

ON THE WIRE

1914 THE NEWSLETTER OF

SPRING '95

THE GREAT WAR ASSN. 1918

President's Address to the Membership

by Ernst Deksheimer
GWA President

GWA Spring Event

The GWA Spring National Combat Event will be held at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, VA on April 20-23, 1995. At the event we will hold nominations for new officers and will for the first time begin combat in the continually improved trenches during the day on Friday. *Plan on being there.* The Fall National will (said with confidence) be at the new National Event site at Newville, PA.

The State of the GWA

My friends and comrades, another year has come and gone in the wonderful world of WWI and I felt it was time to give you the "pulse" of the association. We had a significant year, filled with many changes, problems and victories. Yet, it is as we join together as a team that WWI reenacting grows to become what we want it to be.

Before I rattle off a litany of facts, let me praise each one of the membership who has stayed with the association through all of our stormy days (and years...). You stalwart few can take the praise for saving this organization and turning us back toward the path of greatness we used to be on. At the end of Shimpstown the GWA had 600+ members. Then came the years of Boy Scout camp, private farms and starter trenches at Ft. Pickett. Without trenches the membership melted away to barely over 200 members. Now I am happy to say that there are 383 members in the GWA and it is my belief that two years from now we will have over 1000 members. The easiest way I can think of to tell you how the GWA is doing is to list what our priorities were when you elected us and where we stand today in getting them accomplished:

1) Establish Ft. Pickett as a quality site—Trenches at Ft. Pickett

have been dug on twice now and will be enhanced again before the Spring Event. The scenarios have been good ones as the land is big enough with the woods to the west and plenty of distance between the two sides. The biggest drawback still remaining is that most members stay in barracks instead of underground bunkers. After this next event Ft. Pickett will revert to being a "Regional" site and will continue to serve our needs into the future.

2) Find a quality "National" Event site where we can purchase or lease land with good terms—Here I must give long-time member Rick Keller high marks. He convinced his friend Mark Anderson to purchase a site for us in Newville, PA. The land has been purchased, I have negotiated our relationship with Mark and the site is progressing through tests on soil, drainage and the like. We will (99.999% likely) be on this site for the Fall National with a very good start on the trenches and bunkers. The outpouring by members concerning making bunkers, admin buildings, etc... has been phenomenal (example 1R92 has committed to spend \$100.00 per unit member on their bunker).

Continued on page 9

Inside this Issue

§ Highly Info on the GWA Spring Combat Event at Ft. Pickett Virginia

§ Important News from the G-7

§ A Guide to Better Reenacting

§ Trench Raid; The Grim Handshake

On the Wire

Volume 6, #1 Spring 1995

On the Wire, the official newsletter of the Great War Association, is published three times a year in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. All contributions are welcomed, but we reserve the right to edit for length, spelling and content.

The views expressed herein are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of *OTW* or the officers and members of the GWA.

Editors /
Marsh Wise
Sue Fisher

Contributors:

Ernst Dekshheimer
Steve Fisher
Sue Fisher
Mike Gonzales
Tim Goodwin

Mike LoCicero
J.M. Murphy
Pete Tuttle
Marsh Wise

GWA Officers

President:
Craig Nordquist

Vice President:
Tim Goodwin

Treasurer:
Mike Moss

Allied Representative:
Pete Tuttle

Central Powers Representative:
Steve Fisher

Allied Combat Commander:
Mike LoCicero

Central Powers Combat Commander:
Mike Gonzales

Please direct all comments and articles to:

On the Wire
c/o: Marsh Wise
P.O. Box 1408
Annandale, VA 22003
(703) 642-2267

Words from the Editors Desk

by Marsh Wise & Sue Fisher
Editor *OTW*

Greetings! We're the news editors of *On the Wire*, Marsh Wise and Sue Fisher. We'd like to use this space to tell you about us and our plans to make *OTW* the premier newsletter of historical reenacting.

First off, a couple of short blurbs about us:

My name is Marshall Wise and I've been a member of **IR63** and the **GWA** since the Fall 1990 event. I have been doing newsletters in WWII a for a couple of years now and also edit **IR63's** newsletter **Der Frontsoldat**. I look forward to doing this newsletter because the level of participation is so much higher in WWI. With that level of participation, we hope to have many quality articles being sent in.

I am Sue Fisher of the **IR111** Ladies Auxiliary. I've been reenacting WWI since the Fall 1990 event also, and I am currently finishing my Masters in History. I have been studying WWI for 20 years. I look forward to working with everybody and trying to make *OTW* a first class newsletter, which is both informative and interesting, with your help.

We know, this issue has more German stuff in it, but we have *NO* Allied articles to put in this time, but we hope you will help us change that next time. As we both do German, we have access to a lot of German info but very little Allied stuff. *Please*, send us in articles, especially Allied Articles. There are some good Allied newsletters out there that can help us out. What we'd like is for you to send us some of your old back issues so that we may reprint good articles and share your valuable info with your fellow reenactors. Although we reenact German, we like all kinds of WWI info and read all we can get a hold of. Hell, we'd probably be *fascinated* by an article on French latrines or some such bit of WWI minutia, so send in that info. Don't worry if you think that you can't write, most people are better than they think and anyway we'll edit it for you and make it into a Pulitzer Prize-winning article! The **GWA** has a high proportion of knowledgeable people and we hope you will share your knowledge with the rest of us.

Please, please, please do not send in handwritten articles, it is just too time-consuming for us to type in the articles (no, we're not being lazy here). We need the articles to be *at least* typewritten (so we can scan them) as trying to type-in an article done in some people's handwriting is a torture that has to be tried to be understood! Better yet, as most folks these days have a computer

Continued on page 8

1995 GWA Spring Combat Event Information

by Tim Goodwin
GWA Vice President

rupt the planned scenarios. Anyone who intends to use this service should contact: Lou at (410) 479-0911 or, forward \$30.00 to:

Louis Ritter
204 S. Third St.
Denton, MD 21629

(Checks should be made out to L.H.C.A. or Combat Catering.)

Let Lou know at least one week prior to the event, so he can judge how much food to buy. **Money for meals will no longer be collected at the registration table.**

1. The GWA Spring Event will be held at Fort Pickett, Virginia on **April 21, 22 & 23**. Signs will be posted at the main gate directing you to the registration area. The G7 had hoped the Newville, PA site would be available for this event. Unfortunately, some of the environmental inspections are still being conducted.

2. We are going to try something a little different for the spring event—***This time it will be a two-day combat event!*** Combat will commence at noon Friday, immediately following a short safety meeting. It will continue throughout the day and will be terminated at the discretion of the two Combat Commanders. If you do plan on participating on Friday, please try to make the noon meeting. Late comers will be briefed and inspected as they arrive on the field. This will consist of passing-on pertinent range safety information, reviewing the basic Safety Regs, inspecting grenades/ammo and checking trench passes. (Please do not give the Range Guards a hassle about this!) All GWA members must register, have paid their 1995 GWA dues **and** have a valid trench pass prior to participating at the event (we **WILL** check this time!). Saturday's schedule will be similar to previous events.

3. Registration will take place in the same building as the flea market. The table will be manned from 0730 to 1100 hours on Friday and 0700 to 0900 hours on Saturday. The Germans will handle registration for this event (we need volunteers!!). The Fort Pickett event fee is \$15.00.

4. During registration, each member of the GWA is required to sign a liability waiver which states that you have read, understand and will follow the safety guidelines established by the GWA. Copies of these guidelines will be available at the registration table for new members.

5. Barracks will be available for those who wish to use them. The cost for staying in the barracks is \$5.00 per person. We need an accurate "head count" for the number of persons intending to use the barracks Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Please let your unit commander know if you intend to use the barracks. We will reserve only enough barracks space to accommodate the head count.

6. Authentic camping is permitted on the range, behind each line of trenches. You can also have a fire, but make sure it is in a dug pit surrounded by stones (per Range Ops). Ask at the registration table for additional details.

7. Combat Catering, Inc. has again volunteered to provide meals for this event. The cost is \$30.00 for the entire weekend. This includes five meals (Friday dinner / Saturday breakfast, lunch & dinner / Sunday breakfast). Saturday's lunch and dinner will be served in the field, weather permitting, so as not to inter-

8. Safety Meeting—Many GWA members have expressed concern that the Saturday morning meeting is far too long. In an effort to shorten the time we spend standing around, the following procedures will be enacted at this event.

A. The Saturday morning meeting must start on time. Plan on being in formation 10 minutes prior to commencement.

B. Unit commanders will brief their own troops concerning GWA safety regulations and have each member sign a copy of these regs (to be retained by the unit). How and when this briefing is to take place is at the discretion of the unit commanders. The GWA Safety Officer will only review safety issues which are unique to the Fort Pickett site.

C. Grenadiers will fall out for grenade inspection after the meeting is concluded.

D. The G-7 staff will make a concerted effort to keep the meeting focused and moving along.

9. Trench Passes **will be** checked this event. All members **must** carry a valid trench pass on their person. Last fall we had 179 members register for the event, yet 186 people attended the Safety meeting???

10. We need an EMT (or equivalent trained person) to participate during Friday's action. If you are an EMT qualified person and intend to play on Friday, please call Tim Goodwin at (614) 427-3544.

11. The flea market will be open all day Friday and until 0900 Saturday. Vendors can set up Thursday night, if they so desire.

12. All participants are asked to help police the area (both the combat site and around the barracks) before leaving Sunday morning. Based upon the last two events, there seems to be a small group of people who are doing the majority of the work. This last event, one of the barracks had to be recleaned before it would pass inspection. This places a hardship on those left behind to do the work. This must be an "all hands" effort!!! For those who left early last time, plan on staying this time!

Continued on page 8

Words from the GWA VP

by Tim Goodwin
GWA Vice President

GWA Officer Elections

Elections for GWA officers will be held at the GWA Fall Combat Event in November 1995. Nominations for the following offices will be made at the upcoming event:

Current Office Holders

President	Craig Nordquist
Vice President	Tim Goodwin
Treasurer	Mike Moss
Allied Representative	Pete Tuttle
German Representative	Steve Fisher
Allied	
Combat Commander	*Mike LoCicero
Central Powers	
Combat Commander	Mike Gonzales

* Mike LoCicero is serving out Phil Schreier's remaining term of office. Phil resigned his post earlier this year due to personal/business related reasons (much to the GWA's loss).

The GWA constitution limits all office holders to two consecutive two year terms, except for the combat commanders who have no term limits. With the exception of Mike Gonzales, the current officers will all be completing their first two year term. All seven individuals listed above are renominatable and reelectable.

In order to be on the final ballot for elections in November, all nominations (including those for returning any of the incumbents) must be made at the April event. Nominations will take place during the Saturday morning safety meeting. All capable individuals who would like to contribute to our organization as either an administrative officer or combat commander are encouraged to seek nomination. GWA members should feel under no obligation to always renominate or reelect incumbents. However, the overriding consideration should be the potential of the individual, or the proven record of the incumbent, to effectively manage or administer GWA affairs or lead in the field. These last couple years have been difficult ones for the GWA, as we had to cope with the loss of the Shimpstown site. We are now in a position where things appear to be coming back together. The Newville, PA site will be coming on-line in the near future, several regional sites (including Ft. Pickett) are being developed for our use and the procedures and guidelines under which we operate are in the process of being fine-tuned.

The new Administration (Nov 95 — Nov 97) will face a myriad of new problems and challenges as they take responsibility for

developing the Newville site and managing the anticipated rapid growth of the GWA (once the word gets out that we have "real" trenches again). Between now and the April event, please give some thought as to who you want to run our organization!!!

GWA Administrative Items from the Vice President

1. Constitution—Several amendments to the GWA Constitution have been proposed which would help streamline the administration of the GWA. Petitions will be circulated at the spring event for signature. Please take the time to carefully consider each proposal and sign the petition if you agree. Provided 50 signatures are obtained, these amendments will be voted upon in the fall. The amendments that are being put forth were developed within the Executive Committee (G-7) to better define certain gray areas within the existing Constitution. Anyone within our organization can propose amending the GWA constitution, solicit the required number of signatures and bring it to a vote. If there is something you feel strongly about, that needs to be changed, please bring it to the attention of the G7. If our answer does not suffice, a constitutional amendment is still an alternative.

2. NRA Membership—In order to be eligible for the NRA Group Insurance rate, 51% of the GWA membership must also be members of the NRA. This insurance coverage is for more economical than having to contract out for private insurance on a per event basis (like we did in the past). The loss of this coverage would mean the Association will no longer be able to extend liability coverage to regional events. At present, we barely meet this criteria. Past pleas, encouraging members to join the NRA, haven't had much effect. *Please* consider joining, or we will *all* end up paying a lot more for insurance. At present, our NRA insurance is costing the Association only \$7.00 per member annually. This is a good deal!

3. Fort Pickett—For those of you who haven't already heard, Fort Pickett is on the Brack Commission's 1995 hit list for base closures. Whether Fort Pickett will actually close is doubtful, considering that a lot of reserve training has already been consolidated at this site due to other base closures.

4. Safety—In our type of hobby, safety is of paramount importance! All members are expected to know and adhere to the GWA's safety guidelines and regulations. Four new amendments were added to the safety regs during the Unit Commanders' meeting in November. This document has also been reformatted to make it easier to read. Copies of the updated GWA Safety Guidelines will be available at the registration table (Spring '95 event). Any questions/concerns over safety should be referred to either Rick Keller (GWA Safety Officer) 717-264-6834 or Tim Goodwin (Safety Committee Chairman) 614-427-3544.

5. MP Section—A GWA sponsored MP Section is being formed to assist the G-7 in coordinating the National Event(s). This group would help supervise the various safety inspections, help control/direct traffic (as needed) and assist Unit Command-

ers in enforcing safety regulations in the field. Chip Nelson has volunteered to coordinate the efforts of this detachment. Anyone interested in serving as part of this detachment, contact Chip Nelson. Please keep in mind that the MP Section is a part-time, administrative function and should not interfere with your unit duties.

6. Regional Events—Two regional events will be held at Rosemont, Minnesota during 1995. These are scheduled for June 9-11 and September 29 - October 1. See the enclosed flyer for further details.

7. EMT's—One of the safety procedures under which the GWA operates is that we have *at least* one Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), or equivalent trained person, on the field at all times during combat.

According to GWA records, ten of our fellow reenactors possess some form of medical training. These are: **David Ackerman, Eric Alsager, Bill Baas, Mike Bowman, David Brill, Marvin Chadab, Kevin Dawson, Lauren Blakley, Bill Garofalo, and Matthew Riegel.** The GWA would like to thank those listed above (and anyone we may have missed) for their constant willingness over the years to standby in case of an emergency. These are the folks that help to ensure we have a safe and enjoyable hobby. If anyone else possesses some form of medical training and is not listed above, please let the registration table know so we can update our files. For your information—the GWA does possess its own medical kit and stretcher, which are available at each National Event.

8. Classified Ads—Beginning with this issue, *On the Wire* will include a classified section. Advertising is free for any type of service/informational ad and for those individuals wanting to buy/sell their own equipment. Professional dealers, "flea marketiers," etc. will be assessed a fee, based upon the size of their advertisement. Members simply wishing to sell off spare gear, etc. will be given a free ad. You may contact Tim Goodwin for details (614) 427-3544.

9. Unit Affiliation—Members are reminded that they must be affiliated with a specific unit in order to participate at GWA sponsored events (per our Constitution)!

10. Lost and Found Section:

- a) found at Ft. Pickett / Spring 94 German gas mask filter *
- b) found at Ft. Pickett / Fall 94 German wound badge *
- c) found at Ft. Pickett / Fall 94 Iron rimmed boot heel *
- d) lost at Ft. Pickett / Fall 94 German canteen w/cover *
- e) found at Scout Camp / Fall 93 Small revolver @
- f) found at Ft. Pickett / Spring 94 Pair of gym shoes @
- g) found at Ft. Pickett / Fall 94 German shovel @
- h) lost at Ft. Pickett / Spring 94 German canteen w/cover #

Key for Lost and Found Symbols

* contact Marc Benedict (717) 732-1161

@ contact Craig Nordquist (513) 729-1235

contact Tim Goodwin (614) 427-3544

GWA Spring Event Schedule of Events

Thursday April 20, 1995

- 1700 hrs Open select barracks for early arrivals
- 1800 — 2300 hrs Flea Market area open for set up

Friday — April 21, 1995

- 0730 — 2300 hrs Open Registration
- 1200 hrs All Forces Safety Meeting (Combat Site)
- 1230 — ??? hrs Trench Warfare (Combat Site)
- 1830 — 1930 hrs Dinner (Chow Hall)
- 1930 hrs G-7 Executive Committee Meeting (Chow Hall)

Saturday — April 22, 1995

- 0700 — 0900 hrs Open Registration
- 0700 — 0800 hrs Breakfast (Chow Hall)
- 0800 — 0830 hrs Unit Commanders Meeting (Chow Hall)
- 0900 hrs All Forces Safety Meeting (Combat Site)
- 0930 — 1230 hrs Trench Warfare (Combat Site)
- 1230 — 1330 hrs Lunch (Combat Site)
- 1330 — 1800 hrs Trench Warfare (Combat Site)
- 1800 — 1900 hrs Dinner (Combat Site)
- 1900 — ??? Night Trench Warfare (Combat Site)

Sunday — April 23, 1995

- 0700 — 0800 hrs Breakfast (Chow Hall)
- 0800 — 1000 hrs Police Barracks and Combat Site
- 1000 hrs Checkout and Inspect Buildings

Note: Saturday lunch and dinner will be in the field (weather permitting) ☐

Message from the Allied Representative

by Pete Tuttle
Allied Representative

The Spring '95 event at Ft. Pickett is approaching quickly, but I want you to look towards November '95 and the new national site for a moment. The subject is trenches! Our Trench Master, **Jeff Holder**, and several other volunteers, **Don Good** and **Todd Galle**, are undoubtedly working feverishly on the Allied Trench Plan. If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or wish to offer your services on the trench planning effort—write or call **Jeff**.

Let me publicly propose several key concepts on the management of the Allied trench system at the new site:

1. Priority of construction: First priority will be given to construction of the fire trench and primary "play" area. Communications trenches, secondary lines and bunkers will have a lesser priority. My rationale is that it is important that we have a quality trench to play in from the start. If we, **with our limited time and resources**, fragment our efforts between multiple lines of trenches, bunkers and other stuff, we will end up with a half-completed, half-assed play area. This is also a question of survival—if we construct a substandard system, then the GWA membership and the hobby in general will suffer. I suggest that we **as a entity**, at each semiannual event, work on one major area at a time, starting with the fire trench (this can include barbed wire entanglements, and listening posts). We need to finish this off—if we **all** participate in the construction—then we can get through quickly and go on to the next item on the priority list. Construction of a full scale trench system with bunkers, dugouts and all the comforts of home will take a long time. If we take this process a step at a time, and do a quality job at what we do, we will end up with something that we will all be proud of. Besides, priority of construction in the Great War was given to fighting positions first!

2. Ownership of fire trench and main "play" area: **No unit will "own" any part of the fire trench, listening posts or the overall Allied Forces Command Bunker.** They are considered common property of the Allies. The rationale for this is that we have to build the fire trench and play area from scratch and it is a lot of work. Maintenance of the area over the years will require a major effort on **all** our parts. For years units and individuals have pissed and moaned (rightfully so) that they have worked very hard on one trench area, only to be moved out of it the next year, thus failing to enjoy the fruits of their labor. I propose that the fire trench be built to a "minimum standard" that the Trench Master will develop and that we all participate in its construction to that standard. When we are done construct-

ing the fire trench to this minimum standard, we can **then, and only then**, "divide up" the fire trench into French/Russian, British, and American sectors and those respective commanders will allow "tailoring" of their respective fire trench areas to reflect the personality of those forces. I would encourage those commanders not to subdivide their areas into unit areas (since units come and go and lose enthusiasm over time). I do, however, encourage units to bring some type of transportable or reusable goodies that they can use in the area of the fire trench they occupy in any one year—and they can reuse in any other area they occupy the next year.

3. Ownership of bunkers, dugouts and secondary trench lines. I propose that **once we finish the fire trench, main play area and communications trenches**, that we dig the secondary trench line and associated dugouts and bunkers. There will be lots of space for unit bunkers and dugouts and any Allied units that wish to construct bunkers and dugouts should be allowed to. **Units can "own" bunkers and dugouts**, but, there will be a minimum standard (safety and authenticity) for bunker and dugout construction set that units will adhere to; then units can embellish and tailor to taste (not taking away from the minimums). I also suggest that these proposed bunkers be laid out on the Trench Master's overall trench plan and the Trench Master be the approving authority for where, when, how and by whom bunkers and dugouts are constructed. This way we will have no visual abortions or bunkers/dugouts constructed unauthentically all over the place. At this juncture, I have the same opinion on the secondary trenches that I have on the fire trenches—common ownership.

Feel free to correspond with me directly or with the Allied Trench Master concerning these concepts. If we get down the road to the point of publishing final guidelines, your silence will undoubtedly translate into your tacit consent.

Welcome aboard to Mike LoCicero! Good luck and Hun Hunting.

A side issue: I suggest some serious debate among Easterners concerning the use of Ft. Pickett as a regional or special event site. If we wish to do more than two (2) GWA national events a year, you need to figure out how and when you want to approach the Ft. Pickett staff and coordinate future regional events.

See you in the trenches.

Pete

Peter G. Tuttle
Allied Representative

Words from the Central Powers Representative

by Steve Fisher
Central Powers Representative

Kameraden, since my last communication did not find its way into the last *On the Wire*, I will begin by giving you my new address:

6658 Longwoods Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46254 (317) 328-7851.

Thank you all for your patience regarding our new trench site at Newville, PA. The delay has allowed all possible impediments to our use of the site to be addressed by the landowner. We should actually be able to get on the land very soon. The German Trenchmaster, Rick Keller, has asked that units contact him with possible weekends this summer that they would be willing to come out to the site and work on the trenches. Please get with your unit commanders and plan on several possible dates.

All work on the trenches will be supervised by the trench master or his designated representative. If you have ideas, please contact me and get them approved first. Dugout plans also must be approved as to authenticity, as well as soundness of construction. The following members have been designated as "Trench Inspectors" and will be working for the Trenchmaster: Dave Gilginast (IR 92), Mike Ball (IR 111), Don Hongel (20 MG), and Ernie Cowan (12 MW). Their job is to make sure all construction work is authentic and especially that it is safe and will last. They all have extensive experience in construction. Please cooperate with them.

Our priority of construction will be: the front lines first (including LP's) and will work our way backward with primary

communicators. The front line will be manned on a rotating basis; no one will "own" their own section of front line. Our third line will have sections assigned to units on a semi-permanent basis. Areas for bunker construction will be designated and assigned to units when they indicate they are ready to begin construction. Don't worry—there is plenty of room.

Remember, all construction must be approved as to authenticity and durability. The war only lasted four years, we will be here much longer. As much as we all loved the Shimpstown site, I think we can also agree that there was room for improvement. We may be able to get extra development money by renting the site out to film companies. This is yet another reason for ensuring a quality environment for our battles.

And now for a bit of Hate.... As we approach the end of the fourth year of war, we Germans must take heart that the battle lines are everywhere outside our own beloved Fatherland. Although the world has conspired against us in jealousy of our Reich, we shall never go under! We have defeated the colossus in the East; Rumania has been beaten; and vile Serbia ground under our heel. We must remain steadfast and drive the French and British armies into the sea before the American interlopers can make their presence felt. Kameraden!

Stand firm for your Kaiser, König, and Vaterland!!!

Steve

Oblt. Stefan Fischer
CentralPowers Representative

March 6, 1995

Gentlemen;

As many of you have heard, Captain Schreier has relinquished his post as Allied Combat Commander. At this time, I would like to extend my thanks to him for all of his many efforts on behalf of the GWA. Phil worked tirelessly with his G-7 colleagues during difficult times. He certainly deserves a salute from all of us!

As for myself, my name is Michael LoCicero. This is my twelfth year of reenacting with the GWA. Until recently, I was attached to the Allied staff as a Lieutenant of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. I look forward to assisting the GWA membership in making our WWI living history event one of the most realistic and, dare I say, enjoyable around.

Finally, I would like to request that all unit commanders in the Allied Forces provide for their formations two (2) shovels and one (1) pick for the April event.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Lowe

Captain Michael S. Lowe (LoCicero)
D.C.L.I. Att. Allied Composite Brigade

13. All members should review the following basic guidelines about reenacting aboard the Fort Pickett military reservation:

- There will be no discharging of weapons around the barracks/flea market (this is considered a residential area).
- No alcohol is permitted on the field **AT ANY TIME**. This will be grounds for expulsion. Our combat site is located on an active army training range.
- Do not use red smoke or red flares during tactical situations. This is the signal for an actual casualty.
- If you find anything on the field that looks like live ordnance, leave it alone and report it's location up your chain-of-command.
- Base facilities, such as the PX, commissary and theater, are only for active duty or reserve personnel (No, being a WWI Doughboy does not count).
- Do not park your cars in front of or alongside the barracks, except for loading equipment. Use the designated parking areas.
- Follow the posted speed—the MP's will issue you a ticket, even if you are only going 5 M.P.H. over the limit.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING** is permitted in the barracks or chow halls—this is a base regulation.

14. Admin Note—**Phil Schreier** recently resigned his position as Allied Combat Commander due to personal/work-related reasons (GWA's loss). **Mike LoCicero** has been appointed as Phil's successor until the upcoming election. The Allies should contact Mike to discuss any field activities for this event.

15. If you have any questions concerning this event, contact your unit commander. If he is unavailable and you need an immediate answer, then call one of the following:

Craig Nordquist (GWA/President) at 513-729-1235

Tim Goodwin (GWA/VP) at 614-427-3544

Steve Fisher (Central Powers Rep) at 317-328-7851

Pete Tuttle (Allied Rep) at 703-522-1586

PS—BRING PLENTY OF AMMO!!!

Tim

Tim Goodwin
GWA Vice President

or access to one, try and send us the article on disk. We can import almost anything into the program we're using (PageMaker 5.0), even Macintosh stuff. We also would like your good photos or line art of WWI reenacting or stuff to publish with your article, but please send a self-addressed, stamped mailer to return it with and, to be safe put your name and info on the back of the photo or art.

Our hope is in the near future [next issue??] to change *OTW* to a newspaper format. Why you ask? Well the newspaper format would give us more information space and, get this, it looks like it could be cheaper to print! As it stands now, *OTW* is photocopied, which is quite expensive when you multiply it by 300-500 times! Anyway, that's our goal! We hope to have more info on this soon!

Last, but certainly **not least**, we'd like to thank outgoing Editor **Tim Everhart** for his years of service. He really deserves the GWA's thanks for doing *OTW* over the years. Being Editor of a newsletter is one of those jobs that tend to be much harder than they look; kind of like being the Vice President. So thanks Tim and good luck in the future.

Well that's our bit for this month, we look forward to working with all of you and hope to see you at Ft. Pickett.

Sue & Marsh



3) Upgrade the "Constitution of the GWA" to reflect our current situation—At the Spring National this year we will ask for you to affix your signature to a petition for a vote on many changes to our Constitution (worked on and submitted by the Bylaws Sub-Committee). As a preview, here are the basic changes we will be proposing:

~Change the name "Constitution of the GWA" to "By-laws of the GWA."

~Define membership with distinctions for different impressions (combatants, non-combatants, etc...)

~Establish rules to ensure each member's compliance on safety rules, bylaws and drug and/or alcohol abuse.

~Set standards for units to help them grow and work better within the GWA

~Establish the concept of "National" and "Regional" events

~Define the purpose of GWA monies and assets

~Define how event fees and dues are established and changed

~Clarify what happens to all assets if the association ever disbands

~Establish the position of a Military Police Representative and his duties

~Reverse the chairmanship of the Authenticity and Scenario Committees (currently the reps chair the Scenario and the Combat Commanders the Authenticity)

~Establish who the Rep is for member units to the G-7 (Admin. Committee)

~Define clearly the responsibility of the G-7

~Allow us to amend the Bylaws at the Spring, as well as, the Fall National Event (currently it takes as much as a year and a half to make any changes to our structure)

~Clarify how elections are to be held

~Provide the opportunity for absentee voting

Note: this has been a Herculean effort which is vital in allowing

us to grow in size without as many problems. We need your support to pass these changes.

4) Make the *On The Wire* a better tool for our use—Tim Everhart deserves a lot of praise for his tenure as editor of the *OTW*. With the change in editors, *OTW* will feature new sections such as: "A Guide to Better Reenacting" and will also have a section for suttlers to hawk their wares, thus making the newsletter [hopefully!] somewhat self-sustaining, as well as, giving our members easier access to sources for improving their impressions. Finally, *OTW* will come out three times a year (one the month before the Spring National, one in late June or July and one the month before the Fall National) instead of two to give more timely info on events, news, etc...

5) Work toward merging with or uniting all WWI reenactment organizations to provide better standards and more national unity—The Great War Historical Society, The Unified Western Front Association and other unaffiliated WWI groups such as the one in Texas have been contacted and the work begun. This will be a major goal for the balance of this administration.

6) Keep the membership better informed on the issues and upcoming events—Much praise here belongs to our Vice-President/Secretary Tim Goodwin who has diligently written volumes to each Unit Representative. A major part in continuing this effort will be the forthcoming upgrade of the "On The Wire" publication.

Well, there you have it. Much more has been done and obviously, much is left to do. We have made a good start and with your help this year, we will fulfill the promises we made when you entrusted us with your organization. My one request of you all is that you would fight hard to keep your unit and personal authenticity and impression standards very high. As we do this the GWA will flourish and become a beacon to the rest of the re-enactment community and historical groups.

The ship is fine. Stay on-board and keep paddling!!!!

E. Deksheimer

President
Great War Association

Award Documents

Kameraden,

In these many years of your Great War „service,” has your unit issued you an award? The Iron Cross First or Second Class? Both? The War Service Help Cross? A Wound Badge? Perhaps you’ve even been awarded the PLM? And yet those „REMFS in admin still haven’t gotten that award document to you?

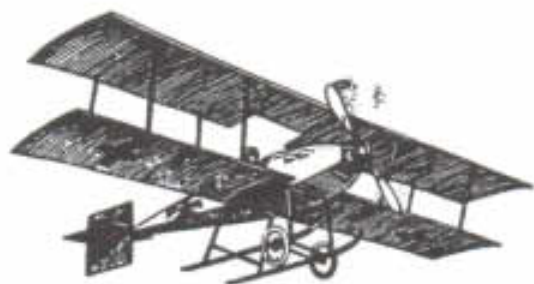
As your Combat Commander, I’ll be happy to intervene on your behalf! Send me the following information: 1) your German name 2) your rank 3) your Kompanie and Regiment numbers 4) the date you remember receiving the award (i.e.: 17 Juni 1918).

Please enclose two (2) .32¢ postage stamps and... in short order, you’ll receive the proper Besitzzeugnis and Verleihen Urkunde for you decoration!

Send your requests to:

Michael E. Gonzales, 2145 NE 36th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111.

AEROSPACE *America*



Fellow Historical recreationist:

Once again **Aerospace America** will be honoring our nations military history at this years air show. Each year the involvement of reenactors gets bigger and better, last year tens of thousands of spectators perused our display area, this year hundreds of thousands are expected! **Now you are invited!**

This year we're receiving extensive support from the **American Military Vehicle Collectors Club**. Present will be tanks, half-tracks, trucks, jeeps, and the 45th Museums own VC-1 Command Car. For us Great War types there will be a 1:1 scale **Fokker DVII** parked right in among us! This aircraft is one of the best recreations flying, down to the correct German gauges, the type wood and canvas used, and the twin Maxim machine guns!

The theme of the show this year is "**War Birds!**" Present will be all the famous combat aircraft of WWII, **P-40's**, **P-51's**, **B-17's**, a **He-111**, a **Me-109**, several **Japanese Zeros**, and many, many more! Of course all the modern stuff will be here also, to include the **B-2 Bomber**—one of only four still flying!

Participants will receive:

- ✧ Free gate passes for all three days
- ✧ Free VIP parking passes
- ✧ Free fuel for military display vehicles
- ✧ A hot breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday
- ✧ An invitation to all airshow social functions
- ✧ Special motel room rates, or if you prefer, you can bivouac on site (these benefits apply to each participant and his immediate family!)

Gentlemen, here's the important part: I need to have each person interested in coming to have filled out and returned to me a confirmation form **NO LATER THAN 30 April 1995**. Or... you can call me and I'll fill out the form for you over the phone. I can be reached at my office: (405) 424-5313, or at home: (405) 942-0443.

For the last three years, the reenactors have been a huge hit at this largest air show in America, here's your chance to be a part of it! There will be lots of display space to show off all that neat stuff you can't bring to an event. We'll have both indoor and outdoor exhibit areas. So mark the dates on your calendar, 16, 17, 18 June, 1995. Let me hear from you soon!

Most sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Mike".

Michael E. Gonzales
WWI Reenactor Coordinator
Aerospace America
2145 NE 36th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111

MILITARY RE-ENACTORS APPEARANCE CONFIRMATION

If you would like to be considered for participation in the Military Re-enactors Display at Aerospace America '95, we ask that you provide us with the following information. The theme for this year's airshow is the anniversary of the "Allied Victory in WWII" so please bear that in mind when planning a uniform to wear or when you are putting together a display. This year we are trying to limit our period uniforms and military display vehicles to dates ranging from WWI through the end of WWII.

- ☐ You can count on me to be there.
☐ I am interested in attending but am as yet undecided.

(If you need more room, use the back of the paper - if you have many interested people, feel free to photocopy this form)

Please print legibly

Participant _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Total number of non-participants accompanying the participants named on this sheet _____

How many parking passes will you need? (one per POV and one per military vehicle) _____

Will you be bringing a Recreational Vehicle? (no water or sanitary facilities in the RV parking area) _____

How many motel rooms will you be needing? _____ Do you plan to stay in the display area at night _____

What uniform(s) will you be wearing during the airshow (please be specific about period, markings, personal equipment, weapons carried, etc.)?

Indoor Displays

How many 6 ft. tables will you need (quantities may be limited) _____

Generally, what will your display consist of _____

Outdoor Displays

How many 15 ft. wide by 20 ft. deep areas will you need _____

Generally, what will your display consist of _____

Will you need electricity and what will you be plugging into it _____

Note: There will not be any overhead cover in the outdoor area so you will need to bring your own if you so desire.

A Guide to Better Reenacting

by Ernst Deksheimer
1963

Many if not most of the membership of the GWA have reenacted for years. Romans, Vikings, French and Indian War, Civil War, WWI, WWII and others... you have portrayed many of the soldiers which have made our world what it is today. I, myself have been in reenacting for over twenty three years and must tell you that WWI reenacting is unlike any other reenacting I have ever done. The battles are more realistic, the impressions more authentic and this organization more responsive to its membership. I still get a thrill going „over the top“ under cover of a smoke barrage or from the night combat, crawling through the wire (or being terrified when late at night I hear the enemy cutting their way through my own section of wire!!). Sleeping in a cramped bunker, on a too-short wood slat bunk with fifteen other men wearing sweat ridden wool uniforms and exhausting the by-products of their dinner gives me the feeling that I am in 1918 and really fighting for my life (sometimes with beans for dinner I really am!!).

Let's face it... reenacting is trying to put yourself in another time and place. It is frankly a difficult challenge to transport not only our WWI clothed bodies to this mystical land of trenches, bunkers and mud, but to bring along our minds too. Our minds can be at home playing with our kids, at work solving a difficult problem or even reliving a great memory while our bodies are moving toward the enemy and the gas and grenades are thick. I don't know how many of you have experienced it but I can distinctly remember several times when I "made it" and actually felt I had been transported to 1918. The first time happened in 1981 when I was at my first Fall event. The enemy blew their whistles and came in three separate waves over the top. I felt confident as the enemy drew nearer, seeing our men at the ready with rifles and water-cooled 08-15 machine-guns, but the enemy fired smoke shells and the field in front became invisible... and I began to panic. The enemy appeared suddenly only 10 meters away and in a sudden impulse... I threw down my rifle and ran. Funny, huh? One other time I was separated from my regiment and caught in a cross-fire by the enemy. I fell, wounded in the chest and by accident slid down into the creek. I laid there with the cool water

splashing over me and I "felt" the agony and helplessness. As I laid there, the sounds of rifle shots and grenade explosions disappeared and the quiet peaceful sounds of the splashing water and a bird chirping filled my mind. I was there.

While the feelings of actually being transported to the trenches of 1918 are rare, the effort we make throughout the weekend for a strong degree of realism is well rewarded. Many call it "living history," I call it doing WWI right! For me it starts when I pack for the drive to the event. Did you know that in my twenty-three years of reenacting I have never traveled to an event site with "civilian" clothes on. I don't know why... but doing so sort of puts me in the mood for the event. (It also gives me a way to talk a cop out of giving me a ticket!!) Some of the other keys to "putting myself there" are... working toward having the most authentic kit possible, not carrying anything farby, keeping my speech WWI in the trenches and bunkers, speaking with an accent or in German (for us Germans) when possible, having a mail call and other "normal" daily period activities and finally, respecting what a grenade, rifle bullet or gas could do to me. I see many who charge up the hill in the face of a machine gun and actually make it to the top! As my friend Chris Aleo says... „in WWI, everyone dies!!“ Realism in everything we do is the key to bringing WWI alive. WWI reenacting is more to me than a place to „burn some powder“. It is a world gone by where I can put my body and my mind in an environment that allows me to relive the past. Whether I am in my bunker, drilling in the field or charging through the enemy wire, I am there... it is 1918.

As we begin this new section „A Guide to Better Reenacting“, it is my hope that each of us will examine our own impression with an eye toward more realism. In each issue of *ON THE WIRE* we will feature articles on the effect of grenades, gas or machine-guns to help us see what would really happen on a charge up the hill or maybe something on how the soldier lived in the trenches. We welcome you budding authors who would like to write an article about the life of soldiers of WWI. It will help all of us do a better job reenacting. It will help "put us there"—it is 1918.

Trench Raid, the Grim Handshake

by J.M. Murphy
edited by M. Wise
reprinted out of Kaiserzeit, Vol. IX, #4

When the word „Raid“ fell upon the tired ears of the Frontsoldat, fear came with a cold embrace, shattering any private illusion of survival. These trench fights were furious, lasting minutes or seconds. For the Soldat unlucky enough to „catch“ a raid, it could mean eternity or... a military hospital. The Frontsoldat thought always of family, friends, and the enemy beyond. Little else mattered. Those men who survived a few weeks or months at the front knew the terrible truth about raiding, battles darkest aspect.

Trench warfare represented an apparent retrogression to static defense. It left many thousands of soldiers to spend endless days and nights enduring the physical and psychological depredations of small earthen worlds, brimming with peril. The clash of nations in the Great War, began and ended with the great armies of Europe engaged in grand strategic offensive operations of varying success, while the remaining moments in between were tedious, and without conclusion.

Many times, soldiers entered sectors fighting for long or short periods, only to be withdrawn and forced to march off exhausted to enter the fray again somewhere else. Battle fronts hovered in half-climax, with each man wondering only whether his „destination“ would be quiet or rough.

The trench, a universally unappealing ditch, could be simple or intricate. The Allies and Central Powers faced off in the ground, with fortifications running parallel for many miles in the West. The distances between the trenchlines fluctuated between 25 to 1000 yards. This was the infamous „No-Man's Land,“ the apocalyptic boulevard of death. In No-Man's Land, troops perished in an unequal contest pitting them against the barbed-wire, bullet, shell and gas, during the sporadic offensive slugging matches called battles which were aimed at reducing the enemy strongholds.

Orthodox trench design boasted a primary line, behind which lay secondary and tertiary trenches functioning defensively should a first-line investment [breach] occur. Frontal fortifications followed nature's irregular contour, boasting redoubts resistant to the heaviest enemy artillery. Salients bristled with the machine gun and mortar, while barbed-wire screens drawn ragged across No-Man's Land, fronted salient positions.

Vertical communications trenches, or „boyaux,“ (the Allied name) connected successive trench lines. Made to facilitate supply and reinforcement, these trenches were priority targets. The fast building of boyaux, signaled offensive preparation and raised enemy suspicions. The troops constructed boyaux during darkness to limit devastating attacks on them. The communication trenches also allowed casualty collection and wire communication with the front. Boyaux were shallow, requiring a half-crouch for safe passage under the frequent shelling. Frontline troop

withdrawal following abnormal enemy activity before a raid, was made via boyaux. The arriving raiding party would find the primary trenchline empty, but once there, would receive a sharp counterattack.

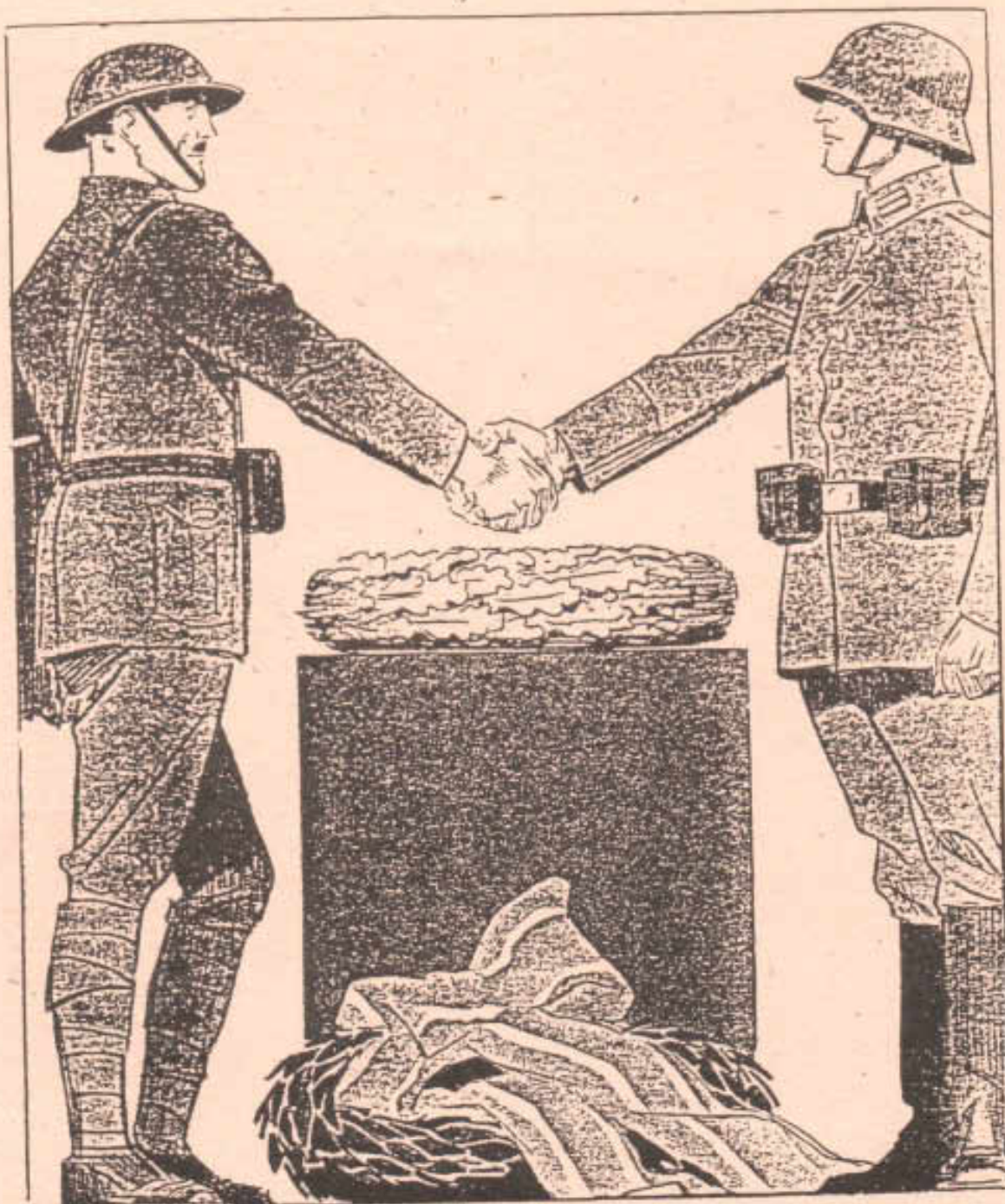
The raiders hope was for maximum success and minimum casualties. They counted success by totaling the dead, wounded, and prisoners. Accordingly, planners envisioned tactical surprise and disruption. A raid thrown hard against the enemy made headlines for a day (particularly if good news was scarce at that time). An attack served to remind the foe of the opposition's toughness, and was so intended. For the enemy battalion or corps commander, the pin-prick of a raid amounted to a nuisance, and at the most, he lost face. To the Frontsoldat though, the raid could mean everything.

Regimental staff operations and intelligence worked carefully to select a promising weak point in enemy defensive fortifications. With long-term analysis, careful intelligence might reveal the Achilles Heel of a sector held weakly in numbers, or suspect aggressive resolve evidenced by the failure to engage. A blind defensive area or sloppy upkeep on one's wirework were an invitation to wily adversaries. Regularity and intensity in artillery fire also permitted the relative gauging of each sides respective resolve. Continued barrages sent messages of preparedness, whilst small and sporadic salvos intimated weakness or temerity.

Tactical momentum demanded small raiding parties of fifteen to twenty men. Orders were routed from Regiment level to Kompanie, and detailed the time and troop numbers needed for the planned raid. NCOs brought bad luck, by selecting from the rank and file for experience, marksmanship, or an able throwing arm. If picked, the long approach of „H-Hour“ became burdensome, inducing an apprehension equal to the surprise suffered by the enemy. Marching to the rear areas, raiders began the rehearsal for the raid.

In the practice zone, raiders constructed approximate mock-up target trenches. Observation balloons and aeroplanes permitted often close detail to be included in the exemplar trenches, much to the benefit of raiders in the darkness. To ensure victory, soldiers practiced operational details repetitively. A hundred men might rehearse the action, but much fewer would actually conduct the raid.

„H-Hour“ (the jump-off time), marked the conclusion of the artillery preparation, or as it is sometimes known, target softening. Artillerists determined range and elevation beforehand by dropping occasional rounds in enemy areas. Then, extensive preparatory shelling served to destroy local defensive works, and disrupt enemy personnel. The barrage was then crept forward slowly. Where defense wire could stop or impede progress, high explosive broke apart the long wire into small scattered lengths which were readily passable. Larger calibre shells easily buried wire, providing simultaneously a scalloped and concealing earth allowing good cover from enemy fire. The raiders quickly followed the shells, whilst the maelstrom of destructive steel warned



©1995 Great War Association

On the Wire is published as a nonprofit venture to increase knowledge about the Great War and as a newsletter for the Great War Association (GWA).

The contents of *On the Wire* are the property of the GWA, and may not be sold or traded. The contents of this magazine may be freely reproduced or republished in whole or in part in any free publication dedicated to the furthering of knowledge and interest in the Great War. Proper credit must be given to *On the Wire*, the author and/or any other original sources.

Pages, articles, text or original artwork may not be reproduced or used in any commercial publication, advertisement, or catalog without the express written permission of the President of the GWA.

Anyone interested in joining the GWA should contact:

GWA Treasurer Mike Moss
456 North New Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Storm of Steel

Federal Class I & III Military Firearms Dealer
1050 St. John Street
Easton, PA 18042
Telephone: (610) 253-9385
Fax: (610) 253-3210

Supplying all your WWI firearms needs including:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SMLE Enfield | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mannlicher |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lebel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carcano |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berthier | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> US M1903/1917 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gewehr 98/Kar98a | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moisen Nagant M1891 |

Pistols

Machine Guns

Bayonets

- Reenactor through Collector grades available!
- Fair and honest service and pricing
- Buy, sell and trade

Michael Moss
(610) 253-9385 days

*All ATF rules apply
F.F.L. No. 8-23-048-01-5P-36650
E.L.N. No. 23-201-6633

Jim Michaud
(516) 678-5156 evenings

the defenders to beware of their approach. Available reserve forces were rushed forward to face the attackers. When necessary though, the artillery discharged "curtain-fire", into the enemy communication trenches to preclude rapid counterattack or safe reinforcement. The injured of course usually repaid this bombardment punctually with a return shelling.

In dry soil conditions or hot weather, the shell bursts produced choking dust clouds, making advance difficult. Only enclosed dugouts gave relief from this condition.

Another hazard in No-Man's Land was poison gas. The lethal agents contained in the gas shells, caused death and toxic suffering amongst the exposed troops. Shells contained most prominently: chlorine, phosgene, and dichlorodithyl sulfide (Mustard-Gas). Chlorine aerosols are yellow-green and cause major lung irritation and pulmonary edema. Phosgene produces a colorless gas causing hydrochloric acid and carbon monoxide to form within body tissues, leading to lung abscesses and pulmonary edema. Dichlorodithyl sulfide, commonly called "Mustard-Gas," is a vesicant eye, skin, and lung irritant causing frequently fatal pulmonary lesions. Gas shells were fired last to avoid dissipation by high explosive.

The raiders donned protective gasmasks, consisting of neutralizing chemically treated cloth (French and British), or a particle absorptive filtration assembly (German and Austrian). Coated circular lenses allowed for vision (albeit quite inadequate) in the drifting gas and darkness. Raiders carried secondary cloth masks or extra filters, for the persistent gases. Aerosols lay in low spots, and shell holes, being potent for days. Fortunately, natural elements degrade gas eventually, through wind dispersal or moisture dilution.

Before the raid, men left home-bound letters and personal effects with Kameraden. Identity tags left behind forestalled unit identification. A typical raid began this way:

... we blacked our faces... to prevent the whiteness of the skin from showing under the flare lights. This is also to distinguish our own men [from the enemy] when we reach the enemies trenches. We were served with persuader sticks or knuckle knives, and with grenades. The persuader is a short, heavy bludgeon with a nail-studded head. The Knuckle Knife is a short dagger with a heavy brass hilt that covers the hand. The barrage fire kept right up to zero, as per schedule. At exactly eleven, it stopped short... there was silence... And in that silence, over the top we went.

Raiders carried a wide variety of weapons across No-Man's Land, including firearms of sorts, knives, clubs, and explosives. The attackers worked rapidly to reach the enemy, using additional explosives (such as Bangalore torpedoes and Petards) on stubborn wire. Fermenting chaos, the raiders freely tossed Grenades into the enemy trenches before entering in search of victims.

Raiders topping trenches discovered soldiers burrowed to escape the fiery blast. Such men made easy prey as attackers fled along between parados and parapet. Alternately, the enemy offered determined resistance, or superior numbers. Assaultants broke-open dugouts, to fling grenades within. The attackers destroyed any machine guns or mortars they found. The raider

had to stay vigilant against counterattack while he worked to corner men for capture. He knew instinctively when the time grew short, and waited for the prearranged recall signal. If the raiders encountered some kind of impossible circumstance, they backed off to lick their wounds and regroup.

Remembering participation in a raid, Allied soldier R. D. Holmes counted the results:

"One party of twelve never returned... we lost seven men killed. The enemy loss was estimated at one hundred casualties, six machine guns, a mine shaft, and several dugouts... we also brought back documents of value... The best part though was getting back!"

After a bad scrape, returning alive seemed tantamount to divine favor. Debriefed, each raider told his story, while others tallied the substantive results. The men who did not return were the known dead, assumed dead/missing, or captured. Sometimes, raiders left behind hid to avoid death or capture, and shielded by fortune, later returned to their own lines. Officers awaited encouraging results, so as to justify their hard labors. Failure simply meant dead Kameraden, depression, and an anger which metamorphosed into a renewed effort.

Only veterans returned from a raid. If a novice survived, he became a veteran. Survival awareness developed within weeks, and was sharpened daily in the trenches thereafter. Soldiers learn through time, the brutal secrets of the frontline. The veterans, unlike new and untried replacements, had seen the enemy and more than once watched death strike. Whether patrolling No-Man's Land, or raiding, *experience meant preservation.*

Soldiers experiences during the Great War were for combatants on both sides, universal. The raid as a common small unit experience is integral to trench war, and reflects the character and organization of the participants. For common soldiers, the raid might mirror actions of high risk, simple obedience, self-preservation, devotion to trade, or presumably, even perceived principle. For the officer, the reasons could be the same and more, to include burdensome higher responsibility and military organization, the whole to be weighed irrevocably in fast battle with the enemy.

In developing tactical problems to high level, the art of raiding advanced organizationally into "shock" battalions (Sturmabteilungen) which were given specialized training. These units represented the final stage in raiding, indeed large raids occurred late in the war, carried out by these special troops. As always, the most careful preparation did not lessen the cost to victor or vanquished; the raid held unfaltering claim as the most unpious representative of the trench, a reputation which is unchanged today.