



HARDTACK

Indianapolis Civil War Round Table Newsletter

<http://indianapoliscwrt.org/>



February 13, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.
Meeting at Indiana History Center Auditorium
450 West Ohio Street

The Plan of the Day Merrill Rifle



19thcenturyweapons.com

This is the story of a J.H. Merrill rifle, serial number '1506' and its travels from Baltimore, Maryland, in 1861 to Martinsville, Indiana in 1866. Sometime before July 1858, J. H. Merrill of Baltimore, Maryland designed, patented and manufactured a top breech loading carbine - rifle for private purchase. After the 1861 bombardment of Fort Sumter, the United States Government was in great need of all types of firearms to issue to its new volunteer army and started purchasing large numbers of U.S. and foreign manufactured rifles and carbines for that purpose. During this time, approximately 800 Merrill rifles were manufactured by the J. H. Merrill Company and sold to the U.S. Government. One of these rifles, serial number '1506' was issued to a soldier in Company K. 21st. Indiana Volunteer Infantry. Our speaker will try to tell the story of this Merrill Rifle, serial number '1506' and its travels with soldiers of the 21st Indiana Volunteer Infantry - 1st. Indiana Heavy Artillery and how it ended up in the possession of Captain Chambers Cox.

JOIN US BEFORE THE MEETING AT SHAPIRO'S DELI!

All ICWRT members and guests are invited to join us at 5:30 P.M. at Shapiro's Delicatessen, 808 S. Meridian St. (just south of McCarty Street) before the meeting to enjoy dinner and fellowship.

Our Guest Speaker



Mike Beck is a Master Instructor. He served one (1) year with the IUPUI Police Department and nearly six (6) years with the Shelby County Sheriff's Department prior to joining the staff at the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in February of 1983.

Graduating with the forty-seventh (47th) Basic Session of the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, Lieutenant Beck is also a graduate of the Northwestern University Traffic Institute Instructor's Course, the University of North Florida Accident Reconstruction Course, the 11th Command Officers Development Course from the Southern Police Institute, from University of Louisville, and a certified Traffic Crash Reconstructionist. Lieutenant Beck holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Criminology from Indiana State University.

Lieutenant Beck is the Captain of Company D, 11th Indiana Infantry Zouaves, Company C, 27th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Civil War Re-enactors Units, and has authored several articles dealing with the Civil War, which have been published in the magazines *Civil War Times Illustrated* and *Military Images*. At the present time Lieutenant Beck is the Senior Vice Commander of the Department of Indiana, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) and Past Camp Commander of the Benjamin Harrison Camp #356 (SUVCW) Indianapolis, Indiana.

Roster of Officers and Committees for the 2011-2012 Campaign

Officers:

President: Jerry Thompson
Secretary: Frank Bynum
Programs: Jenny Thompson

Vice President: Dr. John Wernert
Treasurer: Tony Roscetti
Immediate Past President: Chris Smith

Committees:

Preservation: Andy O'Donnell
Publicity: Dave Klinestiver, Dave Sutherland & Tony Roscetti

Website: Paul Watson

Quiz Master:

Tony Trimble

HARDTACK Newsletter:

Editor: Jenny Thompson

Summer Campaign:

If you have a short article, book review, or some other item that may be of interest to our members, please submit it via email to the editor at jkt60@att.net by the tenth day following the preceding month's meeting.

2011-2012 Campaign Plans

March 12, 2012	Four Civil War Persons of Note from Randolph County Phil DeHaven
April 9, 2012	USS Cairo Kevin Stickels
May 14, 2012	Confederates in Indiana: The Raid of John Hunt Morgan Jim Turley
June 11, 2012	Battle of South Mountain John Hoptak

Other Camp Activities

Hamilton County Civil War Roundtable: The Carmel-Clay Civil War Roundtable is now the Hamilton County Civil War Roundtable. They meet at the Conner Prairie Interactive History Park located at 13400 Allisonville Road. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., and the program will start at 7:30 in the Lilly Theater on the 2nd floor of their main office building. We will have plenty of free parking, and people should enter through the main entrance where the ticket office is located. Camp coffee and hardtack should be available. Meetings will be on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, September through May, excluding December.

2/15 T.B.D.

3/21 Ron Durrah – “Brother vs. Brother Genealogy”

4/18 Phil DeHaven – “CSA Brig. Gen. William E. ‘Grumble’ Jones”

Lincoln Day Program: Dr. Robert Bray, author of *Reading with Lincoln*, will be the featured speaker at the annual Lincoln Day program on Sunday, February 19, 2012. The program will include presentation of colors by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, special music, and other ceremonial activities. It will begin at 2:00 p.m. CST at the Abraham Lincoln Hall of Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana (8 miles south of Interstate 64 on Indiana Highway 162, adjacent to Lincoln State Park). The part entrance fee will be waived for this event. This program will also kick off the park’s year-long observance of its 50th anniversary as part of the National Park System.

Crossroads of America Civil War / Political Show: This Civil War show will be held at Beech Grove High School, 5330 Hornet Avenue in Beech Grove on Friday, March 30, 2012 – 4pm – 8 pm and Saturday, March 31, 2012 – 9am – 4pm. Thousands of Civil War and political items will be offered by national dealers. For more information, contact Harvey W. Warrner, www.ironbrigaderelics.com or call 317-784-2617.

Civil War Heritage Days: The second annual Civil War Heritage Days will be held June 23 – 24, 2012 in Danville, Indiana. Contact Cindy, 745-2604 or Gail, 696-3129, for details.

Lew Wallace Study and Museum: In honor of International Museum Day, there will be free admission to the Lew Wallace Study and Museum on May 18.

Special Orders

Complete Civil War Submarine unveiled for first time: The H.L. *Hunley* was unveiled in full unobstructed view for the first time on January 12 in the Charleston conservation laboratory at the old Navy base. To read more about this, please visit the link on our Facebook page or this link: http://news.yahoo.com/complete-civil-war-submarine-unveiled-first-time-004714070.html?_ylc=X3oDMTNubjQybjR2BF9TAzIxNDU4NjgyNzUEYWN0A21haWxfY2IEY3QDYQRpbmRsA3VzBGxhbmcDZW4tVVMecGtnAzA2MGUwNWMxLTJIODQtMzc3Ni1hYjE2LTIyMWEzZjUzOWExNgRzZWMDbWI0X3NoYXJIBHNSawNtYWlsBHRlc3QD;_ylv=3.

Alas Richmond, A Civil War Romance: Nikki's newest book will appeal to both the male and female readers. Her careful attention to historical detail, showing the political, social and military state of Richmond toward the end of the war, will appeal to the male reader. The romance that develops between the grieving widow and the Englishman will appeal to the female reader. Our Round Table president, who is also my husband, is not a reader. He found himself caught up in both of Nikki's two books. This last book he read in one day. We both highly recommend Nikki's books.

150th Commemoration of the First Battle of Kernstown: The Kernstown Battlefield Association invites you to be with them on March 24 for the 150th commemoration tour of the First Battle of Kernstown with the foremost authority on this battle, renowned author/historian Gary Ecelbarger, as your tour guide. Registration deadline is March 10th. To learn more about this tour and to download the flyer and registration form, please visit <http://www.kernstownbattle.org/> or call Donna Crawford at 540-869-2896 to have her mail you the information.

Central Kentucky Civil War Relic Show and Logistics of War Battle: This show will be held May 4-6 (9-9 Saturday and 9-5 Sunday) at the Cave City Convention Center in Cave City, Kentucky. There will be 300 tables (\$7 table or 3 for \$15) with CDs, tapes, books, memorabilia, currency, documents, stamps, weapons, photographs, uniforms and other collectibles. There will also be a tea party, fashion show, two meals and standard amenities. There is no fee for reenactors if received by April 15, and there is no charge for sutlers and period artisans. For more information, visit www.cityofcavecity.com or call Cave City – City Hall 270-773-2188, Gary Hogan 270-473-1747, or Ed Keiley 270-531-3115.

Official Records

January attendance: 36

Alan T. Nolan Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund: The Executive Board of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table has established this fund to provide membership dues, annual tour expenses or other worthwhile purpose for any full-time student of any age. Please see Tony Roscetti to donate to this fund.

Facebook: The Indianapolis Civil War Round Table is on Facebook. We invite you to join our group. Feel free to post Civil War related messages on our site.

Charitable Sponsors: In an effort to upgrade our speakers and programs, the board of ICWRT is asking members and organizations with which they are involved (companies or charitable organizations) to consider sponsoring one or more speakers. This could be done as a gift now, or a person could opt to make a bequest in a will for that purpose. Because of our limited membership, we can't bring in as many national speakers as we would like to. If you are interested or want more info, call Chris Smith at 450-7430.

Book Raffle:

The Blue and Gray, by Henry Steele Commager

The Women's War in the South: Recollections and Reflection of the American Civil War, edited by Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenburg

Letters from the Iron Brigade: George W. Partridge Jr. 1839-1863, Civil War Letters to His Sisters, edited by Hugh L. Whitehouse

With My Face to the Enemy: Perspectives on the Civil War, edited by Robert Cowley

The Civil War: 1861-1865 (2 volume set), by Ralph Newman and E.B. Long

***Anyone wishing to donate books for upcoming raffles should either bring them to Tony Roscetti at the February meeting or contact him to make arrangements for pick up.**

Test Your Civil War Knowledge (with Trimble's Trivia)

1. What group was expelled by Grant from his department in General Orders No. 11?
2. By what other name was the Battle of Hatcher's Run known?
3. Name the battle in which the opposing commanders were John Newton and William Miller.
4. Name the architect who was the general secretary of the U.S. Sanitary Commission.
5. General Joseph E. Johnston had a distinguished Revolutionary ancestor. Who was it?

Answers to the January quiz:

1. Name the commander of the Iron Brigade whose son won the Noble Peace Prize.
*** Rufus Dawes
2. Name the Wisconsin soldier who won the Medal of Honor and whose son also won it. *** Arthur McArthur
3. Name the colonel of the 36th Wisconsin who wrote a memoir of Gettysburg. *** Frank Haskell
4. Old Abe was the mascot of the 8th Wisconsin. What was Old Abe? *** A Bald Eagle
5. Name the wartime governor of Wisconsin who later became postmaster general.
*** Alexander Randall

The Soldiers Speak

From *Merrill Rifles Factory Manual and Sales Brochure – 1864*:

"...The simplicity and strength of construction arrived at in the Merrill Rifle is only equaled by its extraordinary range and accuracy of fire, and the efficiency of the arm not being dependent on any patent metallic or India rubber cartridge case, but using the simple paper cartridge, or loose powder and ball, and the ordinary percussion cap, (to be had at any country store or trading station,) gives them great advantages over arms depending on fixed or regularly prepared ammunition, and makes them justly preferred, not only on the frontier, but wherever a rifle is required."

"...Another advantage the Merrill Plan possesses is, that it can be easily applied to muzzle loading arms at a small cost, without restocking, altering the lock, or changing the general appearance, or diminishing the strength of the arm. The alteration of Muzzle-Loading Arms, to the Merrill Plan of Breach-Loading, has been practically tested by the United States Government with the most entire success, and has placed in the hands of the troops an arm that cannot be surpassed and also at a small cost..."

Civilian of the Month

James H. Merrill, of Baltimore, Maryland, submitted the following Letters Patent no. 18,401, dated October 13, 1857, for improvements in projectiles for rifled ordnance:

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES H. MERRILL, of Baltimore, in the county of Baltimore and State of Maryland, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in the Construction of Projectiles; and I do hereby declare the following to be full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which –

Figure 1 represents the projectile in perspective. Fig. 2 represents a vertical section through the same, and Fig. 3 represents a horizontal section taken at the red line xx of Fig. 2.

Similar letters of reference, where they occur in the separate figures, denote like parts of the projectile in all of them.

My invention relates to that class of projectiles in which the base or rear portion is caused to be expanded by the gas to fill the bore of the gun; but, unlike all other projectiles of this class, I make mine of one piece of cast-iron, and cause a portion of this cast-iron to be expanded, instead of packing the projectile with lead or inserting in it sections of wrought-iron, as have been done, to fill the bore.

Making projectiles of two kinds of metals, or even in two or more pieces, is not only expensive, but the parts will separate or fly from each other under the concussion of the discharge, and make their range uncertain, as well as to be dangerous. I therefore make my projectile in one single piece, but still preserve the expanding property. It is best made of cast-iron, annealed, if found desirable, to give it proper tenacity, though it may be made, but at greatly increased expense, of wrought-iron; and I would consider the

latter metal almost out of the question, owing to the expense of making the projectile, when the cast-iron can be softened, or left hard when the projectile is to be an explosive one.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and use my invention, I will proceed to describe the same with reference to the drawings.

A represents a conical-shaped projectile, having its base rounded out, as shown at *a*, and hollow, so that the powder may enter and explode therein. The rim *b*, between the outer edge of the shot and the chamber or bore *a*, is quite thin at the extreme rear end; but it gradually thickens until at a line drawn through the bottom of the chamber its solidity would prevent it from being expanded by the gas. At a point, *c*, (say about midway between the rear of the projectile and the bottom of the chamber or bowl *a*,) are made through the wall of the chamber or bowl any suitable number of holes, 1 2 3, and from the rear of the projectile slots 4 are formed or cut down to said holes, so as to leave the base of the projectile, as it were, in sections.

5 5 5 are ribs or swells on the outside of the projectile, which are intended to fit into the grooves or rifles of the cannon, and around the outside of the projectile is placed a band or fillet of leather, *e*, India-rubber, or other material, which will close the slots 4 to keep the gas from getting between the projectile and the bore of the gun, but at the same time yield to the expansion of the sections between the slots, and it is immaterial whether the fillet adheres to the ball or projectile or not after it leaves the gun, its object having been exhausted before the projectile leaves the gun.

If that part of the projectile which is to be expanded to fit the bore be annealed or made of malleable cast-iron, there is no possible danger of the sections being broken, as they will easily spring by the expansion of the gas to the necessary extent to accomplish the purpose, the spring being gradual from the holes 1 2 3 to the rear of the projectile, and the metal thinning in the same direction, the slots of course widening to admit of the expansion.

Having thus fully described the nature and object of my invention, what I claim therein as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is –

Making the base of a projectile that is cast in one piece cup or bowl shaped, and slotting the metal between the hollow and the outside of the projectile, so as to allow said base to expand by the force of the gas to fill the grooves or bore of the gun, substantially as described.

JAMES H. MERRILL.

Witnesses:

E. BEATTY GRAFF,
EDWD. G. STARR.

Historic Site of the Month



National Park Service

Springfield Armory National Historic Site, One Armory Square, Suite 2, Springfield, Massachusetts, highlights examples of US military small arms, including muskets, rifles, pistols, machine guns, edged weapons, and production machinery. View the cases and look at a rare 14th Century hand-cannon, a modern Vulcan 20mm Gatling Gun, or see the revolutionary 1822 Blanchard stockmaking lathe. Started as a technical reference library for the workers and engineers at Springfield Armory, the museum collection has grown into one of the largest collections of military small arms in the world. The park is open seven days a week from 9-5 except for the following holidays Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day; it may also be closed due to inclement weather, construction or other extenuating circumstances. It is best to contact the park ahead of time to make sure they will be open. There is no admission fee.

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