

The Monthly Muster

KEY WEST AVENGERS NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER, 2025

Upcoming Events

Dade City


November 14-15, 2025

Pioneer Florida Museum, Dade City, Florida

We are halfway through our fall campaign, but don't slow down yet! Dade City is next, a very laid back event right in the heart of Florida. The event spans Friday to Saturday, with no battle on Sunday. Register with the link below.

Registration

Living History and **CIVIL WAR** Reenactment



Saturday, November 15, 2025 • 10 am - 4 pm

Battle will take place at 2 pm Saturday only

The public is invited to tour the authentic confederate and union camps; reenactors are in character. Get a glimpse of how they lived and what it was like during the Civil War.

All museum buildings will be open!

SATURDAY ADMISSION
\$12 Adults
\$10 Seniors or Veterans \$ 6 Students
under 5 free and free parking


Saturday Schedule
10:00 am - Gates Open/Camps Open to the public
10:30 am - Colors - Battlefield
11:00 am - Ladies Tea (period dress required to participate) spectators welcome- Barn
11:30 pm - Civil War Speaker - Main Building
12:30 pm - Period Fashion Show- 2 story house
2:00 pm - Battle- Battlefield
4:00 pm - Camps closed to the public/Gates close

Live music by 7lbs of Bacon, great food, history, blacksmith and other traditional craft demonstrations

Concession Stand Open cash only

School Field Trip Day, Friday, Nov. 14, 9 am - 1 pm
Students may rotate through different stations learning about the Civil War, musical instruments, Union Camp, and Confederate Camp just to name a few. To be included in "School Day" activities, you must pre-register at www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org (lesson plans available)
\$8 per person students or chaperones for field trip day only

LOCATION: Pioneer Florida Museum
1 mile north of downtown Dade City off US Hwy 301
15602 Pioneer Museum Rd. Dade City, FL 3523
www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org • 352.567.0262



Captain's Desk

Captain David Hendrix



The Key West Avengers had strong attendance so far in the Fall Campaign with 18 members attending Ft Clinch and/or Sandersville. We also had some good men fall in with us at both events. Our next event is the Battle of Dade City November 14-16 where we will be Union. Following Dade City we have a very special event garrisoning Fort McAllister December 12-14 as Confederate soldiers. At Fort McAllister we will portray Georgia late war troops. Since we will camp inside the Fort, please bring a Dog Tent if you have one. Our historical impression of Civil War Soldiers is very good, but can always improve with the little things. We can all make a better impression with such things as period eye glasses,

collecting different uniform parts to portray different periods of the war, adding Dog Tents to our gear or whatever makes the impression more accurate. This is one of the joys of reenacting, getting new stuff!

A quick note on our Drill. If you have drill manuals, old copies of the Company Newsletters or another reliable source please review and study the following maneuvers that the Company routinely drills and uses on the field:

From standard formation (When the Company is formed in 2's facing the Captain)

Right Face (into 4's)(1's pivot and 2's step up to the right)

Left Face (into 4's)(2's pivot and 1's step up to the left)

In each Rank Left Face (into 2's)

In each Rank Right Face (into 2's)

From a column of 4's

By Company into Line (Form a Battle Line to the front)

By the Left Flank (Form a Battle Line to the left)

On the Right by Files Into Line (Form a Battle line to the right)

Left and Right Wheel

Until the next campfire, safe travels.

Event Recap

161st Occupation of Sandersville, October 24-26, 2025



For our second event of the month, Company K traveled to Sandersville, Georgia to partake in Sherman's March to the Sea. There we portrayed two battles, the first being the Occupation of Sandersville. After a majority of the Federal Army slept on arms and fought their way five miles into town, we met them at the edge of town and helped secure the town square from rebel forces. We heavily outnumbered the southerners, and we easily pushed them through the city streets. After securing the town, our very own general gave a speech, very similar to the speeches given by Sherman as he conquered small towns throughout north Georgia, much to the chagrin of the local populace. We left the town with very little damage, though, except for a couple of windows blown out by the concussion of the artillery.

Sunday we portrayed the battle of Griswoldville, another from Sherman's March. From an entrenched position, we repulsed several waves of attacks from Georgia Militia, who historically was mostly young boys and older men. The rebels suffered heavy casualties, gained no advantage, and Sherman's March continued.

In keeping with newly reinstated traditions, the Florida Battalion had a dress parade Saturday evening. Colonel Jay Welch announced we would be adopting a new battalion banner for our Federal impression, much like he did at Fort Clinch for the Southern impression. After unveiling the flag (pictured below), Colonel Welch was proud to announce the battalion has decided to add Sandersville as its first battle honor to the new Federal flag. Next time we don the blue coat, be sure to pay attention to the flag to see the battle honor you earned.

In all, Sandersville was a great event. The company carried 12 men and our captain into the field, a great turnout for our second event in two weeks!







First Sergeant's Report

First Sergeant Lawrin Ellis



Moving forward with our review of Civil War weapons, this month's focus is the Enfield Pattern 1853 Rifle-Musket.

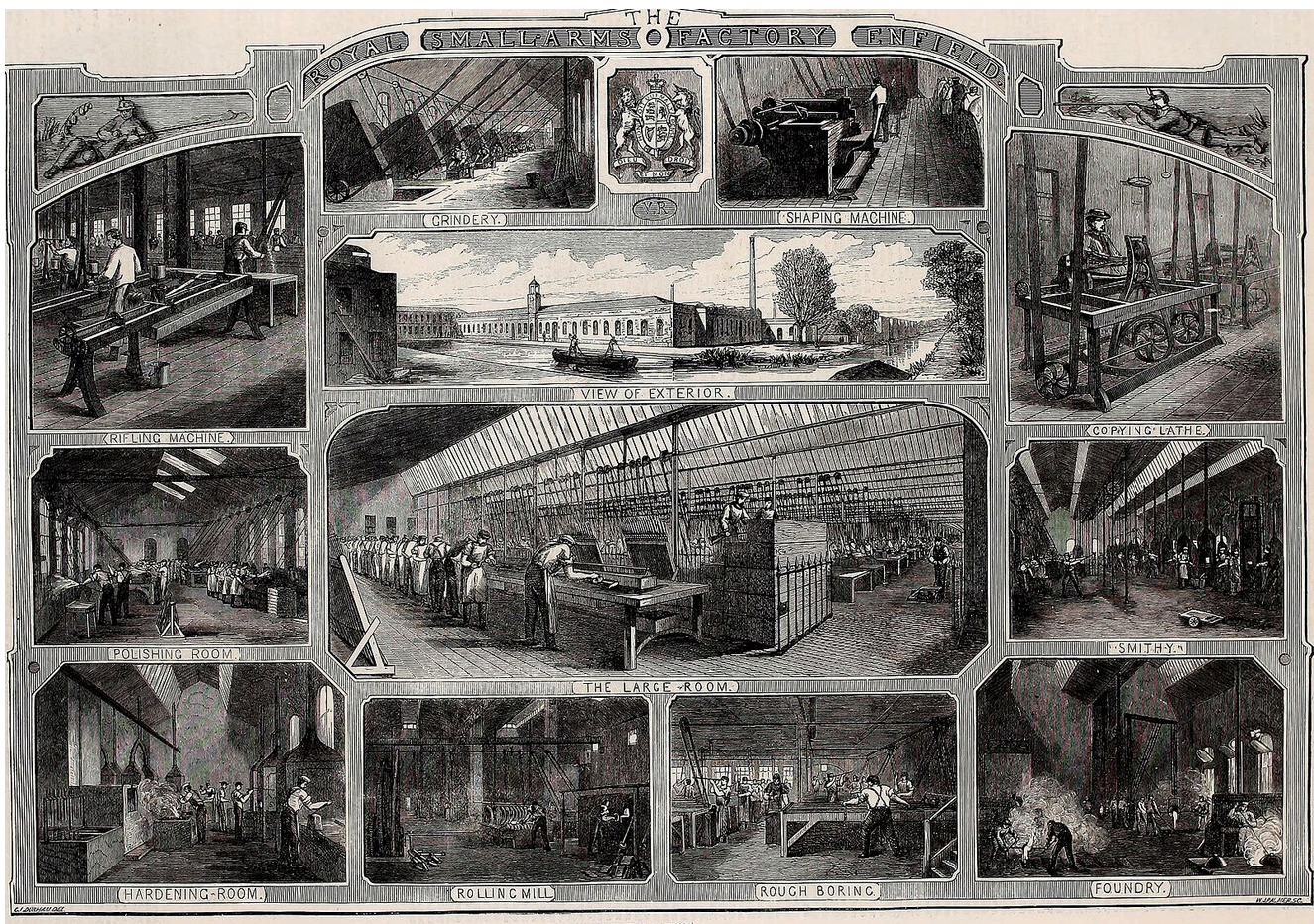
Origins and Historical Significance

The Enfield Pattern 1853 rifle-musket, also known as the P53 Enfield, Pattern 1853 Enfield, and Enfield rifle-musket, used by the British Empire from 1853 to 1871, is one of the most historically significant rifles of the 19th century. Developed as part of the British Army's transition from smoothbore muskets to rifled firearms, this .577 caliber muzzle-loading rifle revolutionized

infantry tactics and saw extensive use in conflicts worldwide. After 1867, many P53 rifles were replaced in service by the cartridge-loaded Snider–Enfield rifle.

By the mid-19th century, the limitations of smoothbore muskets had become evident. The British Army sought to replace its aging Brown Bess musket with a rifled weapon that offered greater range, accuracy, and stopping power. The development of the Pattern 1851 Minié Rifle, an early rifled musket firing the Minié ball, provided valuable insights that culminated in the Pattern 1853 Enfield Rifle-Musket.

The Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) in Enfield, located in North London, played a pivotal role in its production, but other manufacturers, including Birmingham Small Arms Trade (B.S.A.T.) and private contractors, also contributed to large-scale production. The rifle underwent rigorous military testing before being officially adopted by the British Army in 1853, leading to its widespread use across the British Empire and beyond.



The Enfield P53 rifle holds historical importance not just as Britain's first widely standardized rifled musket, but also due to its impact on military tactics. Its adoption signaled the decline of tight infantry formations, which had been necessary for smoothbore musket warfare. The increased accuracy and range of the P53 Enfield meant that soldiers could engage enemies at distances exceeding 600 yards, compared to the Brown Bess's effective range of only 100 yards.

The rifle was first deployed in combat during the Crimean War (1853-1856), where it demonstrated its effectiveness against Russian forces. However, its most infamous role came during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when rumors spread among Indian sepoys that the cartridge grease was derived from beef and pork fat—a serious offense to both Hindus and Muslims. This controversy was one of the catalysts of the rebellion, which profoundly reshaped British colonial rule in India.

Even after newer breech-loading rifles like the Martini-Henry (1871) were introduced, the P53 Enfield remained in service in colonial conflicts, including the Zulu War of 1879, where some auxiliary units still used it despite the Martini-Henry being the standard rifle.

Royal Small Arms Factory developed the Pattern 1853 Enfield in the 1850s. The 39 in (99 cm) barrel had three grooves, with a 1:78 rifling twist, and was fastened to the stock with three metal bands, so that the rifle was often called a "three band" model. The rifle's cartridges contained 2+1/2 drams, or 68 grains of gunpowder, and the ball was typically a 530-grain Boxer modification of the Pritchett & Metford or a Burton-Minié, which would be driven out at approximately 1,250 feet per second.

The original Pritchett design was modified by Col. Boxer, who reduced the diameter to 0.550 after troops found the original 0.568 too hard to load during the Indian Mutiny, changing the mixed beeswax-tallow lubrication to pure beeswax for the same reason, and added a clay plug to the base to facilitate expansion, as the original Pritchett design, which relied only on the explosion of the charge, was found to cause excessive



fouling from too slow an expansion, allowing unburnt powder to escape around the bullet. The Enfield's adjustable ladder rear sight had steps for 100 yards – the first position – 200 yards, 300 yards, and 400 yards. For distances beyond that, an adjustable flip-up blade sight was graduated (depending on the model and date of manufacture) from 900 yards to 1,250 yards. British soldiers were trained to hit a target 6 feet by 2 feet – with a 2 feet diameter bull's eye, counting 2 points – out to 600 yards. The target used from 650 yards to 900 yards had a 3 feet bull's eye, with any man scoring 7 points with 20 rounds at that range being designated a marksman.

American Civil War and Tactical Impact

The Enfield 1853 rifle-musket was also used by both the North and the South in the American Civil War, and was the second most widely used infantry weapon in the war, surpassed only by the Springfield Model 1861 Rifled Musket. The Confederates imported more Enfields during the course of the war than any other small arm, buying from private contractors and gun runners and smuggling them into Southern ports through blockade running. It has been estimated that over 900,000 P53 Enfields were imported into America and saw service in every major engagement from the Battle of Shiloh (April 1862) and the Siege of Vicksburg (May 1863), to the final battles of 1865. The gun was highly sought after in the Confederate ranks. According to a survey taken by British officials during the early stages of war on the arms of the Western Confederate Forces, nearly 70% were armed with smoothbore rifles, such as the Model 1842 Springfield. Later in the war when the same survey was taken, they found that more than 75% had acquired a rifle, mainly the Pattern 1853 Enfield.

The P53 Enfield's capabilities were largely lost by the lack of marksmanship training by both the Union and Confederacy. Most soldiers were not trained to estimate ranges or to properly adjust their sights to account for the "rainbow-like" trajectory of the large caliber conical projectile. Unlike their British counterparts who attended extensive musketry training, new Civil War soldiers seldom fired a single cartridge until their first engagement. After the end of the war, hundreds of formerly Confederate Enfield 1853 muskets were sold from the American arms market to the Tokugawa shogunate, as well as some prominent Japanese domains including Aizu and Satsuma. These units were later used in the Boshin War, and some remaining in Satsuma were also used by rebelling former samurai in the Satsuma Rebellion about a decade later. A large number of Enfield rifles were sent to Mexico to arm the Mexican Army in the 1861-67 War with the French.



Key Specifications:

- Caliber: .577
- Ammunition: Pritchett ball, typically 530 grains, .550 caliber w/ash wood plug
- Powder Charge: 68 grains of black powder
- Overall Length: 55 inches
- Barrel Length: 39 inches
- Weight: ~9.5 lbs.
- Rifling: Three-groove rifling, 1:78" twist rate
- Muzzle Velocity: ~1,250 feet per second
- Effective Range: 100–600 yards in standard combat conditions; up to 900 yards in skilled hands
- Rate of Fire: 2–3 rounds per minute

Manufacturing and Variants

Enfield Pattern 1853 rifles made under contract or made by the British government can be classified as follows:

- Enfield Factory – marked ENFIELD on the locks. Examiners' marks are a crown over E over a number.
- London Contractors (Royal Small Arms Manufactory)– marked TOWER on the locks. Examiners' marks are a crown over a number with no letter.
- Birmingham Contractors (Birmingham Small Arms Trade) – marked TOWER on the locks. Examiners' marks are a crown over B and a number.
- London Armoury Company – marked LACo on the locks. Examiners' marks are a crown over Z and a number.

Post-War Use and Legacy

The Enfield Pattern 1853 was far more than just a rifle – it was a turning point in military history. As one of the most widely used rifles of the mid-19th century, it influenced the design of later firearms and played a critical role in shaping modern warfare. Its service across multiple continents and conflicts cemented its legacy as one of the most important military arms of its time.

The Enfield 1853 rifle-musket is highly sought after by US Civil War re-enactors, British military firearms enthusiasts and black powder shooters and hunters for its quality, accuracy, and reliability. The Italian firms of Davide Pedersoli & C. and Armi Chiappa (Armi Sport) manufacture a modern reproduction of the Enfield 1853 rifle-musket, which is readily available on the civilian market. Davide Pedersoli's reproductions are imported into the United States by the Italian Firearms Group located in Amarillo, Texas.

Whether in the hands of British redcoats, Confederate infantry, or Indian sepoys, the Enfield rifle left a lasting mark on the world.

Additional Reading

For those interested in learning more about the history of the Enfield Rifle, the following books offer a focus on the rifle's history and development:

The Pattern 1853 Enfield Rifle

Authors – Peter Smithurst (Author), Peter Dennis (Illustrator)

Publication Date July 19, 2011

This was the first British weapon manufactured using new American technology, which meant that the component parts were interchangeable, ensuring that the weapon was easy to maintain on the battlefield. There were three main types based on the P 53 - the long rifle, the short rifle and the carbine, and this volume provides a concise history of the development and use of each type. In addition, the book discusses the privately manufactured varieties which were used for sport as well as the standard accessories issued to the infantryman in the field including bayonets, combination tools, the cartridge, ammunition pouch, muzzle stopper and ramrods.

.577 Pattern 1853 Rifle Musket and Snider Enfield (Small Arms Identification Series)

Author – Ian D. Skennerton

Publication Date January 1, 2005

A complete technical description of the arm in question, practical notes and identification aids. It is not a "battle" history; you must look elsewhere for histories of the various wars and campaigns these guns have figured in. If you have one of these guns, you need this book.

Making the Enfield Pattern 1853 Rifle-Musket: The Evolution of Gun Making, 1820–1860

Author – Peter Smithurst

May 30, 2025

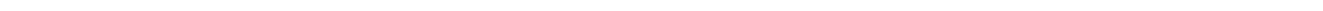
The Pattern 1853 Enfield Rifle Musket embodies a number of revolutionary milestones for Britain; it, and the carbines and short rifles derived from it, were the first rifled firearms to be issued universally to all troops; its design owed more to the French 1777 musket than to its English forbears; it was the first firearm to be produced en masse extensively by machinery; in 1857 it became the first firearm in Britain to be made fully interchangeable. Aspects of its manufacture at Enfield are covered in a small number of contemporary accounts. These vary in the detail provided and contain errors which have been noted and corrected.

Access to a wealth of specimens, drawings and documents not previously studied or published, has allowed the manufacture of this iconic rifle using these new technologies to be presented in unprecedented detail.

The English Cartridge: Pattern 1853 Rifle-Musket Ammunition

Author – Brett Gibbons

The Pattern 1853 Enfield rifle-musket is one of the iconic weapons of the mid-19th century, used extensively in the American Civil War, the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and other conflicts. While the history of the Enfield rifle is well known, it was the ammunition developed for this rifle that was truly revolutionary. Brett Gibbons traces the history of the muzzleloading cartridge used in the Enfield rifle from the early development of the Minié bullet in France, to the dramatic yet ultimately unsuccessful attempt by the Confederate States to adopt the Enfield cartridge for the Southern armies in the American Civil War. The role of the Enfield "greased cartridge" in the outbreak of the Indian Rebellion of 1857-1858 is carefully handled. Crossing several oceans and continents, from the sweltering heat of Central India in the summer of 1857 to the trenches of Petersburg in 1864, Brett Gibbons ties together the fascinating history of Enfield rifle-musket ammunition. Each development of the Enfield cartridge from 1853 to 1864 is covered, with over 60 helpful illustrations.



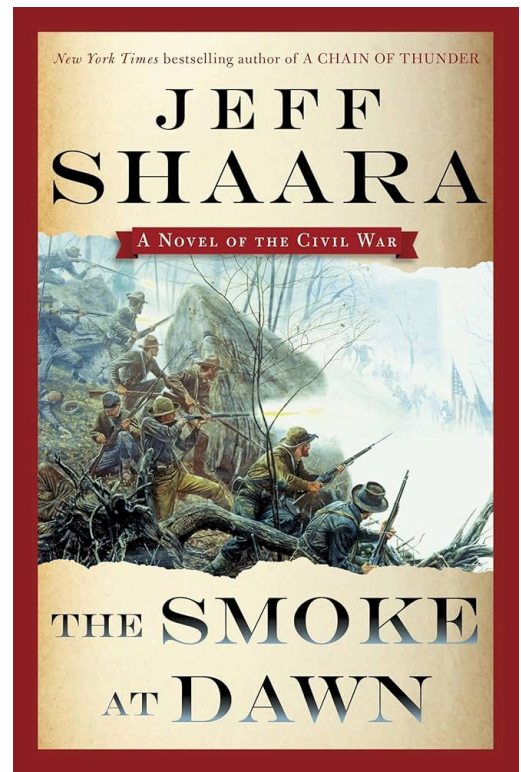
Book Recommendation

The Smoke at Dawn

Jeff Shaara

Jeff Shaara is the foremost author of Civil War fiction novels. The son of Michael Shaara, author of *Killer Angels*, Jeff wrote a four-book series on the western theater. *The Smoke at Dawn* is the third in that series, and is set during October and November 1864 in Chattanooga, giving a very historically accurate novelized version of the Siege and Battles for Chattanooga.

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