

 **The 15th New York Cavalry** 
"The Red Neck Ties"



Hand Book

15th New York Volunteer Cavalry

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CONSTITUTION

The Historic 15th Cavalry, Co. L, Inc.

Article I Name

This organization shall be known as the 15th New York Volunteer Cavalry Company L. popularly called “The Red Neck Ties”, and shall at all times operate and conduct as a non-profit corporation in accordance with the laws of the State of New York providing for such organization and by which it shall acquire all rights as granted to corporations of this kind.

Article II Purpose

The purpose of the 15th NY Cavalry shall be to authentically represent the historic regiment at events both local and national. In this endeavor we shall research the historic regiment and use what is found to both guide our own actions and to publicize the record of the 15th Cavalry in the Civil War.

Article III Officers

Officers of the regiment shall be elected at the same meeting at which the ratification of this document takes place. Elections will be held in a manner prescribed in the bylaws. The officers will include:

- Captain
- Lieutenant
- 1st Sergeant
- 1st Corporal

Officers and NCO's will perform duties detailed in the bylaws. Other ranks may be created and voted upon by the membership in a manner prescribed in the bylaws.

Article VI Membership

Membership in the 15th NY Cavalry is open to all those over the age of 18. Those under the age of 18 may participate if a parent or legal guardian is present.

Article VII Amendments

This constitution may be amended in the following manner: At the request of 2/3 rd's of the dues paying membership, an amendment may be proposed. The proposed amendment will be read at a open meeting and a vote taken at the following meeting. The vote will be by written ballot, a 2/3 rd's vote is needed to adopt the amendment.

Article VIII Ratification

Ratification of this document will be by written ballot, a 2/3 rd's vote needed to adopt.

Article IX Regulations

The membership may enact all regulations necessary and proper to the promotion of the 15th NY Cavalry in a manner prescribed in the bylaws so long as those regulations are consistent with the Constitution of the 15th NY Cavalry.

Bylaws of the 15th NY Cavalry

Meetings:

Regular meeting of the 15th NY Cavalry will be at a time and place fixed by resolution and entered in the Standing Order.

Special meetings of the 15th NY Cavalry may be convened at the call of the President. A special meeting shall be convened at the written request of seven or more members. Two (2) days shall be the minimum advance notice for the convening of a special meeting. Telephone or other electronic means of communication may be used for the purpose of notifying members of the convening of a special meeting.

Meeting of Committees may take place at the call of the chair of the committee, which is to meet.

Five regular members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business at a regular meeting.

Membership:

A member of the 15th NY Cavalry may have no affiliation with any other unit, reenactment group, club or organization portraying War of the Rebellion, Union or Confederate, and he/she may take the field with no other unit without permission of the President. He/she must come into the possession of and maintain the uniform, accouterments, equipment and arms of a private soldier of the 15th NY Cavalry in the War of the Rebellion. He/she may affix no device to his/her uniform not in keeping with the reactivated 15th NY Cavalry. He/she must conduct themselves in a military manner at all times when engaged in unit functions and must exercise reasonable care in the use of unit equipment.

Regular Member in Good Standing:

A person who has paid dues (*\$60 per year – individual or \$84 per year – family*), meets the Constitutional requirements for membership and attends at least eight (8) sanctioned events each year shall be considered a Member in Good Standing. Sanctioned events may include events for which the unit is paid, or is declared to be a maximum effort by being designated by resolution. Regular meetings may count toward this total. A member in Good Standing may vote and enjoy other emoluments unique to membership in the 15th NY Cavalry.

Member Emeritus:

A person who has made unique and important contributions to the unit or has rendered long and faithful service may be designated a Member Emeritus. A member Emeritus shall enjoy all rights and privileges of membership, but only be exempted from the payment of dues.

Dues:

Dues shall be **sixty dollars (\$60.00)** per year for individual membership or **eighty-four dollars (\$84.00)** per year for family membership. Dues shall be payable in monthly increments of five dollars (\$5.00) for individual membership or seven dollars (\$7.00) for family membership and shall be received by the Vice-President or Treasurer at the regular meeting. Dues may be paid in advance up to a period not to exceed one (1) year.

Members more than **three (3) months** in arrears shall be advised of this situation by the Secretary. Members more than **six (6) months** in arrears shall lose the right to vote on any questions, election or other matters before the organization. Members more than **twelve (12) months** in arrears shall be dropped from membership.

Standing Committees:

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and the Secretary and such other persons duly nominated and elected by the members for a one (1) year term. The President shall Chair the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall make meeting agendas, set organization policy and serve as a Nominating Committee for all officers of the 15th NY Cavalry. A simple majority of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business.

The Steering Committee shall consist of those persons named in the Certificate of Incorporation of the Historic 15th Cavalry, Company L, Inc. any additional members shall be appointed by the Committee members from the general membership. The Steering Committee shall provide oversight and advice in all affairs, business and operations the 15th NY Cavalry. Three members shall be a quorum for conduct of committee business.

The Finance Committee shall provide oversight to the Vice-President and Treasurer and will conduct an audit of the organizational finances once a year to be reported at the January annual meeting. The Finance Committee shall consist of a Chair elected from the general membership and two others appointed by said Chair. A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business.

The Safety Committee shall provide instruction and advice to members regarding camp, field, horse, weapons and fire safety. The Safety Committee shall consist of a Chair elected from the general membership and two others appointed by said Chair. A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business.

The Authenticity Committee shall provide instruction and advice to members regarding the historical appropriateness of objects and practices. The Authenticity Committee may also be tasked with the curator ship of the organization's collection of artifacts, archival materials and books. The Authenticity Committee shall consist of a Chair elected from the general membership and two others appointed by said Chair. A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business.

The Events Committee shall provide information to members regarding shows, reenactments, lectures and other programs in which the organization may wish to participate. The Events Committee shall identify which members will attend the said programs, initiate and complete necessary administrative papers, publish the rules of the said program, and ensure that

the organization is properly registered for each event. The Events Committee shall consist of a Chair elected from the general membership and two others appointed by said Chair. A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business.

The Rules Committee shall investigate and report on Constitutional questions, questions relating to the Bylaws, questions relating to Standing Orders, questions relating to the Rules of Order and ordinary resolutions. Items of business to be so investigated and reported shall be referred to the Rules Committee on motion in a regular or special meeting of the organization, duly made and carried. The Rules Committee shall also sit as the investigative committee in Disciplinary Procedures in accordance with the Rules of Order Chapter XX and 60, p. 646-652. The resolution to impanel in the said Rules of Order shall take the form of a motion to commit or refer. The Rules Committee shall consist of three members elected from the general membership with two alternates similarly elected. Members of the Rules Committee may hold no rank higher than Corporal. For the purpose of investigation and reporting or ordinary items of business, a simple majority of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business. For the purpose of disciplinary and reporting, three (3) members must be impaneled, with alternate aforesaid filling vacancies.

The President shall be a member Ex officio of all Committees. The President shall have power to appoint Special or Ad hoc Committees in accordance with the Rules of Order.

Rank:

Any member in good standing may be designated in the ranks of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Officers. Those who presently hold rank and who are members in good standing will continue in those ranks.

When there is a need for additional commissioned or non-commissioned officers, the Executive Committee will nominate and the membership vote on said positions. The voting will be by ballot at the regular monthly meeting. Elections will be announced at monthly meetings, letter or telephone.

Events:

All members are asked to participate in all events that the unit has agreed to attend. The 15th NY Cavalry will pay the event registration fee *if* the member participates in the events scheduled for the viewing public, barring medical consequences. Members who commit and then fail to attend will be assessed.

Event Participation:

Event participation is defined as being present prior to camp or event *opening to the public* and being present until the camp or event is *closed to the public* (usually 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM), unless a *prior* arrangement is made with the President.

Members must *participate as a member of the 15th NY Cavalry* and be in *full and proper uniform including all equipment and accouterments required for the event.*

Event Registration:

All members will be invited to register for events requiring advanced registration. Registration will take place at the first meeting/drill after receipt of the registration form. Those *members not in attendance* will be telephoned after the meeting /drill and given the opportunity to register. *Only pre-registered members* will have the fee paid by the 15th NY Cavalry.

Adoption and Amendments:

The Bylaws of the 15th NY Cavalry may be ratified by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority to be presented at a regular meeting and the form of voting being at the pleasure of the assembly. Amendments to the By-laws may be proposed at a regular meeting and adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a succeeding meeting.

Amendments

Amendment I; Family Membership:

Family Membership is offered to active members whose immediate family is interested in joining and participating at events. The Family Membership, enjoys the full benefits of an active member and obligated to rules same as active membership except dues are at \$84.00 / year or \$7.00 / month.

Amendment II; Associate Membership:

This is to supplement the ranks of membership in the field, and at the same time give those individuals contemplating on joining the 15th as a full active member an opportunity to portray a cavalry soldier or civilian of the 15th, in the field, at reenactments, Living history events, etc.

The following will be required of Associate members. Individual Associate member must own his or her appropriate equipment to portray a mounted / dismounted soldier or civilian of the 15th New York Volunteer Cavalry. An associate member must pay for event registration, understand rules and regulations of the 15th NYVC. The benefits are that an individual will enjoy the camaraderie with a cavalry unit at events. Dues will be assessed at \$10.00 per year for liability insurance. A person serving as an Associate Member, applying for full active membership will be given credit to their probation period based on their performance as an Associate Member.

The following are limitations of Associate Membership. An associate member cannot hold any rank or executive position in the unit, and is not entitled to any voting privileges on unit business or decisions.

15th NEW YORK VOLUNTEER CAVALRY

Meeting Order of Business

Meeting Called to Order; (**Presiding Executive Officer**)

Flag salute;

Roll Call of Members Present; (Any guest will be announced)

New Members; (Introduce any new member present at meeting with application)

Secretary's Previous Meeting Minutes & Correspondence;

Treasurer's Report;

Officers Report;

Old Business;

New Business;

Open floor;

Adjournment;

New Members **(Probationary Members)**

All new members must be accepted as on a probationary condition, for a period not to exceed one year from the time the application is first approved. Probationary members are new principal members applying to the unit as well as members reaching the age of eighteen years of age who are in the unit. Accompanying the new applicant will be the amount specified for the insurance for the current calendar year and one month's dues.

For probationary member to be accepted into the ranks as a regular member in good standing the following requirements must be passed.

- Safety principles must be adhered to as specified in the unit's handouts. Safety includes weapons, and personal.
- Basic uniform consisting of headgear, Jacket, shirt, suspenders, trousers, socks, footwear and any other required accoutrements specified in the unit handout.
- Current with dues and any other assessed fees.
- Maintain good attendance participation at events, drills and meetings. Consideration for other personal business will be taken into account.
- Obtain knowledge of Civil War History and of 15th New York Volunteer Cavalry.
- Understand Cavalry drills, tactics, accoutrements and command structure.

Personal accountability; no probationary member shall in any way countermand, show infidelity, ill will, or misrepresentation of the unit by his / hers action. Any probationary member found to be derelict in his / hers obligation during probation, may be subject to disciplinary action including dismissal from the unit.

Any probationary member not able to meet the requirements can request an extension for a time not to exceed no more than six months. If a probationary member does not meet the requirements of full membership at the completion of the extended period, he / her may be subject to dismissal from the unit. The Standing committee will use its discretion on all applicants.

15th New York Volunteer Cavalry

Event uniform SOP

Uniform; Standard Operational Procedures

When a scheduled event is slated for/ by the unit, whether a Reenactment, Living History, drill or any service, unless specified by an officer, a cavalry-uniformed member must be in full uniform with accoutrements.

1. Uniform, is specified as full regulation cavalry uniform.

- Brogans or period boots are accepted.
- Rag wool socks recommended.
- Period cavalry trousers with suspenders are preferred, infantry trousers will be accepted.
- Period shirt.
- Shell or sack coat.
- Red necktie (veterans only).
- Forge cap or kepi.

2. Leathers

- Sword belt, holster, carbine sling, cap pouch and cartridge box.

3. Weapons

- Carbine, Pistol and saber.

4. Miscellaneous

- Canteen (mandatory) and Haversack

15th New York Volunteer Cavalry

Event uniform SOP

(Continued)



Where did I put that d..#^#@* item?

Organizing your uniform and equipment

In order to be ready for an up coming event it is best to be organized prior to the event day. It is recommended that members purchase a large tote bag or rubber made style box to store their equipment. If a member wishes to arrive in street clothing to change at an event I would recommend hanging their period clothing in a garment bag.

It makes go sense, when all your items are stored away in advance of an event, it makes it a lot easier to;

- Organize your self, for and at the event.
- All that you need is now altogether and easier to carry.
- If you use a large duffel bag (of period material and style) to carry your equipment or clothing, the bag at the event can be used to cover any farbie items i.e.; cooler.

Event Authenticity

Co. L, 15th NYVC

Civil War period authenticity is a crucial point of the 15th NYVC interpretation. Many visitors to events a times take note to the items and clothing we have. The unit has a great pride in interpreting history in its proper forum. In fact the 15th NYVC has won awards and declorations on its camp and individual presentations. With the notoriety that we have gained, it behooves the unit not to set standards of authenticity to continue with this reputation.

Uniform / Period Dress

- Make sure that your clothing is American Civil War period correct.
- All weapons should be of the type correct for the period.
- Not modern eye ware should be worn. Avoid this as much as possible by purchasing period like eyeglasses.

Camp Presentation

All items in camp during visitors must represent period correct Civil War camp that means the following. A farbie tent should be set up to accommodate any modern items from the public.

- No modern drinking items plastic, paper, aluminum cans, modern bottles, etc.
- No coolers of any type.
- No sleeping blankets.

PERSONAL SAFETY IN THE FIELD

Co. L, 15th NYVC

No one knows your health better than you do. Heat stress can be uncomfortable during the summer months not to mention being dressed in our wool's and other period clothing. Other than heat there are a host of other issues that may arise. It is therefore that I offer the following suggestions, while you are at an event or drilling.

- Drink plenty of water. This should be done before attending a drill or event. Water intake is the natural way to cool the body down and help preventing heat stress.
- Bring extra water with you. At some events the water taste terrible.
- Always have a full canteen. This applies to drill and before a battle / skirmish.
- If any member should feel uncomfortable because of health reasons, by all means let someone in command know (15th). We will assign someone to stay with you.
- By all means get comfortable if it is a hot sultry day. I do not believe Civil War Soldiers did not have the common sense to take off their coats and roll up their sleeves. In fact I have seen photos of artillery units at Petersburg in that same dress (Jackets off and sleeves rolled up).
- Get proper sleep! At many events weekends have a tendency of long evenings and early mornings.
- Eat proper foods! Eat foods that will help you stay in condition for an event. Stay away from foods that will stuff you and slow you down.
- If you are on any medication or have a guarded condition tell someone or write it on a piece of paper and keep it in your wallet.
- Stay away from Poison ivy and other poisonous plants.
- When in the field be cautious where you step. Be careful of holes in the ground. Holes and rocks are a good source of injury.
- If you have allergies or reaction to certain plants or insects let someone know.
- Always register your presence at an event and carry ID.
- If you are injured at an event please report it. This is very important.
- Reenacting horses should be well trained, so respect them and train your self to use care in their presence. Even the gentlest animal may accidentally injure you. Tell your children not to touch or feed a horse without the owner's permission and presence. Do not make any sudden movements or noises that may startle an animal. Should a horse spook and start to run loose, don't try to stop it, just get out of the way and let someone with horse experience round up the horse.

Remember have fun, but play it safe.

WEAPONS SAFETY

Co. L, 15th NYVC

Weapons safety is paramount with the 15th New York Volunteer Cavalry at all times. This covers black powder firing weapons as well as edged weapons. It is therefore that the following suggestions, while you are at an event or drilling.

Black powder and weapons

A clean weapon is a safe operating weapon.

- Never handle black powder or cartridge rounds near / close to any open flame or lit smoking embers (includes smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipe etc.).
- Never point a weapon at anyone, period.
- All members shall have their weapons inspected prior to any battle engagement or demonstration, by a NCO or officer in charge of unit or associated unit.
- At the end of a firing demonstration or battle, all weapons of individuals shall be made clear. Again it shall be declared clear by a NCO or officer in charge of unit or associated unit.
- If a weapon should jam, misfire, plug or not operate properly cease all attempts to fire and call for the unit officer for help
- Use a high elevation when firing weapons in battle and on firing demonstrations.
- Before doing a firing demonstration, first ask permission of the event coordinator or unit officer in charge. Ask where it can be done. Make sure area is clear of any persons or animals. Animals can be sensitive to the noise of firing weapons.
- Remember young children can be sensitive to a weapon firing. Please advise parents of young children of any weapons firing.
- If a weapon is loaded, at weapons inspection the inspecting officer should be notified. In reality no long arm should be loaded at inspection. Pistols should be the only weapons loaded prior to the imminent battle or by permission only.
- All weapons should be cleaned prior to parade, drill inspection or skirmish.

Edged weapons

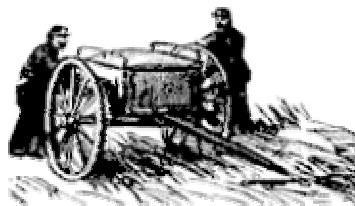
- No edged weapon should be taken to battle with out permission of the unit officer and event coordinator.
- As a rule dismounted cavalry will not take to the battlefield with sabers.
- All cavalry edge weapons should be maintained clean.
- Before drawing saber make sure that the drawing area is clear.
- When a saber drill is held maintain a clear area surrounding the drill.

At any time if you feel what is taking place is not safe, stop what you are doing and excuse your self. Explain to an officer in charge what the problem is. Above all safety is common sense; use it to enjoy a safe event.

Personal Safety With Artillery

Co. L, 15th NYVC

- Stay clear of the front of the guns. Fifty feet is the absolute minimum distance at which any non-artillery person should approach the guns, unless a *very* specifically scripted scenario has been planned out ahead of time and approved by all the officers involved on both sides. Many people prefer 50 **yards**. It is best to imagine a 50-foot circle, centered on the muzzle of the gun, and **stay out of that circle**.
- Have ear protection with you (all reenactors on the field should keep this available) and use it no matter what. If no ear protection is available, cover the ear that is exposed close to the piece that is about to fire. While covering your ear also open your mouth to equalize the pressure, which may ensue.



- Never fire near or over the limber (Artillery ammunition case towed with cannon).
- Look at the artillery line occasionally before passing in front of an artillery piece.
- Familiarize yourself with the signals used by artillery crews.
 1. A rammer held vertically on one hub of the gun carriage indicates that the piece has been loaded.
 2. Rammers crossed over the gun indicate that a misfire has occurred; in other words, that the gunners do not have complete control over the piece, and it is possible that it will fire without warning. Do not ever approach a gun displaying this signal.
 3. A rammer left in the bore of a piece indicates that it is safe.

Camp Fire Safety Co. L, 15th NYVC

The [CAMP FIRE](#) is a very important part of any Civil War unit. It provided a central conversation point where members of the unit would gather to cook, eat, smoke and enjoy the general camaraderie of each other. The campfire also provided the source of light and warmth. We today in the course of our reenacting the period during the American Civil War find the same importance in the campfire. In doing so certain precautions should be taken.

- Keep a water can with in reach for extinguishment should it be needed.
- Choose a spot for your fire such that it is a good distance away from tents, hay, straw, bedding material or any other material in which a fire from the pit may ignite, if dangerously close.
- Using a Shovel dig a hole @ 3 inches deep and no bigger than 2 feet by 2 feet. Carefully remove the sod as not to break it up. Place the sod in a clear area so to be used again.
- When the fire pit is dug place large logs or rocks around the perimeter of the pit. This is so you can place a grill safely over the open fire and at the same time it serves as a firebreak.
- Fuel for the fire should be dry logs. **DO NOT USE STRAW ON A FIRE !** The embers of straw will lift from the fire and travel posing danger in camp and to others.
- During the day and especially when visitors / public are in camp the unattended campfires should be extinguished.
- When breaking down camp extinguish all campfires thoroughly, then cover the fire pit with dirt and the original sod, which has been placed a side.

Please keep in mind that we are guest at all events and the reputation of the unit is one that is paramount. We as a reenactment/living history unit are in a sense a preservation organization and therefore we should leave the camp area as we found it.

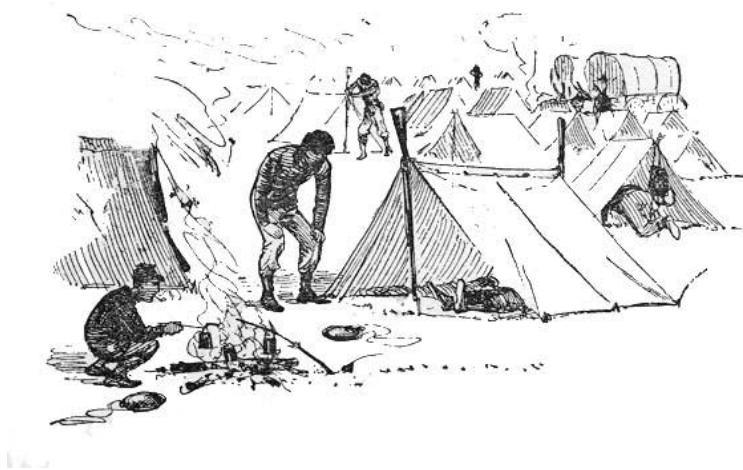
Canteen Safety & Care

Co. L, 15th NYVC

Canteens play a very important part in our hobby it holds properly the precious water that we need to be hydrated. It is therefore a reason that the canteen is a required item and inspected before a skirmish. So it is a good time of year to look at the condition of our canteens. We should start to look at our canteen to see if it holds water also check the condition of the corkstoper and chain to see if it is in good condition. The cork can some times turn dry and flake apart. Also check the metal hardware on the cork, this after time can get rusty and snap. In the final process check the canteen strap and the outside cover of the canteen. Make sure that it is not fraying and falling apart. When all done replace or repair any item as required. If any questions arise call a company line officer for their help.

In storing the canteen, member Al Rodriguez has a good method. Fill the canteen with mouthwash when storing!

- This kills off bacteria. Remember that if your canteen is not in good working order it can become a source of illness if not prepared properly.
- When storing it will be easy to see if a leak develops over time.
- The corkstoper is also kept wet to secure a good seal.



Taking good care of your canteen is taking good care of yourself.

