

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

General:

The established GWA Safety Rules will be adhered to at all times. These Rules of Engagement (ROE) and any orders issued through the Chain of Command will always conform to the Safety Rules.

A unit commander has the authority to remove any member of his unit from the field if actions of the member are deemed unsafe at any time, i.e. abuse of alcohol, drugs, violation of safety rules, etc. If the member refuses to comply it should be reported to a G-8 member immediately, especially if his actions endanger the health or welfare of others.

In the face of heavy fire, it is expected that units will take the appropriate number of casualties! (Failure to do so is not only non-historical, but takes a lot of the enjoyment out of our hobby. Die! Die! Die!

Once combat commences Friday evening until Sunday morning, there should be no work done on top of the trenches. This does not preclude period correct night time wiring parties, but they must be tactically sound and are subject to attack and must respond accordingly.

When leaving or entering the battlefield, use the rear access roads, so as not to interrupt the fighting.

This hobby is not the recreation of the Wild West. Do not shout out “I got you, you’re dead,” etc.

If an enemy unit takes control of a vacant trench line, do not argue, or yell for them to “leave”. Two options are to hold them at bay, or push them out with a counter attack.

It is impossible to dodge machinegun bullets! Hollywood often portrays the amazing ability for soldiers to miraculously survive machinegun fire; while remotely possible, it isn’t likely. Respect what a machinegun can and did do! Therefore, if you are crossing an open field and not under cover and a machinegun opens up; your dead – take the hit. The sad fact is more attacks failed and ended in death than not. **Stay true to what we do, remember, we cannot change history or the outcome of the Great War no matter what we do on our battlefield.**

Do not argue about hits, if there is a dispute between two opposing forces; settle it by both taking hits. Accept the fact that death was common in the trenches, not about who got shot! Taking hits is a part of our reenactment. We are not just remembering the survivors, but also those who died! Therefore, when in doubt take the hit – DIE

Likewise, arguing or fussing about whether or not hits are being taken, look to yourself first. Everyone needs to make sure that they are “doing the right thing.” Make sure that you are doing everything you can to make this as real an experience as possible, which benefits everyone.

If you feel that it is a problem with an opposing unit, talk to your unit commander first to work out an understanding, rather than become bitter about it. If the matter cannot be resolved simply, then report it to the appropriate Rep. after the event, unless it is a vital safety concern! Remember, everyone is here for the same reason – “to experience the Great War and to remember those who died and served.” Let’s keep everything we do within this perspective.

While major assaults and raids (i.e. scenarios) are developed and coordinated ahead of time, the smaller individual unit/sector actions are not. All units should contact their sector commander or the Combat Commander and receive his approval prior to launching any raid/assault.

Do not appropriate, capture, take, or abuse personal equipment (including grenades, uniforms, soldier’s equipment, etc.) from an opponent’s trench. Some types of items that are fair game include: sector maps, dispatch cases, signal flags, trench signs, etc., but **ONLY IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS WILLING TO RELEASE THEM**. These “souvenirs” will be passed up the Chain-of-Command for return to the opposing side at the appropriate time.

Do not maliciously damage, destroy or break equipment or trench revetments. However, it must also be understood that during an attack we reenact violent acts of aggression and accidents may occur in the “heat of battle” resulting in “battle damage”. Everyone must understand the difference between “battle damage” and blatant acts of destruction. Hopefully, any problems will be resolved at the unit commander level. However, if not, disputes should be taken to the appropriate Representative and discussed by the individuals involved. Unit commanders are responsible for the conduct of their men.

National flags are not to be flown in the front lines! This simply is not authentic.

Wire cutting parties are to minimize the amount of wire they need to cut for a specific operation. (Wire is expensive and it takes a lot of time to set-up properly.)

Do not intentionally cut field telephone wire. This is needed, not only for tactical coordination, but also for safety communications.

Individuals assigned as combat officers must be obeyed! These individuals are not only part of the Command Structure and assist with coordinating the tactical scenarios, but are also the designated Safety Representatives of the two Combat Commanders.

All participants must carry their trench passes with them when on the battlefield. When asked by a safety representative to see their pass, it must be shown.

To stop the battle for any reason, use the code word “corpsman.” Upon hearing this word, the reenactment will immediately stop and all participants will remain where they are. The nearest EMT, both Combat Commanders and the GWA President should be directed to the problem area.

Tactical:

All units are encouraged to use the casualty (chit) system developed by the G-8. If you are unaware of how it works, please contact your appropriate representative. This system may be modified by either side as appropriate.

Boundaries have been established for combat. Troops can neither maneuver in, nor attack from an out-of bounds position, which includes the roads behind enemy lines. No fighting will take place outside the designated combat area. The combat area is considered the area inside the property’s perimeter road.

If killed, wait a couple of minutes before resurrecting one’s self, or until after the action passes. **DO NOT engage in idle conversation while you are dead – accept it.** If wounded, you may moan, groan, or call for help, but save discussions with your buddies for the parking lot. **When dead; lie down and stay quiet - you are out of the action.**

Faking death in order to gain a tactical advantage is not permitted and is frowned upon.

All participants are expected to react realistically to fire; casual movement or non-chalant actions on the battlefield are unacceptable. You are either attacking or retreating and should always be fighting when doing either.

If killed in the trenches during close quarter combat, you must either wait until the fight resolves itself or withdraw to the road behind your lines and rejoin your forces at a designated rally point to get back into the fight or go to the road behind the trenches by going around the battlefield to get back to your own side. **At no time should you casually walk across the battlefield to your lines.** To leave the field, leave as a casualty by either having a comrade(s) help you back to your lines.

If an attack fails, you must rise and withdraw fighting along with your unit, again, do not merely get up and casually walk back to the lines. Drag, carry, or help your wounded back to the lines.

When assaulting a section of enemy trench which is strongly held, remember that failure to break into the enemy line was common during WWI. If the opposition is too strong, either fall back or dig-in. Remember to take casualties and/or withdraw fighting.

If a grenade explodes within 4 ft of you - you're dead! No question, just bend over and kiss your butt goodbye! Remember, the best indication of character is doing the right thing when no one is looking.

If a grenade explodes in a shell hole, all occupants in the hole are dead. If you are look like the Pillsbury Dough Boy after a grenade explodes, YOU ARE DEAD!

Smoke denotes plain smoke, which is used for masking maneuvers, SMOKE CANISTERS ARE NOT GRENADES! Use of gas canisters as defensive weapons is ludicrous and historically inaccurate! Use of gas canisters should simulate artillery bombardment; not grenade throwing!

Handling of prisoners - If an individual doesn't want to be captured or searched, don't force the issue. The process for handling prisoners is left to the discretion of the Combat Commanders.

Wearing pieces of your opponent's uniform to deceive enemy pickets is strictly forbidden.

If there is a mortar barrage in your trench and you are in it, YOU ARE DEAD. Recycle. Fall back to a second line position or another designated area. Wounds from barrages or friendly fire should be treated as close combat wounds.

Safety:

Primary Rule - Stay Alert / Use Common Sense / Be Safe! Always remember that we're all friends in this hobby, regardless of the uniform we wear and that our objective is to have fun experiencing this unique historical recreation.

Use caution when engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Never strike your opponent in any way and do not run rubber knives across another person's neck. Even flexible rubber can cut or hurt!

Bayonets are not to be unsheathed or fixed while on the battlefield without the DIRECT ORDER OF THE COMBAT COMMANDERS!

Any attack made with fixed bayonets will be coordinated ahead of time by the two Combat Commanders. Everyone in the attacking party will die. **There will be no hand-to--hand combat with fixed bayonets for any reason!**

Do not pick up and throw back your opponent's grenades and smokes. (Fuses on the former are purposely cut a little long to give the victim time to roll away from the detonation).

All fighting within the "trench system" must be limited to the trenches. (Do not attack over the tops of intervening trenches to get at your opponent. This is a major safety violation.)

When fighting in the trenches, all weapons must be pointed / fired into the air. Never point your rifle at the ground (there are often casualties at your feet). **When too close, simply DON'T SHOOT.** The concussion from a muzzle blast at close range can cause serious ear damage - be careful!

Do not yell "Bang" unless in an enclosed space where firing could damage hearing or cause injury. Otherwise, only the report of actual blanks constitutes weapons firing.

Weapons are not to be fired directly at an individual when closer than 20 yards distance (there is a potential for eye injury at shorter ranges).

Steel helmets will be worn by all participants on the battlefield and especially in the wooded areas behind the trenches at all times unless specified otherwise (early war scenarios, etc.) .

When not in combat, unload your chamber. When in combat, keep your safety on until you are ready to fire.

It is not permitted to throw lit grenades or smokes into any bunker, shelter, tent, or roofed over structure within the combat area.

All mortars and rifle grenades must be elevated at least 60° when firing projectiles

Anyone violating a safety rule, or deemed unsafe during combat, may be ordered off the field by a unit commander until the issue can be resolved. If an argument occurs between two individuals, then both may be ordered off the field by their respective unit commanders until the issue can be resolved. At no time is anyone to resort to physical violence to resolve an issue. This may result in expulsion from the field or from the event.