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# On the Wire

The Official Newsletter of the Great War Association

Fall 2024

## AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY TO NEWVILLE

In just a few days, upwards of 700 reenactors will converge on south central Pennsylvania, coming from as far away as Great Britain and the Netherlands. You may be wondering where you can get provisions, last-minute construction supplies or repair tools, and anything else you are certain to forget, without spending too much time away from the site. Here are some Newville-area businesses you may or may not be aware of (in no particular order):

**Saylor's Market:** Grocery store. Carries everything you'd expect at a grocery store with bakery and deli, plus made-to-order subs, soup & salad bar, and hot food bar. 37 Carlisle Rd., Newville. Open M-Sa 7-9, Su 8-7.

**Newville Auto & Hardware:** (formerly Bender's Hardware): Great selection of yard/garden, paint and related supplies, hardware of all kinds, tools, and a little bit of everything. Also propane fills, which will be on sale from Nov 7-9. 1 Rich St., Newville. Open M-F 8-5 and Sa 8-noon.

**Jaymee Lee's Quick Stop:** Convenience store with impressive fast-service food menu, daily specials, and grab-and-go hot sandwiches; coffees and slushies; cigarettes, ice, and the closest ATM to the site. 348 Doubling Gap Rd., Newville. Open M-Sa 6a-8:30p.

**Big Spring Pharmacy:** Full-service pharmacy with extensive OTC remedies, as well as cards and gifts. 91 S. High St., Newville. Open M-F 8:30-7 and Sa 8:30-2.

**Stakes Furniture:** Used furniture store with a lot of pieces; if you need a wooden chair or small table for your bunker, you just might find it there. 6 Cherry St., Newville. Open M-F 9-5 and Sa 9-noon.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2025 Spring Tactical:

**April 4-6**



Photo from 'Der Grosse Krieg in Bildern'

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# FROM THE CP COMBAT COMMANDER

Reenactors of the Central Powers,  
Meine Herren und Damen,



We are a few weeks out from the Fall event and I can say that we have a wonderful event planned with some great combat, as well as sufficient time for living history scenarios. The entire site is within the realm of combat scenarios, but I want to caveat that no offensive operations should be conducted outside of the limits of the trenches unless it comes from the Hauptquartier. Penetrations of enemy trench networks are reserved to major attacks. This ensures that rogue operations aren't conducted when we have scheduled down times, but rather when major offensive operations are directed can we go beyond the limits of our normal operating area. Saying that, please know that units can operate in all of no man's land without restrictions.

As part of controlling no man's land, it's beneficial to cut lanes through the enemy's wire obstacles, but we've had issues with units shredding wire (again) – sometimes into hundreds of foot long pieces. I am not aware of Central Powers units doing this, but we have been the recipients of this insidious tactic. I brought this to the Entente Commander and he will address it with his command as well. Let me be clear – we do not shred wire obstacles, we only cut lanes. The reason for this is that wire is expensive and we as reenactors pay for it. Wire is an integral part of our overall experience and for our enjoyment, not something to destroy. In fact, we don't destroy obstacles or other items that are part of the site or its improvements. We can move and adjust things or cut lanes, but every time we actively destroy something that needs to be replaced, it increases the cost of reenacting for someone else; retribution for stupidity only transfers that cost to us all. It doesn't matter what flavor of uniform someone wears, we are all reenactors, we all spend significant amount of resources to reenact, and we share a common brotherhood amongst us all as GWA members. Let's never forget this point.

We will conduct the Thursday training again this event. This was very beneficial for those who attended the Spring Schule and the Fall's training will consist of a little drill, offensive tactics, and defensive/delaying tactics. For each event we will pick different topics to address so attending the Schule each event is good for gaining the well-rounded training to make you a better reenactor and leader in the hobby. Reenactor development is one of the pillars which I campaigned on and it is one of the most important things we will do under my time as Combat Commander. I do not want to be the Combat Commander forever – I have things I want to accomplish and then I wish to turn it over to someone else. Whoever that is, he needs to have the requisite skills to effectively lead our hobby into the future. However, I don't believe in picking a replacement and pushing his candidacy. I believe we train everyone and allow the cream to rise to the top. Of the Central Powers commanders above the unit level, we have an officer in his 40s, one in his 50s, one in his 60s, and three in their 70s. This is by design to implement my initial designs, but we must provide for our replacements and the replacement

## FROM THE CP COMBAT COMMANDER

(continued from p. 2 )

of those replacements. If we aren't training our future leaders, it will only haunt us in the future. It is my responsibility to develop everyone who wishes to grow in leadership responsibilities across the generations and develop everyone to the best of their capabilities. Leadership is a learned skill so anyone is possible of leading well. However, I demand the highest expectations from leaders – the higher the rank you wear, the more you sacrifice for those you lead – that's just the way great leadership has worked for millennium and the basis for German leadership principles (Auftragstaktik).

We are growing and I am dedicated to ensuring our growth has somewhere to go. I met with the Allied Commander in the Spring and we agreed to general areas of growth; this Fall we will meet with the Site Committee to codify that plan for our future. I'm excited for our future and you should be as well.

This event reintroduces the Rotes Kreuz as a combat enabler for us. They will no longer be located at the old DRK pavilion, but rather provide support in the general area around the Hauptquartier assisting with repatriating Central Powers Soldaten and supporting humanitarian aid in regards to the Entente prisoners as we process and interrogate them. In the end, they work with the Swiss in the humanitarian area and act in some way as our liaison with them as well as noncombatant support. Please support their endeavors as much as possible and make them welcome. That being said, we are in need of someone to interrogate and process prisoners. In addition to the RK, a Soldat has volunteered to process Feldpost for us. Feldpost packages and letters can be dropped off at the Hauptquartier and will be delivered to the units in batches from our Feldpost. Let us also welcome PB13 as a new unit. They are a Württemberg Pionier unit working with IR124 and PB14. It is my belief that diversification of impressions is the key to growth in the hobby by providing depth to our experiences. If there is an impression you're interested in, please approach me to find a way to incorporate you into what we do. In one year's time we've seen the addition of a chaplain, Feldpost, artillery, and reintroduction of the RK. These are in addition to a cobbler, cooks, mortarmen, flamethrowers, telephone communications, etc. we've had for a while. The hobby has so many things we can do, so before you think you're too old, too broken, or too bored, look at your skills and interests and work towards a new impression we can add to the hobby. In my experience, you need three things to introduce a new capability into the hobby: 1) someone interested, 2) the material requirements, and 3) a commander who will incorporate it. I'm willing to employ just about anything reasonable – it's up to each of you to bring it forward and our imaginations are the only thing holding us back.

I'm excited for the Fall event and think we've developed a great event and scenarios. Lean forward and let's give our best to this event! I should be arriving Tuesday - see y'all in the trenches!

„Wir haben einen Willen; Sieg oder Todt!“

Hauptmann Otto Landrik

Mike Landree

## FROM THE ALLIED COMBAT COMMANDER

### Fall Event Preparation



As we approach the fall event, I just wanted to convey some basic information. I have been working closely with my German Counterpart, Mike Landree, and I believe we have a great event planned out for you. It has the tactical elements we have come to love and attribute to the GWA. We will be using more of the property for certain tactical scenarios, and the roads are in play during unrestricted combat times, BUT only if accessed through the trenches, so end runs around the trenches to access the rear roads is still not allowed. The schedule also allows for period down time, training, and yes, plenty of time to be reacquainted with old and new friends. The key to any good event is balance, and Mike and I keep that in mind when designing the events.

Remember to listen to your NCO's and officers, and do not take the war into your own hands and go rogue. They didn't, you shouldn't; it's not safe, and the event has time frames. Everyone will see plenty of action. Look after the new guys, bring plenty of ammo, take your hits, and most importantly, stay safe.

Remember, you make the event what it is: everyone contributes. Wearing your kit correctly, doing a mail call, immersing yourself in the misery of the trenches, the way you carry yourself, doing the mundane tasks of a water run or filling sandbags, all add to the realism of what we do. What I am most proud of with the allied side is how much everyone brings to the experience. Keep up those efforts — it makes a big impact!

"Pulling Back the Curtains on the Allied Battalion, Part 2" will be coming in a future OTW.

Cheers,

Bret Werner  
Allied Commander

## EVENT SCHEDULE

### Thursday

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.: Registration / Check-In / Voting

7:00 p.m. - GWA Social - at the Chateau on the French line / showing of "Paths of Glory" \*\*ALL ARE WELCOME\*\*

### Friday

11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.: Pyro Inspection, near registration shack (late arrivals report to your side's safety officer for inspection)

12:00 p.m.: Registration / Check-In / Voting Opens

1:00 p.m.: Living History activities begin

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.: Mandatory New Recruit Safety Training, at the Fusilier Crater in No Man's Land

4:00 p.m. Gate closes

5:00 p.m.: Mandatory for All Participants GWA Safety Briefing in Formation - at the Memorial

6:00 p.m.: Registration / Check-In / Voting Closes

6:00 p.m.: Unrestricted combat begins

10:00 p.m.: Unrestricted combat ends; restricted combat / living history activities begin

### Saturday

7:00 a.m.: Restricted combat / living history

8:00 a.m.: Make-up New Recruit Safety Training, with each side's respective Safety Officer.

8:30 a.m.: Unrestricted combat resumes.

9:00 p.m.: Combat ends

### Sunday

Clean up.

8:00 a.m. GWA Town Hall Meeting with the President, Allied & CP Representatives

**AT THE END OF THE EVENT, BE SURE TO POLICE UP YOUR TRASH AND TAKE IT TO THE DUMPSTERS UP FRONT.**

**Please don't leave it for someone else to pick up.**

**ALSO, PLEASE NOTE: Lumber, bricks, cinderblocks, tin, or any kind of construction material should never be placed in dumpsters. There is a use for it as rubble and debris around existing and planned structures - contact any Site Committee or G-8 member for info on where to put these materials.**

# THE GERMAN CHAPLAINCY OF THE GREAT WAR

By Tyler Holcomb, CP Feldgeistlicher  
Infanterie-Regiment 52 von Alvensleben

The spiritual care of an army is one of the more personal topics in military history. Amidst the staggering artillery barrages and crackling machine guns of the Great War lie a quieter conflict, waged in hospitals, makeshift cemeteries, and the remnants of old village churches. Like the rest of the world, the clergymen of the German empire were swept up in the “war fever” of 1914, preaching sermons of fire and glory and the holiness of their cause. During this time the very few professional German army chaplains, about 63 for an army of over 3.5 million, tried mightily to instill a Godly fighting spirit in the soldiers despite being overstretched beyond any reasonable capacity. By the end of the summer offensive, it was determined that the spiritual care of the soldiers needed to take greater priority, and by 1917 the German chaplain corps had grown to include several thousand uniformed military clergymen of the Evangelical, Catholic and Jewish faiths.

The more structured German chaplain corps included a senior chaplain at the divisional level (known as a Divisionspfarrer) that coordinated the pastoral care (Militärseelsorge) of large bodies of troops. Under their leadership were field chaplains (Feldgeistlicher) that led regular services, notified families of the deceased, visited soldiers on the frontlines and ministered in hospitals among other tasks. Finally, the chaplain corps was supplemented by civilian volunteer clergymen that typically worked in home garrisons.

My portrayal is that of the Feldgeistlicher, identifiable by the purple-trimmed feldgrau uniform with red cross armband and white enameled cross mounted on a visor cap. Although certain elements of a field chaplain’s duties were structured, such as Sunday services, much of their daily life was dictated by their individual convictions. For many Bavarian Catholics, the belief in the granting of absolution found them crawling between shell holes under intense fire to aid and minister to wounded soldiers. One such chaplain, Father Rupert Mayer of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, earned the Iron Cross 1st Class for his heroic actions during an offensive operation in Romania that cost him his leg when a grenade landed near him. For Evangelical chaplains like those of Prussia, increased attention was paid to field hospitals where they could minister to wounded soldiers for longer periods of time, hoping to guide them towards repentance of sin and belief in Christ. Other activities across denominations might include individualized prayer meetings near the front lines, gathering and distributing reading material, and bringing up hot coffee or extra rations to the men.

Through my portrayal of this often-overlooked position in the German army of the Great War, I hope to engage members in small, personal vignettes that capture the quieter, more introspective moments of life in the trenches. Driven by a genuine faith as well as a desire to add greater depth to the Newville environment, it has been an honor to share this impression with you all and to receive your kind words and feedback. So, if you see me this November, please don’t hesitate to stop me and ask questions, drop a prayer request, or just chat with me about anything. This topic is my passion, and I cannot wait to share it with you all for years to come.



*“Herr, wie Die willst, so will ich gehen, und wie Du willst, soll mir geschehen.”*

## NEWVILLE BUSINESSES

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**Newville Convenient:** Carries an extensive selection of cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, smoking supplies, snacks, ice, etc. 98 Broad St., Newville. Open M-F 6-8:30, Sa 7-8:30, and Su 8-8:30.

**Dollar General:** National discount chain. 1 Mill Road, Newville. Open every day 8a-9p.

**Family Dollar:** National discount chain. 67 N. High St. Open every day 8a-10p.

**Barrick's Tire Sales:** In addition to the tire shop, Barrick's has an amazing general store where you can buy anything from dishes to overalls to touch lamps to hardware at reasonable prices - and the most ridiculously, obscenely huge selection of toy tractors & farm equipment you'll see anywhere. It absolutely defies explanation. 455 Center Rd., Newville. Open M-F 8-5 and Sa 8-1.

**Ugo/Big Spring Deli:** Carries primarily cigarettes and smoking supplies, but also has a grill in the back. Their marquee out front has advertised 'funnel cake fries' and '2 large cheese pizzas 18.99' for at least 5 years, but I've never spoken to anybody with firsthand knowledge of their food. 63 Carlisle Rd., Newville. Open M-F 6-9, Sa-Su 7-9.

**Cumberland Supply (formerly A.B. Martin):** Full line of building supplies including lumber, all kinds of tools and power tools, paint, doors, roofing supplies, etc. 35 Ridge Rd., Newville. Open M-F 6:30-5 and Sa 7-noon.



## FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

I'd like to start with a "Bravo!" for the folks of the Central Powers. You may notice that this issue of On the Wire is loaded with all kinds of interesting and useful stuff: communications from officers, information on boot care and grooming, profiles featuring members who portray specialized impressions.... And the vast majority of that content has come from the CP side of the line. Thank you all for your incredible engagement in support of this effort to resurrect OtW.



What say you, Entente colleagues?? They're making us look bad here.

In other matters, we're just a week out from the event now, and some have asked "Do we have to stop at the registration shack again this time?" Absolutely, yes. First off, the quick scan of your QR code (or the still-pretty-quick look you up by name method) to check you in electronically is the only way your unit will get credit for your attendance. But more importantly, this time there is some important bylaw business to attend to: proposed amendments to vote on and to sign in support of, if you wish, to be put up for voting at the Spring event. The text of all of these proposed amendments is included in an appendix at the end of this issue, so you can read them at your leisure ahead of time, instead of in a big sweaty mob outside the registration shack. (Copies will still be available at check-in, for those of you who choose the sweaty mob.)

Safe travels - and enjoy the expanded access to water on site, brought to you by your Site Committee.

-Erica Miller, GWA Secretary



Photo from 'Der Grosse Krieg in Bildern' #22

# FROM THE CENTRAL POWERS REPRESENTATIVE

Greetings all,

November in Newville is fast approaching and we have a lot of great things happening on the Central Powers side. We just added a well to the southern half of the line. Please let me know if we need a platform added. Flares and sandbags have been delivered and the treasurer is looking for a new source for smoke.

Once again, we will have the Kriegsschule running on Thursday and I encourage every unit to send Soldaten who will then train their own unit in what they learned. This school goes a long way towards making the CP a fighting force to be reckoned with. We will also be practicing Drei Lilien in the school. It's important that we all know our song, which will make a strong impression on the Allies when we march into the Friday Safety formation.

The second edition of the Dienstunterricht des Infanteristen is published and ready for dissemination. Each unit will get two copies. After the event, please contact me with any changes or additions you think are important for everyone to know.

Grenades matter. We will have several major fights and numerous raids/small fights. The hand grenade is the weapon that everyone notices. We encourage every man to make 100 grenades and wear grenade bags in the fights. The Allies will pay attention to grenades a lot more than they do to blanks. Additionally, the "combat bic" is a pet peeve of mine. In the last edition of On the Wire, I wrote an article showing everyone how to make pull fuze igniters. These take a little bit of work but make the grenades quick to light and throw. They're especially beneficial at night so you don't have to fumble around with a lighter, giving away your position, to light your grenades.

Safety. Commanders, you are the primary safety officer for your unit. Please make sure that new guys attend the safety briefing, but also review the safety rules with the alter soldaten. We always

have minor incidents of firing blanks too close, etc that can be alleviated by reiterating safety.

Smoke and CO2 detectors. Just a reminder that these are required in each bunker. Please check to make sure they are present and working. They actually are life savers.

New Unit: Pionier Batallion 13 was accepted as a probationary unit. Please congratulate them when you see them in November.

Bylaw changes. There should be a bylaw change to formalize that form/process used to submit a change to the bylaws. The reason is that we've had a number of them submitted that could have been corrected without making a formal change, but there was no sponsor listed, no reason for the recommended change, etc. This format should make them much easier to track.

Also, there will be a bylaw change for the 50 signatures to bring it to a formal vote allowing minors to participate. I expect there will be two versions presented: one that allows minors, age 16 or older to participate with a designated sponsor and the other that allows them to participate with a parent. Please only sign your name to the one you prefer. It will then come up for a vote by the membership in April.

The Rotes Kreuz is alive and well. They are presenting a memorial wreath to the CAMC on Friday, which will start with a march down from the Swiss camp at 1330. Everyone is invited to attend.

The authenticity standards were taken off the website when we changed the web host. I have



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## FROM THE CP REPRESENTATIVE

(continued from p. 7)

the old ones and will be working with the committee to update them. Before they're implemented formally, everyone will get the opportunity to comment on them and each unit will get a vote. We will also include recourse to enforce the standards. If you want to be on the authenticity committee, please contact me.

We've had an interesting discussion lately about authenticity standards, in particular, grooming. As you may already know, the German Armies didn't have a grooming standard like we do in the modern military, leaving it up to the regiments. We're well aware of bearded Germans making the attacks in Belgium and France in 1914, but we're also well aware that as lice and gas became prevalent, that the men in trenches began to shave their heads and faces. Please read the article about grooming in this issue.

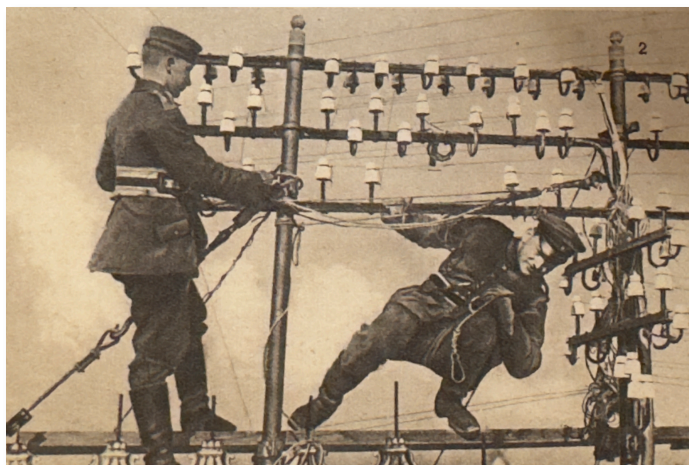
It raises to my mind the question, why do we reenact? There are as many reasons as there are reenactors. At its base level, I suppose it's Cowboys and Indians for grown ups. I first started reenacting the War Between the States because Napoleonic tactics didn't make sense to me. Why would they line up and fight like that. After doing it, it began to make sense. If we do this right, we can get a sense of why the people consigned to history did what they did. We get a

small sense of what they lived through and, if we do it right, we honor them with our actions.

If you'll allow, I'll leave with a war story. I went to a living history not long ago and there were Vietnam reenactors there. One of the kids was wearing erdl camo, which was the same uniform I was issued at Parris Island in 1981. He had his shirt open, no cover, his belt was worn wrong and, frankly, I got a little pissed off. We never wore the uniform like that and I found it incredibly disrespectful.

We're represented actual soldiers who served their country in what was arguably the worst experience in human history. Since we set our events in 1918, don't we owe it to the memory of the people we represent to be as accurate as we can be? Granted, they were 20 years old and there's nothing we can do about that, but we can control our grooming standards, uniforms, equipment, etc. I ask you all to remember that before going to Newville, get a proper haircut and trim the facial hair so it fits neatly under that gas mask. It grows back and it's the least we can do.

Vielen Dank,  
Eric Cleveland  
CP Rep



Photos from 'Album de la Grand Guerre' #30

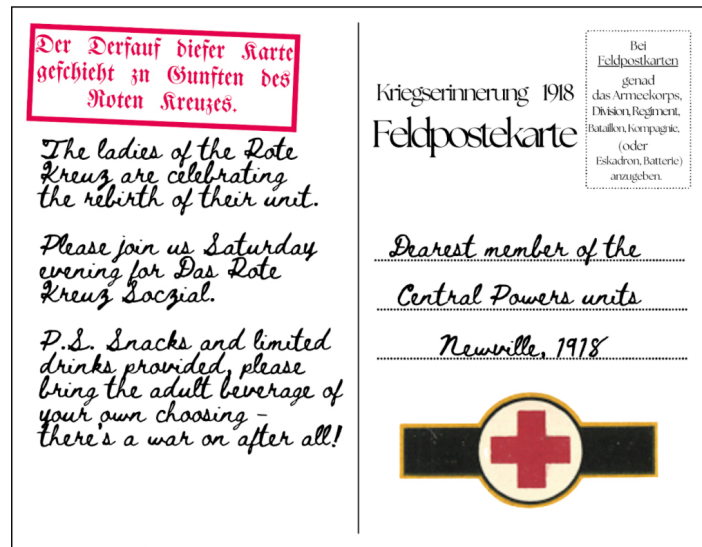
## Announcing the Revival of das Rote Kreuz (RK)

Dearest members of the GWA,

Das rote/s/n\* Kreuz (or simply, the RK) are super excited to announce the revival of their unit, the former DRK, on the Central Powers side!

We will have approximately seven gals joining us this fall, with more to attend in the coming years. To celebrate our revival, we are hosting a “social” that all are welcome to attend post-battle on Saturday evening.

During the event, we will be offering light snacks, coffee, and other refreshments -



however, we will be doing much more. We will be part of the processing of Allied POWs prior to their interrogation and repatriation, and we are working with other “supporting” units to see how we fit into the overall event in coming years.

To support our unit, as in previous years we will accept donations to help us cover the cost of snacks and refreshments. In addition, we will have handmade reproduction items available for sale during the event. We will also have two auction items: a fully kitted out comfort kit (more appropriate for CP reenactors, but would be great for captured items for Allied bidders), and a Red Cross stuffed dog made from a 1914 pattern (our only request is that he be carried into battle). Bids open October 17th, and close 5pm on November 7th (Thursday) to allow folks to be able to use items during the event. Winner will be announced Friday by noon and delivered to the winner.

Comfort kit bidding form: <https://forms.gle/DhSrT5Tek9ch7GKK9>

Red Cross dog bidding form: <https://forms.gle/zvuyEMkfpe2ZTMxSA>

Please feel free to come visit us and introduce yourselves! We look forward to working with everyone at this fantastic event.

Warmly,

The RK Gals

Julz Zenisek, leader; Myranda Abel, co-leader

A.W. BLANKS WILL BE BACK IN THE PARKING LOT IN NOVEMBER.

FREE EVENT DELIVERY CODE IS: josephine

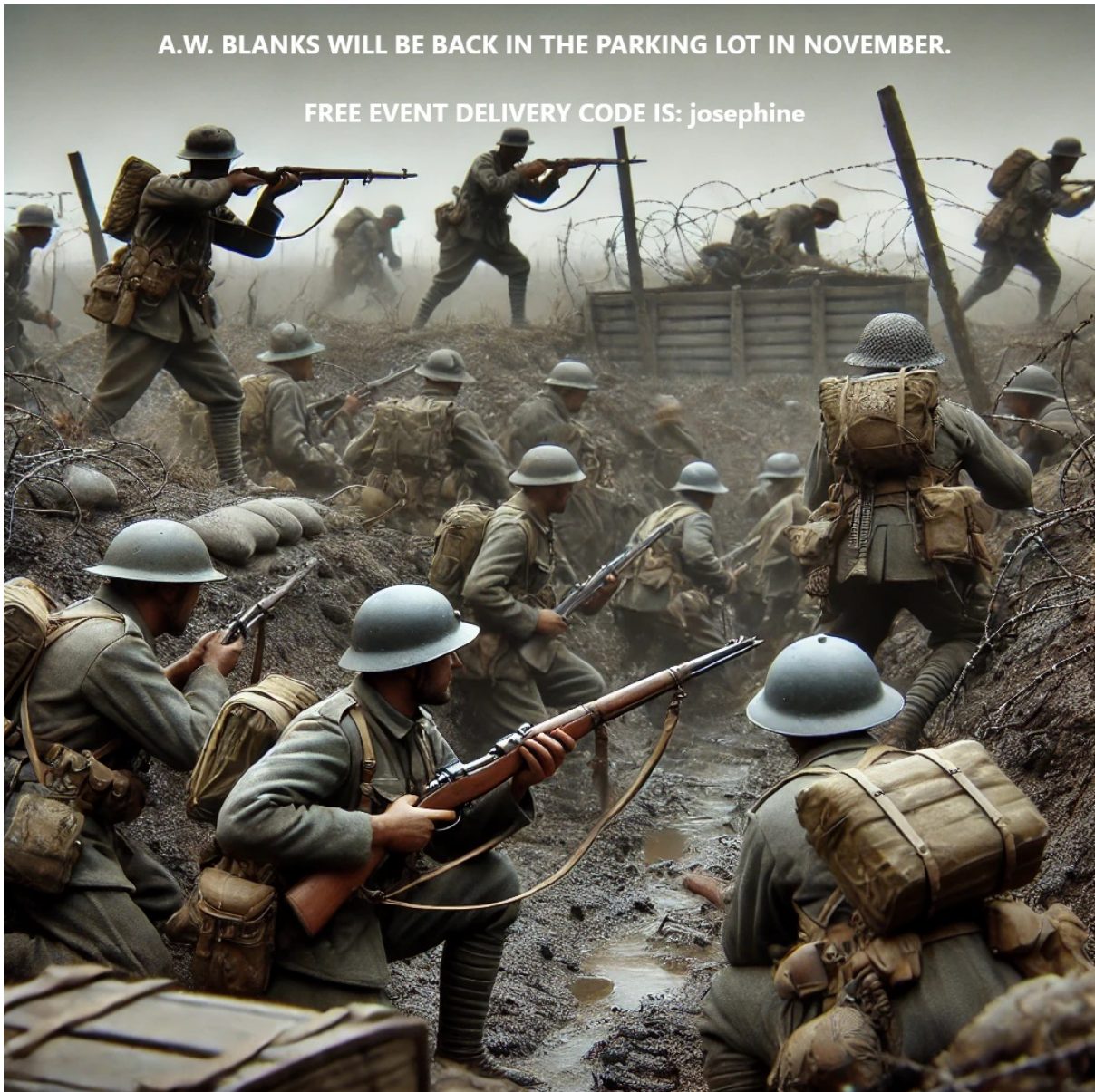


Photo from 'Album de la Grand Guerre' #30

# CONTROLLING THE MESSAGE

## Austria-Hungary's War Press Office

By Larry Dunn

As war broke out in the autumn of 1914, Austria-Hungary, along with the other belligerents, moved quickly to rein in its media and to gain control of the information being disseminated to the public. Austria-Hungary mobilized its *k.u.k. Kriegspressequartier* (Imperial and Royal War Press Office, hereafter “KPQ”) in early August of 1914, in accordance with instructions formulated by the Ministry of War in 1909. Organized as a subsection of the General Staff, the KPQ was overseen by and directly responsible to the army's high command (*k.u.k. Armeeoberkommando*, or “AOK”).

The KPQ quickly recruited writers and journalists from such prestigious publications as Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse* to be war correspondents (*Kriegsberichterstatter*). KPQ personnel included such notables as Ludwig Biró (inventor of the modern ballpoint pen), Egon Erwin Kisch, Ferenc Molnár, Alexander Roda Roda, Alice Schalek (one of the war's few female correspondents), Stefan Zweig, Robert Musil and Franz Werfel. The KPQ soon expanded its scope beyond simply reporting and censoring news to creating and controlling propaganda initiatives. Painters and photographers were hired to create visual materials to support the war effort, and film studios were enlisted to produce newsreels and patriotic movies for both the frontline soldiers and the home front. Travelling field cinemas (*Feldkino*) proved remarkably popular with the troops.

KPQ war correspondents generally worked singly or in small groups, reporting back to field office (*Exposituren*) under the command of a military officer. While not technically members of the military, correspondents were subject to military law and discipline while on duty. They were permitted to wear officer's tunics, (though some preferred civilian clothes) and could be identified by “presse” armbands in the traditional black and yellow colors of the House of Habsburg. As a courtesy, correspondents were treated as having equivalent rank to a reserve lieutenant, and were provided with orderlies to look after their day-to-day needs.

There will be a KPQ *Kriegsberichterstatter* at the GWA Fall Tactical (embedded with k.u.k. IR63), sent to report on the progress of Austro-Hungarian troops on the Western Front—should he ask to take your photo or for an interview, your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.



# BOOT CARE, PART 1

By Fritz Frising

You've seen them--untreated tan low boots that at 10 paces could be Timberland work boots. Marschstiefel, marching boots, the color of weak coffee. Or worse, these same boots which have gotten wet, with charcoal lines above soles that are starting to come apart at the seams. Who wants to see this? Ill regard for gear was not tolerated in the Kaiser's Army. Boots had a limited field life when properly cared for during the war. For reenacting we need to treat our boots in a way that they will last us for 10-20 years of occasional weekends, but many fail in this regard.

To best understand what we see regarding honey brown, black, and brown leather, here's a little Bekleidungsamt, clothing supply, background.

Through regimental supply sergeants, uniforms and gear was procured and more often stored until needed. The standard German Army leather color is black (although Bavaria used brown with Feldgrau uniforms from 1907-1918). Records indicate 30-40% of the leather that was unissued was stored UNDYED, since the black dyes rotted stitching. Undyed gear lasted better in storage. When this gear was issued, the expectation was that the regiment would have these items dyed. In 1914 men were deployed so quickly a lot of "raw" leather gear was issued and often seen in early war fotos with no treatment. It was left for the men to dye or just treat with grease/oil, and that may not have been black. This is why we see brownish leather that varies from item to item. We see meager or ruinous attempts to darken leather behind the lines, and some decent attempts on a larger scale in some units performed in Garnison or Etappe. (Take note, that a number of leather gear items were not manufactured or dyed black during the war; mostly anything relative to the Tornister, pack, or the spade and are carriers.)

So what can or should be done for reenacting? We have read about the late war orders for blackening; if blackening is not our intention a protective oiling or neutral waterproofing is needed to give us the best look and life for our boots. Even the best made boots on the market need treatment ! A common argument I hear is that dubbing--waterproofing--ones boots hurts the resale when you retire from the hobby. Foolishness.

The critical step you should undertake when you get your boots is to treat the sole and edges of the sole/heel with BOILED Linseed Oil, just like the originals. It will protect the leather that is underfoot, and help preserve the durability of the boot where it gets the most wear. An untreated, or merely greased leather sole will turn to mush when wet, and drop hobnails with every step.

For simplicity sake, I'll address dying and greasing options in Part 2 in the next On The Wire.

(continued on p. 13)

# BOOT CARE, PART 1

(continued from p. 12)



ill. 1. One raw and one Bavarian brown boot.



ill. 2. Dry, dusty boots alongside boots cleaned and lightly oiled.

Chip Minx, a top regarded collector and researcher, was kind enough to present the Bavarian blackening order from original regulations:

Das Schuhzeug anlangend, so ist dieses fortan wieder Schwarz. Es sei gleich hier erwähnt, daß überhaupt das gesamte Lederzeug, das der Offizier oder die Mannschaft- nicht aber auch das Pferd- an sich trägt, mit alleiniger Ausnahme des neu eingeführten, unten zu erwähnenden Feldkoppels der Offiziere das bisher teils weiß, teils schwarz oder braun war, künftighin schwarz getragen wird.

Roughly translated: "Concerning footwear...it is from now on to be once again black. It should be quickly mentioned here that generally, all leather items which the officer or the enlisted man carries (but not horse furniture {tack}) in the future will be black, with sole exception of the newly introduced, Feldkoppels (to be mentioned below) of the officers, which up to now, were either white, black or brown, will from now on be worn black."

Fritz Frising, aka Walter Fritz Bär,  
k.b.10.JR (reenacted)  
Mai, 2016, revised Juli 2024

# REQUIESCAT IN PACE

LCpl Julius of the Canadian Army Medical Corps  
May 9, 2012 - October 19, 2024

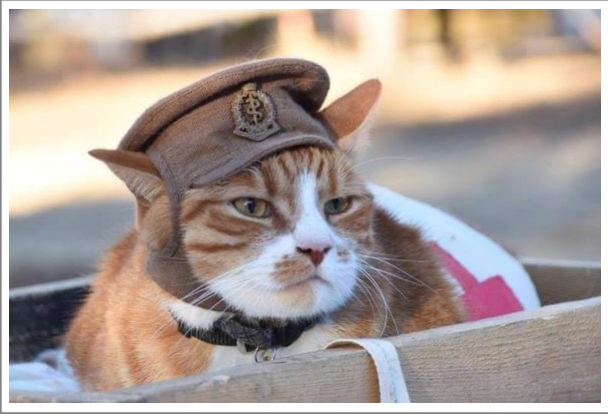


Photo courtesy of Jeff Brown

Julius was a foundling, abandoned in a garage at the tender age of about 16 weeks. He was rescued and cared for by a lovely Estonian couple who, despite being violently allergic to him, saw him into safe hands and steady employment as an Apprentice Shop Cat at Spencer's Mercantile in Hamilton, Ontario. Julius took to his new profession with gusto and was soon the darling of staff and customers alike. After two years and a promotion to full Shop Cat, Julius was looking for additional avenues to fulfill his life's mission of befriending and loving every human he possibly could. It was then that the WW1 Canadian Army Medical Corps came to his attention, and he eagerly signed on as mascot

His first event was at Newville, where he provided cuddles and therapeutic purrs to every human he came in contact with, and it wasn't long before news of his prowess at healing both body and spirit

spread to both sides of the lines. Armed with his signature bullfrog purr, he eagerly met the wounded and the weary, bringing joy to all. He was soon awarded a medal for his service by Princess Ceili, and after a few years' service, he was promoted to LCpl in recognition of his good deeds. He wore a wound stripe in recognition of his recovery from a life-threatening infection two years ago.

His work with the public did not stop at Newville. For years, he delighted Fort staff, visitors, and especially children at WW1 events across Ontario. Even the most recalcitrant member of the public was curious about the cat in the hat, and he opened the door to many great conversations about history for a host of people who might otherwise have simply gazed for a second and wandered by. He touched a lot of lives, and was widely known as "WW1's most popular re-enactor."

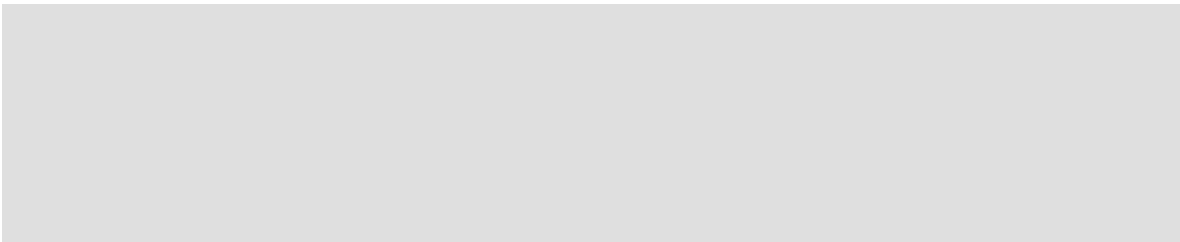
LCpl Julius suffered a stroke and went into the west on October 19th. He is heavily mourned and badly missed by many on both sides of the battlefield. We are quite certain that he is now caring for the fallen in the next world, some of whom have been waiting more than 100 years for the sound of his bullfrog purr and the touch of his soft, warm fur.

We will remember him.

- Submitted by Susan Spencer



Photo courtesy of Stacy Putnam



# CENTRAL POWERS GROOMING STANDARDS FOR GWA EVENTS

Von Uffz. Hoffmann (1 Kp./ JR 23) u. Sgt. Bär (KB 10 JR)

In recent years, those of us in the Central Powers have seen a steady uptick in inaccurate haircuts and facial hair at GWA events. In effort to combat that, The Central Powers Combat Commander has seen fit to set forth regulations regarding acceptable grooming for participants on our side of the line. There are no AKOs (Allerhöchste Kabinett Verordnungs) outlining grooming standards for the German Army during the war. This is partially due to grooming standards being delegated to local commanders. The other likely reason that we don't see official regulations, at least for Prussian troops, is that cleanliness was considered to be one of the "Prussian Virtues" set forth by King Frederick Wilhelm I of Prussia upon his ascent to the throne in 1713. These virtues became ingrained in wider Germanic culture throughout the 18th and 19th

Centuries. It is also important to note wider grooming trends on the European continent in the 1910s, which soldiers also followed per pictorial evidence. You would not see any mullets worn by anyone, for example, much less worn by German combat troops.

Bottom line up front, these regulations are designed to define the appearance of the average German combat troop in the latter stage of the war. Conventional wisdom states that many "Frontschweine" in the latter portion of the war kept their hair close cropped or shaved as a practical effort to abate lice. All we ask instead is that you keep in mind hygiene and period fashion during your preparation for the event. Please see the selection of representative pictures below, which come from the Fritz Bär and Everett Padro Collections.

(continues on p. 16)



# CENTRAL POWERS GROOMING STANDARDS FOR GWA EVENTS

(continued from p. 15)

## Central Powers Regulations:

- Hair is to be worn in an orderly fashion, with tapered back and sides, to be kept off the neck and ears.
- Hair on the top of the head is to be combed over or back, and not to exceed a length that inhibits wearing of headgear.
- Tucking long hair such as a mullet, pony tail, or man bun (to name a few) under the Krätzchen or Stahlhelm is NOT permitted.
- Sideburns should extend no longer than the bottom of the ear.
- Facial hair will be kept in a neat manner for combatants as not to inhibit the seal of your gas mask. Beards became less common as the war progressed, and were often cut into well trimmed goatees. Of note is that beards were also out of fashion for military aged males in the 1910s, and usually appear on older gentlemen. Being clean shaven is preferred.
- Mustaches are to be kept short, trimmed and groomed, for example waxed into a handlebar style. See below for representative styles.
- Full beards are discouraged and should only be worn by Landsturm or civilian impressions, who will not enter the trenches during the event. Soldaten who insist on wearing a full beard should trim the sides thin as pictured below.

Participants who arrive falling outside of these guidelines will be asked by Central Powers staff to either get their hair within these guidelines or leave the event.



Photo from 'Der Grosse Krieg in Bildern' #22

**SAFE TRAVELS TO NEWVILLE, AND HAVE A GREAT EVENT!**



Photo courtesy of 6th Marines, 78th Company, AEF

## **CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

***On the Wire* Winter 2025 Issue Drops January 15. Ish.**

Please submit content for the Winter issue prior to January 5, including unit updates, feature stories, pictures, etc. Something you'd like to see? Please also feel free to pass along your ideas.

Send content / suggestions to [GreatWarSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:GreatWarSecretary@gmail.com) .