

Ship's Company, Inc.

1861 – 1865

Civil War Naval Detachment

USS *CONSTELLATION*

An 1855 Sloop of War



Recruit Information Package

Ship's Company
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Dear Prospective Member or New Recruit:

Thank you for your interest in the Civil War Naval program. We hope that you will join our ranks and enjoy serving on board USS Constellation – the last remaining warship to see action in the Civil War. This package has been assembled to make obtaining the necessary uniform parts as easy as possible. We will not lie to you; some may consider this expensive. However, careful selection of quality items will bring you priceless enjoyment of living history for enough years to greatly diminish the impact of the initial costs. If you stick by this list, treat and maintain the equipment well, it will provide you many years of good service. This list describes the basic equipment necessary for participation. Members must have the “basic uniform kit” complete in order to participate. Certain additional items are also required but are not necessary to begin participating and can be purchased last.

PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE ANYTHING FOR USE WITH THE NAVAL CONTINGENT THAT IS NOT IN THE ENCLOSED MATERIALS UNLESS YOU CONSULT WITH THE NAVAL COORDINATOR FIRST! THERE IS A LOT OF JUNK ON THE MARKET AND YOU DO NOT WANT TO WASTE YOUR TIME AND MONEY! PLEASE ALSO NOTE THAT THE ATTACHED EQUIPMENT LIST PRICES ARE ESTIMATES. YOU WILL NEED TO CONFIRM CURRENT PRICES WITH THE SUPPLIERS.

We will be portraying the regular Navy and will develop our drill, appearance, and conduct to reflect the highest traditions, professionalism, and esprit de corps of the United States Navy. This will mean a little extra effort and expenditure (Ex: the summer uniform). Although Constellation will be our home base and primary responsibility, our activities will not be limited to just Constellation. Therefore, having the required items will make it easier to do the occasional field event.

Once again I hope you will decide to choose the Ship's Company Civil War Naval Detachment as your new impression. If I can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, please call me on the telephone number listed above or use my email address.

Sincerely,

Larry Bopp

Civil War Naval Coordinator
Ship's Company, Inc.; USS *Constellation*

Ship's Company, Inc. (www.shipscompany.org)

Civil War Naval Detachment

WHAT IS SHIP'S COMPANY?

Ship's Company is a living history organization which serves as a coordinating "umbrella" for sub-units that portray varied aspects of naval and marine history. Currently there are at least five sub-groups that include 1812 Navy, 1812 Marines, Civil War Sailors, Civil War Marines, and Chanteymen. The organization was created predominantly to serve on USS *Constellation*, an 1855 sloop-of-war that was the last all-sail warship constructed by the United States Navy and is the last ship afloat that saw action in the Civil War. In addition to the *Constellation*, members have served on board USS *Constitution*; Brig *Niagara*; Barney's Barge; and the HMS *Victory* (Lord Nelson's flagship at the battle of Trafalgar and located in Portsmouth, England). The membership consists of some of the more renowned names in the reenacting community, new personnel, and numbers approximately 60-100 people within the mid-Atlantic area.

WHAT IS THE CIVIL WAR NAVAL DETACHMENT?

The Civil War naval detachment is a branch of Ship's Company that has the mission of depicting the life and role of the sailor and marine on board the *Constellation* during the Civil War. The Civil War naval detachment functions in most respects, as an independent organization, but remains an adjunct of the larger organization. In doing so we maximize the interaction with other naval and marine organizations, events, and facilities, while retaining the independence to participate in any event we choose. Our principal focus is, and always will be, the restoration and interpretation of USS *Constellation*. Participation in outside events is anticipated to be part of the regular schedule, but our primary responsibility is to our home ship.

WHAT ROLE DO WE HAVE ON *CONSTELLATION*?

Although the ship came back from major restoration on July 2, 1999 there are still items that have not been completed. Each year will see more renovation until the ship is fully restored to its full Civil War appearance. Our function is to work with the existing structure to properly display all ship's routines, protocols, examples of shipboard life, watches, and traditions. Some displays will be up to us, and we will carry out various scenarios to keep us on our toes while we entertain the public with educational talks and activities. Research is a never-ending process and as it continues, so will our interpretive presentations.

HOW DOES THE DETACHMENT FUNCTION?

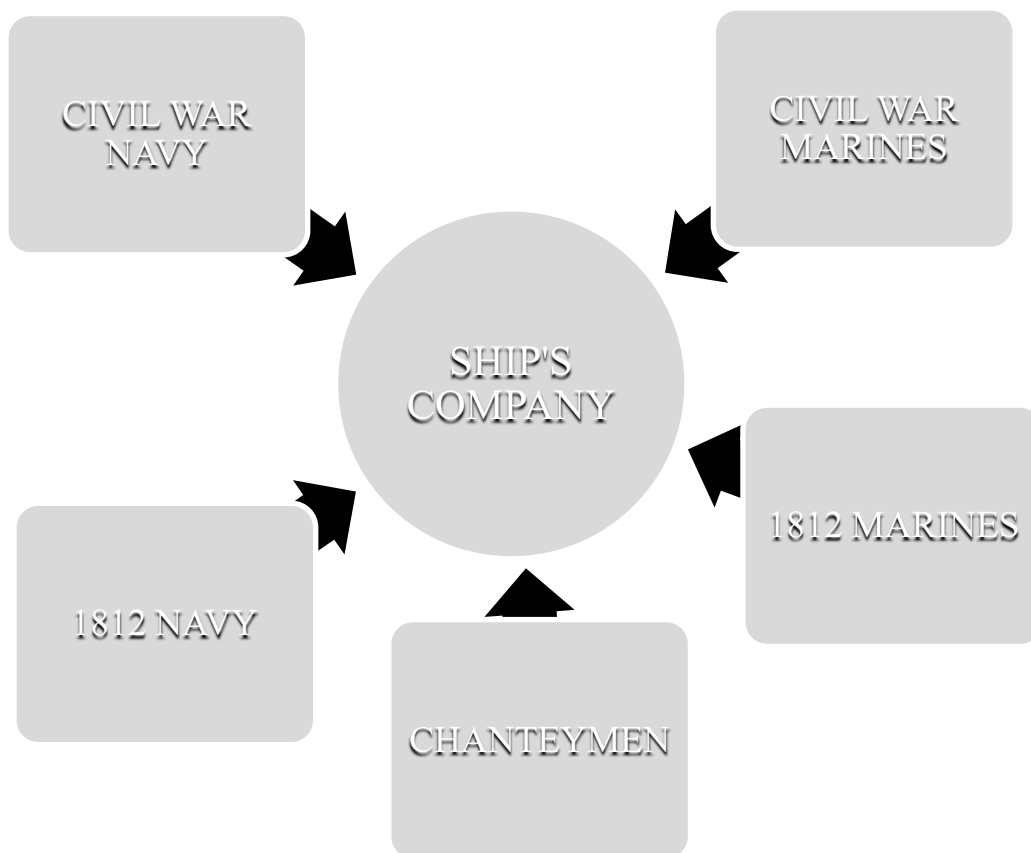
Larry Bopp has been assigned by Ship's Company to form the detachment of Civil War sailors and he will serve as point of contact with the executive board of the group and serve as ranking naval officer on board. He will have the authority to assign ranks until such time as there are enough members for democratic selection of petty officers to be effective. The detachment will make the schedule by popular vote, but in doing so, must keep in mind that the detachment's first loyalty is to *Constellation*.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO JOIN?

To join the Civil War naval detachment, you must become a member of Ship's Company, Inc. but you will not be required or pressured to do anything other than Civil War Navy. To participate, you must have the "basic kit" as described in this package and pay your annual \$15 dues. You can make payment via PayPal to treasurer@shipscompany.org "attention Alexa Price" **If you must make payment via hard copy check** contact the Recruiting Officer, Kenneth Berry at shipsco.recruiting@gmail.com

We will work with new recruits/members as much as possible to get you on board ASAP as you accumulate your gear.

This is not just any old reenacting group. We are the living history custodians of a rare piece of American History. Due to our affiliation with the ship, we have a relatively high profile for a living history group. The history of Ship's Company is filled with great achievement, and it has a valued reputation known throughout the world. Our aim is to make our Civil War interpretation the model for all naval groups to emulate.



Brogans (shoes)*** **\$149+**

Fugawee Corporation makes extremely comfortable and correct shoes which also comes with a manufacturers guarantee. Your best place to order. The artillery boot they make is also acceptable. There are numerous makers on the web such as Montana Boot and Shoe, Mattimore Harness, etc. No heel plates or hobnails on shoes.

(SPECIAL NOTE: Though on our required list you may participate without all items listed from this point onward.)

BLACK LEATHER WAISTBELT, HOLSTER, AND PISTOL BOX*** **\$65+**

These items come as a set from Legendary Arms Company (see their website). The items are machine sewn so if you are a perfectionist, you may want to re-sew them by hand after purchase. The pistol box comes embossed with the correct USN on the flap. Blockade Runner also offers this set for \$79.95. See their website for information.

AMES MODEL CUTLASS *** **\$145**

Our current supplier is Sentry Post. The cutlass is very well done with a good blade and comes in the fully riveted scabbard with a frog to hold it on the belt. Contact Larry Bopp to order one. Legendary Arms has another model, not quite as well made and it comes in a sewn scabbard with an incorrect brass tip for \$229. [Historical Swords, Knives, and Clothing | Legendary Arms Inc.](#)

1851 MODEL STEEL FRAME COLT NAVY REVOLVER .36 CAL. *** **\$349+**

Consult catalogs and/or nearby gun shops. Do NOT get the brass frame. Cabelas recommended.

TIN CUP*** **\$25+**

A good, correct, hot-dipped tin cup is available from Hot Dip Tin – www.hotdip tin.com

DITTY BAG***

Easy to make; Larry Bopp has the pattern.

KNIFE, FORK, SPOON+++

Originals are readily obtainable at antique stores for \$15-\$20 each. G. Gedney Godwin makes reproductions.

MESS PLATE+++

Available from multiple vendors, Fall Creek Sutler has them for \$9.95

an area of interest to you, contact Mike Bosworth at 703-281-4174. Most any instrument that existed in this period is okay for amusement during down time on board.

Revised 12/21/23.

NAVAL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

BASIC KIT:

Uniform Items

- Blue Wool Jumper***
- Blue Wool Trousers (either broadfall or fly front)***
- Flat Hat***
- Black Silk Scarf***
- Brogans***
- Socks***

Equipment (New Members may participate without these items)

- Black Leather Waistbelt**
- Ames Model Cutlass in Scabbard w/Frog**
- Pistol Box**
- Black Holster**
- 1851 Model Steel Frame Colt Navy Pistol**
- Ditty Bag**
- Tin Cup**

BEYOND THE BASIC KIT:

Equipment that you will be required to obtain, but are not required to have to begin participating:

- White Jumper (Highly recommended since it is worn from May through September)**
- White Cap Cover (Also used from May through September)**
- Sea Bag**
- Mess Plate**
- Knife, Fork, Spoon**

- Short Jacket**
- Undershirt**
- Clasp Knife**

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- Sennit Hat**
- Clothing Bag**
- Southwester**
- Pea Coat**
- Rain Slicker**
- Musket**

- Hammock**
- Mattress**
- White Blanket**
- Pillow**
- Musical Instrument**
- White Trousers**

***Required item**