

ON THE WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION

Spring 2011



2011: A Year of Achievement

JUST A FEW WEEKS to go until our Spring National Event at Newville. This marks the start of a very big year for the GWA. Just a few things that either have or will be happening in 2011:

- The GWA Site mortgage was paid off in February. We now own the site outright. This will be transparent to many, but it is a pretty big deal. Few, if any, other living history organizations have accomplished anything like this, and none on our scale. We can really pat ourselves on the back for this one, and will be celebrating it at the Thursday night social at the Farmhouse before the event.
- This is an election year and all G-8 positions will be up for votes. Nominations will be taken at the Spring event meet-

ing Saturday morning for elections in the Fall. We have many capable people in our organization, don't be afraid to step up and participate or nominate someone who will benefit our organization.

- Battlefield improvement, particularly a Death Valley solution, will be implemented this year. See the articles later in this issue. And from this point forward we'll have more funding for accelerated site development, since we're no longer paying the mortgage note.
- GWA Bylaws revision will occur this year; you can expect a vote for ratification to occur at the Fall Event. GWA Site Regulations will also be updated this year.

So we'll be busy, but that's how it should be.
See you in a few weeks.

Jim Kidd
President, GWA

Spring Combat Event Schedule April 15-17, 2011

Friday, April 15

- 1:00-6:00 pm** Registration shed open
- 5:30 pm** Modern vehicles must be moved from all areas beyond the registration shed gate (including the battlefield, roads, rear areas, camps) before 5:30pm and parked in the parking lots. The registration shed gate will be locked until 6am Sunday.
- 6:30 pm** Safety briefing at the memorial site
- 7:00 pm** Stand To. Combat begins.
- 11:00 pm** Stand Down. Combat ceases.

Saturday, April 16

- 9:00 am** Safety briefing at the memorial site (mandatory attendance)
- 10:15 am** Stand To. Combat begins.
- 11:00 pm** Stand Down. Combat ceases.

Sunday, April 17

- 6:00 am** Gate at registration shed opened. Modern vehicles may access roads to battlefield.
- 7:00 am** Battlefield cleanup

GWA/GWAA Thursday Evening Social

NEED ANOTHER GOOD REASON to come to the Great War event early? The Pilots and the GWA sponsored an evening social at the Fall 2010 event. And all reports indicated it was a success and enjoyed by all who attended. While the pilots have been reassigned to another sector this spring and won't return until the fall, the "Social" will go on!

At your Farm House, located at the southern end of the CP lines, beginning around 8:30pm there will be good food, good drink, sparkling and good natured conversation among friends from both sides of No Man's Land ... many whom haven't seen each other in six months.

There will be "entertainment" provided during the course of the evening. No, I don't mean someone reciting "Henry V," etc. ... it will be real entertainment to be enjoyed by all.

All members of the GWA are invited to attend and no one will be thrown out of the Farm House until midnight. Lest anyone forgets, there is a war to be fought and heads will need time to clear themselves for the rigors to come Friday night.

Anyone wanting to "donate" any food and/or drink to the festivities will not be turned down, regardless of nationality. Items like a flag or other symbols and objects to help decorate the first floor are also welcome.

Bring a chair and your cup, mug or stein and come toast a few as we celebrate the great news ... no, the war isn't over — our site is paid off!!

— GWA Farm House Social Committee



Death Valley 2011

Or, as those of us who have been thinking, planning and talking about it since mid 2008 — CP Project, Phase IV

MANY ON THE ALLIED SIDE, and all the CP, have been hearing (since 2008) — just wait until 2011 and we'll attack Death Valley. 2011 has arrived and, pending formal G-8 approval, the work will begin 5 minutes after the spring event ends (only a slight exaggeration).

When it is completed (and it will be ready for the Nov. event) it will not resemble its current miserable, soggy, bramble ridden (thorns & poison), nasty, useless, unconnected, configuration.

The Berm will be "massaged" on the front and cut and revetted on the rear, providing a front connector between IR92 (south) and FR90 (north); the lower trench will be cleaned up, scrapped, built up in the front and fully connected to the north, below FR90 and RIR236, providing us with front and rear movement, north or south; the interior of DV will be completely cleaned up with some contouring, but keeping the shell holes (actually using two of the big ones up at the N/W corner, to connect the trench coming from FR90 to the Berm revetment); and a drainage system will be put in to remove the pond and lower swampy area by the road (pipe will be laid out from DV, across the road and drained into the creek); an artillery position will be built at the far N/E corner connected to the road, and finally the lower open, wooded area (across from IR92 & 8th Kur) will be cleaned up so that two CP units can build their living quarters (there is a berm between the lower trench and this area to be cleaned).

In 2012, we are hoping to build several bombed building foundations to increase combat opportunities for the Allies and the CP in the open, interior area of Death Valley and plant rye to combat the weeds. The new configuration will allow the GWA to keep it mowed and cleaned.

By the fall (and especially the spring 2012 event), DV should have all kinds of new defensive and offensive capabilities for both sides and finally provide the CP with front and rear access, north to south for the entire CP trench system without having to step out on our back road during combat.

— Scampi, *CP Rep/CP TM*

Death Valley: The Final Chapter

FIRST OF ALL, thanks for the support and encouragement from the Allies for the improvements we have made on the Central Powers side of the battlefield. Our attempts have been to develop a trench design to more accurately represent trench design of the period, make the trenches more "playable" by reducing the number of trenches that needed to be maintained, and help control overgrowth of inaccessible areas. A phased system approach was developed to accomplish this goal.

The first three Phases focused on specific areas for improvement, with the main goals being; 1) to clear undesirable growth and 2) to fill in overgrown and unmaintained trenches. Scraping allowed us to better contour the land and redesign our trenchline based on designs used by the Germans. Some accommodations had to be made, but overall, the German trenches are designed on the dragon's tooth design with zig-zagged communication trenches. We limited the number of communication trenches to enable better upkeep and maintenance. In addition, we also created access points and covered "bomb proofs" that support the weight of the mower and tractor to help control the vegetation. These efforts seem to have contributed to better interaction and combat between CP and Allied units.

Phase IV was saved till the last to deal with the biggest problem confronting the CP line. For years, the CP side of the line has been divided because of Death Valley. Placing units into the area was problematic because of the lack of development, which resulted in an inactive area in the middle of our battlefield. Our approach of using above ground trench design will finally make the area playable and will finally unify the CP side of the line and changes a previously unused area into an active combat area.

Our goal is to have Phase IV completed for the November event. The development of Death Valley offers an opportunity to open more of our battlefield to tactical use and involve the entire lines on both sides of the field. Again, our thanks to all of you who have supported and encouraged our efforts; the November event should be exciting!

— Rob Zienta, *CP Combat Commander*

GWA Executive Committee

2010–2011 term

President

Jim Kidd

1110 Putnam Blvd.
Wallingford, PA 19086
610. 874.3757
jk816@comcast.net

Vice President

Kevin Brown

17 S. Pine Street
York, PA 17403
717. 903.7435

Secretary

Brad Busch

138 Taylor Ave.
Woodlyn, PA 19094
bradbusch76@aol.com

Treasurer

Randy Gaulke

584 Valley Road
Gillette, NJ 07933
908.626.1345
lavarennnes@comcast.net

Allied Combat Commander

Mike LoCicero

thirdypres@hotmail.com

Allied Representative

Jim Higginbottom

734.646.7477
jdhigginbottom@lycos.com

Central Powers Combat Commander

Rob Zienta

rzienta@comcast.net

Central Powers Representative

Tom "Scampi" Galleher

2605 Kilgore St.
Haymarket, VA 20169
703.754.4974
Jenn_galleher1@comcast.net



Trench Art

by Roger Tharp

From time immemorial soldiers have had to overcome similar circumstances: the rigors of training, fear in battle, and abject boredom. Soldiers throughout history have participated in a myriad of activities to pass the time, and the Great War soldier was no exception. The men in the trenches fell back on their skills and talents of civilian life to create what is commonly known as “trench art” although the name is somewhat nebulous. A simple definition of trench art is anything made or crafted from battlefield debris. Trench art covers the gambit from bone carvings made by soldiers to elaborate metal work crafted by commercial firms. The term “trench art,” with respect to the Great War, conjures the image of soldiers hammering out a souvenir in the mud spattered trenches, but this is a mostly false conception.

The vast majority of trench art was made by soldiers who were far removed from the front or by civilian artisans who manufactured souvenirs for public consumption. Prisoners of war produced a variety of artifacts for sale to civilians near the prison camps or merely to pass the time while interned.



Matchbox cover made by German POW

These artifacts should not be considered trench art because the raw material was seldom gathered from the battlefields. Convalescent soldiers in Britain however were supplied with wreckage from downed Zeppelins and German airplanes by the War Office. Convalescent hospitals and other institutions encouraged injured soldiers to make a variety of handicrafts to relieve boredom during their recovery as well as a means of retraining, so that permanently disabled soldiers could support themselves on their return to civilian life.

Commercial firms and independent artisans soon discovered there was a lucrative civilian market for anything made from battlefield wreckage. During the war raw material was supplied by soldiers returning home on leave that had picked up a helmet or shell casing as a souvenir. After the war commercial tours of the battlefield became popular and many items were picked up with the express purpose of supplying battlefield material to artisans.

The collection of souvenirs was so rampant that even the bricks of damaged buildings were fair game for tourists. Trench art became big business in France and Belgium after the war and soon battlefield artifacts became part of the Parisian tourist traps. The most dubious of all “trench art” was manufactured by Francis Bannerman in Brooklyn, New York. Bannerman purchased large amounts of war surplus that was never issued, let alone saw the battlefields of France. Some of his pieces are still advertised as “trench art” to this day — buyer beware!

All is not lost, for there were pieces of artwork created by soldiers in the trenches. Aluminum mess tins and canteens (or water bottles for the BEF) provided soldiers with a medium easily worked with a penknife or nail.



Austrian artillery shell head stamped 1916



Helmets became canvas for the painter, the subject being anything from a unit insignia to a variety of camouflage designs—camouflage being more common on German helmets. The insidious gasmask carrier was sometimes embroidered with inscriptions depicting a soldier's sentiments toward this particular piece of equipment: “I need thee every day,” “Always in the way” (my favorite).





Perhaps the most popular artwork produced during the war was not constructed from battlefield debris at all but from the artistic minds of cartoonists. There were a number of soldiers who drew pictures or cartoons but this article will focus on only two of the most well known artists, Pvt. Fergus Mackain and Captain Bruce Bairnsfather. Private Mackain served with the 23rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, landing in France in April 1915. Mackain captured accurate depictions of trench warfare on a series of postcards entitled “Sketches of Tommy’s Life” that were eventually published in Boulogne and Paris. Although these cards were meant to be humorous, there was a deep understanding of what it was like to be a soldier on the western front, derived from first hand experience.

Unlike Mackain’s work, Bairnsfather’s post card series *Fragments from France* were not published in France and therefore were not purchased by soldiers on active service. Bairnsfather’s work was published in sets of post cards but also by the illustrated magazine *The Bystander* in Britain.

Subaltern Bruce Bairnsfather left England for war in the autumn of 1914 with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Rumor has it his first drawings, *Bullets and Billets*, were drawn on the walls of damaged buildings in the Ypres salient. The popularity of his cartoons was sufficient to earn his promotion to captain and he was



removed from front-line service to take on the morale-boosting liaison role of “officer cartoonist.” His creation, Old Bill, was a wise but contemptible soldier experiencing the trials of front line life — the captions were classic understatement of the real hardships.

Collectors of trench art will have a difficult time determining the authenticity of artifacts because there was little documentation as to

when and who made the piece. The artwork created by soldiers in the trenches may be identified by the tool marks but this is no guarantee. The intricate hammering of the Austrian shell case (see photo) could not have been made in the trench for lack of tools — not to mention the noise generated by such hammering that would make the artisan a target. Dates of manufacture won’t even ensure the artwork was created during the war or that the “raw material” was even issued. The only thing a collector can be sure of is that if the artifact was made from period correct raw material, it’s not a reproduction! ■

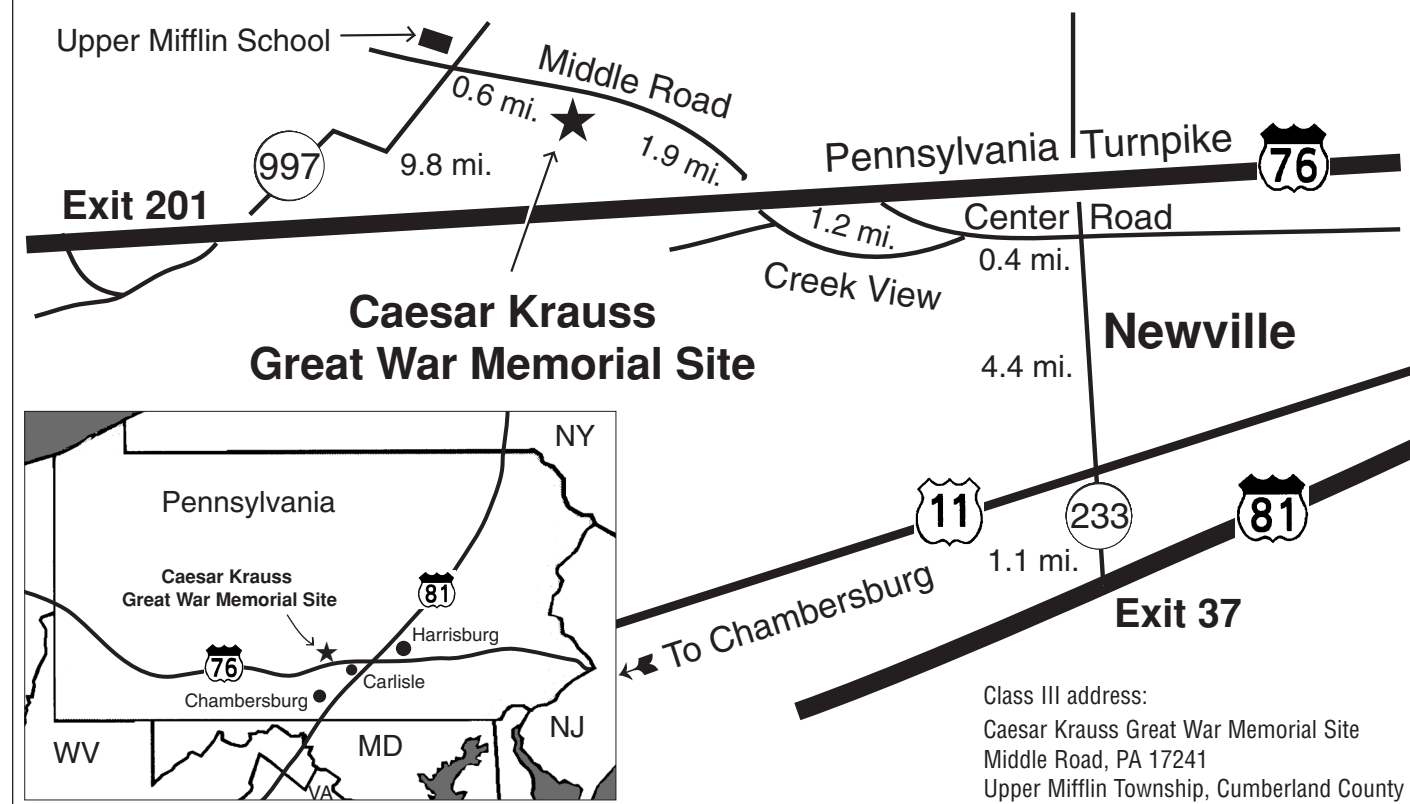
Works cited

Doyle, Peter. *British Post Cards of the First World War*. Shire Publications, United Kingdom, 2010

Doyle, Peter. *The British Soldier of the First World War*. Shire Publications, United Kingdom, 2008

Kimball, Jane. *Trench Art: An Illustrated History*. Silverpenny Press, 2004

Map to Event Site



NOTE: PAPER COPIES OF OTW WILL BE MAILED ONLY TO THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO REQUEST THEM. GWA members are requested to download the newsletter from the website, www.greatwar-assoc.org. **This will help reduce unnecessary costs and administrative burdens. Send requests for hard copies to the GWA Treasurer.**

☐ Check this box if you have changed your address since the last event or this is your first event

Print first letter of your
last name in this box

☐ Check this box if you are a unit commander

SPRING 2011 REGISTRATION

GWA Membership and Registration Form for the Spring Combat Event Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, Newville, PA

Part I — Member Information — Please Print Legibly

Last Name: _____ First Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Unit Commander: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

I certify that I am 18 years of age or older _____
You must be at least 18 to register. You may be asked for proof of age. (Sign here)

Part II — Unit Affiliation

This box must be filled out, using the units and abbreviations on the back of this form. If you do not belong to one of these units, you are an independent.

Part III — Dues and Event Fees

A. 2011 dues (Annual dues are due at the Spring Event each year) **\$25.00**

B. Spring 2011 Event fee if pre-registered (see below) **\$25.00**

C. Optional site development donation

\$

D. Pre-registration subtotal (A+B+C as applicable)

\$

E. **Gate registration fee**

\$15.00

F. Gate registration total (D+E) \$

\$

Pre-registration: Members are encouraged to pre-register to save the gate fee. If you pre-register but are unable to attend, your event fee (only) will be returned within two weeks. All pre-registrations must be received by the Registrar on or before April 15, 2011. If your pre-registration is not received by this date, you must pay at the event — including the \$15 gate fee. Your original mail pre-registration will be returned unopened.

Make checks to "Great War Association." Send form and check to:

Chris Garcia, GWA Registrar
418 Chinaberry Ct, Virginia
Beach, VA 23454

(757) 631-0661 e-mail: criostalmiceal@gmail.com

Register Online with PayPal

You can now register and pay online by using PayPal (www.paypal.com). Dues and the event fee are \$26 each (\$52 if paying both) to cover the costs of this service. Payments should be sent to the GWA Treasurer at GWAtreas@comcast.net. Please include all information normally entered in Part I & II of this form in the notes box of the PayPal form. Registration payments without this information included will not be accepted.

GWA Unit List (use abbreviations only when filling out registration form)

American

26AEF 26th Div., (Yankee Div.), AEF
27AEF 27th Div., 107th Inf. AEF
109AEF 28th Div., 109th Inf. Co. L., AEF
116AEF 29th Div., 116th Inf., Hdqtrs. Co., AEF
33AEF 33rd Div., (Prairie Div.), AEF
80AEF 80th Div., 318th Inf. AEF
372AEF 93rd Div., 372nd Inf. AEF
49CO 5th Marines, 49th Co., AEF
67CO 5th Marines, 67th Co., AEF
78CO 6th Marines, 78th Co., AEF(*probationary*)

British

2SRFC No. 2 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps
6BWBEF 6th Btn., Black Watch, BEF
BRBEF The Border Regiment, BEF
BUFF 6th Buffs Rgt., BEF
GDSDIV Guards Division
ROYENG Royal Engineers

Commonwealth

5AIF 5th Btn. Australia/New Zealand Army Corps
PPCLI Princess Pat's Canadian Light Infantry
42BNCEF 42nd BN, Black Watch, CEF

French

8BCP 8 Btn. Chasseurs à Pied
18RL 18ème Régiment d'Infanterie (Régiment de Gâtinais)
151RL 151ème Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne

Russian

RL Légion Russe

Non-Military

DRK Deutsches Rotes Kreuz
INDP Independent (non-combat only)
SA Salvation Army

Austrian

63KUK 63rd KuK

German

1LR Königliche Bayerische Leib Regiment
5SB 5.Sturm-Pionier-Bataillon "Rohr"
8KUR 3. Feldesk., Kürassier Regt. Nr. 8 (Rheinisches)
12MWK 12. Minenwerfer Komp. 12 Division
13PB 13. Pionierbataillon
20MG 20. Maschinengewehr-Scharfschützen-Bataillon
23JR Infanterie-Regt Nr. 23 (2. Oberschlesisches)(*probationary*)
63JR 3. Komp., Infanterie-Regt. Nr. 63 (4. Oberschlesisches)
73FR Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 73 (Hanoversches)
90FR 10.Komp., Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 90 (Mecklenburgisches)
92JR Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 92 (1. Braunschweigisches)
120JR 5. Komp., Infanterie-Regt. Nr. 120 (2. Württembergisches)
124JR 3.Komp., Infanterie-Regt. Nr.124 (6.Württembergisches)
129JR Infanterie-Regt Nr. 129 (*probationary*)
459JR 8.Komp., Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 459 (Rhein.Westf.)
236RIR 5. Komp., Reserve Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 236(*probationary*)

Great War Association
584 Valley Road
Gillette, NJ 07933

