pin on the back side. This badge is believed to post-date the war; probably 1866. Provenance: the donor is the great-grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. The premise that this badge post-dates the close of the war is borne out by a book of war memoirs Hardtack & Coffee or, *The Unwritten Story of Army Life* written by John D. Billings and illustrated by Charles W. Reed. It was published in 1888 by George M. Smith & Co. of Boston, Massachusetts. Chapter 13, pps. 250-268, discusses in considerable detail the development of the Corps Badge as a means of identifying military units. Ten pages of many illustrations show the various design of the badges. Enlisted personnel wore cloth badges in red, white, or blue, sewn on their kepies, hats, or tunics. Quite obviously, silver badges would have been prohibitively expensive. Such elaborate engraved and enameled badges were purchased by proud and well-to-do members of the Grand Army of the Republic. Union Army XVIII Corps Silver Badge, inscribed Co. A / 46TH REG'T / MVM. Owned by Leopold Karpeles, Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.12.

toward victory. If that is an accurate observation, then Leopold Karpeles was a significant factor since he was instrumental in turning the tide of that battle. Karpeles described the action in Capt. John Anderson's book *The Fifty-Seventh Massachusetts Volunteers in the Great War of the Rebellion, Army of the Potomac* (Boston, MA: E. D. Stillings & Co., 1896).

...our right wing commenced to break and through that brought about a general stampede. When it



reached our regiment, Lt. Colonel Chandler [Colonel Bartlett having already been taken wounded to the rear] inquired "Color Sergeant, what's the trouble?" I mounted a stump that had been broken by a shell and replied, "Colonel the Rebs are all around us."

Gen. James S. Wadsworth (bringing up another division to support the collapsing wing) saw the colors of the 57th far out in advance, floating proudly and defiantly amid the sulphurous smoke in the face of the advancing foe. He also witnessed Sergeant Karpeles standing firmly and entreating the retreating men steaming by him to re-form and make a stand against the enemy.

Karpeles continued:

As I was the only color bearer left on the field, I, with the assistance of officers Royce, Ward, and Bowman, by every possible exertion, halted the retreat and gathered a large number of men from other regiments, in addition to our 57th to rally around our colors! We also prevented the capture of stragglers in the woods and we added a sizeable number of the rank and file of a Pennsylvania and a New York regiment. We succeeded in forming these men into a fighting line and ordered them to advance on the approaching rebels, and by a rapid discharge of firearms managed to check the enemy. We also enabled the disordered wing to form anew, thereby saving that portion of the wing aforesaid from almost total destruction.

We held until dark and then fell back and reorganized regiments and corps in time to take part in the fight the next day, in which engagement, our colors were very severely shattered.

Karpele's citation for his Medal of Honor read: "While color-bearer, he rallied his retreating troops and induced them to check the enemy's advance." Obviously, Leopold's contribution to the cause of freedom was significant. On 24 May 1864, the IX Corps was officially designated part of the Army of the Potomac on a permanent basis although it had fought in tandem before this. After a frustrating engagement at Spotsylvania Court House, the 57th moved on to a major fiasco at North Anna.

The march to North Anna was kept up day and night; the men were weary and bleary-eyed. Many felt like walking dead men. The brigade to which the 57th belonged was badly led and suffered seriously because of that. At the crossing of the North Anna River, on 24 May, its commander, Brig. Gen. James Ledlie, inspired with artificial courage (bottled) known through the army as "*Dutch Courage*," led his brigade without orders and unsupported against a virtually impregnable Confederate position. The soldiers were shattered by musket fire, blasted by entrenched artillery, which shook the very ground and swept everything in front and closed upon



FIG 4. CVHN-94.7A. Civil War Soldier's Haversack. Unlike a rucksack or a knapsack, which are types of back packs, the haversack is a one shouldered bag. Union soldiers were issued a haversack made of painted canvas having a removable cotton liner with which to carry food. Worn over the shoulder, haversacks were handy for carrying rations of pork, hardtack, coffee, personal items, a Bible, and extra ammunition. Union haversacks were superior and prized by Confederate soldiers. This example, used by Leopold Karpeles, suggests that he was sufficiently well-to-do to have a leather haversack. It is a pouch-shaped bag that closes with a flap. There is a small pocket closed by a flap on the outside of the bag flap. There are two leather bands to attach the carrying strap, which is missing. The inside bag and pocket is lined with fabric. There is an inscription, now somewhat indistinct, on the lining of the pocket "LK". Provenance: Donor is the great-grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Union Soldier's Haversack, United States Army, Civil War, 1861-1865. Used by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.7 A.

both sides by Confederate infantry charge. All semblance of a line was lost; it was a wild, tumultuous rush. As the Union forces came closer to the rebel battery and its supporting sharpshooters, the 57th men began to fall. The colors of the 57th went down as Color Sergeant Karpeles was hit. Though badly wounded, Karpeles rose and again moved forward with the colors. Col. Charles J. Chandler, always near to the colors, tried to take the flag from him and send him to get medical assistance, but Karpeles refused until a loss of blood compelled him to give it up. In the collapse and rout that soon followed, Colonel Chandler was reportedly mortally wounded and abandoned on the field. He was not mortally wounded though, but rather captured by the Confederates and survived the war. All night long, Karpeles charged himself with the death of his dear colonel because he had to leave the field. He was inconsolable though he was in no way responsible: "We had seen the regiment very nearly annihilated and had lost dear friends we dearly loved. In the loss of our colors, our pride had been humiliated, yet we felt a consciousness that the brave men who were with the 57th that day had





FIGs 5,6. CVHM-94.4 Civil War U.S. Army soldier's tin canteen with a short neck and a rolled lip. The stopple is missing. Metal strips formed into flat loops are fastened at the bottom and sides of the canteen. A leather carrying strap was fitted through these loops. The metal canteen is covered with a woolen fabric which has faded to an indeterminate color. The owner's initials "L.K." are stenciled on the wool of one side. Provenance: The donor is the great-grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Union Soldier's Canteen, United States Army, Civil War, 1861-1865. Used by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.4.

done all, under the circumstances, that brave men could do."

Severely wounded, Karpeles was taken to a cavalry camp where, he was later informed, he remained unconscious for several days. He was then moved to an area hospital, was treated, and spent a recuperation period. True to his nature, Karpeles became very restless during his convalescence and yearned to rejoin his regiment. Doctors were initially wary about his release but finally agreed in October. Unfortunately, the debilitating wounds incurred at North Anna made his re-entry into action brief.

Wounded again in December, Karpeles was forced to submit to official orders and allowed himself to be transported behind the lines. His wounds were so severe that he was moved to Mount Pleasant Hospital in Washington for advanced care. His condition was listed as nearly total paralysis. It was feared that his leg would have to be amputated to save his life. This dire consequence was avoided by a fortuitous twist of fate in the form of a chance meeting. The meeting involved a young lady volunteering as a hospital aide, along with her mother and sister, to minister to the men through such activities as letter writing, ambulatory exercise, and general morale boosting. This aide proved remarkably well-suited to Karpeles' needs. Her cheerful visits, parcels

of food, and books elevated his spirits commendably. Through the weeks, sixteen-year-old Sara Mundheim, daughter of Rabbi Simon Mundheim, first Reform Rabbi of Washington, grew increasingly fond of her fallen hero. The feelings were mutual. When amputation of his limb was threatened, Sara queried the doctors anxiously and was told that there was a slim chance that intensive care might avoid that catastrophe, but the hospital could not offer such a level of care.

Sara prevailed upon her parents to allow Karpeles to be brought to their Pennsylvania Avenue home and receive the nurturing she would gladly provide. Her mother objected strenuously to the burden this would impose upon the household. Mrs. Mundheim demanded to know the personal history of the young stranger and his religious affiliation. Sara related Karpeles' life story, including his enforced indoctrination into Catholicism in order to attend school in Prague. The Mundheims acquiesced to their daughter's ardent pleas, but with one crucial condition. They insisted the if Karpeles were to live under their roof he must agree to convert to Judaism. Since he was already of that faith and he was willing and eager to resume Judaic studies and practices, there was no problem. Sara prepared to receive her young hero into the household where he would be evaluated by their excellent doctor and nursed back to health by a dedicated team of Mundheim women.

The family physician was both competent and kind. He began to monitor Karpeles closely. With the excellent care



FIG 7. CVHM-94.6. Believed to be a Grand Army of the Republic Belt, Brown Leather Belt with one leather loop and one brass loop for fastening. No Buckle. It was postulated by the appraisers who valued the gifts to the museum that this is not a Civil War Belt but could be a Grand Army of the Republic uniform belt. Provenance: Donor is the great- grandson of Leopold Karpeles, the original owner. Leather belt, believed to be Grand Army of the Republic, after 1866. Owned by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.6.

provided by Sara, his health began gradually to stabilize, and he won the battle to retain his endangered limb.

One of Karpeles' first ventures outside the house occurred when Lincoln's funeral cortege proceeded up Pennsylvania Avenue right in front of the Mundheim home. Karpeles wore red, white, and blue slippers made by Sara. With the use of a cane and leaning heavily on his lady, he descended the stairs to join the throng mourning his idol. He remembered weeping copiously and was inconsolable for several days. His health took a turn for the worse, and the dark gloom of worry invaded the house until he finally began to recover.

Sara Mundheim and Leopold Karpeles were married in Washington's Hebrew Congregation by her father as soon as Karpeles' doctor considered him out of danger and reasonably strong.

Karpeles quickly became active in civic affairs. He artfully weaved his way through select Washington circles and became acquainted with the key figures. "Father knew absolutely everyone from the President down as far back as I can remember," his daughter Theresa, affectionately called Tasy, recalled.

Karpeles was also a major figure in the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), a veteran's organization, fraternal in nature, which supported veterans' causes. His home was always open to any veteran in need. It also became the site for countless celebrations with elaborate banquets and merry music.

Karpeles gave his own account of the battles of the Wilderness and North Anna in the 1870 affidavit with which he applied for his Medal of Honor. Karpeles was awarded the Medal of Honor on 30 April 1870. The delay may have been caused due to the need to verify the facts



FIGs 8, 9. CVHM-94.8. Civil War Soldier's Shaving Mirror for use in the field. This is the sort of personal item that would be carried in the haversack. An oval mirror is set into a wooden frame that is oval with flattened ends. Judging from the raised portion at one end with the diagonal inner edge, the fragile looking glass was originally protected by a wooden cover which swiveled on the small metal pin at the opposite end and which locked against the diagonal stop. The nails also serve to hold the frame securely in place. There is an inscription in ink on the bottom: "L. Karpeles / [illegible]48". It is tempting to read that number as "46" since that was the Massachusetts Regiment in which Leopold initially served. Provenance: The donor is the great grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Union Soldier's Shaving Mirror, Civil War, 1861-1865. Used by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.8.

of his heroic deed. He was the second Jewish recipient of the Medal of Honor in the Civil War.

Karpeles' adjustment to civilian and family life seemed complete when he and Sara became parents of Theresa, a beautiful, strong-willed daughter, on 21 December 1870. One year later, a second daughter was born and life appeared unblemished with limitless promise. But, as in war, conditions reversed themselves rudely a year and a half later when Sara died in childbirth along with her baby. Before she died, the family gathered around her bed, and Tasy remembered her mother grasping her hand as she summoned Leopold to her side. She begged him to promise to marry her older sister, Henrietta when the obligatory mourning period of one year had elapsed. This would guarantee the good care of her young daughters, she reasoned. A weeping Henrietta and Leopold were prodded repeatedly by Sara to follow her last wish. Finally Rabbi Mundheim bade the two to comply to what Jewish law prescribes in such a case. Before the next year elapsed





the younger daughter also died of diphtheria. Tasy became the sole survivor of the original match.

A growing brood of children, now three sons and four daughters, required all of Henrietta's energies. Money was never plentiful, although Karpeles appointments to the Commerce and Post Office Departments provided a steady income. Karpeles always supported anyone seeking his assistance as long as the seeker was a Civil War Union veteran. The Karpeles home was also the setting for both veteran and civic affairs with lavish spreads for many guests.

Karpeles established a niche in official Washington. He possessed a finely tuned public persona and moved easily among the "movers and shakers" of post-Civil War Washington. He was recognized as a catalyst for the legislation of social causes as well as for his exemplary military heroism. He was avidly sought as a star attraction

for major expositions, political campaigns, and veteran affair conferences where he was a featured speaker and often prodded to discuss his exploits in Texas, the Civil War, and his knowledge of Lincoln.

He was often seen strolling with a senator, representative, or key foreign ambassador and conversing heatedly in one of the five languages he spoke fluently (English, French, German, Greek, and Bohemian). His power of speech was all the more remarkable because he had virtually lost it completely when he suffered his several battle wounds.

On each New Year's morning, the "Colonel" was up bright and early singing Civil War songs, snatches from Grand



FIG 10. CVHM-94-38, Civil War Enlisted Man's Presentation Sword given to Medal of Honor recipient Leopold Karpeles probably about 1875 in recognition of his service as color sergeant in the 57th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. The straight steel scabbard is trimmed with a brass tip, throat, and brass ring upon which is mounted a loop for the lower sword hanger. The tip is engraved with a floral motif. The throat is engraved with stylized floral elements and a reserve upon which is engraved: "L. Karpeles / Co.E / 57th Reg. / Mass. Vols". All brass work retains vestiges of original gilding. The scabbard may have been painted or may have been blued; there is no finish remaining. The upper hanging ring has broken off the brass throat. The blade, which is not engraved, has a single fuller which runs the full length. The ricasso is marked: "W. / Clauberg" above a stylized figure of a blacksmith. W. Clauberg was a sword maker and manufacturer of cutlery in the City of Solingen in the north Rhine area of the Ruhr area known for superior metal work since the 18th century. The grip is wrapped with shagreen (sharkskin) and secured with brass wire. The brass pommel is a plain brass button. The guard is decoratively pierced and embellished with stylized floral elements. The single quillion is turned downward. Vestiges of gilding remain on the brass handle. This was not a "top-of-the-line" sword when it was new. It has seen some abuse through the years, perhaps having been played with by Leopold's three sons. Were it not for the very significant association with Leopold Karpeles, it would not command great attention among collectors and military historians.

FIG 11. CVHM-94-38A. Detail: Engraving on Presentation Sword. Close-up detail of the engraving on the scabbard throat of the presentation Enlisted Man's Sword given to Leopold Karpeles probably around 1875. Stylized floral elements embellish reserve upon which is lettered: "L. Karpeles / Co.E / 57th Reg. / Mass. Vols." Provenance: Donor is the great-grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles.

FIG 12. CVHM-94.38B. Detail of the Grip of Leopold Karpeles' Presentation Sword. The grip is wrapped with shagreen (sharkskin) held in place by brass wire wrapping. The pommel, just visible in the photograph, is a plain button. The guard is decoratively pierced and embellished with stylized floral elements. The single quillion is turned downward. Vestiges of gilding remain on the brass handle. Provenance: Donor is the great grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Presentation Sword, circa 1875, styled after Civil War enlisted man's sword. Presented to Leopold Karpeles. Made by W. Clauberg, Germany. Gift of Joyce Blackman. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.38.



Opera and just bubbling with the joy of living. By 0800, he was fully dressed in his best Prince Albert suit with all of his medals: the Medal of Honor, the Commonwealth Medal, and the GAR Medal. He was freshly shaved and impeccably groomed. His high silk hat was polished over and over again until it gleamed. Tucking his silver-headed walking stick under his arm, en-route to join the other Medal of Honor recipients and pay his respects to the President of the United States and other top dignitaries.

As years passed, Karpeles became more and more involved in worthy causes and became an officer in many organizations such as the Masons and the GAR. He was one of the six founders of the Medal of Honor Legion and served as a vice-president. He worked tirelessly and successfully to pass the early closing law for District of Columbia stores. His daughter Tasy said, "His backbone was strong as steel like his will. He was a great patriot and unshakably loyal to his beliefs." He always dedicated himself to helping those unable to help themselves.

When Leopold Karpeles died in February 1909, he was buried in the cemetery of the congregation where he worshipped, the Hebrew Congregation in Washington. His tombstone is unique with a replica of the Medal of Honor emblazoned on its granite surface. All who knew him greatly respected him. His daughter Tasy spoke most eloquently of his integrity, dedication, knowledge, generosity and kindness, and his very existence. In the old country all those positive qualities could be summed up in a few words: "He was such a mensch."

*Nowhere else have I found any allusion to an application for the medal and the only reference I have seen is in a brief resume of Karpeles' military career among a list of Jewish Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor compiled by Seymour "Sy" Brody for the American Jewish Historical Society This I found on-line at [www.seymourbrody.com/congressional\\_medal/cmohtoc.htm](http://www.seymourbrody.com/congressional_medal/cmohtoc.htm).*

#### Notes:

1. Joyce Blackman, a writer living in Chestnut Hill, Newton, MA, as of November 1995, is the granddaughter of Leopold Karpeles' first son. In "A Civil War Hero and His Rhode Island Family, Leopold Karpeles" which was published in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Part B, November 1995, Mrs. Blackman noted, "The Southwestern frontier environment was a stark contrast to the strict establishment life style embraced by Leopold's prominent family in the Old World. But he thrived in the fresh elements of direct, unobstructed sunlight, boundless open space, and unrestricted freedom."
2. Samuel Brigham Spooner, b. 17 September 1806, d. 8 May 1862, was the son of farmer Samuel Spooner of Hardwick, MA, who married Hannah Williams on 14 January 1798. From *Records of William Spooner—Plymouth, Mass. —His Decendants Vol.I by Thomas Spooner* (Cincinnati: 1883).



3. A direct quotation from Joyce Blackman's article "A Civil War Hero and His Rhode Island Family, Leopold Karpeles" published in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Part B, November 1995.





FIGs 13,14, (opposite) CVHM-94-9. Early in the American Civil War, Sen. James Grimes of Iowa, who was Chairman of the Senate Naval Committee, took an interest in awards and introduced a bill in Congress to promote the efficiency of the Navy. On 21 December 1861, President Lincoln signed Public Resolution 82 into law. The secretary of the navy was authorized to have two hundred medals struck with suitable emblems and be awarded to Naval and Marine enlisted personnel who distinguished themselves by gallantry in action.

The Navy Medal of Honor was designed by Christian Schussel and sculpted by Anthony C. Paquet. The first medals were clearly intended specifically for the Civil War. James Pollock, director of the U.S. Mint, wrote in a letter to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, the design of the front displays "the foul spirit of secession and rebellion in a crouching position and holding serpents in his hands. These are striking at a large figure representing the Union of our country, who holds in her right hand a shield and in her left the fasces. Around these figures are thirty-four stars representing the states of the Union." The design is in the center of an inverted five-pointed star with laurel leaves and a trefoil at each point.

In February 1862 Sen. Henry Wilson of Massachusetts proposed a similar medal for enlisted personnel of the Army. The resolution was amended on 3 March 1863, to allow commissioned officers of the Army to receive the award. The design was basically similar to the Navy medal except the Army medal was suspended from the ribbon by a trophy comprised of crossed cannons above eight stacked cannon balls and a sabrer.

Both the design of the medal and the laws which govern it have been changed several times over the years. Suffice it to say, the Army medal remained unaltered until 1896, again in 1904, and a third time in 1944. The fourth change, which is in use at the present, is simply a change in the neck ribbon.

The reverse side of the medal awarded to Leopold Karpeles is engraved, "The Congress to Color Serg.t L. Karpeles 57 Reg.t Mass. Vols."

The author is indebted to William Fowler and Eva Kerrigan for clarifying and describing the changes in the Medal of Honor in their scholarly work *American Military Insignia, Medals and Decorations* (Edison, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1995). Congressional Medal of Honor, 1870. Presented to Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams' Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.9.



FIG 16. CVHM 94.10. Grand Army of the Republic Medal. The G.A.R. was a Union Civil War Veteran's Fraternal Organization started shortly after the close of the war. Although thousands of former slaves and freedmen served in the ranks, it was sadly not open to blacks until well into the early decades of the twentieth century. The medal was fashioned after the "Medal of Honor" designed by the arms department. Within the circular surround is the phrase "GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC 1861 VETERAN 1865." Inside this surround two figures shake hands, observed by two small children. At the left are an eagle and a flag, at the rear a standing figure, and at the right a cannon barrel. Each of the five points of the star terminates in a trefoil rosette and displays a military symbol: a bugle horn, an anchor, crossed swords, crossed drumsticks, and a cannon barrel. The star is suspended by an American flag ribbon pendant from a spreadwing eagle perched on crossed cannons and a cluster of cannon balls. There is a clasp on the reverse of the eagle which allows the medal to be pinned on a civilian coat or a G.A.R. tunic. Provenance: a descendant of Leopold Karpeles. Grand Army of the Republic Medal, after 1866. Owned by Leopold Karpeles. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.10.

FIG 15. CVHM-94.15 Leopold Karpeles with a child, circa 1870. Tintype portrait of Leopold Karpeles with dark hair and a beard seated and holding a young girl on his lap. She is wearing a plaid skirt with a white smock and is wearing earrings. Her cheeks are tinted pink. She is his daughter, either Eva or Vera. Provenance: The donor is the great-grandson of the original owner. Leopold Karpeles. Tintype, Leopold Karpeles with a child, circa 1870. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.15.



FIG 17. CVHM-94.14 Leopold Karpeles and Family. Paper photograph glued to a cardboard shows the Karpeles Family posed on the front steps of their home in Washington. It is not known whether it was a rental or whether it was purchased. It is fairly old, appearing to have been built late in the eighteenth century in what has come to be called the "Federal Style." The brick work has neatly drawn joints and the bricks are laid up in a variant of the Flemish Bond. The tall narrow windows have dressed stone sills and are topped by flat arches comprised of tapered and beveled brick. The window shutters appear to have fixed louvres and are probably closed against the seasonal heat of Washington. The transom light above the front door is painted and displays the number 613. Inscription: Written in ink on back: "Father, Mother, Nerman, Maurice / Simon - Vera - Eva". Nerman, wearing a three piece suit and a necktie, is the oldest son. "Mother" is Leopold's second wife, younger sister of his first. Her maiden name was Henrietta Mundheim. The two little boys sitting on the steps are Maurice (on the left) and Simon. The younger of the two girls is Vera seated on the porch railing, and Eva, standing, on the right. Provenance: The donor is the great-grandson of the original owner, Leopold Karpeles. Maurice in photo above was the donor's grandfather..Photograph, Leopold Karpeles and family, circa 1880s. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.14.



FIG 18.CVHM-94-16. Bust length portrait of Leopold Karpeles with dark hair, sideburns, beard and mustache. He is wearing a white shirt, dark vest and dark coat. Pinned to his vest is the Medal of Honor which he received on 30 April 1870. An oval paper photograph, pasted on cardboard which is inscribed on the lower right: "Bucholz / SPRINGFIELD, MASS." Herman Bucholz was a well patronized photographer working at a number of Springfield locations between 1872 and 1880. Bom in 1838, Karpeles was between age thirty-four and forty-two at that time. Provenance: Gift of Leopold Karpeles' great grandson, Lyman James (Jim) Williams of Providence, Rhode Island. Photograph, Leopold Karpeles, circa 1890. Gift of L. James Williams. Wood Museum of Springfield History. 94.16.



FIG 19. Karpeles Family gravestone. Hebrew Congregation Cemetery, Washington, DC. adam-geibel\_primarysourcehistory.wordpress.com.



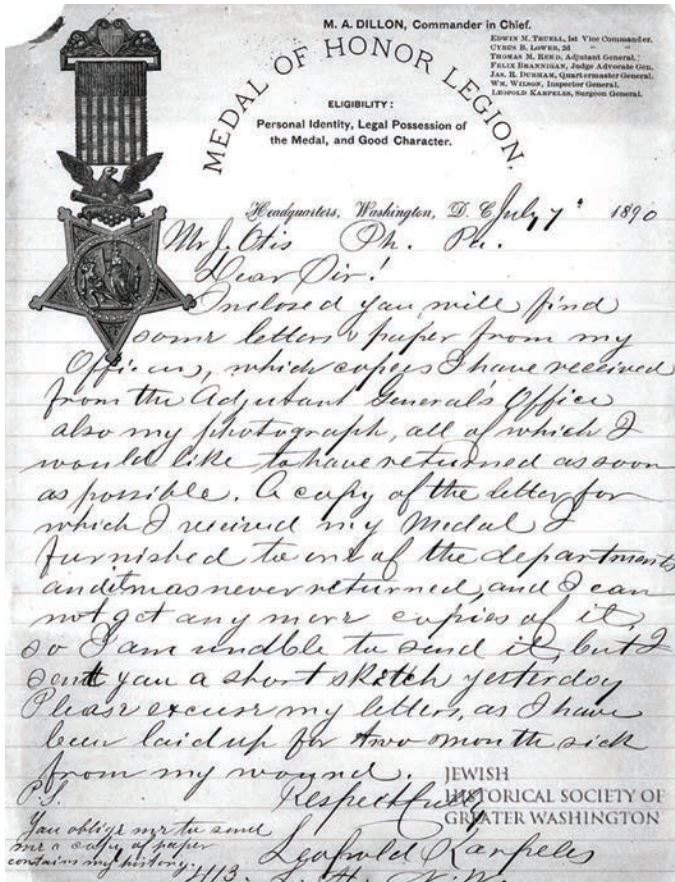


FIG 20. Proof that Honor Medal Recipient Karpeles suffered from his wound long after the Battle of the Wilderness is a letter that he wrote on 7 July 1890 which states that he has been "laid up for two months sick from my wound." Karpeles evidently had loaned some personal letters and papers and also his photograph, all of which he would like to have returned as soon as possible. He bemoans the loss of the letter which confirmed receiving his medal. Of greatest importance is his gentlemanly demeanor despite his loss. The Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History.

In 1994 descendants of Leopold Karpeles donated artifacts and memorabilia pertaining to his Civil War military career and post-war years to the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts. This was appropriate, since Leopold had worked and lived in Springfield prior to enlisting in the 49th Regiment, MVM and, subsequently, in the 57th Regiment, MVM. Hence, the reason for accession numbers assigned to the items to be prefaced with the letters "CVHM" and the year date '94. At the time, I was working several days a week in the history museum as collections curator and cataloguer.

Within the past decade a new building has been acquired and named the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History. All of the collections of the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum were transferred but due to the vast number of objects, the old CVHM accession numbers were retained. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Phyllis Jurkowsky, a long time staff member, for her kind assistance in making available to me photographs of the objects and copies of extremely important documents.

Joyce Blackman's Karpeles Family History has been the most detailed and instructive document. Because this article has focused on Leopold Karpeles, the Medal of Honor Recipient, I mention his own family but do not discuss the lives and careers of successive generations.

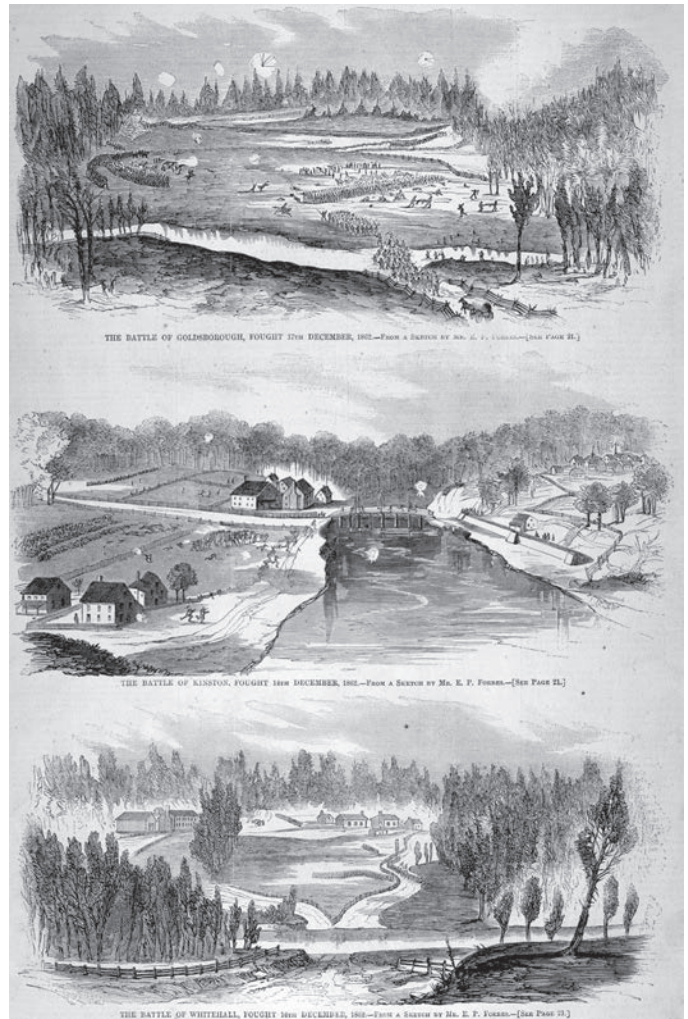


FIG 21. Engraving from Harper's Weekly, 10 January 1862, of the Battles of Goldsboro, Kinston, Whitehall 1863. Source: State Archives of North Carolina, OP\_249.



## Royal-Artillerie and the variations of its uniform, 1776–1785

*René Chartrand*

Company members may have noted that a fine Military Uniforms in America plate by acclaimed military artist Lucien Rousselot depicting a gunner of the French Corps Royal de l'Artillerie that was commonly called Royal-Artillerie, c. 1780-1786, is published. As its text shows, this was a large unit in the metropolitan army that, from 1777, furnished many detachments as reinforcements to garrisons in the West Indies and, notably, a large contingent with General Rochambeau's army in the United States from 1780 to 1783. Oddly enough, while many regiments of that army have been the subject of illustrations, the gunners of Royal-Artillerie, who did such splendid service with the new Gribeauval artillery system during the October siege of Yorktown, had not been the subject of much attention regarding their material culture.

The remarks below may explain why. There are many variations in details in contemporary sources so that an illustrator would be somewhat confused as to what should be shown. For instance, Rousselot shows two buttons set vertically on the cuff and there may have been a third unseen. This would agree broadly with the 21 September 1779 regulation and 1 October 1786 dress regulations and the artist made a good choice.<sup>1</sup>

There were, however, other possibilities for cuffs and other details, as shown in the accompanying illustrations from contemporary sources, that likely were the result of much confusion at that time over just what would be worn. This was largely due to the dress regulations of 31 May 1776 whose very unusual specifications for foot troops created an uproar in the army and even in the public's eye. These were due to the Comte de Saint Germain, minister of war since 12 December 1777 whose efforts sought to modernize weapons, which were laudable and led to the excellent Model 1777 musket, but also to a firm rebuttal on all sides of the May 1776 dress regulations he had concocted. As early as June 1776, there was "much opposition" to it and Prince of Montbarrey had "amongst others" complained to the king about it. Newspapers already joked about seeing "our elegant [soldiers] wearing hats with four corners..." Indeed, it could be argued that it caused Saint-Germain to be the object of such ridicule by critics that it was a major reason as to why he was dismissed from his portfolio on 18 October 1777.<sup>2</sup>

In all this, there was a sort of slow replacement process created by the way the French army replaced its soldier's clothing. It was sent to units from September of each year in the following way: one third of the uniform coats were sent every year. Thus, in principle, it took three years to have regiments wearing the new style. The other items (waistcoats, breeches and a new item consisting of a white cloth sash) were issued yearly in the 1776 regulations.



FIG 1: Royal-Artillerie gunners, 1776. This rare manuscript is one of the more credible attempts to illustrate the very controversial dress regulation introduced by Minister of War, the Comte de Saint-Germain. However, the cuff buttons specified in the regulation are not shown. The unknown illustrator was also at pains to render the hat with four corners even if he might actually have seen it. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI, USA. Author's photo.

The white cloth sash with buttons was mysterious, the short waistcoat quite unusual, the gaiters had no garters not to speak of the short tails on the coat. On the whole, it would appear that units tried every trick in the book to alleviate the effect of such an item as a hat with four





corners, to evacuate better rainwater according to a next to incomprehensible page and a half describing it in the 1776 regulation. Its only redeeming grace seems to have been the bunch of three small white plumes it had. Infantry chasseurs had this mixed white and green while grenadiers had white and red, but were despaired at the loss of the bearskin caps they had officially worn since 1763 and did everything they could to keep them. Another unusual item, better accepted, was that the shoulder strap (that were the color of the coat piped with the facing color) would have a wool "houpe" at its end, which appears to mean fringes, in the color of the cuff.

The illustration shows two gunners dressed according to the 1776 regulation (FIG 1), or at least as close to what the artist could make of them. It introduced dark blue lapels (with seven small buttons each with four below the right lapel) piped red. The cuffs are shown as plain, but the regulations specified four small buttons set vertically, two on the cuff and two on the lower sleeve. The fringed shoulder straps with fringes are shown as white and red rather than the regulation's blue piped red without fringes. The gaiters are somewhat short and the waistcoat, previously dark blue in the artillery, was now white like the rest of the line infantry with the added cloth belt. The gunner with a pick is in undress and might also be a miner in which case his coat would be the same as the depicted gunner except for "aurore" (orange) shoulder straps. His waistcoat has red cuffs and he has the peculiar "pokalem" forage cap. On the whole, it is unlikely that this 1776 order of dress was much seen overseas and even in France.

While Julliette's 1778 illustration of Royal-Artillerie (FIG

2) is possibly the least reliable since such details as the lack of red piping, blue instead of red coat lining and white (or uncolored) fringed shoulder straps seem to be colorist's lacking attention, the style shown reflexes the army's rejection of the fashion imposed by the 1776 regulation favouring the more traditional "French" style that many argued for. The cut of the coat is more standard as are the gaiters, which have garters, and the fairly standard hat.

According to an officer's coat at the Musée de l'Armée in Paris (FIG 3), there were three buttons at the top of the cuffs, as specified in the 1779 regulations, but four buttons below the lapels as in 1776, the coat otherwise being definitely in the "French" style, which make one wonder if it might not have been made in about 1778.

The following year, Isnard's prints of the army's uniforms reflected the 1779 regulations and the gunner shown was correctly colored. There would henceforth be three large buttons below the right lapel. The cuff buttons must have posed a problem. The infantry regiments were to have two on the cuff and two on the lower sleeve, but for the artillery, there were now to be three large buttons on the cuffs. Isnard was possibly not too sure how to interpret this and showed three edging the top of the cuffs and another lower (FIG 4). In the 1779 regulations, it was an issue of one third every year for coat and waistcoat, yearly for breeches. Other items such as a hat, three shirts, two pairs of shoes, gaiters, cloth stocks and various utility items would be yearly or when needed.

The later print by Hoffman (FIG 5) shows the three buttons on the cuffs set vertically as specified in both the 1779 and the 1786 regulations for the artillery. Indeed, both regulations prescribe that same uniform that



FIG 2:

Royal-Artillerie gunner, 1778. This print after Julliette is a lesser reliable illustration of Royal-Artillerie's dress of 1776, even when some details were not implemented by reluctant units. The colouring is notably deficient with regard to the absence of red piping edging the lapels and the collar as well as the lining shown as being blue instead of red. The cuffs are shown with two buttons. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI, USA. Author's photo.

FIG 3:

Officer's coat and waistcoat of Royal-Artillerie, c. 1778-1785. These garments made of a light silk material were undoubtedly for an officer serving in a tropical climate. They have faded over time and would have been originally of the much darker hues that made up the corps' uniform. The ground color would have been dark blue and the now light buff cuffs and piping would have been scarlet. The cuffs each have three buttons edging the top and there are four buttons below the right lapel. The gilt buttons are stamped with the numeral 64, Royal-Artillerie's precedence number. Musée de l'Armée, Paris. Author's photo.



remained the order of dress until the French Revolution. The red fringed epaulets and hat pompon probably denote a bombardier gunner, which had the status of a grenadier, although this was not specifically mentioned in regulations.

Gunners were considered elite soldiers and, in the French army, all were armed with a hanger (or short saber). The Model 1767 hanger with its brass “D” knuckle-bow is shown in Isnard’s 1779 print. However, from 1768, a distinctive model for gunners that consisted of a saber “à la Romaine” (Roman style) without a knuckle-bow whose brass grip featured an eagle’s head (FIG 6) was introduced. Although such Antiquity themes were becoming very fashionable in the second half of the 18th century, the Roman saber appears to have been introduced very slowly, no doubt because it was seemingly more expensive to produce. Furthermore, such a saber was a fairly long lasting weapon and would not need to be replaced instantly, but over many years, so either style could be correct. For instance, it was only in about 1775 that an officer’s model of the Roman saber was made available from private cutlers and it was quite expensive so there would not have been a rush to obtain it.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes:

1. *Règlement arrêté par le roi pour l’habillement et l’équipement de ses troupes. Du 31 Mai 1776.* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1776): 2, 37-38; *Règlement arrêté par le roi pour l’habillement et l’équipement de ses troupes. Du 21 Février 1779.* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1779): 11, 23-24; *Règlement arrêté par le roi pour l’habillement et l’équipement de ses troupes. Du 1er Octobre 1786.* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1786): 2-4, 7, 37; “Le variations de l’uniforme du Corps Royal de l’Artillerie 1756-1792”, *Carnet de la Sabretache*, IV (1896): 460-469; V (1897): 28-29.
2. *Courrier du Bas-Rhin*, year 1776: 407; Léon Mention, *Le comte de Saint-Germain et ses réformes 1775-1777* (Paris, 1884): 174-175.
3. Michel Pétard, *Des sabres et des épées* (Nantes: Éditions du Canonier, 2005), III: 66, 68; Maurice Bottet, *L’Arme Blanche de Guerre Française au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1910), plate X.

FIG 4:

Royal-Artillerie gunner, 1779. This print after Isnard is a more reliable illustration of Royal-Artillerie’s dress according to the dress regulation of 21 February 1779. The colouring is correct. The cuffs are shown with four buttons, but three edging the top, which is probably a sign that the artist was uncertain of how the three buttons mentioned in the order would actually be set. Private collection. Author’s photo.

FIG 5:

Royal-Artillerie gunner, c. 1780-1789. This print by Hoffman is possibly the most reliable depiction of the unit’s uniform for both the 1779 and the 1786 dress regulations. The three buttons on the cuffs were specified in both regulations for the artillery. Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI, USA. Author’s photo.

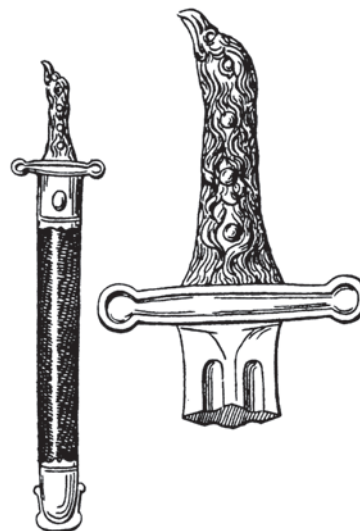


FIG 6: Brass hilted “Roman” hanger for enlisted men of Royal-Artillerie, 1770s-1780s. Print after Bottet. Author’s photo.

