

# Alton Jaeger Guards, Fundraising for Special Set of Drums

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ALTON – Local historical re-enactors, The Alton Jaeger Guards, are fundraising to attain a very special set of drums.

The drums were used during the Civil War, and are identified as part of the 71st New York Volunteer Infantry, meaning the drums may have been used during several iconic Civil War battles, including Gettysburg, Bull Run and Chancellorsville. The set includes three snare drums and one bass drum. They come at the cost of \$1,800, and the group has created a GoFundMe account to get them. A correct recreation of the drums could go from \$800-\$1,400 today. The drums do need work, but they would be used across the area to educate folks regarding history.

Alton Jaeger Guard co-creator and member Zach Hardin said fife and drum corps have been a party of American culture since the Revolutionary War, but they have been on the decline in recent years, despite the U.S. Army still operating a corps called “The Old Guard.”

“Alton has a long history of fifing and drumming, beginning with the Alton Jaeger Band of the 19th Century and followed up by the Alton Colonial Fife and Drum Corps, of which many local citizens will remember from various parades and local functions,” Hardin said. “Our goal is to bring fife and drum music back to Alton.”

Outside of bringing the lost art to Alton, Hardin said the group also wants to prevent these drums from wasting away in an attic. He said the drums would be played at several events in which the Jaeger Guard participates, including parades.

“We are also considering practicing while marching through the brick streets of Christian Hill, as we once did with the Alton Colonials,” Hardin said.

The Alton Jaeger Guard takes its name from the Jaeger Guard of old, which was a pre-Civil-War militia created in Alton. It was among the first local groups to volunteer to fight for the Union, and joined with Company A of the Illinois 9th Volunteers.

As much as \$330 has been raised on that GoFundMe toward the \$2,000 goal. The Jaeger Guard is a nonprofit community group dedicated to educating folks regarding local and Illinois history – specifically in regards to the Civil War. That GoFundMe can be found here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/alton-jaeger-guard-fife-amp-drum-campaign>.