

ON THE WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION

Spring 2009



Onward 2009

We're about to embark upon another year at Newville. Some of you may have already, if you attended unit sponsored events by FR90 and the 109th Inf. 28th Div AEF this winter, which went off without any noted issues, brought in excess of \$1K of revenue and, more importantly, some new recruits for the GWA. But now we prepare for the real fun: our Spring National Event. Hopefully the economy hasn't hit you too hard to come to Newville this April; we had a nice turnout last Fall and would love to see another on April 17!

The GWA site committee has been at work this winter prioritizing and planning the higher priority issues for site development this year. Jeff Redrup, Site Committee chair, has a report on that later in this issue.

Spring Combat Event Schedule April 17-19, 2009

Friday, April 17

- 1:00-6:00pm** Registration shed open
- 5:30pm** Central Powers unit commanders meeting at the 8Kur bunker.
- 6:00pm** Modern vehicles must be moved from all areas beyond the registration shed gate (including the battlefield, roads, rear areas, camps) before 6:00pm and parked in the parking lots. The registration shed gate will be locked until 6am Sunday.
- 6:30pm** Safety briefing at the Memorial
- 7:00pm** Stand To. Combat begins.
- 11:00pm** Combat ceases.
- 11:00 pm to ?** Living history as unit appropriate. No combat.

Saturday, April 18

- 9:00am** Safety briefing at the Memorial (mandatory attendance)
- 9:00-9:50am** Registration shed open
- 10:15am** Stand To. Combat begins.
- 11:00pm** Combat ends.

Sunday, April 19

- 6:00am** Gate at registration shed opened. Modern vehicles may access roads to battlefield.
- 7:00-8:30am** Battlefield cleanup
- 8:00-9:00am** Executive Committee meeting

We should also note that 2009 is a GWA election year, which means we'll be taking nominations for G-8 positions at the Spring Event. While I suspect the power of incumbency may hold sway a bit (the pay is just so good!) but that should not preclude any earnest & dedicated workers from stepping up. The current G-8 has been a pretty strong grouping, but anything can be improved and if you are willing to work and think you have the time and interest in helping, the GWA can always use more workers.

That's it from where I sit; you'll certainly hear enough from me in the coming months, I'll let other G-8 and GWA members inform and enlighten you for the rest of this issue.

See you in Newville.

Jim Kidd
President, GWA

Greetings from your Schatzmeister!

2009 Budget

At the present time I have not completed the 2009 budget for the GWA. However, copies of the budget and corresponding notes will be made available at the spring event. As usual, you can contact me with any questions after reading that.

The Treasury remains strong. After adjusting for two checks and one deposit on Jan. 2 (relating to the fall event), we had about \$19,700 in the bank.

Mortgage Status

The final payment of the GWA's mortgage is February 2011. That's less than two years away!!! After that, we'll own the property outright. More important: We currently spend \$9,500 on mortgage payments a year. That is about 30% of our budget. After the mortgage is paid off, that's money that the Site Committee can use to develop the site and/or purchase additional event supplies—such as pyrotechnics.

Event Registrar

As many of you know, I have served as GWA Treasurer for more than eight years. In real life, I am a high yield bond analyst following the healthcare, industrial and automotive industries for an asset management firm in Manhattan.

While I am willing to continue to serve as Treasurer, I am looking for some help to spread out the workload. The G-8 has decided to seek a volunteer for the newly-created position of Event Registrar. (Note that this person is not an official officer



of the G-8 as outlined in the by-laws; just as the Trench Masters are not officers of the G-8.) The Registrar would process the registration forms before the event and run the registration shed at the event. As Treasurer, I would continue to focus on the budgeting, insurance, and administrative aspects of the job.

The only real skill needed to do this job would be an ability to work with MS Excel spreadsheets.

So, if you've been looking for a way to "do your bit" for the GWA, please step up and volunteer to help the organization!

Mit freundlichem Gruß,
Randy Gaulke
Schatzmeister

Handgun Safety

The handguns we carry range from revolvers to semi-automatic. They typically fire a much smaller load than our rifle and MG rounds and yet they are probably the most dangerous weapon we carry at Newville.

How can that be? Because of the way we use them and the fact they are small, easily handled and were made for close in work. Machine gunners about to be overrun pull their pistols; officers and NCOs going over the top or in defense of a trench, pull their pistols. It's natural and expected.

The danger lies in the fact that because they are small and you may be shouting orders and pointing with the hand car-

rying the pistol, moving quickly running across No Man's Land and where your hand might be pointing at any given moment; down, up and down, as you run. It could be pointed down just as you come up on a shell hole and it's dark and suddenly two enemy soldiers raise up to engage you and startled, your natural reaction is to pull the trigger. Or you are in a dark trench, bent down, and moving slowly trying to find the enemy. Noise all around and the pistol is supposed to be pointed straight up but it's light (compared to a rifle) and it's requiring both hands to balance yourself as you creep down that trench hugging the wall and your pistol hand isn't pointed up at that moment and suddenly an enemy comes out of the shadows firing his rifle (hopefully straight up) and you jerk and your pistol discharges.

The simple point I am trying to make is that a pistol can get easily lost in the shuffle and it's paramount that those of us who carry them have got to pay attention at ALL TIMES whenever we have our handgun drawn and ready for action. It's just too easy to make a mistake. And, don't be fooled that because it carries a small load that it can't seriously hurt another if fired too close.

As a matter of fact, we had an incident occur at the November '08 event just like the example given about moving through NML at night in the heat of combat. Fortunately, no one was injured even though a hole was put in a jacket.

Scampi
JR92/CP Rep



Members of the GWA's 28th & 29th Divisions help honor Frank Buckles, the last surviving American Veteran of the Great War.



Site Committee Report

April 2009

By Jeff Redrup, GWA VP

The following projects have been agreed upon by the Site Committee and will be in the works this year. There is no order of precedence; all are important and we will try our darndest to complete them this year. If you have any input or ideas to make these go smoothly, please feel free to see your Reps or VP.

General

Porto-Johns

There will now be 2 of them opened all your round. You no longer have run run and hope for the best. The 2 which are open at all times are behind the German line (459) area and the Allied line (28th) area. Please do not cut anymore locks.

Allied training area

A training area is being built behind the Allied lines. This will enable us to pull units out of the line during the day and give classes on the proper tactics of the time. Cost \$1,700

Mowing

We usually do this once a year. We are now going to do this twice.

Revamp German Line

We are in the process of rebuilding the German lines. They have been a mess for a long time. We are not helping units rebuild their trenches but are adding new communication trenches and installing a 2nd line. This will enable Allies lanes to use and and not end up on the back road always. We are working on this in 4 phases. We are starting on the Southern sector first. Phase 1 should be completed by the Spring event and Phase 2 by the Fall event. If you have any questions regarding please feel free to get in touch with the German Rep.

Continuing Projects

1. Cannon preservation

We have a spot to put it and are trying to put it in place before the event, but we're waiting on price quotes. Either way the cannon is being moved off the mound and put over by where the new slab is going.

The slab is done but we are waiting to put the cannon on it until it is sandblasted and painted. The cannon has been sandblasted but the weather did not help us. We are going to sandblast it again and paint it this summer. I would like to thank the Great War foundation for their \$1000 donation. Without it the cannon could not be finished.

2. Fix farmhouse for GWA use

Steve Wiser said he is going to shore up the 1st floor for free. We can proceed to shore up the 2nd floor and get the windows

covered. One of the ways to cover the windows is to build wood shutters. We have decided to do this to protect a GWA asset and to have shelter to any unit if needed in inclement weather. If needed it would be used for CP and Allied. It can be used for whatever else we could need. No existing unit will be kicked out.

The 2nd floor now has windows. The floors are fixed. There is a stove on the 1st floor. Thank the GWAA (the pilots) for all their hard work and the stove. They really helped us a lot. We are now working on putting bunks in the basement. Work is continuing.

4. Parking lot improvements needed, need to establish order in the lots

Logs or wire rope to denote parking/ driving lanes. Move vendors to far end of the parking lot if they are going to take up more than one space. We are going to use tape this event to get it started. More to come, we will keep you posted.

Should be finished by the Spring event.

CP Side

1. Two frontline area trenches to be dug out.

Est. cost: \$300.00

Was not completed because of new improvements to the German line.

Allied Side

2. Small fence around the baby's grave.

We feel this should be protected and preserved. Period style wrought iron will be used. Est. cost: \$200.00

Trying to find low enough priced wrought iron fencing

Long Term

There could be more projects in the wind but we are trying to fix and maintain GWA assets and have a reasonable goal. ■



Steve Girard, 67th Co 5th Marines, escorts George York (son of Sgt Alvin C. York) and Samuel Parker Moss (grandson of WWI CMOH Winner Samuel Parker) during the Sacred Soil Ceremony at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park at Ft. Benning.



Memoir: Gustave Rewwer

Gus is a World War II German veteran who served in the Luftwaffe and in a Panzer Grenadier regiment. He is also a member of the GWA and can often be seen roaming our site on event weekends talking with folks. Last year he sent us a hand written memoir of his service in Russia. Being on the site and seeing all of us always brings back memories and he finally decided to write some of them down. Although not WWI, parts of the memoir relate directly to the experience of fighting in the trenches. Trying to keep most of Gus' exact words, I made some slight changes to try and keep the memoir flowing:

"I went to school in Freiburg. In October, I was drafted (called up). In May and June of the following year, no more flying lessons. We were sent to Bar-Le-Duc, France for infantry training, target practice and marching, etc. What happened?

We had hoped they would send us to Italy, but the Russians had broken through German lines. I spent about five months in trenches and fighting holes. From October to November we were digging the trenches, bunkers and dug outs, all night. Dark 14 hour-long nights with flares going up all night from us and the Russian trenches. Russian flares were brighter than ours, and made a 'shhhhhh' noise.

The real enemy was the eternal rain, the mud and more mud. Always cold, wet feet, then the cold, the snow and the nasty wind. At night, a very low flying, small plane came over our trench and behind, shooting straight down at whatever they thought was worth destroying. But then the fellows got lost. They were shooting at something behind their own lines. Reason for good laughter on our part.

The Russians always made music for us. 'Wenn der Weisse Flieder Bluht' (When the white lilac is blooming again). And, then there were snipers during the day.

In January in the morning and bright sunshine, snow on the ground, the Russians attacked next to us. Mortar fire was his main weapon. It looks pretty when a mortar shell explodes in the white snow as the impact creates a very red ring and a black puff is going upwards. After 10 minutes, they fired smoke shells and visibility is suddenly 10 yards or less with black and grey clouds. We were scared to death. But nothing happened. We did not have barb wire entanglements in front of the trench. Orders came to retreat 200 yards through the snow. I was lugging my machine gun. A mortar shell explodes in a thousand little splinters to disable a person, not kill him. An artillery shell's shrapnel are much bigger. A Russian artillery piece fired about a 10 centimeter shell horizontally that exploded in the air almost immediately after it left the barrel. No more safety in a fighting hole.

Retreat from village to village or farmhouse. Over and over again. In March, I was wounded in my left leg by artillery shrapnel. I did not know it until my left foot got warm. Blood was running into my boot. By that time, many of my friends were either dead or wounded. I could walk.

Walking along a road, there were three of us, a heavy truck came and he stopped and picked us up.

Slowly through the burning village, past that burning church. The fire was so hot and made such a racket and the street was so narrow. After a few miles, the driver stopped and pointed to the First Aide station, a fancy farm house. Inside I saw a most horrible scene. About 20 young soldiers with white bandages, waiting to be picked up. Nobody talked. Ten other wounded men waiting in line (I was one of them) with shrapnel in their bodies, in bloody torn uniforms, limping. The soldiers operated on were yelling and moaning. I was standing behind an artillery officer, a small fellow. He was asked questions to fill out the yellow tag. He did not answer, nothing, only a blank stare. They took him away. He was mentally, emotionally exhausted. How could the doctors or anybody survive such an ordeal? A picture of despair. I was so lucky. If that shrapnel had hit me at a different angle (1/2 inch), it would have hit the bone and nobody could have helped me any more to get away.

In August [1945], they shipped us back to Germany (Kiel), leg almost OK. British soldiers took our pocket knives, wrist watches, fountain pens, etc, not our decorations. Otherwise, they treated us well. There was enough food, no barb wire. Almost five months without a shower, not shaved and lice!

After the war I was absolutely lost standing in the street. The trench was home, there was protection and safety! Before going to bed at night, I think back and reflect; Nobody can storm my bedroom and yell: 'The Russians are coming! Wake up! Fast, get out in the trench and behind the machine gun.' How wonderful!"

Several years after the war, Gus moved to the U.S.A, became a citizen, got married and had two daughters and worked for the U.S. Navy department. If you see Gus on the site, go ahead and start up a conversation. He has lots of war stories. ■

GWA Web Portal in the Making ... Your Input is Requested !

I have been working with a couple members of the G-8 on a new web portal that will make communications in the GWA not only easier, but also better. No longer will the G-8 have to wait for the webmaster to have time to do some update. Each unit will be able to update it's own information page and there is an easy to use photo gallery to showcase photographs of GWA events and other WWI subjects. Please visit the website in progress at www.great-war.org — if you like what you see, please let the G-8 know. And of course, all suggestions and comments are welcome.

Thanks
Marsh



An Introduction to the 42nd Canadian Battalion

(Royal Highlanders of Canada) — 1915-1918

Some Background on the Regiment

Since its creation in 1862, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada has maintained a very strong presence — now spanning 3 centuries — in both the Canadian Army and Militia as well as in Quebec's socio-military life. Raised as a Montreal based militia regiment during a very difficult time in Anglo-American relations during our Civil War the regiment was originally named the **The 5th Battalion Volunteer Militia Rifles of Canada**. The regiment changed titles 7 more times before the coming of the Great War for Civilization and only assumed a Scottish identity in 1876. The title when the war began was **The 5th Regiment Royal Highlanders of Canada**.

The regiment then, as now, enjoyed a very highly developed officer corps many of whom during our period of study were among the social elite of Montreal. Despite some difficulties with the organization of the RHC's officer corps — with the resignation of several top officers in 1910 due to problems of a complex rank seniority structure with the Canadian Militia — the regiment was on very solid ground when war broke out in 1914. Many of the earliest raised battalions within the CEF enjoyed strong cadres of enlisted men, senior NCO's and officers who had seen prior service in the British army or who had at least been in a militia regiment prior to the war and the RHC was no exception to this. Early in the war, joining a militia regiment was actually necessary before going into one of its overseas service battalions — this being relaxed as the war progressed.

The 5th Regiment Royal Highlanders of Canada raised three overseas service battalions for the war, the 13th, 42nd and 73rd Battalions RHC. The 13th and 42nd would survive through the end of the war after arriving at different times in 1915, the 73rd existed for only several months overseas until, after sustaining very heavy casualties at Vimy Ridge in April of 1917 it was broken up for reinforcements, most of whom were fed into the 13th, 42nd and 85th Battalions CEF.

The 42nd Canadian Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada)

The initial driving force behind the 42nd RHC in 1914 was Col. G.S. Cantlie who was actually the Colonel of the Regiment but in the U.K. at the time war was declared. Largely responsible for reorganizing the regiment after the shakeup in the officer corp during the crisis of 1910, Cantlie was instructed to remain in England by the Canadian Minister of Militia to act as a liaison between the Canadian and British War Departments. With these instructions, Cantlie would not see the raising of the first active service battalion of the Regiment — the 13th Battalion.

In October of 1914, Cantlie was finally relieved, at his request, of his liaison responsibilities in England and hastened back to Montreal to resume active leadership of the regiment and the raising of its second overseas service battalion

— the 42nd. Though he would initially command the 42nd Battalion, health issues caused him to relinquish his command though he would later go on to run the 20th Reserve Battalion in the U.K. which acted as a holding battalion for reinforcing the RHC service battalions later in the war.

The 42nd was hampered by uniform and equipment shortages right from the start of its organization. In addition to the shortages of uniforms, arms and equipment many nations experience during war mobilization, the 42nd was additionally stymied by the fact that the 13th Battalion, raised earlier, had received the bulk of the regiments supply of uniforms and accoutrements — particularly Highland kit. This led to several stopgap measures including a kilt pattern called “Cantlie Tartan” being developed for the Battalion. While a description exists, it has been difficult to track down an example of it and it is not clear to what extent this was issued and when a transition was made to the Black Watch tartan.

With completion of its mobilization and initial training in Canada, The 42nd Canadian Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada) as it came to be known, arrived in England on June 19th, 1915, completed further training and arrived in France on October 10th, 1915. On December 22nd, it was assigned to the 3rd Canadian Division, 7th Infantry Brigade along with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Royal Canadian Regiment and the 49th (Edmonton) Battalion for the duration of the war. The Brigade would come to be known as “The Fighting Seventh” and enjoyed a very distinguished service record. The 42nd Battalion, over the next three years of its active service, would add the following battle honours to its colors: MOUNT SORREL; SOMME 1916; FLERS-COURCELETTE; Ancre Heights; ARRAS 1917-18; VIMY; Arleaux; Hill 70; YPRES 1917; PASSCHENDALE; AMIENS; Scarpe 1918; Hindenburg Line; CANAL DU NORD; PURSUIT TO MONS; France and Flanders 1915-18. Those in caps are embroidered on the colors of the Battalion.

In addition to the many medals won and laurels gained by members of the Battalion, the winning of the Victory Cross by Private Thomas Dinesen, a Dane who enlisted in the RHC as a replacement, stands out in particular not only in terms of what he did to earn it, but particularly the intensity of the action he was in — the especially brutal trench fighting at Parvillers during the Amiens operations in August of 1918.

The day to day operations of the battalion are well documented and read not unlike the stories of other units in the war. Periods of boredom, toil and terror are punctuated by a few instances of exceptionally heavy casualties during several offensives. “The Hundred Days” or “Canada's Hundred Days” is an especially interesting time to follow the battalion and Canadian Corp with its operations leading up to the capture of Mons. The 42nd Battalion is generally recognized as the first unit to make it back into that famous Belgian city though this is sometimes contested in that some RCR troops



attached to the 42nd appear to have been the first into the actual city center.

With the Armistice, the 42nd Battalion was not destined for occupation duties and remained a few weeks at Mons and in Belgium and France. During the march through Belgium however, the 7th Brigade did experience a disturbance within some of its ranks at Nivelles in December of 1918. As a result of grievances over the implementation of Full Marching Order, false information over its destination, (the men under the impression they were destined for occupation duties) and some residual effects of the Russian Revolution and the revolutionary spirit there was a minor revolt in some elements of each of the brigades' infantry battalions. Evidence indicates that a few members of the RHC were involved to air the grievances of the men and the entire affair at Nivelles was viewed by the GOC 3rd CID (General Loomis) as more a matter of discipline and leadership issues with the battalion officers and NCO's than real complaints by the men. The majority of the 42nd Battalion stood fast and was afterwards asked to police the Brigade by Brigadier-General Clark, not something asked of a unit thought to be having a crisis in its ranks. One RHC "ring-leader" was given 7 days guard duty as "punishment." The affair was over with quickly and more grief came to Battalion Commanders and Company Officers than the Other Ranks.

After departing France, the 42nd Canadian Battalion went back to the U.K. to spend a few tense months there during the demobilization crisis which gripped some elements of the Canadian Corp during the winter of 1918-1919. The 42nd RHC was not involved in or affected by this unlike the Nivelles "munity." The battalion made its way back to Canada arriving in Montreal on March 11, 1919, stood to its final formation and quickly demobilized thereafter. The Battalion sustained 36 officer and 832 other rank fatalities during the war.

Researching the 42nd Canadian Battalion.

We were especially lucky in that there were some excellent resources available to us that provided a fine overview of the battalion in terms of arms, equipment, organization and history. One of the best resources at our disposal was Archivanet — the Canadian National Archives online research engine: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivanet/index-e.html>. Contained therein are several different areas of interest, for our purposes just about every CEF War Diary, as it was actually typed or written, can be downloaded from Corp to Battalion level. Therefore we could easily read the actual battalion war diary, day by day, for our research purposes. This was readily augmented by reviewing the 3rd Canadian Division's Ordnance Diary as well as the Ordnance Diary for

the Canadian Corps. To say that this was a ton of fun would be an understatement!

Within the 3 levels of hierarchy, Battalion, Division and Corps, particularly in matters of ordnance and uniform, we formed a good snapshot of what the unit looked like based on the written record alone. Everything from when the 3rd Division battalions changed over from Ross rifles to the SMLE rifle, when kilts were withdrawn and replaced by trousers for the Canadian Highland Battalions during winter months, to how boot repair should be done and how to recycle lead solder from rations cans — the list is endless — can be found within these diaries. (Oh, and yes, they also wore underwear under their kilts — this question was bound to come up.) Fortunately the 42nd Battalions diary was largely type-written; some of the other battalion's histories I have

viewed have handwriting that ranges from the most beautiful script to absolute gibberish.

Archivanet also allows review of copies of the enlistment forms for many members of the CEF and we were able to download many of these for the battalion based on a search by army serial number, the range of the 42nd Battalion being known to us.

A Battalion history was written in 1931 by C. Beresford Topp and while extensive, is somewhat a reflection of the war diary though it did reveal several

item of interest to us — for example that the 42nd Battalion arrived in the U.K. in 1915 with SMLE rifles only to have them withdrawn and replaced with Ross rifles on which they needed to re-qualify. A more general history of the RHC in its totality was written in 1962 for the regiment's centennial and was a good guide for overall regimental history prior to the war.

Two autobiographies written after the war were especially important in fleshing out the human face of the battalion. Both were written by members of 'D' Coy. — one in #14 Platoon, Will Bird — and one in #15 Platoon, the Dane and V.C. winner, Thomas Dinesen. Both are an excellent read and are generally available from Amazon in paperback. Both these men came in as replacements and give excellent accounts of their experiences particularly of the Parvillers action in which they both fought and where Dinesen earned his V.C., as previously mentioned. Bird went on to be a celebrated journalist in Canada writing his autobiography "Ghosts Have Warm Hands" as well as "Thirteen Years After" and "The Communication Trench" — the latter two being collections of stories from the War. Dinesen, was promoted Lieutenant in the RHC, wrote his autobiography "A Dane with the Canadians" also known as "Merry Hell," and later retired back to his native Denmark.



A 42nd RHC Lewis Gun section on the march near the Canal du Nord.



There also exists some good photo documentation of the battalion, particularly during the Hundred Days. An excellent image of what appears to be a Lewis Gun section on the march near the Canal du Nord shows all of the men carrying the General Service Pattern waterbottle carrier and waterbottle often associated with the Pattern 1903 Bandalier Equipment as a supplement to their '08 harness waterbottle and carrier. This corroborated with a 3rd Canadian Division order allocating over 10,000 of these for use by the infantry battalions who, at this time, were moving very quickly over open ground, often outpacing their train of supply. eBay has also been a good source for portraits of individual members of the battalion and a very few but excellent uniform groupings have turned up there as well.

In conclusion, a few things really stood out in researching the battalion. One of the most glaring items was that the term "Black Watch," almost always guaranteed to appear with any reference to Royal Highlanders, was almost never encountered in the written record. The only place it was sometimes found was on recruiting posters in which the phrase is usually along the lines of "Allied with the Black Watch." Any referral to the unit is 99.9% of the time made as 42RHC or 42nd Canadian Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada) — as we find the signatory in the war diary at the end of each month.

The battalion was highly motivated with a good officer and NCO cadre. The other ranks also seem to have been of exceptionally good quality and the general success of the battalion is clearly a reflection of the mix of these elements.

Our Unit Philosophy

The current membership of our unit is generally a collective of friends who have the same take on re-enacting and living history. We wanted to avoid some re-enacting pitfalls and the key motivator was to do this as safely and authentically as possible within the constraints of some limitations we have on our kit — chiefly in suppliers of Highland kit. Since many of us have been doing this for a very long time, the important thing was to be sure to balance fun with the very solemn responsibility of portraying the members of the battalion in a respectful and accurate manner. The key was to avoid the extremes of authenticity snobbism which we sometimes saw exercised by groups in other time periods we do, (nobody has ever influenced anyone by being rude to them over kit,) or by getting incrementally lax and letting BS authenticity into our ranks. It is an easy balance if you recruit the right folks and concern yourself with your own house in terms of authenticity and unit demeanor.

We were also very sensitive to the sometimes poor portrayal of Highland Troops in other periods we have done or observed. This is no indictment on anyone and is meant in a lighthearted way but we wanted to avoid bad accents, endless haggis jokes and several dozen other stereotypes that often cast a poor light on Highland troops and Highland reenactors. The 42nd Battalion was very mixed in terms of ethnicity though it did have a strong English/Scottish base with a large number of other nationalities thrown in — the winner of the V.C. in the battalion was a Dane off the boat, for example.

We hope to be accepted as a full GWA unit this spring and thank you for your interest. We look forward to seeing you in the Neuville Sector! — *Richard W. Moncrief*

The Hindenburg Line from A Doughboy's Point of View

R. B. House
N. C. Historical Commission

Lifted from the website of the NC Dep't of Archives and History. Published Oct. 15, 1920

Among the many records of the 30th Division now on file with the North Carolina Historical Commission is the following description of his experiences by Corporal James E. Gregory, Company M, 119th Infantry. Corporal Gregory, the son of Mr. And Mrs. W. J. Gregory, was born in Newland township, Pasquotank County, N.C. May 15, 1896. He was called into service through the draft September 20, 1917, as one of the first men in his county to go, and was transferred from the National Army at Camp Jackson, S.C., to the National Guard at Camp Sevier, S.C. Corporal Gregory's experience typifies that of thousands of young North Carolinians who waited for the call to service with full faith in the system of Selective Service, and eager courage for action. His story follows:

"On the second day of July, 1918, we began our hike for the front. After five days of hiking with eighty-pound packs, we stopped within ten miles of the Ypres front in Belgium at Kemmel Hill. Here for two weeks we trained and got somewhat acquainted with the sound of big guns and German air raids.

"On the 24th of July we went to the front and with the British 4th Army helped to hold the front line. The first day was fairly quiet, but the second was rough. When I saw two of my best pals killed and I had to help carry one of them out with his head blown off, I decided Sherman was right when he said 'War is hell.' That night we were relieved by another company of our boys and we went out to rest—a few days later and the Division was out for a rest. After five days of rest we were sent back to the lines to relieve the British. This time we let 'Old Jerry' know who was there. The 27th American Division at our right went over the top and captured Kemmel Hill. Our Division went over with them and advanced the line even with the 27th, which was about one thousand yards. Then being relieved by the Scotch Highlanders, we went out for another rest and were sent to the Somme front in France to help the Australians break the famous Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt. Here we learned we were used as storm troops for the English 4th Army.

"At 5:50 a.m., September 29th, our Division attacked the Hindenburg Line on a front of three thousand yards. For four long hours the barrage continued without one minute of let up from both sides. It looked to me as if the destruction of the world had begun. I couldn't hear myself think, shells were falling everywhere, and shrapnels filling the air with their horrible whistles, and men were moaning and groaning at every side, pleading for someone to help them. German prisoners were coming over with hands up yelling 'Kamerad,' enemy aeroplanes whizzing low to the earth and sending showers of bullets down on us, friends everywhere falling dead and wounded. I was in a continuous struggle for life and



almost unconscious of what was really happening, when the hardest of the battle was over and we had reached our objective, the tunnel of St. Quentin and the entire Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt. We spent the night in a German dugout seventy feet under ground, where the night before Hindenburg's men never dreamed of having to give up.

"On the morning of the 30th we began to gather up the remainder of the dead and wounded. Horrible sights were to be seen. I saw men piled beside the shell-torn road in piles of from two to a dozen, and Australians hauling men to bury in wagons like we haul wood—a dozen or fifteen to a load. At the burying ground some of the men could not be identified for only half a man could be found, sometimes his body being blown to pieces and the identification tag lost.

"On October 1st we were relieved by the Australians, having captured 1,434 men and 47 officers and advanced 4,200 yards. We went out to back areas for a well-earned rest which we never got. On the 5th we were started back to the front to relieve the Australians. On October 9th I went over the top twice. We captured two small villages. One I remember was Busigny. Just before we entered the village we ran into a machine gun nest and several of our boys were killed. H.L. Myers of my squad fell severely wounded and called for help. I [was] not supposed to aid him but he begged so I could not refuse, took off his first aid pouch and began to dress his wound as best I could. While busy at work on him three bullets struck the ground behind us within four feet of us. I said to him 'Crawl behind me, if you can, to this hill.' While he was crawling a bullet passed through the overcoat on his pack.

"When we had routed the machine gun nest, we advanced through Busigny and came within sight of the enemy's artillery and began to fire on the fleeing enemy. While moving the artillery back as fast as they could some of the enemy's guns were firing on us at open sight in our ranks. I could see the fire belch from the mouth of the gun when it was fired in our ranks. This was just at night. Orders came to dig in and prepare for the night. About six o'clock in the morning of the 10th, a barrage was put down on St. Souplet and we went over the top again and drove the enemy just outside the town; advancing our line about a mile, leaving both right and left flanks open to the enemy. While driving the enemy out of the town they were firing on us from behind houses, out of windows, in church towers, from behind doors, and every place imaginable. I discovered one firing at me out of the open door in a large brick house about two hundred yards away. I took steady aim at the door and when he came to the door again I fired at him and he at me. He struck within two feet of me. I don't know how near I came to him but I did not get him. We exchanged three shots at each other and I called two other fellows and went to the place where I saw him but he had gone to the rear. Late in the afternoon a counter attack was made by the enemy but without success. We strewn the ground with German dead. While the attack was on, one of our boys ran up against five 'Jerries' in the cemetery. He shot down three of them; the other two shot him to the ground but he never stopped firing on them until they turned heels to the rear.

"The next day, October 11th, we were relieved by the 27th American Division and came out for a rest. But our rest was

very short, for on the 16th we were called back to the lines, taking over the lines at the same point we had left them when relieved by the 27th Division.

"The attack began on the 17th and lasted three days, capturing several small villages and towns. We were relieved on the 20th by the British. Our company then consisted of between forty and fifty fighting men, all the others dead or wounded in hospital.

"This time we went out to Behencourt, about forty or fifty miles from the lines, to recruit and fill our ranks with new men. While out there the armistice was signed, November 11th. We never had to return to the lines again.

"After a few weeks at Behencourt our regiment moved to Beaumont. There we stayed and drilled until late in February. Then we hiked about forty miles with a pack of about seventy pounds to forwarding Camp Lemans. Here we stayed five weeks, then boarded on American box cars, sixty men to the car, and went to St. Nazaire. Here on March the 21st we embarked on the U.S.S. Huron at five o'clock and bid old France goodbye. A voyage of twelve days and we landed April 2nd at Charleston, S.C. Spent the night on board, unloaded early next morning, the 3rd, and boarded the train for Camp Jackson, the same old camp I started from. Saturday the 5th we gave a parade with fixed bayonets, steel helmets, and gas masks, at the alert position, for the benefit of the people of Columbia. After the parade the Red Cross, with the ladies of Columbia, served refreshments.

"Monday, April the 7th, 1919, I signed an honorable discharge, and reached home two days later, April 9th." ■

GWA Executive Committee

2008–2009 term

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

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

Print first letter of your last name in this box

☐ Check this box if you are a unit commander

**GWA Membership and Registration Form for the Spring Combat Event, April 17-19, 2009
Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, Newville, PA**

Part I — Member Information — Please Print Legibly

Last Name: _____ First Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Unit Commander: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

I certify that I am 18 years of age or older _____

You must be at least 18 to register. You may be asked for proof of age. (sign here)

Part II — Unit Affiliation

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

Part III — Dues and Event Fees

A. 2009 dues

(Annual dues are due at the Spring Event each year)

\$25.00

B. Spring 2009 Event fee if pre-registered (see below)

\$25.00

C. Optional site development donation

\$

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

\$

E. Gate registration fee

(PAY ONLY IF NOT PRE-REGISTERING)

\$15.00

F. Gate registration total (D+E)

\$

*Pre-registration: Members are encouraged to pre-register to save the gate fee. If you pre-register but are unable to attend, your event fee (only) will be returned within two weeks. All pre-registrations must be received by the Treasurer on or before **April 13, 2009**. If your pre-registration is not received by this date, you must pay at the event — including the \$15 gate fee. Your original mail pre-registration will be returned unopened.*

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

**Randy Gaulke, GWA Treasurer
584 Valley Road
Gillette, NJ 07933**

(908) 626-1345 e-mail: Lavarennnes@comcast.net

Register Online with PayPal

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

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

American

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

British

2SRFC No. 2 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps
6BWBEF 6th Btn., Black Watch, BEF
BRBEF The Border Regiment, BEF
BUFF 6th Buffs Rgt., BEF
IRISHGD Irish Guards No. 3 Co., 1st Btn.
ROYENG Royal Engineers
RWF Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Commonwealth

5AIF 5th Btn. Australia/New Zealand Army Corps
PPCLI Princess Pat's Canadian Light Infantry
42BNCEF Canadian Black Watch (*probationary*)

French

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

Russian

RL Légion Russe

Non-Military

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

Austrian

63KUK 63rd KuK

German

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

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