



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.ORG

Est. 1983 (A Non-Profit Organization)

NRA Affiliate Number G8162



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October 2011 VGCA e-Newsletter



Presentation at the September 22nd Meeting: Our speaker was **John H. Thillmann**, an expert on US cavalry and artillery sabers from 1833-65. He delivered an outstanding talk on *US Army Swords 1832 – 1865, “The Golden Age of US Army Swords.”* He is a well known and respected authority on the subject, and a member of the Company of Military Historians. John has written several books on sabers and many articles for *Man at Arms* magazine. He brought a fascinating digital slide presentation and some of the finest swords in existence, either inside or outside of a museum. He set the stage for the talk with an overview of The Regulation of 1825 on swords that was not a very specific regulation, thereby leading to a confusion of sword types, *“The swords of officers of the general staff, engineers, artillery and rifle, will be yellow mounted, with a black or yellow gripe, and straight blades. Those of the officers of the Infantry will be of similar form and will differ only in the color of the mountings which shall be white. Medical officers will wear yellow mounted small swords.”* The Army updated the regulations covering dress and weapons in the Dress Regulation of 1832, which specified a new model of sword to be

carried immediately, by using general descriptions. Unfortunately, none actually existed at the time. A general in London sent examples of British swords to the Ordnance Department in Nov 1832. US maker Ames was given the English swords in early 1833, and after the model swords were made up, they were adopted and produced in 1834. In general, there were four major models of swords from 1832 through 1860. The Model of 1834 began with the 1832 Foot Artillery Sword, the model 1833 Dragoon and then the Models of 1834. The Model of 1840 – was a total revision of the earlier sword patterns except for the 1832 Foot Artillery Sword. The Model of 1850 superseded both foot, mounted Infantry officers and the artillery officers sword. The Model of 1860 brought only a new light Cavalry Saber and a new Staff Sword. The Model 1832 Foot Artillery Sword was based upon French swords carried by the Foot Artillery from 1832 through the 1880’s. It was made from 1832 to 1862 and was also used by NCO’s and Musicians till the model of 1840. The Model of 1833 Enlisted Dragoon Saber made from 1834-39, and in Texas in 1840. Many of these went to state regiments. The Officers Models have gilt hilts, sharkskin grips, and etched blades. The Model 1834 Infantry, Artillery, Staff and General Officers sword was made from 1834 to 1840 with leather scabbard for officers of the Infantry and artillery. Staff and General Officers carried it with a metal scabbard. The Model 1834 Medical Staff Sword was a small sword also carried by Engineer and Pay Department Officers. The Model of 1840 resulted from trials in 1839 and the need for a special saber for the new Light Artillery. These swords had newer pattern and sturdier infantry officers sword and the family included Light Artillery Sabers, heavier Dragoon/Cavalry sabers, separate NCO swords, and separate Musicians swords. The Model 1840 Officers Sword was contracted with Schnitzler and Kirshbaum in Prussia in 1840 as part of a large sword contract for Dragoons, Artillery, NCO’s and Musicians swords. The new Model of 1850 affected only Officers swords. It was based on the French model of 1845. The officers so disliked the Model of 1840 sword that it was typically not used. They wanted a more durable and serviceable sword than the cut and thrust model. Only Medical and Pay Officers, General Officers and Cavalry Officers retained a separate model. All other Officers carried the new model of 1850 including “mounted artillery officers.” The Models of 1860 included a new lighter cavalry saber as the model of 1840 was large and heavy (named the “wrist breaker”), and a new smaller staff sword,

as the model of 1850 Staff and Field sword was heavy and cumbersome for desk-bound staff officers. He went on to cover the M1860 Cavalry Officers saber and the Model of 1860 Staff Sword, as well as Militia Staff Swords from 1830's through 1860's. He then covered the high grade swords that were usually made for presentation, and adorned with gold, silver and jewels which sometimes added to equal the money being allocated, and appeared in poor taste. The night had a massive amount of information, and the examples he displayed on the tables were things of art and beauty, that belied their deadly uses. For further information, Mr. Thillman's books can still be obtained, although the out-of-print book is very pricy. *Civil War Cavalry and Artillery Sabers* is 530 pages and 1,600 images, published in 2001 and is completely end-noted with all sources identified. *Civil War Army Swords* is 640 pages and 2,400 photos, published in 2008, and is also completely end-noted with all sources identified. Many thanks go to Mr. Thillman and John Morris who made the presentation available for notes.

- ◎ **UPCOMING!!! The October VGCA Meeting** will be held on Friday, October 21, and feature *Dave Rivers, Sgt. (ret.), Homicide Bureau, Miami Dade Police Department*, on the 1986 FBI Miami shoot-out. This should be very interesting. **PLEASE NOTE: The date of the October VGCA Meeting will be Friday, October 21, 2011 instead of the following week on the customary 4th Thursday of October 27.** We will have Pizza, but **we will also need members to help clean up all the trash.** Please bring **at least one trash bag** so we can carry out our trash. **Be prepared to take your filled trash bag with you as NOTHING can be left in the hall.** Since the meeting date has been changed, there will be no clean-up crew. This is **critical** due to a Saturday NRA event in the lecture hall, and since we are guests in the hall we do not want to leave a mess. Show & Tell theme will Law Enforcement firearms, old and new.
- ◎ The last meeting of the year will be on December 1 with an NFM-VGCA presentation. Phil Schreier of the NRA informed the members at the August meeting that he has secured Mr. Val Forgett, owner and CEO of *Navy Arms* and *The Old Western Scrounger*, as the guest speaker. This meeting will have the standard food. If members wish to bring a dish to share for the Holiday season in addition to the standard meeting food fare, it is welcome.

- ◎ **Clean out that closet!** Do you have old ammunition, extra accessory items for guns, firearm-related books, reloading gear, bayonets, grips, gun parts you no longer want? Here's your chance to get rid of some of the junk (well, great stuff anyway) and help out the National Firearms Museum at the same time. NRA's National Firearms Museum will be having an auction December 1st at NRA HQ. If you can contribute items for auction, you can bring them to the VGCA meeting on Friday October 21st and they will be received by museum staff. You'll get a receipt you can use for taxes. Come to the auction in December and bid up what you gave or just stand by to watch the fun! Noted arms auctioneer/museum director Jim Supica will provide merriment for all. Any questions, contact Doug Wicklund at (703) 267-1602 or email nfmstaff@nrahq.org

September 25th Business Meeting and Announcements: Rick Nahas gave an update on show table sales. Members need to support the club and take more sales tables. Addison turned the meeting to Emory Hackman, who made announcements on the elections and opened the floor for nominations. Nominations will also be taken at the October AND December shows.

Important Issues for Association Members' Consideration:

- ◎ **Election of VGCA Officers for the 2012-2014 Term:** There is only 1 general membership meeting (October) until the Annual Association Membership Meeting in early December. We will still be taking nominations from the floor at both the October AND December meetings for candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The nomination process will be voted closed after the nomination session at the meeting in December. The election will be in January 2012. Ballots will be mailed out in early January and must be returned and received by February 10 (no exceptions!), as stated in the bylaws, to allow the ballots to be counted and the results announced at the February 23, 2012 Meeting. When you receive the ballot, make sure you vote and return the ballot to the address provided on the ballot to ensure its receipt by the deadline. This December meeting is also one of the only opportunities you may have to question potential candidates about their ideas for the direction of the Association, instead of relying on a photo and one paragraph attachment to the ballot. Some of the incumbent Officers have indicated they are definitely not running for re-election, so we will need to have candidates to fill the vacant positions. Please consider if you would like to run, or if you have someone you would like to nominate to run. is extremely important as we face a number of

challenges. Our recent elections have had increasing This numbers of candidates, which is a good sign of increased interest, so if you wish to get involved, now is the time to make your interests known.

Important Notes from the Podium: Please make an effort to attend the October meeting on FRIDAY evening on October 21st. Please note the DATE CHANGE. Bring at least one trash bag so we can carry out our trash, and be prepared to take your filled trash bag with you. Nothing can be left in the hall. Since the meeting date has been changed, there will be no clean-up crew and the hall is needed for a NRA function the following Sat. I will bring trash bags for all the sodas etc. The pizza should be there by 6:15 or so. Our speaker, Det. Dave Rivers, should be most interesting. Bring in your OLD and NEW law enforcement arms for show and tell. Bring a law enforcement officer (LEO) with you if you care to. It should be a fun evening. Most meetings are!!!

- On another note, it is time for VGCA members to again team up and have sales tables at the show. Display tables are nice and interesting but they don't build floor traffic. We need tables of stuff for sale. This is the time for you to get off your butt and help your club for a change. We are being battered by too many shows — by a lack of disposable income in the public — the economy is as bad as it has been since the Great Depression. Several VGCA members have done a great job in setting up tables in these hard times to help the club.
- Another factor that you may not have considered – I estimate that in the past 20-25 years, we have LOST perhaps 30 table holders due to death or medical conditions with the members or family members that preclude their setting up. Several have left us for a variety of reasons. The people who do well are the ones smart enough to price things to sell and to have items that are what the public wants. This is a sad situation but one that we cannot control.
- Another major but obvious problem is the same thing real estate agents constantly harp on – *location, location, location*. We did well at Hugo's. It was a dump, had a leaky roof and poor lighting, but the location was great and we filled the parking lots and it was mobbed. We had little competition then. Things have changed. Our present location is also not perfect — but we have not done enough to generate floor traffic. That with all the other problems I just mentioned, have worked against us. It is up to our members to overcome this situation.
- So bring out the junk or stuff you don't need any more. Reloading supplies are always great. Price it to move! Pocket a few bucks. Clean out your basement and help the club at the same time (AND then use the clean basement for new purchases!) IT IS UP TO YOU TO HELP YOUR CLUB.

Regarding the upcoming election — some of us are old and need to be replaced. You can only run the tires on your car so long. I think 30 years non-stop for me is starting to wear the treads on my tires down way too far.

I keep hearing the same excuses not to run. I don't have computer or accounting skills or I don't like to speak in public, or I don't have the contacts or know enough people to do it... Neither did I when I started. Anyone can perform the duties needed for the officers. What seems to be lacking is motivation and a willingness to devote time — fire in the belly — whatever you care to call it. Get over it and consider the good of the club. If someone as dim witted as I am can be secretary and president for 30+ years, any person can do it. (I am just a poor old hillbilly druggist from West Virginia). I did it while working a full time day job.

We have 400 members in this club. Many are highly educated and very intelligent, and many are or were in important positions. It is something to think about. You need to be approaching these fine folks.

Well, that is enough preaching. You understand what is at stake. VGCA must not be allowed to die. Hope to see you Friday night, October 21st. It will be fun. Don't forget to bring a trash bag or two.

– *Addison Hurst*, President, VGCA

The Fall 2011 VGCA Gun Show will be on November 5-6, 2011 in Manassas, Virginia at the Prince William County Fairgrounds. As usual, we need VGCA gun show members to volunteer for the show table Setup, Safety and Security Teams, as well as some folks to help with the sign detail the morning of the show, and pick them up after the show on Sunday. Please let **John Frietsch**, **Dave Litchfield** or one of the Association Officers know if you wish to volunteer. Talk to **Larry Hare** if you want to help with sign placement. Table set-up will be on Thursday, November 3, usually around 1PM, or whenever the tables arrive.

- © We have a **strong** need for additional volunteers for the Safety and Security Teams. If any member wishes to help out for **an hour or so** at the show on the Safety and Security Teams, please call **John Frietsch**, Safety and Security Coordinator at 1-540-409-1271. The more folks who participate means the details can be spread

among more people, thereby freeing up time for hitting the aisles in search of new treasure for your collections. Also remember, **volunteering and serving for the Security, Safety, or Setup teams gets you a free admission.**

- ⊙ **Fall VGCA Gun Show Sales Tables:** As this is written, the Association *still has a few tables remaining for the Fall VGCA Gun Show*. A gun collector organization gun show's draw and reputation is not just the dealers who are present, but also for the unusual and rare collectible pieces and related accouterments items that can be found being offered for sale by its membership from their collections. The number of VGCA member sales tables that accent and illustrate the hobby of gun collecting has been on a slow decline in recent shows. Fortunately, the number of superb member displays has increased, but the member sales tables are what often draw the new and experienced collectors looking to learn, start collecting or enhance their own collections by making trades, sales or purchases. Members should seriously consider reserving a table for disposing of your unloved or duplicate firearms, accouterments, collectable accessories, or other gun collecting related items. Also remember that vacant tables cast a visible pall on a show and discourage repeat or future attendance by both dealers and the public. Please contact Rick Nahas, ASAP. If you believe manning a sales table alone would be too demanding and not allow you time to hunt for deals or just talk to other members, get a partner and share the duties and have relief for your time around the show. Show tables cost \$60 each, so sharing splits costs with a colleague.
- ⊙ **VGCA Gun Show Educational and Display Tables:** The club will continue having FREE DISPLAY TABLES for members *on a space available basis* for the Fall show. This is a great opportunity to test the waters if you wanted to do a display table. Display tables are space available depending on sales table rentals, and therefore may be limited, so again, contact **Rick Nahas** ASAP to reserve yours.
- ⊙ **December Annual Membership Meeting:** We combine the December and November meeting into one early December meeting due to the Gun Show and the Thanksgiving and December Holiday Seasons. We will have the nomination of officer candidates and other business. Since this will also be a meeting with food, and if a member wants to bring in some special food to celebrate the holiday seasons feel free.

Show & Tell for the September 25th Meeting: **Jim Vaughan** kicked off the show and tell by displaying two of the swords he owns. One was a Model of 1850 Staff and Field Officers sword with a Millard blade, most likely imported into the US. The Second was a non-regulation Model of 1850 Staff and Field Officers sword made by Horseman. Both were nice examples. **John Morris** showed an unusual US Navy cannon gunpowder measure that was discovered recently in a private residence on the West Coast. It weighs over 10 lbs. It is about 10 inches tall, with an inside diameter is 7 inches, dated 1850, and marked showing inspection by John A. Dahlgren. This is the only US Navy gunpowder measure I've seen which has two handles. This charge measure was made for filling cloth cartridge bags for use in the Navy's 64-pounder "round shot" gun. Of 8 guns made, only one "64-pounder round-shot gun" survives, in a park in Waukesha, Wisconsin. **Jim Burgess** showed an 1840 Dragoon Saber with a Model of 1860 hilt and a Philadelphia marked scabbard. He bought it in 1972 at the Pikesville Armory Show, near Baltimore, MD. **Larry Hare** brought is on-topic 1902 Dress sword. He also brought an '8 pound" civil war cannon he bought at an auction. However this '8 pounder' was in fact a scale model machined from steel that weighed 8 pounds, and was about a foot long. **Kelly Cook** showed a smaller blade that was a small hunting knife or could be used as a patch knife. **Marc Gorelick** showed his Model of 1861 Navy Percussion Rifle or in common usage, the "Plymouth Rifle," manufactured by Whitney under an 1861 contract. Between 1861 and 1864 10,000 examples were manufactured. Designed for naval boarding parties and shore expeditions, the iron-mounted 34" barreled rifle fired a 69 caliber projectile. The rifle was developed under the Captain John A. Dahlgren on the USS Plymouth – a US Navy trials ship under Capt. Dahlgren's command. The rifle saw use after the civil war well into the 1870's and was used in the 1871 Korean Expedition. **Rick Nahas** closed the session with a number of questions for the members about black powders, which after discussions, the meeting was adjourned.

Member Announcements, For Sale, and Requests for Member Assistance:

- VGCA Patches for sale. Cost is \$5.00. See Addison.
- Jack Looney, (703-534-3286) is selling the following: **Thompson Center Contender** pistol with 10" Octagon .22LR barrel and iron sights \$575.00; T/C Contender 10" bull barrel in .32-20 with scope mount base, \$250.00. **Two Vietnam Tet Offensive bring backs: Chinese Mosin-Nagant Carbine, Type 53** (PRC version of Russian M-44), 7.62x54R, with folding bayonet. The rifle has blood rust on the left and top of the receiver/barrel. **Mossberg Model 'R'**, .22, with **Beech Front Sight** and a non-Mossberg (possibly Winchester) **Carbine Type**

Ladder Rear Sight. 'R' Stock has a split in the fore end. The story was that the Type 53 was unfired, no rounds in the magazine, and a fully loaded bandolier was on the soldier. No individual story is available on the Mossberg, but it was brought back at the same time as the Type 53. Jack prefers to sell the pair as a set and is accepting reasonable offers. Call Jack Looney at 703-534-3286.

Presentation and Show and Tell Photos from September 25th Meeting



← Just of few of the wonderful examples of US military swords.

↙ Slide of Model of 1832 Foot Artillery Sword.

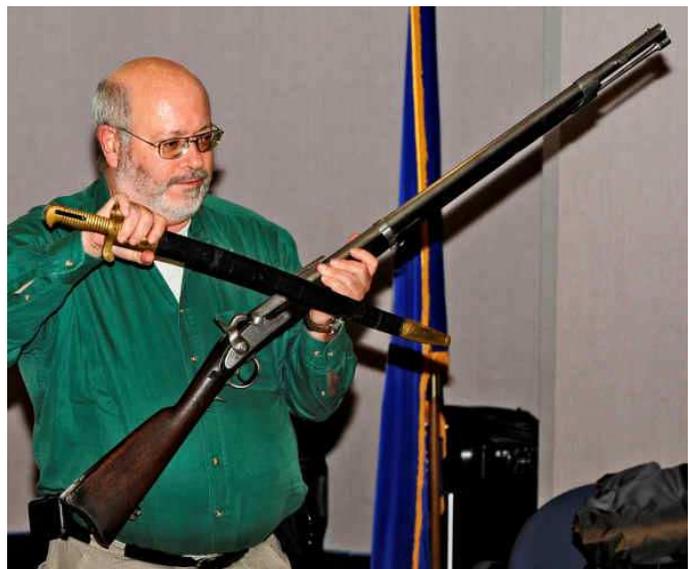
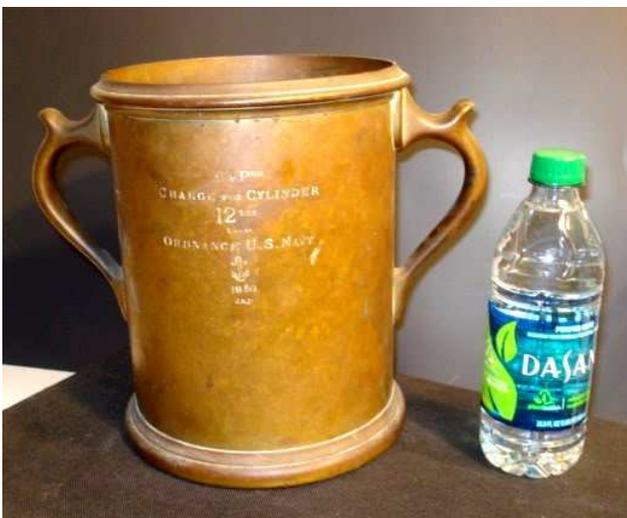
↘ Prussian markings on an imported blade.

↙ 64 Pounder powder measure.

↘ 1861 Plymouth Rifle

The Model 1832 Foot Artillery Sword

- In 1828 Lt. Tyler was in France to study artillery. He sent examples of French accoutrements among them the sword
- This sword was carried by the Foot Artillery from 1832 through the 1880's. It was made from 1832 to 1862
- It was also used by NCO's and Musicians till the model of 1840
- Shown here with its first belt and scabbard, note the buckle



Upcoming Events and Shows

PLEASE NOTE: There are sometimes changes in schedules or errors on websites. Members are strongly encouraged to verify before driving to a show. These dates have been published online, but are not guaranteed. **Yellow** = Collector organizations.

VIRGINIA 2011

- ⇒ October 15-16, 2011 - Richmond, VA – Showplace - *C&E Gun Show*
- ⇒ October 14-15, 2011 – Salem, VA - **Roanoke Airgun Show** - Moose Lodge, 3233 Capawba Valley Drive, Salem, VA. 24153. Hours: Friday 8AM-12PM - Dealers and Early Buyers (early buyers \$50.00 admission Friday 8AM). Public: Fri. 12-5PM, Sat. 9AM-5PM. \$5.00 admission goes to Moose Programs. There will be a test range to test airguns at the show. On-site camping available. Auction at 5PM on Friday. Info: 607-734-3805 or email: ars@stny.rr.com.
- ⇒ October 22-23, 2011 – Virginia Beach, VA – Convention Center - *SGK, LTD*
- ⇒ November 5-6, 2011 - Manassas, VA - **Prince William County Fairgrounds – Virginia Gun Collectors Association**
- ⇒ November 4-6, 2011 - Woodstock, VA - Shenandoah County Fairgrounds - *Virginia Gun & Knife Shows*
- ⇒ November 5-6, 2011 - Norfolk, VA – Norfolk Scope Arena - *C&E Gun Show*
- ⇒ November 5-6, 2011 - Dale City, VA - VFW Post 1503 - *Old Dominion Shows*
- ⇒ November 12-13, 2011 - Richmond, VA - Raceway & Fairgrounds – *Showmasters*
- ⇒ November 18, 19 & 20, 2011 - Chantilly, VA - Dulles Expo Center - *C&E Gun Show / Showmasters*
- ⇒ November 26-27, 2011 - Hampton, VA - Convention Center - *SGK, LTD*
- ⇒ December 3-4, 2011 - Richmond, VA – Showplace - *C&E Gun Show*
- ⇒ December 10-11, 2011 - Harrisonburg, VA - Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *C&E Gun Show*

MARYLAND 2011

- ⇒ November 5-6, 2011 – Upper Marlboro, MD - Show Place Arena – *Silverado Promotions*
- ⇒ November 12-13, 2011 - Frederick, MD - Frederick Fairgrounds – *Silverado Promotions*
- ⇒ December 10-11, 2011 - Parkville, MD - Tall Cedars Bldg., Putty Hill Shopping Center - *Appalachian Promotions*

PENNSYLVANIA 2011

- ⇒ October 22-23, 2011 - Monroeville, PA - Convention Center - *C&E/Showmasters Gun Shows*
- ⇒ October 15-16, 2011 - Allentown, PA - Agricultural Hall - *Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society*. Contact: FDHAS, 3491 Linden St., Bethlehem, PA 18017. 610-997-8613 after 6pm.
- ⇒ November 5-6, 2011 - Poconos, PA - Split Rock Lodge - *Eagle Arms*
- ⇒ November 12-13, 2011 - Tarentum, PA - Pittsburgh Mills Galleria - *Pennsylvania Gun Collectors Association*.
- ⇒ December 3-4, 2011 - Allentown, PA - Agricultural Hall - *Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society*. Contact: FDHAS, 3491 Linden St., Bethlehem, PA 18017. 610-997-8613 after 6pm.
- ⇒ December 10-11, 2011 - Monroeville, PA - Convention Center - *C&E/Showmasters Gun Shows*

NEW YORK 2011

- ⇒ December 10-11, 2011 – Freeport, NY - The Freeport Recreation Center - *Long Island Antique Historical Arms Society*. Contact: Dave Gruner (631) 722-3248, P.O. Box 41, Jamesport, NY 11947

OHIO 2011

- ⇒ November 19-20, 2011 – Wilmington, OH – Roberts Centre - *Ohio Gun Collectors Association*. **OGCA MEMBERS ONLY**. <http://www.ogca.com/index.htm>

OKLAHOMA 2011

- ⇒ November 12-13, 2011 – Tulsa, OK - Expo Center-Expo Square (Tulsa Fairgrounds) - *Tulsa Arms Collectors Association*. ****MORE THAN 4,100 TABLES!****

Address for any Newsletter related matters or submissions is VGCAnews@cox.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 Bill Chronister, VGCA Newsletter Editor