



From the President



It is hard to believe it will have been 10½ years since Jim Kidd appointed me to finish the resigning CP Rep's term, then two terms elected to be the CP Rep and finally two terms as your President. Several folks have asked me if I am glad to be done or will I miss it or did I regret having to try and work through "GWA" politics. The answers are simple.....yes, yes and no.

I gave it my best shot as the Rep and President to bring positive improvement to our organization but after 10+ years it's time for a fresh perspective from a new President. Members of your Board work very hard at our events and our duties can take us away from our units and folks you may only see twice a year. I am more then ready to come to an event and spend most of my time with my

unit and not have to worry about being called away to deal with problems, issues or attend meetings. For 10 years my pard, Denny Mongold has had to clean Maxine by himself because I was always having to do something else. It's time to get dirty Sunday morning cleaning Maxine and helping my unit clean our area of responsibility before departing.

Human nature being what it is.....I will miss not being in the immediate "know" of what is going on in the GWA at a given moment and being involved in the daily and monthly decisions improving our organization. However, I will not miss the worrying that goes with the job. Worrying about serious injuries occurring or something major going wrong that ruins an event. Worrying about local or state ordinances changing and impacting the GWA. Now I can just worry about my unit and none of them gets hurt or whether the guys are having a good event or are the guys following our safety rules, etc. You know, normal unit commander stuff.

I have heard about "GWA" politics since the day I joined the GWA. Maybe it was true in the early days but I didn't see it as a detriment to doing my job. And, I have a better word then "politics." Personalities is a much better word. We all have passionate beliefs on WWI and our organization and what we should and shouldn't do. So it came down to being able to work with all those personalities. That was easy. You show and give respect, be honest and upfront and a good listener. I never forget that why I reenact WWI may not be the same reason as the guy next to me. I was also very lucky in that I served with great Boards. We had our disagreements but

your Board members wanted to find solutions and do what was best for the organization and they worked well together. I believe the organization is very lucky in that our new Board will be returning with very little turnover. A little reshuffling with two members moving to new positions, a new Allied Rep and a new Vice President in November. I am confident the new VP whether Allied or CP will quickly fit in.

I nominated Carter Bertone to be our next President. I didn't do it out of friendship. I did it because I believe he will be a good President for our organization. I may not agree with some of his "future" decisions but he can count on my support because in the four years I worked with him as our Allied Rep, I saw him grow as a Board officer who can and will work tirelessly for the best interests of the GWA. He has a good perspective of the Allied and CP points of view and the challenges facing the GWA in the years to come. Although the Presidents' position will not face an election challenge come November, I may be the most responsible person for this occurring. Joe Murray, the CP Rep seriously thought about throwing his hat in to the ring. I strongly encouraged Joe not to run for President but to run again for a second term as the CP Rep. I had two reasons for doing that. Joe was finishing his first term as our CP Rep and had done a great job and selfishly wanted him to be our Rep again and continue his good work. I wanted his voice and advice on our next Board representing the CP. I was concerned that the organization after six years of CP Presidents might be ready for an Allied President and that would determine the vote more than the qualities of the two candidates. If Carter had not been running, I would have nominated Joe because just like

Carter, he has the same qualities to be our President.

I was thinking I would write up a list of all the accomplishments your Board made happen in the last four years but decided against it. All any member of the GWA has to do is look around at the positive changes and improvements on our site and the internal working of the organization, on our web page/forum and all the units on both sides of NML working, to see a lot has happened over the last four years. I am extremely confident that our new Board under new leadership will continue to make our organization better. I can't wait to see what they have in store for us.

I had two goals when I became your President. One was to improve the organization. Two, finish two terms and not have 80% of the GWA want to hang me in effigy because I screwed up. Too many times I have heard past Presidents suffer the slings and arrows for being bad Presidents. Whether they were bad or not, it's a tough job and unless you walk in those shoes, you don't know what happened that made a President good or bad. I was hoping I could leave the Board and assume the mantle of "elder statesman" and get dirty cleaning Maxine.

In closing, it has been an honor and privilege to serve the organization as your President. I want to thank all of you for trusting in me to get the job done and when I did screw up, accepting my apology and trusting I would get it right the second time. You may not believe this but I actually had fun and no regrets. I will officially step down at one minute past midnight on Saturday, 4 November and Carter will be in charge. However, if something "big" happens before that, I will confer with Carter before making any decision as the outgoing President.

**Candidate for President (unopposed)
Carter Bertone**



For those of you who don't know me, my name is Carter Bertone. I am a retired US Army Officer and after several years in the Defense Contracting Industry, I am back in Federal Service as a DoD Civilian. I have been a member of the GWA since 1999 and have commanded the French Line since 2007. I am honored to be nominated to serve as the Great War Association's President. Serving on the Board as the Allied Representative for the past four years has been a great experience. I am proud to have been part of such a hard working productive team. In the past four years we have seen tremendous improvements to the site and raised the quality of the events and the WWI experience for all our GWA participants.

First off, I would like to thank Thomas "Scampi" Gallagher for his dedicated and selfless service as

President of the GWA over the past four years. As President, Scampi quickly built a cohesive team and focused his efforts on site renovations and improvements to the "Battle Area". In all his efforts he has been transparent and open to feedback. He has become a trusted friend and mentor. If elected, I will be following in some pretty big footsteps.

If elected president I plan to continue in the G8's tradition of transparency and open communications. It is not my hobby, but "our hobby". We can make it even better. There is quite a bit of talent throughout our ranks and I would like to see it harnessed. I would like to create an atmosphere in which the members of the GWA take ownership of the hobby. The GWA Board is not the wellspring of all "good ideas"; many of the successful efforts we initiated over the past four years came from the suggestions from the membership.

Future initiatives I would like to pursue:

Continued Development of the Battlefield: As stated earlier, the last board has gone to great lengths and expense to improve the site. I would like to continue this priority effort. Development and change keeps the events interesting and provides more opportunity for units to explore the "Living History" facets of the hobby.

G8 Defrayment of the Cost to Build Bunkers: Units that build bunkers are "Committed Units" and are generally in for the "Long Hall". Building a bunker is a labor intensive and expensive endeavor. When the funds are available I would like to see the GWA be able to pay for the cost of digging when units commit to building a bunker.

Creation of German, AEF, and Commonwealth Authenticity Committees: Though there have been many improvements to the quality of reproduction WWI Uniforms and Equipment over the last few years, and units / individuals seem to be doing

more research than ever before, however there are some serious glaring deficiencies in many individual and unit impressions. I would like to see each respective group form an "Authenticity Committee" much like the French Company did years ago and work to improve the quality of the impressions and mentor newcomers and veteran GWA members alike. These committees should inform the membership regarding where to purchase high quality kit, proper period military grooming standards, proper wear of the uniform, individual conduct in the ranks, etc. As Living Historians / Reenactors we should always be "upping our game".

Review / Revision of GWA "By-Laws": I believe our by-laws are outdated. The board needs to take a serious look at the by-laws and if needed, revise them to fit the needs of the Hobby. In the past several years we have more than doubled our size. What made sense when we had 300 members may not make sense today. If this is the case we need to revise those outdated portions and put them to the membership for a vote.

Expanded Opportunities for Living History: In the reenacting community, the GWA is truly unique. Urban sprawl is closing in on many areas making it more and more difficult for units to host events. Additionally, many landowners now demand proof of insurance before they allow reenactments to be held on their property. These factors combined with several others have really taken a toll on combat focused events of other

Cantina Open at Spring Event

Thurs from 12 noon to ?

Friday from 7 am to 7 pm

Sat. From 7 am til 12 noon

If the guys need anything other than those times they can call me

Anyone who wants straw should contact Kim at:

conoex516@gmail.com

and arrange for the number of bales needed. Previously, folks have ordered straw but failed to pick it up and pay for it, so all requests will require pre-payment by check before the event.

time periods such as WWII and Civil War. We are different. The GWA has its own land and its own insurance we have an opportunity to grow despite the end of the centennial. In order to keep the flow of "new blood" into our organization, I would like to conduct outreach to various historic sites and history themed events to establish more GWA presence. I would like to help GWA units participate in more "public" events to make potential recruits aware of what the GWA has to offer.

I greatly appreciate your taking the time to read this and would greatly appreciate your support. I look forward to serving as your President.

VR **Carter**

Candidate for Vice President James Ivers



James Ivers has been an active member of the Great War Association since 1998. He has spent the last 12 years on allied staff working with the current Allied Combat Commander planning the GWA events from the allied perspective. At the last three events he has shadowed the current GWA VP (and both the allied and CP safety reps) for how to notify the GWA members of the rules to ensure a safe event, monitor the event for safety issues, and most importantly how to deal with safety issues during the event. The past GWA VP has put in place a good structure for the VP role which James plans to maintain moving forwards. James is in favor of site improvements that offer both a tactical and practical utilization for all GWA members as well as offer a sense of historical accuracy for a WWI battlefield.

Candidate for Vice President Mike Landree



Gentlemen and Ladies of the GWA, I accepted the nomination for Vice President of the GWA with humility and a complete understanding of the immense responsibility for serving the membership of our great organization. As

Vice President, my job is to support the President as his right hand man and serve as the Chairman of the Safety Committee. As a veteran reenactor of 34 years, an executive director of a national veteran's organization, board member of several civic/ veteran's/ historical societies/ organizations, and a retired Marine LtCol with 3.5 years deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, I am imminently qualified for this position. As a reenactor, I am a Civil War and WWII unit commander and serve as a combat company commander during the WWII reenactment of the Battle of the Bulge at FIG - as well as an Unteroffizier in IR 124.

I believe in growing the hobby and making the historical experiences as realistic as possible. Everyone loves the "time trip" of the moment - we should strive for this perfection. We've grown so much since the WWI hobby started and I hope that those who come after us only know of a great experience with no understanding of the difficulties we overcame to get us there. Is it perfect? Of course not. Can we do better? Of course we can. We definitely need to give credit to those leaders who have come before us for the advances we've made so far, but let's take it to the next level. For this we need men of vision. As Vice President, I'll do my best to add common sense to the process and to ensure we don't waste the resources available to us. Although we have unlimited wants and needs, we have limited resources. It's our responsibility on the G-8 to effectively manage those resources and provide the best support to you, our members. If we provide the right construct, you will have the opportunity to fulfill the reason you do this hobby for your own personal reasons.

As the Chairman of the Safety Committee, it falls upon me to provide and enforce common sense safety measures that enable historical reenacting without overly restrictive measures that suck the fun out of the weekend. I'd like to commend Bret Werner for his work in this regard. We

all have the expectations of leaving as healthy as when we arrived - this is my number one duty. There is definitely an art to determining how to do this, as well as figuring out how best to provide ways and means of employing current and future historically accurate weapons: tanks, artillery, mortars, rifle grenades, "poison" gas, aerial delivered bombs, anti-aircraft fire, and trench weapons (maybe even simulated flame throwers). I believe in finding a way to say "yes" rather than saying "no" because it makes my job easier. We should encourage the addition of historically correct weapons while figuring out how best to employ them in a safe manner without limiting its employment beyond common sense. We need to empower members to experiment and add to our overall experience, which builds the hobby.

Lastly, I fully recognize that no one cares about the background drama that exists on any board. As a

reenactor, I hope that you show up, enjoy yourself, and leave with great memories and pictures for your unit's Facebook page. My hope is that you see the G-8 like your truck tires - works without you even thinking about our functions or to the process as a whole. In the end, I serve you, the membership of the GWA, and I humbly appreciate your support.

Mike Landree

Candidate for Treasurer (unopposed): Chris Garcia



I am running unopposed for my 4th term as treasurer, why? Because no one else wants the job. The bylaws were amended 3 years ago to remove the term limits on the treasurer. Why? I have no desire to do the job forever, as it is the hardest job on the board and the only one with year round responsibilities, but as I refuse to do the job as it has been done in the past. In the past when the two term limit was reached and no one took the job, it was filled by appointment by the President with NO input or say by the membership. I am willing to do the job so long as the membership wants me to do it.

I will continue to streamline registration as we adopt standardized rosters that simplify the verification process and eliminate illegal dual unit memberships. I also do a myriad of other tasks, such as paying the bills, taxes and securing and renewing insurance, ordering supplies and ensuring services

are carried out, all while ensuring we remain financially responsible and protect our site.

Candidate for Secretary (unopposed): Marsh Wise

As I am running unopposed, I am not campaigning here, but instead, am going to outline what I envision my job for the next two years. First, I want to say thanks to outgoing president, **Skampi** (Tom Galleher) for all his hard work and being a good friend these past years! **Thanks man!!**



Anyway, first thing I want to discuss is that I plan on increasing our comms and making it better. Right now, we have a number of various mediums. A past board determined that the GWA Forum on our website **will be the** official venue for ALL GWA communications and, along with our newsletter, **On the Wire**, will be where important issues will be discussed. Our Forum is NOT open to non-members and we will continue to make an effort to not let them in. It's the place for YOU to voice your opinions and discuss things – that place is NOT Facebook or the email forums. That is the decision of the Board and the Admin team will follow that order.

Our Archives and Paperwork

We have a lot of important paperwork and documents that we need to, and will be, digitizing. This is something the Board voted on a while back and we will be implementing this soon, to have to then copied to both archival media and an online repository like Carbonite.

On the Wire

My hope is, is that we will get more articles and be able to publish like 4 issues a year. No, they will not be printed and mailed to you... this is the 21st Century and if you don't have a computer or a way to view it, you

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will have to ask a buddy to do it for you or go to a library and view it. Sorry, but for years, we spent a HUGE amount of our budget and time printing this out and mailing – no more. Doing only an e-version will also allow the use of more photos and colour and other good things. This is a good thing.

The Board

Most of you have heard me rant about this subject: There should be more people involved. Not just 1-2 people running for the posts and the board basically staying the same for years. If you're not happy, or think you can do better, run. There many positions that need filled, including authenticity and site committees, etc. When I was CP Rep, I had a bunch of people who would bend my ear at EACH event, whining about authenticity, yet when appointed to the committee, they then did NOTHING. Here's your chance to actually do something... or shut up. Right now, get with your rep and volunteer; If you aren't willing to spend a little time for the hobby, then don't complain and don't whine about "those guys in the G-8 doing nothing/the wrong thing/wasting our money," etc. Here's **YOUR** chance... don't waste it.

I am also going to say this: You can't really understand the board and how it works until you are on it. There should be 3-4 people running for each board office. Please think of contributing.

Meeting Minutes

I'm bad at that. Sorry. I'm listening to and engaging in discussion at meetings. Chris Garcia, Skampi and Carter Bertone, however, are really good at that and deserve a hand for their minutes. Just an acknowledgment. I know some people get spooled up over Board Meeting Minutes, but I am not one of them and am not going to make up 11 page minutes. No, they won't be recorded either. Aren't happy with that?? Cool, I suggest, no ENCOURAGE you to run for office on the Board of the GWA in 2019

The GWA Facebook Group and Page

Another thing most of you have heard me rant about. If you cannot follow the SIMPLE directions we have and that the Board ordered followed, then you won't get in. You read the rules, you answer the questions, you send the email, you get in - it's that simple,

Candidate for Allied Combat Commander (unopposed): Bret Werner

I started with the GWA in 1993 at Ft. Picket with L 109, 28th Div. I worked my way through the ranks as a Private, Corporal as a squad leader,



Sergeant as half platoon leader and then platoon Sgt. I was promoted to Lt. and commanded second platoon AEF for years. At this time I was also unit commander for L 109. I helped grow L 109 from a small 8 man unit to one of the biggest units in the GWA. I was then asked to come onto Battalion Staff where I served as Adjutant and was then promoted to Captain as 2/ic where I have served for years under

yet I dump huge amounts of people from the queue ALL THE TIME because they think that they that they are special and don't have to follow our directions and rules. Do we really want knuckleheads like this in our hobby carrying a weapon?

Capt. Kulaga. I ran for Vice President of the GWA four years ago, and was again re-elected. As VP I tightened up the safety committee by allowing the CP and Allied Safety officers the ability to do their jobs without restrictions and brought in a chief medic. The safety committee enforced the rules requiring each unit to have a safety rep and ushered in the new member safety training.

About Me

I have a degree in history and an M.Ed in social studies education. I have written for Schiffer and Osprey publishing. I currently teach AP European and US history and serve as Department Chair at the high school where I teach.

My philosophy

My philosophy as Allied Combat Commander is rather simple. I want to do things as accurately as possible, I want the events to be as enjoyable as possible and I want to maintain a uniqueness and a feeling of newness for every event. I work for the Battalion all year, the battalion works for me two weekends a year. I welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Thank you for your continued support,

V/R, **Bret Werner**

Candidate for Central Powers Combat Commander (unopposed): James Harter

This is what was received: If elected, I will serve.

Candidate for Allied Representative (unopposed): Matt Murphy



Members of the GWA,

My name is Matt Murphy though some of you may know me by my nom-de-guerre, Cpl. M.A. Picard. I am honored to have been nominated for the position of Allied Representative so would like to tell you about myself and what I would like to do while working in this capacity. During my 12 years in the GWA I've witnessed the growth and improved operation of the GWA and am anxious to do my part in maintaining this positive momentum.

In my professional life, I work as a production manager and editor at an elite documentary photo agency. This job allows me to be constantly immersed in three of my great interests: history, photography and current events.

I began reenacting at the age of 12 when I joined the RevWar 2nd NJ Regiment as a drummer. At age 25 I became commander of the 2nd NJ and for the next 10 years was regularly asked to take on command and administrative rolls at both regional and national events. In addition to working hard to make sure that unit authenticity improved and operation was seamless, I

helped stage some memorable events including the highly-successful 2013 Battle of Monmouth reenactment. At the end of that year I gave up command so that I could concentrate more on Great War reenacting with the 151e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne, a unit I have been active with since 2005. I am also a member of The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada, the WWII impression of the GWA's 42nd Battalion CEF.

Those who know me can attest to the fact that I'm a natural communicator, organizer, mediator, and diplomat. I admit that my insistence on thoroughness does sometimes result in some unusually-lengthy correspondence and epic spreadsheets, but I always prefer to overdo whatever I've been tasked to give my attention to. I pride myself as being an approachable person, much preferring an inclusive approach to our hobby, but with firmness in regards to safety, authenticity, and professionalism.

As Allied Representative I intend to immediately meet with unit representatives so that I can learn what they and their members feel works well, needs improvement, should be eliminated, and/or should be introduced to GWA events and operation. During the next two years I will quickly address problems and proposals with an open mind and work toward solutions with the membership and G8. Anything is possible with honest communication, respect and teamwork. I will give this sort of reactive operation top priority but will also bring a number of proposals to the table.

Though it may sound like a beaten-horse, communication can always be improved. It has gotten better but we can go further. Though we rely on our board to handle operation and unit commanders to function as representatives, it's vital that all out members are aware of what's in the works. An informed GWA member is much more likely to dedicate him/herself to our activities than an uninformed one. We also need to make sure that our communication tools are accessible and

professionally moderated. Our discussion boards should be an inviting place to share information, ask questions, and interact with our greater trench-family.

I understand that there has been a discussion about creating authenticity committees for each national force. I've witnessed the creation and progress of the inspection/authenticity committee within the French Company and we've greatly benefited from these gents' activity: these experts have done the work of finding the best sources for our required reproduction items and whenever at a loss, developed a new source. I'm confident that committees of well-informed AEF, Commonwealth, and German GWA members would be able to do the same. WE should be dictating the quality of the equipment and uniforms made available to GWA members, not just accepting sub-par products offered to us.

I realize and respect that there are a broad range of experiences our membership hope to attain at GWA events. Some want to spend a cold rainy night on a revolving guard detail, some want to spend time relaxing in their bunkers, some want to participate in early-morning combat scenarios while others would prefer to wait until later. I won't go into specifics here, but I am completely confident that with such a large organization the G8 can find ways to accommodate this range of desired experiences.

My most memorable event experiences relate to thoughtfully staged living history scenarios: the sobering mass-burial party that welcomed Entente forces to the lines on a Saturday morning, the flooding of aid stations with "wounded", "mutiny" in the French ranks, trading with allies from down the line...I could name many more. All of us are responsible for making our event experiences better for each other. While I think that we as individual GWA members and individual units are responsible for keeping our events fresh, interesting, thoughtful, and mutually-educational, I feel that the organization should stage living

history scenarios at events on a more regular basis. I should state here that I have found the winter "third events" of these past few years extremely enjoyable experiences. Though much smaller when compared to our April and November blasts, these third events have been challenging in the most wonderful ways not to mention they've allowed new friendships to form between units which might never come into contact with one another at our large events. I would like these third events to remain regular and get more members involved.

I would like to find other ways for units to interact with one another. How crazy is it that we spend event after event walking past or looking across no man's land at the same guys that we never meet in person? While "third events" and Thursday night farmhouse mixers provide these opportunities, I would like to develop new methods in which our units are exposed to one another during our April and November events. We're much more likely to work hard in making event scenarios better for familiar friends than strangers.

With the enormous amount of knowledge embedded in our membership, our organization should support and urge educational outreach through public events away from Newville. Our average GWA member is well prepared to present the history of the Great War on both a general and soldier's-eye view and I feel that we are responsible for sharing the information we so passionately acquired.

Rarely does an event pass without there being complaints about hit-taking or other aspects of tactical simulation. I find a lot of the impassioned complaints and accusations embarrassing to witness and want to address this regular ugliness by introducing a battle-play training program. I am thoroughly impressed with the newbie safety briefings and feel that this same model could be used as a model for developing a method for instructing and reminding our members of what needs to be considered while engaged in tactical

simulation. Furthermore, there should be oversight in regards to units' professionalism while engaged in battle-play and a set method in reporting and addressing understandable trends in operation.

In closing, I hold our organization and its membership in high regards and

will work hard to help maintain smooth operation and introduce solutions to any subjects that require attention. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as Allied Representative.

Respectfully yours, Matt

Candidate for Central Powers Representative (unopposed): Joe Murray



I would like to thank you for these last two years and am looking forward to the next two.

Things I want to Do

My hope is to continue to work on our trenches, making them better and safer. I

would like to encourage our CP member units to improve their own trench areas and, for some of the newer units, to take over and make a section their own. I have seen *so much* improvement over the last few years in our CP line and I am heartened as to where they are going now.

I know that the site committee is almost ready to publish the new trench and bunker guidelines and it is my belief that they will go a long way in making things better, safer and more longer-lasting.

Authenticity

I think everyone is doing a pretty good job as both units and individuals! I would like to actively encourage units to continue this progress and work with the new

Authenticity Committee in what I know is going to be a good thing for all of us. I know that their main goal is helping everyone to get better. If you want to go beyond the minimum standards, I encourage this! As long as the minimum standard is being met, we will be good. If you have any interest in helping with Authenticity, please let me know.

Organization

Our side is striving to become better organized and I feel that this will help make things better for all of us. I am not talking about some hardcore "military-style" experience, emphasizing being miserable, but one that is more giving the feeling of "being there."

Our Neighbors

One of my things that I am big on, is having a good relationship with our neighbors and the local township -- not only in relation to the people, but also the local zoning issues and local laws. I also think it's good for them to know what we do and that we aren't a bunch of nuts, but instead are students of history and that we have a respect for our nation's veterans.

I'm here for You!

My job as CP Representative is to not only represent your interests, but to work with the other members of the board to make the GWA a better club, as a whole to belong to.

I remain, your humble and obedient servant...

Fall 2017 Event Schedule

THURSDAY

7 P.M. – GWA "SOCIAL" first floor of the old farmhouse.

FRIDAY

- 11 A.M. – Registration Opens
- 1:00 P.M. – Living History begins on Allied and CP side of the line. All event participants are encouraged to be in uniform if they are in the Allied and CP area starting at this time.
- 3:30 – 4:30 – Mandatory New Recruit Training at the Fusilier crater in No Man's Land.
- 4:30 P.M. – Gate closes. ALL cars need to be removed from the GWA combat area!
- 4:30 P.M. – Registration Closes. All those wishing to participate in Friday night combat, but do not arrive prior to 4:30 P.M. to obtain their trench pass from the Registration shed, MUST be pre-registered. Check in will be at the MP station for the Allies, or the German HQ (92nd area) for sign in and issuance of trench pass. Walk-on's (New Recruits) will not be allowed to participate in Friday night combat unless they attend the New Recruit Safety Meeting.
- 5:00 P.M. – Mandatory GWA Friday Safety meeting at the Memorial - all units/participants wishing to "play" on Friday or Saturday must attend. Trench passes will be checked. This meeting is an insurance requirement. If you are on site you must be at this formation! No exceptions.
- 6:00 P.M. – Full combat/full play no restrictions
- 10: 00 P.M. – Combat ends

SATURDAY

- 8:00 – 8:30 A.M. – GWA Joint Formation for election results. (No Mans Land) Make up new member safety training for those who missed the Friday meeting with each sides perspective safety officer immediately following the joint formation.
- 8:30 A.M. – Combat resumes.
- 10:00 P.M. – Combat Ends

SUNDAY

- Clean up. Gate opens
-)08:00 – Town Hall meeting at the farmhouse.

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Bathelémont: Baptism of Fire

On the weekend of Jan 12-14th, 2018, the French Line and FR 90 will be hosting our 4rd annual "Immersion Event". FR 90 (German) and the 18th RI (French) would like to extend an invitation to all members of the GWA to participate in the Great War Centennial's 4th annual GWA endorsed immersion event - "Bathelémont: Baptism of Fire " (12-14 Jan in Newville PA). The event scenario will focus on the 1st Infantry Division's first taste of action while posted in the French sector near Lorraine in November 1917. US forces will be integrated in the line and participating in joint operations with their French and British allies.

This is a 24 hour immersion event that will start Friday night at approx

6:00PM that will last until 4:00PM on Saturday followed by a social event. Our goal for this event is to create a realistic "Immersion Style" event in which participants get to experience a full 24 hours in the trenches and conduct realistic trench activities all set in a 1917 environment.

This event will focus on period activities such as wiring parties, trench raids, mail call, relief in place, trench repair, etc, with an "after event social" following hostilities on Saturday night. The emphasis of the tactical portion of this event will be to employ and broaden each participant's "period persona" and to improve each unit's ability to act independently and in conjunction with other units in a period correct military manner.

Event contacts are:

- French Forces: **Carter Bertone**; Chargebayonets@cox.net
- Commonwealth Forces: **Eric Verny**; hatrick19@verizon.net
- German Forces: **Joe Murray** (FR-90) ct1407@msn.com
- US Forces: **Steven Girard**: Indianhead1918@yahoo.com

This event will be open to all units / individuals (French, Commonwealth, German, US) who wish to attend and can meet the 1917 themed authenticity requirements. We have plenty of openings for support roles, as well as, combatants so if you have an alternate impression and bring something new for this event, let us know.

This is an excellent opportunity to explore other facets of our hobby that are not normally practiced at normal GWA events. For those worried about safety and fatigue issues each side will have a rotation plan designed to ensure individuals get adequate rest as to be safe and effective.

Registration will be \$20. Payment must be made by postmarked NLT 05 JAN 2018. Registration details and payment instructions will be provided by the event contacts listed above.

Thank you for your attention. We hope to see you at the event.

Respectfully

Carter J. Bertone,

Allied Rep (GWA President-elect),
CDR French Line

Czech This Out! The Retroversion of the CZ 98/22 to a GEW 98

By Curt-Heinrich Schmidt und Johannes Wolf
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In reenacting the Great War, we living historians are given the choice of using originals or, where available, reproductions. Certain items are not available and originals



Fig. 1 Comparison of CZ 98/22 (top) to Gew. 98 (bottom). Note the differences in sight and hand guard.

must be used. Items such as the *Kochgeschirr* (mess tin), *Seitengewehr* (bayonet) and, most importantly, *Gewehr 98* (rifle) are not currently being reproduced.

While the purpose of this article is not to discuss the use of original items, there is an alternative to using an original GEW 98: the "retroversion" of the CZ 98/22 - it is possible to alter this weapon with a few modifications and addition/substitution of a few key

parts. The word "retroversion" is a blending of "retro fitting" and "conversion". A retro fitting is backdating an item to an earlier appearance; a conversion is taking one item and converting it to another.

After the War, the Czechoslovakians adopted the GEW98 rifle as their standard arm. The CZ 98/22 used the GEW98 as the basic design with a few key differences, those being the upper hand guard and rear sight. Otherwise, the rifles are identical. The conversion process will involve altering the upper hand guard and the retro fitting process will involve replacing the sight with the correct Lange sight.

Phase One - Disassembly

The CZ 98/22 (Fig 1) was based heavily on the Gew.98. The differences are slight - the sight is a flat sight and slightly longer than the Lange sight, the upper hand guard extends back to the receiver rather than to the front of the sight, and the entire barrel is blued.

The first step is to take it apart in preparation for conversion. The procedure is basically the same as that of the GEW98. The only difference is that the springs tend to be a lot stiffer. For the pieces converted in this article, to remove the bands required the use of a clamp to hold the spring down and a small dowel tapped with a mallet to slide it up.

Two of the rifles had a surprise. The top hand guard had a clip that held the back end to the barrel. Rather than risking cracking it on taking it out, I carefully cut it as the back half of the hand guard was being removed anyway. (Fig. 2)



Fig. 2



Fig 2A. The stock stripped down. Note the barrel above – it's entirely blued.

Phase Two - Metal Work

The next step was to remove the Czech sight. The sights are soldered on, and after a few minutes of heating

with the propane torch, oil trapped underneath bubbled out of the seams followed by several tiny droplets of solder. (Fig. 3)



Fig 3. Using a propane torch, the barrel and sight are heated to loosen the solder. Be sure to heat the barrel evenly (above and below the sight) to prevent warping.

A few taps with the mallet loosened it up to the point where it could be completely removed. The sight was put on prior to the barrel being set in the receiver; so cutting of the lower bands was necessary. To cut the bands, it was slid to the muzzle and shimmed to keep it away from the barrel (*Fig. 4*). Carefully using the cutting wheel of a dremel tool, the bottom bands were cut and then bent slightly with pliers to be able to slide over the front sight. (*Fig. 5*) Note - you will have to cut the Lange sight base to install it.



Fig 4 Sight shimmed to protect barrel



Fig. 5 (Above) Using a dremel fitted with a cutting disk, the bottom of the band is cut, allowing the band to be removed.

The CZs reworked for this article were entirely blued, bolt included. GEW98 receivers and bolts were not blued - so at this point these parts need to have their bluing removed. I ended up using a combination of hand buffing, a bluing removing agent and mechanical buffing with the dremel to remove the arsenal bluing. When working with the chemical stripping agent, take precautions, such as gloves and eye protection.

It is also a great idea to restore the bluing on the parts that are to remain blued. There are several processes that you can use to blue these parts, but I will only discuss the two most applicable ones.

Heat Bluing

The period method was to 'heat blue' the parts. The process of heat bluing is fairly simple and straight forward, in theory, but takes some practice. In heat bluing, the metal is heated to a bright orange and then quenched in oil. The result is an inky black

finish, and one that is more durable than chemical bluing alone. The finish is susceptible to normal wear.

When doing the oil bluing, be sure to follow several important steps: First, do it in a well-ventilated area, as it will create a bit of an odor! Second, be sure to put something down on the floor to catch the oil drips. (Fig 6)

After the process is done, I wash the parts off in kerosene to remove the excess oil. Before reinstalling the parts, I do give them a light oiling with my gun oil.

From research, the sight (that is now completely blackened as seen in Fig. 6) needs to have the gradient markings brightened, the rest of the sight left in the black. Carefully buff the markings to restore the brightness. With luck, the numbers should remain dark. Don't worry if they don't, as they can be touched up with some careful application of bluing solution and then carefully buffing around the numbers again.



Fig 6 - Heat bluing.

Chemical Bluing

Heat bluing is a good solution for rebluing smaller parts, but rebluing the barrel is a bit trickier and will call for the second method mentioned earlier and is a more modern method - chemical bluing. Chemical bluing (such as Birchwood Casey's Bluing) can be used - be sure to follow the instructions.



Fig. 7. Aligning the new sight

The barrel from the receiver ring forward needs to be blued. Fortunately, most of the barrel was

still blued and only required touching up. I used a bluing agent from Brownell's - highly recommended - to reblue the barrel. Follow the instructions and do several applications to achieve the perfect look.

I also touched up the heat-blued parts I did earlier as the heat bluing was not 100% effective in getting the look I wanted.

With the barrel and sight now blued, the Lange sight needs to be installed. This will need to be cut (as previously mentioned) to allow it to slip over the front sight. Carefully align it - I used a string run from the breech to the front sight and a level to get it as close as possible. I used the alignment mark (notch) on the receiver. (Fig. 7.)

I should note here that you may need to purchase some additional parts to complete your conversion. The upper band may be lacking the sling hook and on the butt of the stock, the rear sling attachment may need replaced. One of the rifles reworked had a flat bar with a nut welded

to it! Parts may be found through Numrich Arms or through online sources, such as e-bay.

Phase Three - Wood Work

With the metal work done, next we will address the stock work.

Part I - Cleaning/stripping the Stock

The first step here will be to get the stock down to the 'bare wood' and ready for sanding out the various dings. Depending on the rifle, it may be coated with Cosmoline or other gunk. That will need to be removed first before the finish can be stripped. Looking around on the Internet, there are a variety of methods that are recommended as 'the' best way. I experimented with three of them.

Commercial strippers:

There are many commercial strippers available, popular ones like Formby's are mild strippers and don't really do that good of a job. Others may be too harsh and will damage the wood. One good choice would be Strip-X by Klean Strip as it is designed for wood and will strip finishes and pull grease and dirt from the wood as well as wood stains. Be sure that the stripper you use is designed for wood and follow the instructions. Multiple applications can be expected, as years

of oil and dirt have to be pulled deep from the wood.

Kerosene

The next stock was scrubbed with kerosene (also used to clean off the metal parts) before being stripped. It did remove a lot of the gunk, but in the end, I feel the process took just as long overall.

Easy Off

Believe it or not, Easy Off works as well as a stripping agent, capable of removing many finishes as well as dirt, grease, and other contaminants. However, do not use water to clean up, clear alcohol is a better choice. In addition, this method can be hard on the wood. With this project, it also worked about the same in the end.

Now that you have the stock cleaned off and any finish removed, the next step is to sand, sand and then sand some more. I start with a heavy grit (80 grit) and work down to a finer grit (600). 3-M has an excellent sandpaper product - the different grits come in a variety of colors. Also, buy more than you think you'll need - despite the applications of stripping agents, there was still enough junk to clog the paper.



Fig. 8. Before



Fig. 9. After

I used a brush to clean the 3-M paper on occasion and get a little more use out of it. Take care to not over sand and leave dips or depressions! If you have a deep gouge, you may have to leave it in. The best way to address it is to make longer strokes rather than concentrating on the immediate area. This will help blend in any depressions.

Part II – Altering the CZ Handguard to fit the GEW98

Looking at the difference in the two handguards (see Fig 10), the upper hand guards are very different. Fortunately, it can be overcome!



Fig. 10. CZ handguard (top), original GEW98 handguard (bottom)

The biggest difference in the hand guard is the overall length. The Gew98 hand guard (see below) only covers the barrel from the rear band to the front of the Lange sight. The Cz98/22, on the other hand, goes from the rear band to the receiver with a cut out for the sight.

By taking careful measurements, measure from the back of the rear band lip to the back of the rear sight lip (or the meaty part in the middle!) The measurements *should*, in theory, be the same, however, there may be slight differences in the location of the rear sight and you don't want to cut the piece too short.



Fig. 11. The original hand guard profile (top) and the initial Cz98/22 profile (bottom)

Cut the Cz98/22 guard cautiously. It's better to leave it longer and gradually work it back than to cut it too short. It's easier to remove wood than to add wood. Go slowly and carefully here, removing a little bit of wood, refitting and checking the alignment, removing more wood and so on. Gradually cut back the wood to

form the lip for the rear sight. Use a file to maintain a rounded profile and test fit it often.

Not only do you need to be aware of the fit for the lip of the rear sight, but you also need to make sure that the front lip (for the rear band) lines up with the stock.



Fig. 12. The original hand guard profile (right) and the initial Cz98/22 profile (top) with each fitted in the Lange sight. Notice how the profile of lip of the altered guard mirrors that of the stock.

Having achieved the fit of the guard to the Lange sight, the last step is to match the shape of the Gew98 guard. The Cz98/22 guard has a 'step' in front of the sight and the shoulders are meatier than the Gew98. See Fig. 12.



Fig. 13. - Shoulder before filing



Fig. 14. Shoulders after sanding. Notice the dark spot in the center (the 'dip' from the original guard).



Fig. 15. Profile of guard after sanding. The angle of the 'slope' in front of the Lange sight is slightly more radical than the original.

Slowly and carefully use rasps, files and finally sand paper to reshape the shoulders to a rounded appearance, blending it in to the end of the front sight. Removing the 'dip' in front of the Lange sight is very difficult to do and I recommend blending it in as best you can.

Part III - Finishing

At this point, the woodwork should be complete. Do your final sanding here and check the wood once more. Now, you're ready to apply a finish.

I have used several finishes over the years, and my personal favorite is

one passed down to me by Herr Schmidt. It consists of equal parts of spar varnish, boiled linseed oil and turpentine. I refer to that as Finish No. 1. Finish No. 2 takes No. 1 and cuts it in half with turpentine. This allows it to permeate the wood deeper. I apply several coats of No. 2 before several coats of No. 1. Put your first coat on, let it set for a minute and wipe off the excess. You most likely will need to 'whisker' the stock - the application of water or the finish will raise some grains (or whiskers). A light sanding with some very fine sand paper will remove them. You may need to do this more than once.

An option given to me by Herr Schmidt is to take the finish and add Permalyn sealer to it (from Laurel Mountain Forge.) This will help it to dry as well as giving it a better waterproof protection. The finishes (No. 1 and No. 2) above are not waterproof. This deviation from a "period" finish is to help protect the rifles better from the elements and is not noticeable.

Phase Four - Reassembly

At this point, everything should be completed and you can reassemble your retroverted Gew98! But, before you begin, I recommend taking an added precaution for the care of your rifle. I use Silencio's *RIG Universal Grease*, which can be found at gun shows or through an online search, to protect the metal laying against the wood. I apply it to any of the areas in the stock where the metal will lie to

protect the metal from moisture. The original rifle I have has pitting on the top under the hand guard. It's still a good idea to occasionally disassemble your rifle for a thorough cleaning, especially after a rainy event!

After that, follow the assembly guide and congratulations! You now have a Gew98 that looks like one as issued and one that you can 'use' at Neuville without worrying about trashing an original.



Fig. 16 (Above) and Fig. 17 (Below) Top: Retroverted Gew98 with walnut stock. Center: Original 1917 dated Obendorff Gew98. Bottom: Retroverted Gew98.



Conclusion

With the diminishing supply of available WW I dated Gew98s as well as the inherent issues in using original rifles for the hard service in the Neuville shale, there IS a viable alternative, with a little bit of work. Original rifles can still be found in a variety of conditions. Obviously, a pristine or mint original should not be used.

Ones that were used by the Turks can be restored, however, as is the case with the three that Herr Schmidt and I picked up years ago, the actions on them are worn from the years of service.

Retroverting the Cz98/22 Mauser will result in a rifle that is a step away from being it's cousin, the Gew98 (adding correct stampings on the

receiver, for example) yet one that can be used in the field without any pangs of guilt that would accompany an original. Collectors may argue against 'altering' an original and the 'value' of one over the other, but that isn't part of the scope of this article!

Cz98/22s should be found at gun shows or online auctions at a reasonable price. The benefit of it will be a weapon that should, provided it hasn't been abused, have a much tighter and smoother action and a sturdier weapon. Of the three altered in this article, the actions were all comparable to an original 1917 Eddystone and Mk III No. 1 Enfield, both which were reworked for service in WWII where as the three originals had some play in them.

Good luck!



Units of the French Line: The 18e Regiment d'Infanterie

By John Holman

The 18e Regiment d'Infanterie was formed from the pre-French Revolutionary unit, the Royal Auvergne, which fought bravely during the American Revolution at Savannah and Yorktown. During the Napoleonic Wars, the 18ème earned the nickname "Les Braves" from Emperor Napoleon at the Battle of Rivoli when he stated that "Brave 18e, I know that before you the enemy cannot hold". The regiment would fight in the Crimean War, the Italian Campaign, and the Franco Prussian War prior to 1914. In 1871, the regiment was garrisoned in Pau, the regional capital of Bearn in southwest France. The regiment was composed primarily of men of Beanaise and Basque origin from this region dominated by the Pyrénées Mountains.



The War Starts!

Following the declaration of war and invasion of neutral Belgium, the 18e and its reserve regiment the 218e were mobilized and sent by train to the Belgian border along with the rest of the 36e Division (made up of units from SW France) on August 6, 1914. The regiment's baptism of fire occurred at Marbaix-la-Tour, Belgium on August 24, 1914. The 18e made a fighting retreat, along with the rest of the French Army, of over 100 kilometers in 4 days. They helped stop the German and pushed them back into Champagne along the Chemin des Dames. During this advance, the 18ème was first cited for bravery. 1914 had cost the 18e 1076 men killed between August and December.

In January of 1915, the regiment was pushed off of the ridge along the Chemin des Dames. They held positions through the region of the Chemin des Dames through 1915 into 1916 when they were called to serve at Verdun. The regiment spent the 24th and 25th of May in as they described it "a horrible nightmare where human beings were crushed by fire and steel". Defending the Douaumont ridge where the modern day ossuary stands cost the regiment 925 casualties. The 18e served in the Argonne and the Somme during the remainder of 1916. 1917 would perhaps be the most trying year for the 18e as they returned to the Chemin des Dames.

The Mutiny

Following the initial failure of the Nivelle Offensive in April 1917, the 18e achieved a seemingly impossible task of recapturing the town of Craonne and the crest of the California plateau despite German bunkers and barbed wire. This action earned the 18e their second citation for bravery. Holding this ground cost the 18e many lives as they were punished by German counterattacks and counter battery fire. 1917 was a time of frustration for the French Army's soldiers who saw poor decisions costing them and their comrades their

lives. One battalion mutinied following orders to return to the Chemin des Dames after a short rest period with few permissions granted for leave. The end result was that around 100 men of the regiment were charged with disobedience, receiving various levels of imprisonment and for three leaders of the mutiny, an execution by firing squad. Losses to the many regiments of the 36e Division saw the 218e disbanded and its soldiers used as replacements for the 18e.

Continued Brave Service

For the remainder of 1917 and into 1918, the 18e helped solidify their gains on the Chemin des Dames and then served in both Alsace and in Champagne around the destroyed town of Tahure. The Michael Offensive caused the 18e to be rushed to hold the line southwest of the town of Montdidier. This successful action saw them cited for a third time for bravery. The 18e served briefly in and around Vauquois where they came in contact with African American soldiers of the 370th Infantry serving under French command. In September, the 18ème fought at



Allemant and was cited for a fourth and final time for bravery. By October, a fighting pursuit of German forces commenced. They and other French units liberated the ancient hill city of Laon following several crucial battles east of Soissons. They had fought for 37 consecutive days. The armistice came with the 18e resting in and around Laon. The 18e served as part of the French occupation force on the Rhine and finally returned to Pau on July 30, 1919.

In Conclusion

In total, the war cost the lives of over 2800 soldiers and officers of the 18e. Many more were listed among the missing (many therefore not listed among the dead) and countless more were wounded at one or more points during their service for France. The 18e maintained their fierce reputation as an elite unit throughout the First World War, a tradition that was carried on through to the Algerian War by the paratroopers of the 18e Régiment Chasseur Parachutistes. The regiment was finally disbanded in 1961. They are memorialized in Pau, France, in the Verdun Ossuary, and on the Chemin des Dames for their bravery on the battlefields of the Great War.



Site Parking Reprint

By President Tom Galleher

There are three distinct rows. The longest and closest to the battlefield is designated for those sutlers who sell off the back of their vehicle. The sutlers who bring the "kitchen sink" must set up at the end of the parking lot and it is clearly marked. It's first come basis. If this area is filled up then those sutlers MUST set up at the other end of the parking lot where folks make the turn to enter the parking lot.

Each row is marked with a high stake and orange ribbon; beginning of the row and at the end of the row. No parking areas are clearly marked. Do not park in these areas as they allow traffic to flow. If you triple park and block other vehicles....you will be towed!

If all the marked spaces are filled, there is parking as you enter the parking lot (this area is also for those large sutlers who couldn't find room at the other end). We could not paint here as the paint would not stick to the dirt. Just follow the pattern set by the three main rows. There is overflow parking about 20-30 yards down from the main parking lot on the right. The first open area is for overflow parking. The next open area on the

right is for trailers with antique vehicles...DO NOT PARK HERE unless you have an antique vehicle. If you do, you will be towed.

All the parking spots are done in bright orange paint with white paint used to designate sutlers, no parking, etc.

Off the first road to enter the parking lot (left turn), you will see areas for vehicles on the left where you can park parallel to the road. Parking is painted in orange with arrows showing the direction to use. There is enough room for one vehicle to a spot, along the road.

One more word about the individual parking spots in the main lot.....the length of the lines on each side are to show you where to park....not the length of the vehicle. We ended up using 21 cans of paint and had to do something to make the paint stretch for the job. We used a truck between each row to try and make sure there was enough room to pull in and pull out even if there was a vehicle across from you in the next row.

Please use common sense in parking and this event won't be a cluster f*ck like we have had in the previous events. Your cooperation in this is greatly appreciated.

A Needed Reprint:

Memorial Lane and our Neighbors

By Marsh Wise, *GWA Secretary*

This is important, especially for you new guys... DO NOT drive on Memorial Lane at the front of our site off of Middle Rd. It cuts through Steve Wiser's property and causes him great angst. It has been posted numerous times over the years not to do this; yet every year, someone new thinks they've discovered the equivalent of sliced bread. Some members incorrectly believe that it's on our property, but Memorial drive is NOT. Please don't drive on it. Feel free to ask questions on this. Wiser is not a bad guy (gasp, Marsh, have ya gone crazy?). The problem is twofold (look at Marshy get all jiggy with fancy terms): our members need to understand that he's not our "employee" and that he doesn't "have" to do things. If you need something done at the site, you really need to go through your Rep first, either Carter Bertone (incoming Matt Murphy) for the Allies or Joe Murray for us good guys :-P.

If you want digging done, call your TRENCHMASTER **first**, don't be pestering Steve Wiser to do stuff for you. If he asks you (more likely tells you after you're the 36th guy

to do it) to not drive on Memorial Lane, don't get all honked off and mad at this "redneck guy" telling you what to do on "our" property. You probably (especially if new) don't know all the boundaries of the site and the "why's" and "why nots" of our site/property. I have included some images showing where to go. One is a satellite photo with markings and the other is a survey map with things more cleanly identified. I am also thinking we should have these enlarged and displayed at the registration shed.

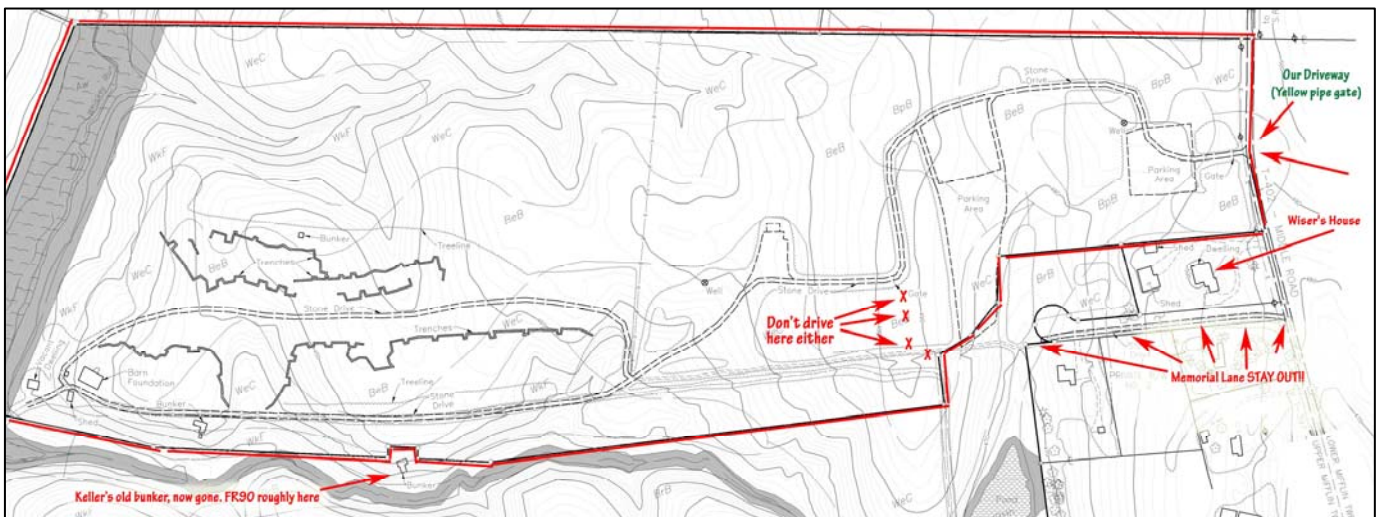
One other note: Steve, of course, needs to understand that our members a: do this for a hobby, b: are not rich, c: are not (all) stupid city boys. And that many just simply don't know all the ins and outs of the site. It's a sin of ignorance, not of malicious intent.

Signage

We need more signage—no, not a big skull and crossbones with "Trespassers will be shot" or "Poison gas in use" on them. Joe White of IR92 has made us some great new signs!! Thanks Joe!

Another Thing to Help

It's my belief that the East end of the parking lot needs to be blocked off or gated — certainly during events! Same with the road that continues on when we turn at



the gate/registration shed (thanks for fixing the gate Steve!). Last, where the road comes up past the CP authentic camp ground... That needs a visible, solid block. Guys need to respect Steve's (and other neighbor's) wishes and property rights. Do you really want to be a bad neighbor?

A note from Skampi, our President:

"The other neighbors who live off of Memorial Lane don't like it either, when GWA members drive on it. This was a problem back in 2007/08 and we made it go away. New folks think they have discovered something new and all they are doing is pissing off our neighbors."

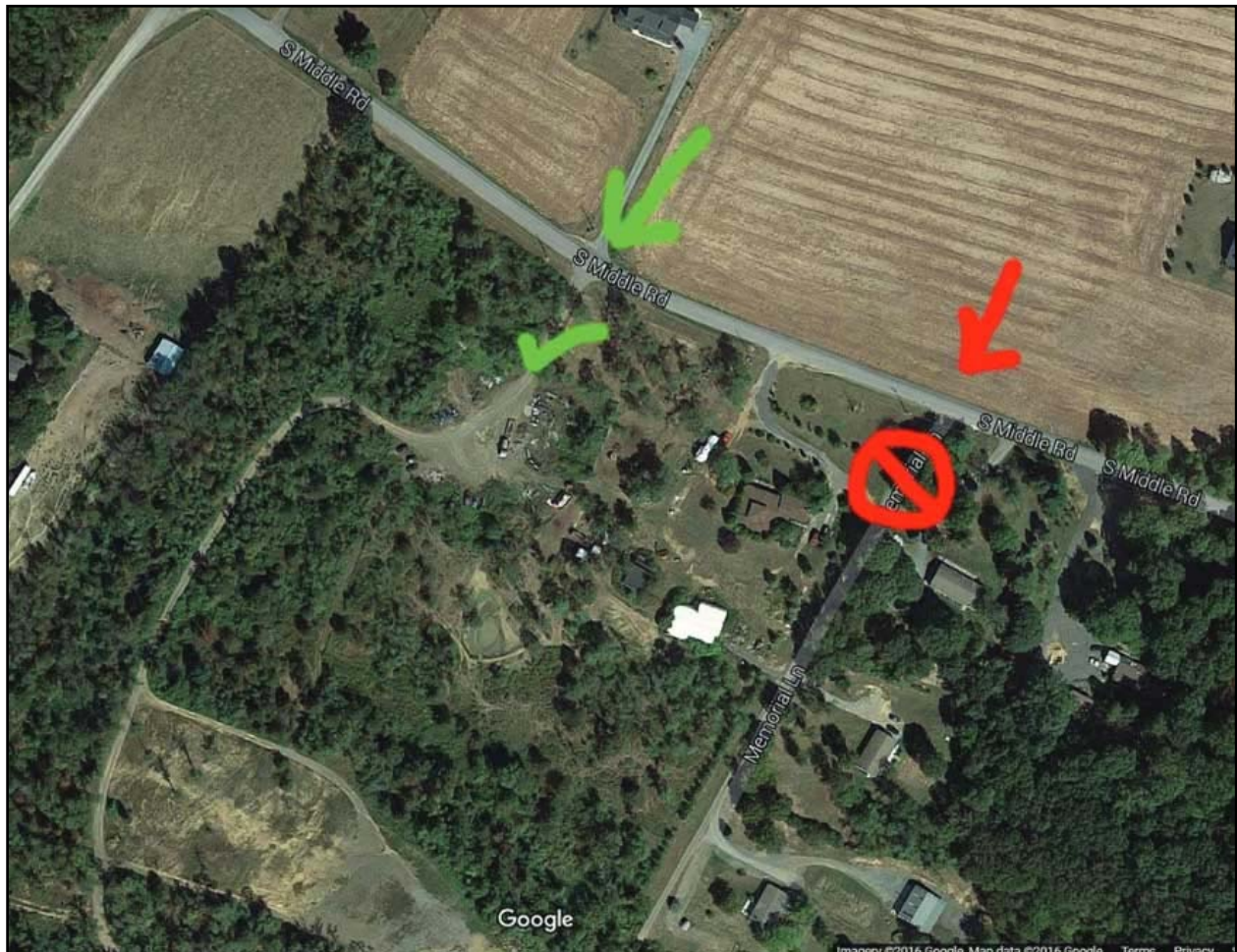
Our Fault

New people, we've probably let you down in not defining things exactly. Please don't assume just because you

saw someone else do something that it's okay ... If you have ANY questions as to the site, ask your Trenchmaster and the Reps.

As the GWA Secretary, I plan on improving communication and making things clearer. If you have a question, ASK, please don't assume. There are no dumb questions in the GWA. If you feel someone will laugh at you, PM, call or e-mail ME. I will do my best to help you or get you an answer - certainly, I can help you get with the person who CAN help you...

And again, please understand that our relationship with Steve Wiser is a symbiotic one. Steve looks out for our site and ... he is a member - both he and his wife Kim joined the GWA. A lot of problems in the past have been due to assumptions and we all know what happens when we "assume," **right?**





ph) [Crown Copyright Reserved]

Part of 1st Lancashire Fusiliers fixing bayonets for the Battle of the Somme, 1st July, 1916.

(The warrant officer on the right, fixing his bayonet, is Company Serjeant-Major E. Nelson.)

Why?

Why does *On the Wire* look so primitive and different this edition? Because I, the secretary Marsh, had to do it, due to Editor Mark Graef starting a new job and pressing real-life commitments. Also, because it's a **newsletter** -- I like to make newsletters look like newsletters and not something they're not. It has pix and whitespace because we don't actually have to pay for printing and postage, so we can have longer articles and colour. Yay. If you have an article, please send it in. :-)