



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

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NRA Affiliate Number G8162



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☛ May 28th Meeting on Civil War Guns and Bayonets: Jim

Burgess our esteemed acting president spent the night going into great detail regarding infantry weapons of the American Civil War and their distinctions. Among these weapons are the musket, the rifled musket, the rifle-musket, and the rifle.

Muskets, by definition, are smoothbore firearms. During the American Revolution, both the Americans and English used flintlock muskets. The flintlock design caused the weapon to perform poorly in wet conditions and was eventually replaced by the percussion cap. Many flintlock

muskets, specifically the Model 1816, were converted to percussion cap during the American Civil War. Eventually, the United States Army adopted the Model 1842 which designed from the beginning as a percussion cap firearm, as opposed to being converted from flintlock muskets.

Smoothbore firearms are relatively inaccurate; the musket was only able to fire with some modicum of precision at a range of one hundred yards. This limitation required formations of soldiers to fire en masse in order to be effective. However, without rifling to slow the reloading process, smoothbore muskets had a greater rate of fire than rifled muskets and rifle-muskets.

Some muskets, in addition to being converted to percussion cap, were also rifled. These weapons are known as rifled muskets, as they were originally designed as smoothbore firearms and then later rifled. This process greatly improved the accuracy of the firearm, at the cost of rate of fire. Many of these rifled muskets did not tolerate the immense amount of pressure when firing, leading to distortion and even destruction of the barrel. The United States Army discontinued converting muskets into rifled muskets as a result.



The Springfield Model 1855 was rifled from the beginning. This is known as a rifle-musket, as they were originally rifled, not rifled later like the rifled musket. The Model 1855 used the newly designed Minié ball, a .58-caliber spin stabilized bullet that was far more accurate than the .69-caliber musket balls used with muskets and rifled muskets. The Model 1855's action was the Maynard tape primer instead of the percussion cap. This alteration was made in the hopes that it would increase the rate of fire of the weapon, but in practice was unreliable as it was prone to fouling due to moisture and dirt. The Model 1861 abandoned the Maynard tape primer and returned to the

percussion cap. The Model 1861 was one of the most ubiquitous weapons of the Civil War.

Rifles were produced before this point, but were not as widely used as the rifle-musket during the Civil War. The Mississippi rifle was created in 1840 by Harper's Ferry. These weapons were extremely accurate for their time. Both sides, the United States and the Confederacy, imported a large number of firearms from Europe during the war. The English Pattern 1853 Enfield rifle-musket was one of the most popular, and effective, firearms imported during the war, and used by both sides.

☛ **Business Meeting of May 28, 2015:** Acting President Jim Burgess brought the meeting to order then promptly began the presentation. The business meeting following a break after the presentation beginning with Membership Chairman Larry Hare announcing there were no new prospective members present to be voted on.

Acting President's Comments

Dear Members,

For those who missed my presentation last month on Civil War Infantry weapons you will have a second chance. At 7 p.m. on Saturday, August 1 I will be giving a similar program at the Manassas National Battlefield Park visitor center auditorium as part of the park's "History at Sunset" series. This repeat performance may be a little more comprehensive since I will be able to tap into the park's collection.

In the meantime we can look forward to Rob Becker's program on June 25th devoted to the SKS family of rifles. Everyone is encouraged to bring in any firearms relating to this subject so we have a good representation of the various models and makers.

Former President Dave Litchfield reminds me that it is not too early to start distributing November gun show flyers especially at all the local gun shows. We will have some available at the meeting and we may be printing additional flyers as we have found this to be one of the more effective ways to publicize the show. We will really ramp up distribution in August and September and we will need everyone's help to spread them around.

I believe tables are still available for the November show and display tables are still free for members. This is a good opportunity to showcase your collection, educate the public, support the club and perhaps win a monetary award. Why more members don't do this is beyond me. Please consider filling out a table application form and doing a display. There is still plenty of time to put something together for November.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting, Thursday, June 25.

-Jim Burgess

☛ **Comments from the Board of Directors:** The Board is still looking for a member willing to help and step up into the highly needed position of president by the next election cycle. IF you or someone you know is interested please have them contact a member of the Board of Directors or email us at web@vgca.net.

Other News!

☛ **Fall Show Call for Volunteers:** If you're interested in working Security at the next show in November WE ALWAYS NEED VOLUNTEERS especially if we want to grow our show and provide more for you all. Please contact Kent Jefferies at KAJefferies@aol.com and remember that working on the Security or Setup teams gets you one free admission to the gun show for the weekend. If you're interested in volunteering in other ways please contact Rick Nahas whose contact information is provided above.

☛ **Current Speaker List for 2015:** What follows is our current sign up for speakers for the 2015 calendar year.

- **June 25:** Rob Becker: SKS Family of Rifles
- **August 27:** Bill Troy: President Thompson Collectors Association
- **September 24:** Marc Gorelick
- **October 22:** Steve Westbrook: American Hammer Shotguns of 1880s-90s
- **December 3:** Holiday Dinner/Show & Tell/Swap Meet

★ **Continued Call of Articles for the Website:** We are making a call for articles for the website. They must be about guns or gun collecting not shooting sports or hunting. No political articles will be used. Articles may be about modern or antique firearms and may be historical and/or technical in nature. Detailed guidelines will be available on the website. Please fact check and proofread your own work. All articles may be submitted to Marc or Richard at web@vgca.net. Official Guidelines for articles may be found on the education page of the VGCA site.



★ **VGCA Member Allan Cors Elected President of the NRA:** Allan D. Cors, a long-time member of the Virginia Gun Collectors Association was elected President of the National Rifle Association by the NRA Board of Directors following the recent 144th Annual Meeting of the NRA in Nashville, TN. Allan, an ardent defender of the 2nd Amendment, is a life-long hunter, competitive shooter, and collector of firearms and military vehicles. VGCA members may know him because of the Virginia Museum of Military Vehicles, popularly known as Allan Cors' "Tank Farm," which he founded in 1989. Many of us have spent an interesting day exploring the armored vehicles during the "Tank Farm's" open house. Allan has served as First Vice-President of the NRA and has been Director of the NRA Foundation for seven years.

He was instrumental in the creation of the NRA Institute for Legislative Action in 1975. He is also the founder and chairman of the National Museum of Americans in Wartime. Congratulations to Allan Cors on his election.

Show and Tell



Member one presented a Colt Signature Series reproduction 1861 contract rifle and an early reproduction Shilo Sharps Mdl 1863 three band rifle patterned after the Hiram Berdan rifles used by the NY Volunteer sharpshooters during the civil war.

Member 2 showed us some original ring tail sharps bullets recovered from a local creek by the son of an Australian embassy worker.



Member 3 showed us an original bullet used in the rare and unsuccessful volley gun briefly used during the civil war.

Member 4 presented an original percussion Maynard civil war carbine in fine condition together with some reproduced brass cartridges. This was one of many innovative breech loading firearm/carbine designs developed during the civil war.



Member 5 interestingly enough ended up periodically submitting numerous exceptionally fine examples of civil war muskets, rifled muskets, and rifles that augmented Jim Burgess's excellent presentation.

The 6th member brought a Mauser commercial Model 1914 pocket pistol produced after WW1. It is in exceptionally fine condition with only a slight modification to the left grip to provide a thumb rest and better access to the safety.



The 7th member had a recent acquisition. Specifically, a rather uncommon Lee Enfield SMLE, MK 5, troop trials rifle, easily identified by the lack of provision for an open rear sight, the installation of an folding aperture sight and an additional upper barrel band. This rifle should not to be confused by the Lee Enfield No. 5, MK 1 "jungle" carbine which is a whole different critter.

Finally the 8th member had a .44 cal. Colt Dragoon, second model that is engraved on the backstrap as belonging to Capt. Newton Givens. The presenter has amassed a rather extensive personal history of Capt. Givens which provides a historical context both the pistol and the man.

Upcoming Events and Shows

PLEASE NOTE: There are sometimes changes in schedules by gun show promoters or errors on websites. Members are strongly encouraged to verify before driving to a show. These dates have been published as of this writing, but are not guaranteed. If you have a favorite show you would like to tell other members about, please email the Editor with a short review, including the show content, i.e., modern, new, collectible or antique, and I will include it as room permits. **Yellow** = Collector organizations.

VIRGINIA 2015

- ☞ July 24-26, 2015 – Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center - *Showmasters*
- ☞ August 8-9, 2015 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Convention Center – *SGK Show*
- ☞ August 22-23, 2015 – Richmond, VA – Richmond Raceway – *Showmasters*
- ☞ August 29-30, 2015 – Winchester, VA – Sportsplex & Indoor Events Center – *SGK Show*
- ☞ September 12-13, 2015 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Convention Center – *SGK Show*
- ☞ September 19-20, 2015 – Manassas, VA – Prince William County Fairgrounds – *SGK Show*

MARYLAND 2015

- ☞ September 19-20, 2015 – Annapolis, MD – Annapolis National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Gun Shows*

PENNSYLVANIA 2015

- ☞ June 13-14, 2015 - Gettysburg, PA – All Star Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- ☞ June 19-21, 2015 - Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Complex – *Showmasters*
- ☞ July 11-12, 2015 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware*
- ☞ August 22-23, 2015 - Carlisle, PA – Carlisle Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- ☞ September 5-6, 2015 - Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Complex – *Showmasters*
- ☞ September 12-13, 2015 - Allentown, PA – Rodeway Inn Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*

The e-mail address for any Newsletter related matters or a submission is Newsletter@vgca.net. Feel free to email items for inclusion in the newsletter. For changes of address or non-receipt of the newsletter, either via email or the mailed hard-copy, please contact Larry Hare. v/r Richard Pripeton, VGCA Newsletter Editor