

Vol. 29 NO 11

November 2021

"The Old Guard"
3rd U.S. Regular Infantry
Co. K

The American
Civil War:

1860 - 1865

Corporate Address: 3rd U.S. Infantry Reenactors, 4 Browns Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22401 <http://www.3rdusreenactors.com>
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Unit Event Schedule & Basic Facts

November Event Belair Mansion Living History Bowie, MD

Final Registration with the Company NLT [November 3.](#)

Dates: Saturday, November 6.

Type of event: Living History

Location: 12207 Tulip Grove Dr, Bowie, MD 20715

Registration Fee: Zero.

Schedule:

Saturday: Roll Call 9:00 AM, Living history throughout the day until 5 PM.

Specifics –We will portray the men of the 3rd US, Co. K.

Commissary: On your own; Haversack or Handbasket.

Uniform: Forage Cap (*Full Hat Brass*), Sack Coat (**NO** *Corps Badges*), Light Blue Trousers, Brogans, Full Leathers, Springfield Rifled Musket.

You are encouraged, though not required, to wear the early-war uniform: Hardee Hat (*with full brass*), Frock Coat (*with scales*), Dark Blue Trousers. We want to show the full range of uniforms the Regulars wore throughout the war. If you're not sure, check with the 1st Sgt.

Ammunition: We will **not** have any firing demonstrations. Ammo will **not** be sold.

December Event Christmas in Camp Fort Ward, Alexandria

Final Registration with the Company NLT [December 8.](#)

Dates: Saturday, December 11.

Type of event: Living History

Location: 4301 W Braddock Rd, Alexandria, VA 22304

Registration Fee: Zero.

Schedule:

Saturday: Roll Call 9:00 AM, Living history throughout the day until 5 PM. There may even be a visit from Santa Claus!

Specifics –We will portray the men of the 3rd US, Co. K. We will gather round the campfire, sing Christmas

Carols, and generally have a good time. Drill will be kept to a minimum.

Commissary: On your own; Haversack or Handbasket. There will be treats such as candy, chestnuts, mulled cider, and coffee.

Uniform: Forage Cap (*Full Hat Brass*), Sack Coat (**NO** *Corps Badges*), Light Blue Trousers, Brogans, Full Leathers, Springfield Rifled Musket.

You are encouraged, though not required, to wear the early-war uniform: Hardee Hat (*with full brass*), Frock Coat (*with scales*), Dark Blue Trousers. We want to show the full range of uniforms the Regulars wore throughout the war. If you're not sure, check with the 1st Sgt.

You are also strongly encouraged to wear your great coats.

Ammunition: We will **not** have any firing demonstrations. Ammo will **not** be sold.

Vice President Report

By: Vice President Peter Vaselopoulos

Remaining Events for 2021

To all: Please note the following link on our website that features an event calendar.

<https://www.3rdusreenactors.com/home/organization/event-calendar/>

As I start planning for next year's schedule, please feel free to submit your suggestions for events that the board and military leadership should consider.

November

Belair Mansion Living History, Bowie MD

Date: Saturday Nov. 6, 2021 9am – 5pm.

Type of event: Living History

Location: 12207 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie, MD. 20715

<https://www.cityofbowie.org/288/Belair-Mansion>

December

Christmas at Fort Ward

Date: December 11, 2021 9am – 5pm

Type of event: Living History

Location: Alexandria, VA

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard>

Commander's Field Desk

Buffsticks,

I have the honor of addressing you after our most recent event at Cedar Creek. As the First Sergeant said, everyone did extremely well in all aspects of the camp: from setting up and breaking down, to helping guide the Boy Scouts while we put them through drill, to how everyone worked on the reenactment field. It continues to be a pleasure and an honor to command this unit.

Looking ahead, we turn our attention away from battles to other aspects of living history. We have our event at Belair Mansion in a couple weeks where we will all play to our individual strengths as living historians. If there is some sort of display or demonstration you want to put on for the public, let me know.

In December we have our ever-popular Christmas in Camp at Fort Ward. There will be music, singing, holiday treats, gifts, and general goodwill and cheer around the campfire. I was describing the event to my wife today, and she said it seemed like a very fun and festive way to come together. I agree.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year: our first event of 2022 is our Annual Meeting. Some of you may not know this, but our NCO's will finish their two-year terms at this point. Any member in good standing is eligible to run, and we have a surfeit of people in the ranks who can do well as corporals and sergeants. Some of you might not think you're ready, but I assure you that you are capable of wearing corporal stripes. Yes, that means you.

YOS,

Geoff White

Commanding Officer, 3rd US Co K reenactors

Cedar Creek Membership Report

Buff Sticks,

I, as a Happy Private, would like to report that I had an enjoyable time at our most recent event on the original battlefield of Cedar Creek, both on and off the battlefield. On the battlefield it was good to be led by our own Colonel Skaggs of the 1st Regiment/USV and great to be led by our own leadership (*1st Lt. White, 1st Sgt. Burke, & Cpl. Vaselopoulos*) as part of the combined company on Saturday and our own company on Sunday. For those new to the hobby, having the Colonel choose our Lieutenant over the Captains from the other Line Companies to lead us on Saturday was a great honor and recognition of our leadership being both tactically and technically proficient in the skills required to being successful at that mission. Drill was great on both days, regardless of whom was standing in front of our formation. It was good to simply respond to the commands given and not think, "*He wants us to do what?*"

Off the battlefield our time was well spent, starting with the fun conversations around morning coffee fire, to the cleaning of our weapons, to the evening Supper, and ending with the evening campfire entertainment. For those of you who missed out, the Friday evening campfire entertainment was exceptional. In addition to our own Commander and 1st Sgt. we were joined by the musically inclined of the 1st Regiment/USV Field Musicians and Vincent's Brigade, some

bringing multiple period-correct musical instruments. Continuously being able to catch up with friends, both new and old, is always a highlight at any of our events. I am looking forward to seeing all of you on Saturday the 6th of November.

YOS - Pvt. Stier

Stepping Off and Stepping Up

By Neil Burke

A "**Quick Tip**" for making movements crisp: Get in the habit of slightly and subtly shifting your weight to your right foot whenever you hear a preparatory command such as "**Forward**", "**Left**", "**Right**", "**X Paces Forward**" so that your *left* foot is prepared to lift off. This helps, especially if you are towards the front of a column, with stepping off in a smart and unified manner and ensure you always start out on "**the right foot**" (*but actually the left one*).

On a bigger subject, I would like to express my pride and complete satisfaction with how well everyone has done at our latest two events, Cedar Creek and "**Antietam-berg**". Most especially, I want to praise everyone for their individual initiative that has kept our camp running smoothly and helped educate newer members. I never have to twist an arm for wood or water detail, you all step up cheerfully and take care of anything needed. People have joked on photos from events that I look "**too happy**" to be a First Sergeant, and the reason why is because you all make my job as stress free as anyone could hope.

A shining example of this was on Sunday morning at Cedar Creek. They always say "**You don't really know something until you have to teach it**" and that was displayed when about seventeen scouts, age 11-17, arrived at our camp to join us in drill. We interspersed the new recruits in the Buffstick ranks and by the end of our hour together I think every one of those boys is qualified to go be a corporal in any other reenacting group. They knew their manual of arms, flank marches, by file and by company into line, and some bayonet drill for good measure. That morning drill session stands as a personal highlight of my reenacting year.

Even though I was in front of the line, it was the privates in the ranks that were doing the educating, helping those around them and providing background information about the purposes behind the movements to the scouts. A teaching spirit and helpfulness ensured a successful morning and a great memory for that troop. I think every one of those young'uns, who originally were at Cedar Creek just to help with spectator parking, left with a greater appreciation of the lived experience of history.

To that end, I would like to strongly encourage every private at either of these recent events to run for leadership positions with the unit, whether as part of the military chain of command or the corporate board. Regardless of whether you think you are "**too new**" or this is your first time back with the 3rd after a while's absence, you are all more than qualified by the excellence you have already displayed.

A Private's Observation 160th Ball's Bluff Original Battlefield

Great weather.

Joined by: Cpl. Vaselopulos, Pvt. Flores, Musicians Bauer, Wilson, M., and Mr. Wilson (*who filmed and posted part of the skirmish on our unit's Face Book page.*)

Learned from Musician Wilson, M. that Musician Wilson, D. while overall is having a good time in college would wish that his fellow students would not stay up so late as their noise keeps him awake past lights out; too bad his school doesn't have a Provost to send the guards out to quiet down his fellow students.

Galvanized Yankee's (*2nd MD (CSA)*) who knew what they were doing during the skirmish.

The Battle Demonstration-Skirmish went off quite well.

Being able to the Skirmish on the original battlefield was awesome!

My only regret for the entire weekend was that my schedule did not allow me to stay over either night; especially as this was a 160th event for 1861.

Talking to the public was fun; especially when the conversation either started with, "*I have lived here 30 years and this is the first time that I have visited.*" or, "*I live within walking distance of the park.*" followed by, "*Wait, there was a battle here?*"

The artillery demo went quite well, especially when they were able to safely fire 6 rounds at 2-minute intervals, as opposed to the NPS 10-minute interval per round.

The artillery team did a smart PR move when they had the Leesburg Fire Marshall pull the lanyard on the last round fired.

Supper in Leesburg at the *Delirious* restaurant with fellow Buff Stick, *Pvt. Flores*, was enjoyable for both the quality of the food and the company kept at the table.

The luminary was special as the FOBB (*Friends of Ball's Bluff*) laid out 259 luminaries to honor each soldier, be they North or South, who were either killed or mortally wounded on that battlefield.

The program itself featured original quotes from those who either fought at the battle or were remarking upon it.

There was electronic playing's of the song, "*The Empty Chair*" and the bugle call, "*Taps*."

To finish out the program I was part of a joint 7-man firing party that fired three volleys for a 21-gun salute.

All who attended remarked upon the uniform flames shooting out of our elevated barrels for each volley.

Afterwards I returned to my vehicle and drove home; satisfied that I had well spent my time for that day.

- YOS, *Pvt. Stier*

Battle of Ball's Bluff 160th Commemoration

Several members of the 3rd US Reenactors participated in the 160th Commemoration of the Battle of Ball's Bluff. These included Claude Bauer, Les Flores, Paul Stier, Peter Vaselopulos, and Michelle Wilson. The event included plenty of Civil War fife and drum music. In addition, the George Mason University Civil War Brass Band played as well. But

the highlight of the event was the skirmish between Confederate and Union reenactors. Over 200 spectators enjoyed the demonstration of musketry as both sides deployed skirmishers. While most of the Union soldiers were "*galvanized*", Private Stier and Corporal Vaselopulos were able to successfully manage the deployment of the skirmishers in almost a text-book example for the crowd. The steady rate of fire lasted for well over 30 minutes. The success of the event clearly showed that there is a continued interest in living history events and smaller size reenactments.

Michaeyla Nadeau Living History Scholarship

The 3rd US Reenactors is now accepting applications for the "*Michaeyla Nadeau Living History Scholarship.*" All young adults between the ages of 12 to 19, who are current reenactors, living historians, or who are seeking to become one. Scholarship candidates must submit a 500-word essay to the 3rd US scholarship committee describing their interest in reenacting and living history, and what they would plan to do with the \$500 scholarship money.

Michaeyla Nadeau was the 15-year-old granddaughter of unit member Glenn Deiters. She passed away in 2019 after fighting cancer for five years. Her zest for life, courage, and strength was inspirational. To honor Michaeyla's life, the board of the 3rd US Reenactors approved the creation of a Living History Memorial Scholarship.

For more information about the scholarship visit:

<https://www.3rdusreenactors.com/home/scholarship/>

Civilian Corner

How To Read An Outfit

Happy November, everyone! This month, I'm cheating slightly and sharing someone else's work with you, rather than writing my own. The images below are pages from the books "*How to Read a Dress*" and "*How to Read a Suit*", both by Lydia Edwards. Apologies for any issues with picture quality; I took the pictures myself on my phone, but since most of us read the newsletter online, you should be able to make the image larger for easier reading.

I can't recommend these books enough for an understanding of fashion changes over time. Even better, the second volume of "*How to Read a Dress*" comes out in just a few weeks (*I'm aware this sounds like a paid advertisement*) and although I don't usually think of this as a selling point, one of the things I'm most looking forward to in the new volume is a focus on undergarments and petticoats. That's the kind of information that's virtually impossible to find in family photographs, although I suspect it's easy enough to find in... other kinds of pictures. But in this newsletter, I'm going to go the family-friendly route and stick to history books! These particularly history books are very user-friendly and provide some of the information that will help any reenactor round out a solid impression, so enjoy this sample of the books' content and I'll see you back in this space next month!

Brown silk moiré taffeta afternoon dress, c.1865, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Despite the expanse of skirt, the style must have been quite liberating compared to the layers of petticoats that went before. The fabric would have been supported by a light cage crinoline, with one or two petticoats over that to make sure rows of steel were not visible through the silk of the skirt. It is worn with detachable lace collar and cuffs to enable easier laundering.

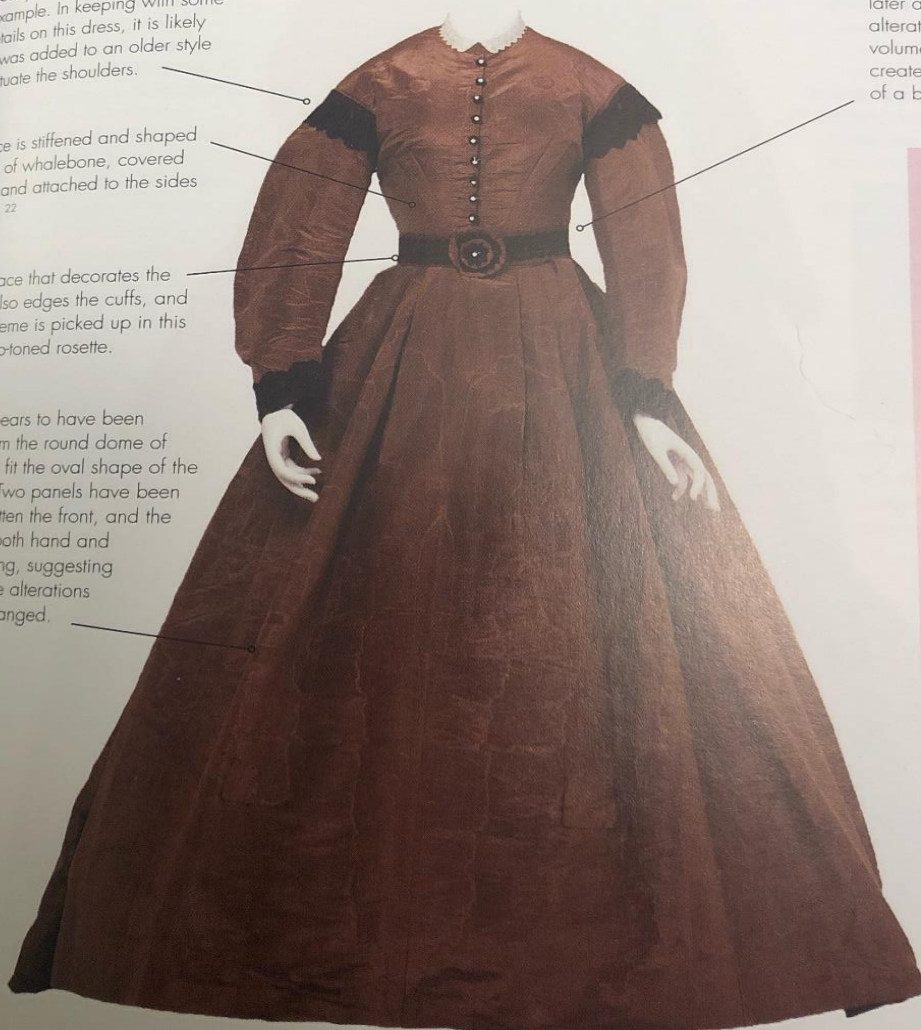
The low-set sleeves are edged with bands of machine-made lace. Trimming on shoulders was very fashionable at this date, and it has been loosely sewn (tacked) into place in this example. In keeping with some other details on this dress, it is likely that this was added to an older style to accentuate the shoulders.

The bodice is stiffened and shaped with strips of whalebone, covered with linen and attached to the sides and back.²²

The same lace that decorates the shoulders also edges the cuffs, and the black theme is picked up in this belt with two-toned rosette.

The skirt appears to have been reworked from the round dome of the 1850s to fit the oval shape of the mid 1860s. Two panels have been inserted to flatten the front, and the skirt features both hand and machine sewing, suggesting some extensive alterations as fashions changed.

The inside of this skirt features a separate bustle pad, made from cotton and roughly finished. It is attached to the waistband by two short lengths of cord, and is a later addition in line with the other alterations. It would have given extra volume to the back of the dress and created the very modest beginnings of a bustle.²³



Auguste Renoir, *Mademoiselle Sicot*, 1865, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

This 1865 portrait by Renoir shows a woman wearing a very similar dress: low shoulders edged in lace, high neckline with white collar, front button fastening, and prominent belt. Dresses like this would be worn with a removable white collar or frill which served a functional as well as decorative purpose: to protect the neckline of the dress from dirt and wear.

Want to Contribute to the Civilian Corner? Read below:

Civilians, this section is yours to share information, whether it be a period article from a contemporary magazine/periodical of the time or your own article focusing on our impressions as civilians of the civil war period. **Any member of the unit is welcome to contribute to this section** and all contributions are welcome. This is our unit, our civilian section and so this section of the newsletter should be our creation. **To submit an article, please simply email a copy of the article** you wish to contribute to Rebecca Welker at r.welker64@gmail.com by the 15th of the month prior to the newsletter in which you wish your contribution to appear. For example, if you wish your contribution to appear in the May edition of our Newsletter, then you must have your article to me by the 15th of April.

If you have not done so, please review our section of the unit's website and review the material we have saved there. All material is a work in process and we welcome feedback. **Military members, if you have family members that wish to join our civilian section, it is essential that you have them read the civilian handbook - and that you read it too!**



The handbook is a good place to start to familiarize yourself on how to get someone started in successfully portraying a civilian of the civil war period. Authenticity is a journey and the journey should always be based on a foundation of period research and documentation so we can do justice to those civilians we strive to portray.

Respectfully yours, *Ms. Rebecca Welker*

Musket Lock Maintenance Part 2: Cleaning and Inspection

Cpl Steve Blancard, 1st S.C.

[Editor's Note – This is a continuation of the weapons maintenance articles that were first posted within the June edition of our monthly newsletter]

This is the second of a three part article on musket lock maintenance. These articles will appear in succeeding newsletters. Part #1 discussed lock disassembly, part #2 will discuss cleaning and inspection and part #3 lubrication and assembly. Unless you are familiar with this procedure, it is recommended that you read and print all three parts before performing this maintenance.

In the last newsletter we walked step by step through the disassembly process of a typical Springfield musket lock. Today we will discuss what you do with all those pieces and how to prepare them for reassembly.

Now that your lock is broken down, it's time to give it a good cleaning. If it has been a few seasons or longer, there is likely to be a build-up of dirt, powder fouling and/or rust on some of the parts. If there is any grease left on the tumbler, it has probably mixed with the dirt to form an abrasive compound that needs to be removed. Clean all the parts in some hot soapy water and dry thoroughly. If rust is

still present, clean it off with some 0000 steel wool or if it is real bad, some 400 grits wet/dry sandpaper. Once all your parts are clean and dry it time to give them a close inspection. Inspect all the parts closely for wear, cracks or other damage. Look especially close at the nose of the sear (*the part that engages the half and full cock notches on the tumbler*). Both parts should be hardened, but generally the sear is a little softer than the tumbler. The sear tip should have a crisp, flat edge that engages the tumbler. If it looks worn, rounded or damaged, replace the sear. Below are two photos that show the interaction of the sear and tumbler at both the half and full cock positions (*bridle removed for clarity*).



Sear engaged in half cock notch



Sear engaged in full cock notch

Look closely at the half and full cock notches on the tumbler. They should be sharp and crisp as well. The full cock notch is flat which allows the sear to be pulled off it when the trigger is pulled. Sharp, crisp edges on the sear ensure that it will not slip off full cock accidentally. The same goes for the full cock notch on the tumbler. In the half cock position, the sear nose fits in the half cock notch. The lip of the notch keeps the sear from disengaging if the trigger is pulled. If that lip is chipped or broken, the musket is not safe to use and the tumbler must be replaced. The fitting and condition of these two pieces are critical to the safety of the musket.

The mainsprings on most Italian made muskets are made from cast steel, not forged steel as the originals were. Casting is a more efficient (*read cheaper*) way to produce large flat springs. However, cast springs are more prone to breakage than a forged spring. Look for small cracks around the "U" bend of the spring. Sear springs are made of sheet spring steel and are usually pretty reliable. But it's a good idea to keep a spare main and sear spring in your kit, just in case.

How was the fit of the hammer onto the square shank of the tumbler? If it was snug with no slop, that's good. If the hammer was loose on the tumbler, then there is a problem. If this is the case, the best thing to do is order a new tumbler and hammer together and replace them as a pair. In a pinch, there are ways to tighten up this slop, but this is beyond the scope of this article.

Another thing to look at is the clearance between the tumbler and the bridle. Insert the tumbler into the lock plate, then attach the bridle with the bridle screw, sear and sear screw, no need for the sear spring at this point.

A note on sear screws - on original Springfield sear screws the threads end with a small shoulder at an exact location. There is a very good reason for this. As the screw is tightened the shoulder stops the screw at a predetermined point. Without this shoulder, the screw can be overtightened, pulling the bridle down against the tumbler, causing the tumbler to be pinched. Unfortunately, most Italian manufacturers omit this shoulder on their screws. I have seen many reproduction musket locks with the sear screw either over tightened or intentionally left loose, neither of which is desirable or safe. In the third part of this article, I'll discuss how to resolve this problem.

With the above note in mind, gently tighten the sear screw until the screw head just snugs up against the bridle – then stop. With the 2 screws snug, verify that the tumbler rotates freely with no binding. If it binds, there is a problem that needs to be fixed. Usually, these parts are properly matched at the factory, but not always. One of our members had a musket with a tumbler that did not have proper clearance and it caused the musket's hammer to freeze up when firing. I ended up having to remove about .020" from the underside of the bridle in order for it to have proper clearance. It has been working fine ever since.

All your lock parts should now be in good condition, clean, free of rust and ready to go back together. In the next newsletter we'll walk-through lubrication and assembly of the lock.

Steve Blancard is a retired US Navy weapons specialist who has been building, repairing and shooting antique and reproduction firearms for over 40 years. He has been a reenactor and living historian for 12 years and served as the 3rd Regiment, ANV Ordnance Sergeant for 5 years where he conducted weapons training, safety oversight and field repairs. While he only works on his own weapons now, he gladly shares his advice and experience.

Order of articles on this topic for the remainder of 2021:

NOVEMBER – Musket Lock Maintenance – Part 2: Cleaning and Inspection

DECEMBER – Musket Lock Maintenance – Part 3: Lubrication and Assembly

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

David Hull Joseph Gillespie
Christopher Goumas Shopia Goumas

Military Chain of Command

1st Lt., Geoff White Company Commander

1st Sgt. Neil Burke

Corporal – Joseph Gillespie

Corporal – TJ Bradley

Corporal – Peter Vaselopoulos

Quartermasters - 1st Sgt. Neil Burke,
Corporal Peter Vaselopoulos
Recruiting Coordinator - Corporal Peter Vaselopoulos

If you have any questions regarding the policies or schedule of the 3rd U.S Regulars Infantry, Co. K please contact one of the elected Leadership:

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