

# The Monthly Muster

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Key West Avengers Newsletter | July, 2025

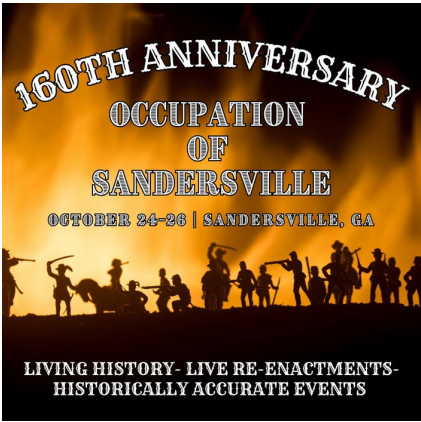
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## Event Announcement

*Sandersville, October 24-26*

The Florida Battalion is looking to sent at least one company to Sandersville in October. Several Company K members are planning on attending. It will not be the first event of the season, but it will be one you don't want to miss!

Sandersville Website



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## Captain's Desk

*Captain David Hendrix*

As I take pen to paper, I pray you and your families are all well and safe. During the summer break between Campaigns please take this opportunity to clean and repair your gear and work on your impression, or a new impression, for the Fall Campaign. A new uniform or equipment is exciting and motivational.

I also want to discuss the fall schedule. The Members agreed to make some changes to our usual Fall schedule. We do not plan to attend the Ocklawaha River Raid as a Company. In its Place



we decided to attend the Fort Clinch Garrison October 10-12 and the Dade City Raid scheduled for November 21. We have the additional opportunity to attend an event only held once every 5 years, the Occupation of Sandersville October 24-26. This is a Union impression event and promises to be Big Fun. Check out the event website (linked above). So please consult your schedules for the fall and start planning to have a busy reenacting Campaign. Have a terrific summer.

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## History Headline

*The 7th Florida at the Battle of Knoxville, May 20, 1863*

*Letter written by Captain Robert Blaire Smith*



The following letter was written by Captain Robert Blair Smith of Company K on June 25, 1863 to his future wife. It details a small engagement that occurred five days prior outside of Knoxville, Tennessee.

The original letter is housed by the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia Libraries. The transcription was completed by the University of Georgia.



The image to the right is believed to be of Captain Robert Blair Smith, date unknown.



Hd Qrs Knoxville Tenn. June 25th 1863

Dear Friend Anna,

Your favor of the 19th inst. was rec'd yesterday. It would have been here much sooner but the enemy made a raid into East Tenn. & destroyed a portion of the R. R. between this point and Dalton [Georgia], which detained the train a couple of days.

They came quite unexpectedly, for they were within 12 miles of this place before we knew any thing [sic] about their presence. Their forces numbered about 3 thousand, well mounted cavalry & infantry.

Their clothing was excellent and general appearance quite imposing especially when they first advanced in line of battle to make the attack. They threw out a long line of sharp-shooters, supported on either flank and in the center by heavy bodies of cavalry.

Their deployments were excellent, and advance quite sublime and looked heroic, but when we opened fire upon them they faltered & in less than one hour they had their whole line in confusion; but very soon they rallied and formed again but not so imposing at first.

We had but two small regiments to oppose them viz. the 6th & 7th Florida and one company of artillery. The Yanks made a bold attempt to out flank us but our boys double quicked it about one mile & prevented that. As soon as they found out they could not succeed in that, they gave up the fight & withdrew.

The fight lasted about two & one half hours, during which time I never saw a man falter, but on the contrary all were eager for the fight & tried to excel each other in acts of daring & feats of bravery.

Certainly the Florida boys fight well & I am truly glad we have had a chance to prove our grit. I think the fight a very small affair but yet, the fire of the enemy was quite severe & what was the worst feature & made it harder to endure was that for a good while we could not return it. It is very hard to get men to endure such a fire.

I was officer of the day & the Coln appointed me his aid, I was well mounted and had to visit the entire line several times during the engagement & when that was over, was sent in command of a reconnoitering party, to discover if possible the direction the enemy had taken. We found out that they had taken the road to Strawberry Plains [Tennessee] which place they subsequently took and burned the large [railroad] bridge at that place. That bridge was a severe loss to the Confederacy for it cuts off communication with the Eastern Army. It will take three months to rebuild.

Ever since the fight we have been in line of the battle expecting the enemy to come back but as yet they have not come.

I have just this moment rec'd orders to report to Hd. Qrs. immediately with the whole of my command. I expect a move is on hand.

I was glad to receive your last letter for I began to think you had determined to write no more. I would gladly assist you if I could, with your composition, but really, I expect your can write half as well, if not better, than I can.

It would be a great treat to me to get permission to go & see you about the time your concert comes off.

I have never had the pleasure of seeing the young ladies of [our social] Circle exhibit themselves.

Please think of me once in a while. Did the shoes fit? O thought they would be very nice for the concert, especially if you have to wear a kersey dress & brown stockings.

My love to all. Kiss your little fingers for me.

Your true friend & well wisher,  
Robt. B. S.

N.B. Please write soon - very soon - instantly - immediately - upon receipt of this if not sooner

P.S. When the Yankees came I burnt all my letters, so yours had to go also.

*For images of the original letter, please reach out to Sgt. Mjr. Hendrix.*

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# First Sergeant's Report     *Secure Arms and Trail Arms*

*First Sergeant Lawrin Ellis*

Arguably the two most commonly confused or misunderstood rifle positions in the manual of arms are *Secure Arms* and *Trail Arms*. These



two are seldomly used and as a result, even the most seasoned of reenactors might not know the proper position.

For both of these, let's take a look at Hardee's Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics, the manual of arms we utilize for the School of the Soldier.





**SECURE ARMS**

*(First motion.)* Like the first motion of support arms, bring the piece, with the right hand, perpendicularly to the front and between the eyes, the barrel to the rear ; except with the right hand seize the piece at the small of the stock.

*(Second motion.)* Turn the piece with both hands, the barrel to the front ; bring it opposite the left shoulder, the butt against the hip, the left hand at the



**TRAIL ARMS**

*(First motion.)* The same as the motion of order arms, by seizing the piece briskly with the left hand near the upper band, and detaching it slightly from the shoulder with the right hand : loosening the grasp of the right hand, lowering the piece with the left, re-seizing the piece with the right hand just above the lower band, the little finger in the rear of the barrel, the butt



lower band, the thumb as high as the chin and extended on the rammer ; the piece erect and detached from the shoulder, the left fore-arm against the piece.

*(Third motion.)* Reverse the piece, pass it under the left arm, the left hand remaining at the lower band, the thumb on the rammer to prevent it from sliding out, the little finger resting against the hip, the right hand falling at the same time by the side.

about four inches from the ground, the right hand supported against the hip, dropping the left hand by the side.

*(Second motion.)* Incline the muzzle slightly to the front, the butt to the rear and about four inches from the ground. The right hand supported at the hip, will so hold the piece that the rear rank men may not touch with their bayonets the men in the front rank.

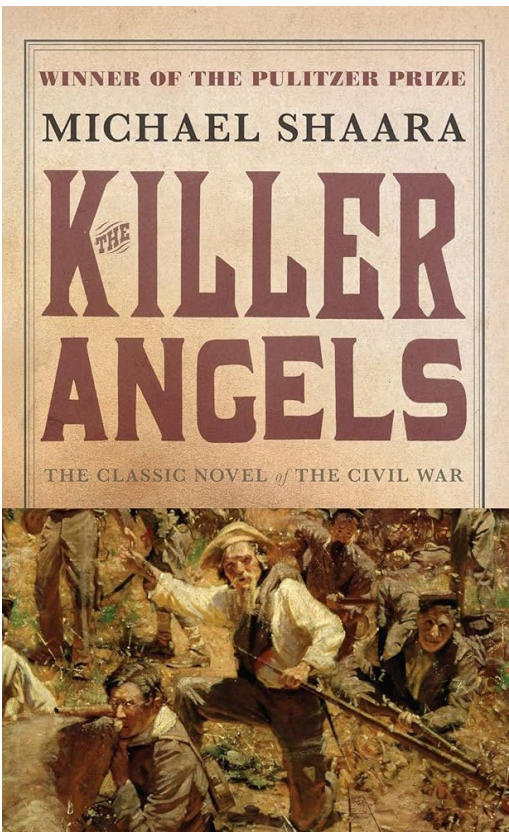
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## Book Recommendation

### *Killer Angels*

Michael Shaara

The most well known novel set during the Civil War, *Killer Angels* is certainly the standard when it comes to Civil War fiction. The middle of a trilogy set in the eastern theater (the other two were written by the author's son, Jeff Shaara), *Killer Angels* tells the story of the battle of Gettysburg through the eyes of Colonel Chamberlain of the 20th Maine, General Longstreet, and General Lee, amongst others. A must read for any reenactor or Civil War buff, this is a book you won't want to set down.



[Find it on Amazon](#)




Schedule

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