



LIBERTY RIFLES

Bylaws

Amended and Ratified on January 14, 2017

I. **Philosophy**

- A. Founded in 1999, the Liberty Rifles (LR) is a group of living historians who strive to accurately portray the common fighting men and homefront civilians of the American Civil War, while excelling in terms of authenticity and organization. We constantly seek opportunities to educate ourselves and others about the sacrifices and experiences of our ancestors. The LR was founded to represent soldiers and civilians on *both* sides of the war with equal accuracy and honor.

We believe that to be true historians we must approach history in a non-political and unbiased manner. Our goal is to learn more about the brave patriots of both sides of the war by accurately emulating them in terms of both our attire and our actions. To do this, we do extensive research on period accounts, written histories, historical sites, and original garments and equipment to comprehend and replicate the period to the best of our ability.

Authenticity is our perpetual journey and we strive to continually improve our portrayal of 1860s soldiers and civilians. Military members come together on the field to act as one well drilled, veteran military unit, and civilians gather to portray those affected by the war off the battlefield. We hope that our members and those interacting with our group gain a correct vision of the hardships endured by our fore-bearers.

II. **Bylaws**

- A. The bylaws set forth by this document shall be adhered to by all members of the Liberty Rifles. At each annual meeting, a time shall be apportioned to discuss, change, and/or amend the bylaws. Any dues-paying member may motion a modification, which must be voted upon and approved by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of dues-paying members present at the meeting.

III. **Membership**

- A. All LR members are expected to research and acquire, to the best of their ability, the most accurately reproduced clothing, uniforms, and equipment of the Civil War period.
1. Military members are expected to portray both US and CS soldiers with equal accuracy and respect. They are also expected to practice and perfect their military drill and bearing by responding to commands, being proficient in Gilham's, Casey's, Hardee's, and Hardee's Revised drill manuals, and performing military duties such as mounting pickets and fatigue details.
 2. Civilian members are expected to portray the appropriate form of society as prescribed by each event scenario, and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the 1860s.
- B. The membership is organized into the following two statuses:

1. **Active Member:** Dues paid and attends one or more official LR events per year.
 2. **Associate Member:** Attends events but owes dues, or pays dues but does not attend events.
- C. A person interested in joining the LR must contact or be referred to the Vice President, who manages new members. Together they will coordinate two official LR events for the person to attend. After attending those two events, if there is a mutual interest in him or her joining the unit, the Vice President will invite him or her to become an Active Member, which he or she will become upon submission of dues to the Treasurer.
- D. All members are liable for their own actions, but are expected to conduct themselves appropriately as each individual represents the reputation of the entire organization. Elevating and maintaining the unit's favorable repute is the responsibility of all members to enable us to grow, prosper, and gain the respect of others.
- E. A member or guest who jeopardizes the safety, property, reputation, or well-being of the LR, its members, or others, risks losing his or her membership and/or may not be allowed to participate with the group. Final decisions on this issue shall be decided by unanimous agreement of the LR Leadership.

IV. Elected Positions and Their Roles

- A. The following positions, collectively known as the "Liberty Rifles Leadership," are elected at the annual meeting for a one-year term. A member may only hold one elected position at a time. When necessary, the LR Leadership may conduct "Special Votes" by majority as needed for time-sensitive decisions.
1. Administrative: Manage the day-to-day operation of the unit and pre-event preparation.
 - a) **President:** Manages all pre-event preparation and distribution of information (unless otherwise delegated), coordinates with event organizers and other organizations, works with the Treasurer to maintain an accurate roster, co-manages the Liberty Rifles email group, approves reimbursable expenses, coordinates and runs the annual meeting, and presents a "State of the Unit" report at the annual meeting.
 - b) **Vice President:** Assists the President as needed, manages and assists new members, co-manages the Liberty Rifles email group, approves reimbursable expenses, and presents a report on new membership and general updates at the annual meeting.
 - c) **Treasurer:** Manages the organization's finances, determines the amount of annual dues, collects annual dues, pays the insurance, battalion dues, permit fees, and reimbursable expenses, and presents an itemized report on the past year's expenses, income, and balance at the annual meeting.
 2. Field Command: Prepare and manage military operations at events.
 3. **Civilian Coordinator:** Manages and distributes information specific to civilian participants, manages the Liberty Rifles Civilians email group, and presents a report at the annual meeting.
- B. These positions shall be elected by majority vote of the dues-paying members (for the following year) who are present at the annual meeting. The President, Vice President, and Treasurer shall be elected by both military and civilian members. The Civilian Coordinator shall be elected by members who regularly do civilian impressions.
- C. A candidate must receive a majority (more than 50%) of the vote to win the position. If more than two individuals are running for a position and one does not achieve a majority, the person with the lowest

number of votes shall be eliminated from the race and another vote will be conducted for the remaining candidates. The process of voting and elimination will be continued until one candidate achieves a majority.

- D. If an elected member is unable or chooses to no longer fulfill his or her term, the position shall be filled in the following manner for the interim of the one-year term.
 - 1. To fill the position of President, the Vice President shall succeed the role, duties, and title of President. The LR Leadership shall then call for nominations from the membership for candidates to run for the now vacant position of Vice President. The dues-paying members shall then vote in an election conducted by a method agreed upon by the LR Leadership (ex. at an upcoming well-attended event, an online vote, etc.).
 - 2. To fill the position of Vice President, Treasurer, or Civilian Coordinator, the LR Leadership shall call for nominations from the membership for candidates to run for the vacant position. The dues-paying members shall then vote in an election conducted by a method agreed upon by the LR Leadership (ex. at an upcoming well-attended event, an online vote, etc.).

V. **Treasury**

- A. A general fund is managed by the Treasurer and be used for annual expenses and items as needed for events. Funds are typically used for battalion dues, meeting fees, insurance, the website, permit fees, site rentals, occasional food at events, miscellaneous impression items, and other expenses that the President, Vice President, and Treasurer unanimously agree to benefit the membership.
- B. Buying a single item for the organization that only one individual would retain (ex. a frying pan) is generally discouraged in favor of smaller items that can be equally distributed among participants (ex. corps badges) or items that add value to an experience in which everyone may participate (ex. prizes for a period competition).

VI. **Dues**

- A. The Treasurer will determine the amount of the annual dues and shall collect them by methods of his or her choosing.
- B. Dues-paying members will receive insurance coverage per the implemented policy, occasional free food at events, occasional free miscellaneous impression items, voting rights, and other benefits as approved by the LR Leadership.
- C. The Treasurer may select a deadline by which dues must be submitted, after which the roster and benefits will be adjusted accordingly. Members who regularly participate with the organization are expected to pay dues.

VII. **Email Groups**

- A. The "Liberty Rifles" and the "Liberty Rifles Civilians" email groups serve as the main forms of communication for distributing and discussing event information, sharing research, buy/sell/trade, and discussing organizational matters. All members and friends are welcome to be included in the email groups.

- B. The President and Vice President, and Civilian Coordinator administrate the two groups, respectively, and may opt to implement the message-approval system to filter out spam, inappropriate, and/or redundant messages.

VIII. Annual Meeting

- A. An annual meeting shall be coordinated and led by the President. The meeting will include LR Leadership reports, new business, review of the bylaws, open discussion, leadership elections, and selection of events. Additional items and discussion may be held at the discretion of the LR Leadership.
- B. The potential events shall be presented, discussed, and voted upon by dues-paying members (for the following year) with an even mix of US and CS events being desirable. Two calendars shall be formed, one of military events, and one of civilian events.

IX. Paid Events

- A. Funds received from paid events shall be fairly distributed to the attendees of the event. A lump sum given to the group will be divided among the attendees according to the number of hours each person participates. The Treasurer or another coordinator will keep track of the hours each member is present during the operating time of the event.
- B. Attendees must have their dues paid in order to receive full payment – those who owe dues shall have them deducted from their allotted payment. Payment for guests attending with the group will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the LR Leadership.
- C. All potential paid events shall be proposed with the following details in writing: date and time of the event, what accommodations will be provided (food, shelter, ammunition, etc.), the impression(s), description of expected activities/drilling/firing demonstrations, requested number of participants, exact dollar amount to be paid, and date by which payment shall be received.

X. Rank

- A. Rank shall be assigned by the Point of Contact for the subject event, based upon the event scenario and expected attendance.
- B. The Leadership shall maintain an "NCO Pool" of military Active Members who are able to effectively perform the duties of Corporals, Sergeants, and Officers. A list or designation of those members in the NCO Pool shall be made readily available to the membership by a method agreed upon by the LR Leadership (ex. listed online, a regularly occurring email, etc.). Members wishing to be included in the NCO Pool are highly encouraged to make their intentions known to the Leadership, and must subsequently attend an NCO School conducted by the Liberty Rifles, or arrange equivalent training with the Liberty Rifles. All members in the NCO Pool are encouraged to regularly attend NCO and Officer Schools.
- C. The number of NCOs and Officers needed at each event will vary according to the scenario and expected attendance; therefore, not all members in the NCO Pool will be able to be an NCO at every event. It is the responsibility of the Event POCs and Leadership to rotate members in those positions.
- D. Among other standard duties, Corporals will be designated to lead details, Sergeants will be responsible for ensuring all weapons are clean and ready for inspections, and all should work to improve the company's functionality. All NCOs shall ensure that duties are equally distributed among the enlisted men by

maintaining a work detail list. All enlisted men are expected to listen to and execute their superiors' commands, and must remain attentive and silent when in formation.

XI. Guests

- A. Like-minded individuals and/or groups may inquire about attending an event as guests with the LR. As non-dues-paying members, guests are not entitled to the benefits received by dues-paying members, although when feasible, they may partake in food or other purchased items for a small fee determined by the Treasurer. Members wishing to bring guests or individuals wishing to participate with the LR shall inquire before the event to obtain the Leadership's approval. Like all LR members, guests are representing the entire unit while at events and are expected to follow the bylaws and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.
- B. Approved military guests may fall in with the unit provided it does not cause the company to exceed an appropriate size. Individual military guests will be Privates, and groups of military guests will be allotted NCO positions relative to the number of people in their group. The Event POC will determine the number of guests to invite with rank, which will be approximately one NCO/Junior Officer for every four to seven guests.
- C. Approved civilian guests are expected to contribute and participate in all scheduled activities, such as cooking, cleaning, or other activities specific to the impression and scenario. Guest civilians should exhibit the same high standard of authenticity and research as military participants, and conduct themselves as befitting of their period counterparts, just as members are. Inquiries for guests who wish to participate as civilians may be directed to the Civilian Coordinator prior to attending an event.

XII. Firearms Safety

- A. Members must be 16 years or older to carry a firearm and 14 years or older to be a functional musician.
- B. Firearms shall be clean and functional at the beginning of an event. Those with dirty or non-functioning weapons will not be permitted to fall in for formation. Following firing, weapons should be field cleaned in a period manner.
- C. Firearms must always be treated in a safe manner as if they were loaded.
- D. Six-wing percussion caps are dangerous and not permitted – only four-wing percussion caps shall be used.

XIII. Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, and Sexual Harassment

- A. When permitted on site and by local law, alcohol may be consumed only by those 21 years or older. It shall be consumed in a period container (bottle, jug, cup, flask, etc) while in camp, and at the good judgement of the individual. Each member is responsible for his or her own actions, must ensure there are no modern containers littering the ground, and perform the activity in a tasteful and mature manner. Members must keep in mind that each individual's behavior impact the reputation of the entire group.
- B. Tobacco products may be used in a period appropriate manner. Modern cigarettes are not permitted within the camp. Smoking is not permitted while in military formation, and is at the discretion of the company officer while on the march.

- C. Prescription drugs in their original containers and other medical necessities should be concealed inside a period poke sack or container. Illegal drugs and/or related activities will not be tolerated and subject to immediate removal from the group.

- D. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and is subject to immediate removal from the group. This includes, but is not limited to, making unwelcome sexual advances and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment through vulgar or demeaning language or unwelcome physical conduct.