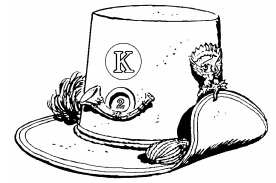


# Welcome to the 2d Wisconsin Skirmish Team!



This group competes in marksmanship contests called "skirmishes" using civil war era weapons. A typical skirmish lasts a weekend. Saturday morning is usually filled with individual competition where competitors shoot at bulls-eye paper targets with muskets, carbines and pistols. Saturday afternoon is typically devoted to carbine and revolver team competition, along with mortar and miniature cannon competition if offered. Sunday morning is devoted to musket team competition and an awards ceremony. Participants are usually on the road going home around noon



All members of 2d Wisconsin skirmish team belong to the American Civil War Shooting Association (ACWSA). Each team in the ACWSA is an autonomous group, and must have at least five members. Every year each team elects a sergeant who represents them on the ACWSA Board of Directors. Association level leadership is also elected annually. The ACWSA organization establishes safety rules, competition regulations, obtains insurance, and organizes our competitions. Other teams in our region include the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Sharpshooters, the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Illinois, the 56<sup>th</sup> Virginia (C.S.A.) and the 66<sup>th</sup> North Carolina (C.S.A.).

ACWSA Dues: \$10.00 per member annually

The \$10 Civil War Skirmish Association dues pays for liability insurance, publishing of "Shooters to the Line" newsletter, and the administrative costs of running the organization. ACWSA insurance allows non-members to participate in two skirmishes as guests without joining. There have never been separate 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin team dues.

## Buying What You Need

The bad news is this can be an expensive hobby to have. The good news is threefold though. First, no one expects you to buy everything you need right away; you have a year from your first skirmish to get the minimum uniform. Second, you can ease the financial stress by prioritizing your purchases and making sure you "buy right" the first time. Third, by joining a tax-exempt historical preservation association, most of your purchases can be deductible.

These recommendations are based on experience and research too lengthy to review here, and are the best we can give a new member at this time. They are based on both authenticity (model, cut, color, etc.) and price. Sporadically, there is good used equipment available that can save you money. Be sure to talk to someone before ordering.

The uniforms and equipment used by the skirmish team are compatible with the by-laws of the Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Association, Inc. re-enacting group. If you re-enact, you'll also

need some additional equipment, e.g., knapsacks, shelter halves, tin ware, etc., but you will not have to re-buy anything because of its' color, cut, or model.

Please be aware that some compromises have been made. E.g., we know that the 2d Wisconsin were issued Austrian muskets and used them throughout the war. However, shootable originals are not readily available and reproductions cost nearly as much as originals. When there are choices of models to use, we tend to buy the earliest model issued to be able to impersonate the unit within the widest time frame possible. E.g., it would be perfectly plausible for a soldier doing an 1864 impression to wear an item issued in 1862, Be aware that most units in the civil war could have been equipped differently, and taking advice from someone outside the 2d Wisconsin may not be appropriate.

The following items should be bought in the order shown if you can't buy them all at once. Don't spend your money on "nice to have" items until you've gone at least as far as the gaiters!

	<b>Recommended Suttlers: Good</b>	<b>Top</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
1. Musket - see separate note	SS, RQ,C		Traditions brand
2. Accouterments:			
A. Belt (M1856)	CDJ, FC		
B. Cap Pouch (M1850)	CDJ,FC		
C. Ammo Pouch (M1855)	CDJ,FC		
D. Ammo Pouch Sling	CDJ,FC		
E. Bayonet & Scabbard			
3. Pants	FC,MP	CS	CDJ
4. Hat (Hardee, M1855)	SS		
5. Shirt (Homemade acceptable)	SW,CDJ,FC		
6. Jacket (M1858 Frock coat first, sack coat optional)	CDJ,FC,MP		
7. Gaiters	SW		
8. Canteen (M1858 smooth sided preferred)	CDJ,FC		
9. Haversack	SW,CDJ		
10. Brogans	CDJ,FC		

CDJ: (608) 437-3560  
 C&D Jarnagin  
 Rout 3-Box 217  
 Corinth, Miss 38834  
 (601) 287-4977

MP:  
 Marilyn Pettit  
 170 S Burr Oak  
 Oregon, WI 53575  
 (608) 835-7421

SW:  
 Scott Wallick  
 507 Lake Street  
 Mount Horeb, WI 53572

SS:  
 S & S Firearms  
 74-11 Myrtle Ave  
 Glendale, NY 11385  
 (718) 497-1100

RQ:  
 Regimental Quartermaster  
 PO Box 553  
 Hatboro, PA 19040  
 (215) 672-6891

C:  
 Cabella's  
 1 Cabela Drive  
 Sidney, NE 69160-9555

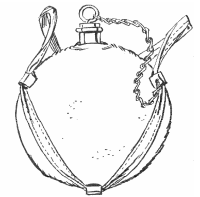
(800) 237-4444

NA:  
Navy Arms  
689 Bergen Blvd  
Ridgefield, NJ 07657  
1-800-699-NAVY

CS:  
Chris Sullivan  
50 Porrca Dr.  
Millville, NJ 08332

FC:  
Fall Creek Suttlerly  
PO Box 92  
Whitestown, IN 46075  
(317) 769-5355

**Canteens:** Smooth-sided canteens were issued early in the war, and the most common throughout it. Bull's-eye styles were not issued until later in the war. The most common covering, and the one our team uses, is brown jean cloth.



**Muskets:** Most skirmishers shoot either an Enfield 1853, or a 1861 Springfield musket. An Enfield is usually less expensive, and it's metal is blued so it does not rust like the unblued Springfield. The Springfield was the most common musket used in the war, and has a drop in the comb of the gunstock that many shooters prefer. Undoubtedly, the most accurate muskets are custom-made ones having special barrels by makers like Hoyt or Whittaker, but they cost \$900+. A new, good-quality musket usually costs \$340-\$480. Recommended makers are EuroArms, ArmiSport and Navy Arms. Avoid Traditions brand muskets. They can be purchased from a number of distributors like S & S Firearms, Regimental Quartermaster, Cabella's and Navy Arms. Do not buy any reproductions made in India.



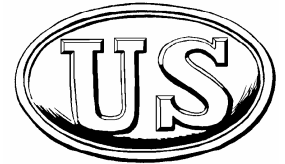
If you want to use the same musket for skirmishing and reenacting, you'll need to get a three-band musket. If you only plan to skirmish, you can get either the two or three-band length. The two-band models are not as "front-heavy" to hold, but the three-bands were more common, and because of the barrel length, will shoot the bullet about 100 fps faster with the same powder charge.

**Quick loads:** Quick loads are plastic tubes with a .58 caliber inside diameter that are closed on one end. The closed tube will hold a measured powder charge, and by wedging a bullet in the open end of the quick-load you can contain the charge and use it at the range. S&S Firearms sells them for about \$6 per 100.

**Bullet lube:** All the bullets you use must have some form of lube on them to keep the black powder fouling soft. I've used straight Crisco shortening, applied at the range from a cake decorator, since 1982, and the only problems with it are that it will melt at temperatures above 90-92 degrees, and I do have to take the time to apply it at the range. There are many different opinions about what's best to use ranging from various store-bought brands (e.g., MCM, SPG, and Tamarack) to home-made concoctions of some form of grease mixed with bees wax for stiffness.

**Ammo Box Inserts:** The tin inserts that come with your leather ammo boxes are not as nice as having a wooden insert made with holes drilled to keep a dozen rounds standing erect at your fingertips. Ask someone on the team about getting one.

**Bullet molds:** Measure your bore before you buy a bullet mold. The size of the bullet should be .001-.002 under the size of your bore measurement. DO NOT get a mold for a bullet the same size or larger than your bore size.



There are many different styles of minie balls to choose from; traditional shapes with deep or shallow cavities in the base, modern wad cutter and semi-wad cutter shapes. Molds can be made of aluminum or steel (steel are more durable, but cost more) and have different designs. Some have a permanently mounted plug to form the base cavity, others have a separate plug that needs to be manually inserted and taken out every time you cast a bullet.

For everyone who owns EuroArms Enfield, I recommend buying Lyman bullet mold 575213. A number of veteran shooters using that gun swear by it. Use 50 grains of FFg powder, with a little Crisco shortening in the base for lube. A 50-grain load will give you about 150 shots per pound of powder.

Finding the right combination of bullet type and powder charge for your gun is essential. Start by trying to find someone **who shoots well** with a gun similar to yours, and ask what they're using for a bullet, then the type and amount of powder they're using. Your results may vary slightly, but most people are using 40 to 50 grains of FFg or FFFg powder.

**Powder Measures:** I recommend you buy drop a measure to make your powder charges. Your powder must be consistent on all your rounds to get consistent groups from your gun. I can charge a full tray of sixty-six Quick loads with my RCBS drop measure in less than two minutes. Lee Manufacturing makes a drop measure less than \$30. There are less expensive ways of measuring powder, but drop measures are twenty times faster and just as consistent.

**Bayonets And Scabbards:** Springfields and Enfields used different bayonets, and you should buy one that matches your musket. Be aware that some of the bayonets on the market are nickel-plated brass rather than, avoid them. For the Springfield bayonet, buy the earlier two-rivet scabbard. An Enfield bayonet usually comes with a scabbard, but you have to buy a frog that attaches it to your belt. Buy the angled frog, avoid the frog that lets the bayonet hang straight down.

## Black Powder, Percussion Caps, and Lead

Do not buy black powder or percussion caps from the local sporting goods store or a suttlery. We purchase these supplies in bulk as a team to save money. A pound of black powder in Madison sells for as high as \$13.00, but we typically pay \$6-7.00 from J& J Pyrotechnics, RR 3, Box 3367G, Moscow, PA 18444, (717) 342-0505. We do the same thing for musket caps.

If you want to purchase black powder through the mail you need to order in increments of 25 pounds, so get together with your "Pards" and coordinate an order for whoever in the group is short. You'll need to send a "Statement of Intent" to suppliers with the first order you place with them. The statement needs to be signed, say who you are, what you intend to use the powder for, that you're not a felon, and the order doesn't violate any federal or state laws.

Keep your eyes peeled for source of pure lead. You can not use wheel weights, or scraps of unknown purity. Good supplies of soft cheap lead are becoming fewer and fewer as federal regulations tighten, but they are out there. We've been paying 30 to 70 cents a pound for lead.

## Eye and Ear Protection on the Range is Mandatory

Safety glasses and hearing protection is mandatory on the firing line at ACWSA Skirmishes. If you already use glasses to correct your vision, you can use the set you already have. People who do not wear glasses should buy glasses specifically made as safety or shooting glasses because of their high-impact lenses. Tint, frames, side-guards, etc. are all matters of personal preference.

There are many options for hearing protection. I prefer the spongy, flesh-colored, disposable ear plugs. For me, they're the most comfortable, and no one knows I'm wearing them when I reenact. A box of 200 pair costs about \$16 from a safety supply store, and my wife and I have been using the same box for over three years. You can get soft plastic reusable earplugs at any sporting goods store or safety supply company. For greater comfort at about \$16, custom-made ones are available, where soft plastic is actually molded to your ear. Ear cups, "muffs", can also be used, but these may interfere with how you place your chin on the gunstock, or how you wear a hat while shooting.

## Casting Bullets

A properly cast bullet is essential to both accuracy and safety. Although rare, poorly cast bullets have been known to leave part of the skirt in the barrel. You should return any bullets that aren't perfect to the melting pot for recasting.

Some shooters size their bullets to insure consistent results and lube their bullets before bringing them to the range. Opinions differ as to whether you need to size or not. If you do decide to size your bullets, you should never size an unlubed bullet, or have to scrape more than a hint of lead from the sides of your rounds.

## Cleaning Your Musket

Black-powder residue is very corrosive, and it's important to clean your weapon as soon as you can each time you use it. I field-clean my gun before leaving an event, and then do a thorough job of cleaning when I get home.

Here's what you need:

- \* Cleaning Solvent - Mix equal parts of Murphy's Oil Soap, alcohol and peroxide. You can get both peroxide and alcohol for 33 cents a bottle on sale. This concoction works better than anything on the market at a fraction of the price.
- \* Pipe cleaners - I use the fluffy ones with bristles
- \* Q-tip swabs - get the cheapest ones you can buy
- \* Patches - buy the cheapest flannel material you can find, and use a rotary cutting tool to make 2 1/4" x 2 1/4" patches. Whether you make your own or get store bought patches, buy 100% cotton.
- \* Oil - I recommend Rem-Oil and Break-Free

These items are good to have, but you can get by without them:

- \* Dental pick
- \* .58 cal. brush - I recommend wire, not the nylon or the looped steel style
- \* .58 cal. cleaning jag
- \* Nipple wrench
- \* Lemon oil furniture polish
- \* Small flashlight - one that will fit down your muzzle, a AAA Mag-lite is best
- \* Tooth brush

Field Cleaning is just cleaning the gun exterior, brushing out the bore, putting a few solvent soaked patches down the bore, followed by an oil soaked patch. Squirt a little oil down the nipple, then oil the outside the gun. It's especially important to clean the exterior of the gun before you leave an event, so you don't contaminate the gun case you store it in.

Once you get home, it's time to do a thorough cleaning job. The easiest and fastest way to clean your gun is to remove the barrel from the gun. Cleaning without removing the barrel takes triple the time and cleaning supplies. A thorough cleaning only should take 15 minutes.

Remove your barrel, take off your nipple and head for the basement slop sink. Rest the tang on a sponge at the bottom of the sink, and fill the sink with hot soapy water up past the nipple hole. Any dish soap works fine. With a patch on your jag or ramrod plunge the barrel back and forth. You'll be suctioning hot, soapy water in through the nipple hole, and squirting it back out under pressure on the down stroke. That water pressure is what you need clean the breech plug. Check the bore with the flashlight to see how you're doing. You can clearly see every mar, scratch and dent in your breech plug, and even the nipple hole when it's clean. Repeat the process again with hot, clear water to rinse. You've now removed the powder residue, but none of the rust that's started to form.

Dry-patch your barrel to remove any remaining water, and clean out the nipple hole with your dental pick and solvent soaked Q-tips. Now swab your barrel with oil soaked patches until they come out rust-free. Clean your nipple with the toothbrush and pipe cleaners. Clean the lock and hammer,

then coat all the steel parts with oil and reassemble. Put some furniture polish on a rag and rub down the wood, especially around forearm and pistol grip areas.

Additional tips:

- \* Removing your nipple when you clean is important! If you don't, the heat and residue eventually forms a carbon-weld, and your nipple will need drilling to get it off. Use a nipple cup if you own an Enfield.
- \* All the new Euro-Arms muskets I've seen had metal burrs left on the inside the barrel bands. I recommend you carefully file the burrs off so you don't scratch your wood when you slide the bands off. Birchwood-Casey makes a cold bluing pen that looks like a laundry marker to reblue where you file.
- \* Polishing the brass on the gun is O.K. only if your wood finish is good, and the brass isn't too bad. If the finish is poor, or you have serious polishing to do, I recommend you remove the brass to work on it. The easiest time to polish all your brass is right after an event, not right before your next one. Black powder smoke leaves a film on your brass will continually corrode the metal until removed. I only remove my brass once a year for polishing.
- \* A rusty ramrod can be chucked in a drill and spun-polished with 400 or finer grit sandpaper.
- \* I only remove my lock plate once a year for cleaning. Lithium grease on the working parts does a fine job of protecting it.
- \* There is such a thing as "over cleaning." Don't rub the finish off your metal or wood. It's a good idea to get a brass bore-guide for your ramrod to protect the crown of your muzzle from excessive wear. Don't remove wood screws any more than necessary. Avoid harsh chemicals and keep away from wood and blued parts with that dental pick!

A properly maintained gun won't foul, and will retain its value. Not cleaning your gun properly will increase your chances of fouling, and diminish both its worth and accuracy.

## **Regimental History:** Taken from: Records and Sketches of Military Organizations, Population, Legislation, Election and Other Statistics Relating to Wisconsin in the Period of the Civil War

The Second regiment of Infantry was first organized under the call for volunteers for three months service. The full number of troops under this call having been accepted, the Second was mustered, June 11, 1861, into the service of the United States for "Three years or during the war" under the call of the President, dated May 3, 1861 for 500,000 men." The organization left the State on June 20, and arrived in Washington D. C. June 25, 1861. From this date until the regiment was mustered out, the Second Infantry served in that part of the Union Army known as the Army of Virginia and the "Army of the Potomac." In July 1861 the Second was brigaded with three New York regiments of Infantry, the whole under command of Colonel - and later General - William T. Sherman, and in this organization participated in the battle of Bull Run, Va. July 21, 1861. On the 27th of August 1861 the regiment was assigned to the brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Rufus King, which became subsequently known as the "Iron Brigade." With that brigade the Second participated in all the historic battles fought by the Army of the Potomac until May 11, 1864. After the battle of Laurel Hill the Second having become reduced to less than 100 men present for duty, was permanently detached from the brigade and was thereafter assigned to duty as provost guard of the Fourth Division of the Fifth Army Corps, of which the Iron Brigade was at that time a part, and following the march of that division crossed the North Anna River on the 21st inst. arriving on the 6th of June on the Chickahominy, Virginia, where the regiment remained until the expiration of its term of service. On the morning of June 11, 1864, except those who had re-enlisted, and recruits whose term of service had not expired. the Second reached Madison on the 18th of June and was mustered out of the military service of the United States on the 2nd day of July, 1864.

The principle battles in which the Second Infantry took part are:

Bull Run, Va	July 21, 1861
Gainesville, Va	August 28, 1862
Second Bull Run, Va	August 30, 1862
South Mountain, Md.	September 14, 1862
Antietam, Md.	September 16-17, 1862
Fredericksburg, Va	December 11-15, 1862
Fitzhugh's Crossing	April 29, 1863
Chancellorsville, Va.	May 1-3, 1863
Gettysburg, Pa	July 1-3, 1863
Mine Run, Va	November 28-30, 1863
Wilderness, Va,	May 5-7, 1864
Spotsylvania Court House	May 8-21, 1864
North Anna River, Va	May 10, 1864
Totopotomoy River, Va	May 28-31, 1864
Cold Harbor, Va	June 1-4, 1864



## Second Wisconsin Recommended Reading

Here is a list of some best books I've found on the history of our unit. Some are probably available for loan through your local library, and for purchase from Morningside Bookshop, 1-800-648-9710. I've listed them in the order I recommend reading them.

1. ***The Iron Brigade***, Alan T. Nolan, ISBN 0-91506-16-X, \$18.95: This book is commonly recognized as the quintessential work on the Iron Brigade. Nolan gives a well-written history of the entire brigade that's full of details about all its units, its leaders, and the battles they fought in. If you only read one book about the Iron Brigade, this should be the one.
2. ***If This is War***, Alan D. Gaff, ISBN 0-89029-536-0, \$29.95: This book concentrates on only the Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, but only from the time each company was recruited until just after their first battle at Bull Run.
3. ***Brave Men's Tears: The Iron Brigade at Brawner Farm***, Alan D. Gaff, ISBN 0-89029-317-1, \$19.95: Gaff picks up the history of the Iron Brigade in this book where he left off the Seconds' regimental history in *If This is War*. *Brave Men's Tears* covers the entire brigade during the Second Wisconsin's second major engagement at Brawner's Farm. This was the first time the association of units that would later become known as the Iron Brigade fought together. This entire book details what Nolan devotes one short chapter to his book *The Iron Brigade*.
4. ***The Second Wisconsin Infantry***, George H. Otis, ISBN 0-89029-082-2, \$30.00: This book is a compilation of various source materials on the Second Wisconsin. Otis was the Captain in charge of the Second Wisconsin when the unit returned home after their three-year term of enlistment expired. After the war Captain Otis penned a history of the regiment from his perspective, which takes up about the first third of the book. The rest of the chapters cover various writings, letter collections, etc., from other members of the unit.

## Reenacting

Our skirmish team is also affiliated with a reenacting group of the same name. The Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Association, Inc., is a recognized not-for-profit historical preservation organization. Membership is \$20.00 annually (Includes \$12 dues + \$8 insurance fee.)

For more information call: Gary Van Kauwenbergh  
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Work: (608) 267-9417  
E-mail: Garyvank@aol.com