

ON THE WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION

Spring 2007



Spring 2007 Site Committee Report

The Site Committee met at Newville on 10 March 2007 to discuss site related issues for 2007. This report will document the discussion, action items and forward looking plan for 2007 and beyond, as discussed at the meeting. The Site Committee is currently composed of the two combat Commanders (M. Locicero, L. Brown); the two Reps (J. Kulaga, M. Hanson); the two Trench Masters (J. Holder, R. Potter) and chaired by the VP (J. Kidd).

Review of 2006 Site Actions

The committee reviewed the discussions and decisions made in 2006; reviewed the planned actions undertaken in 2006 and their results. These were:

Additional trench segments in the Allied Center: 2 of 3 segments complete; the 3rd segment will be completed prior to April event

Extension of entry trenches to access roads: Complete

Improvements to Death Valley & environs: Not undertaken in 2006; solutions under study

Adding shell holes in Center & Southern areas of No Man's land: some holes were added in the south, more are needed and will be put in prior to April event. Improvements in center are tied to DV improvement plan which is still under development

Thinning/clearing of overgrown areas to the north & south of current trench networks: Clearing / thinning of northern areas complete (further thinning there is unwise until impacts of current clearing can be fully assessed). Southern clearing was not undertaken in 2006; it may be considered for 2007, but is of lower priority until we can assess the actual return on investment seen in the larger area of the northern clearing in terms of use during events. If some clearing can be shown to be of near term value, it can be considered; else it may be slated for future development when the need becomes more acute.

Adding a second line trench in CP north where none exists: Not undertaken in 2006, planned for April 2007

Extending a connected line of shell holes outward and forward of northern CP line to gain depth for CP rear: Not undertaken in 2006, planned for April 2007.

Allied Prisoner pen (Allied Rep discretionary spending): Partially complete; final wiring to be done prior to April event.

Review of Site Related Budget: The 2006 budget for Site related expenses (including mechanical defoliation, road maintenance, and site improvements) was \$5,200. Approximately \$3,400 was invoiced (more expenditures were planned, but not executed in 2006, resulting in the lack of full expenditure). Note, the site committee is in firm agreement that expenditures should be conservative; it is better to not spend money than spend it carelessly.

Planning for 2007

Discussion was had on the needs and plans for 2007. These included:

Completion of projects carried over from last year. These projects were discussed, determined if they were still needed, any planned adjustments necessary, and a time frame of action intended

Prioritized needs for 2007 & beyond. A discussion was had about areas of the site which need improvement, and what

Spring Combat Event Schedule

April 20-22, 2007

Friday, April 20

12 noon-6:00pm Registration shed open

6:30pm Modern vehicles must be moved from all areas beyond the registration shed gate (including the battlefield, roads, rear areas, camps) before 6:30pm and parked in the parking lots. The registration shed gate will be locked until 6am Sunday

7:00pm Safety meeting on road between trenches

7:30 to 7:45pm Stand To.

7:45 to 11:00pm Night combat

Saturday, April 21

8:00-8:55am Registration shed open

9:00 to 10:00am Safety meeting formation for all units (mandatory attendance)

10am to 10pm Combat

Sunday, April 22

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



the impact of not addressing them (or delaying addressing them) would be. Major concerns are:

Death Valley solution. Discussion pointed out the DV is truly becoming a death valley, in a bad way—nothing happens there. It is tactically useless for the CP side, and of no real use a tactical objective to the Allies, who can only become trapped there and shot to hell from front & rear. So a major area in the center of our site goes largely unused at events. A solution is needed there. It is acknowledged that the best solution will likely be very costly, and may need to wait until larger levels of funding are available, perhaps after the mortgage is paid. (Note a past attempt to do this on the cheap yielded only the Berm, part deux, to hide the evil fill we did receive; we need a more reliable planned solution). Solutions in that area will need to have not only feasibility and cost studies, but other issues that have long hampered that area, including run off, drainage and environmental aspects. The Site committee will investigate the cost and ROI of having a professional engineering firm evaluate the partial filling and leveling (and related impacts), to come up with a comprehensive and executable plan for Death Valley, to be implemented when adequate funding levels become available.

Defoliation. This maintenance issue has been a thorn in the side of the GWA, both figuratively and literally. Growth of undesired vegetation on site has long been a problem, defying our efforts over the years. The GWA has tried controlled burns, large and small scale chemical defoliation and other methods, with generally poor results. Every year we wind up having to mechanically defoliate the site, combining machinery efforts (paid brush hogging and mowing by GWA volunteers) and old fashioned weeding done by units. These latter efforts, combined with frost, usually have the site in good shape by April and November events, but times in between have left the site overgrown, limiting use outside of our main events, work parties, etc. A long term effective solution is needed which can control and limit the growth to levels which require minimal efforts to maintain.

The best means of controlling growth is to plant and cultivate desirable growth, to close out the undesired vegetation. Planting hardy grasses which require only mowing can limit the growth of poison ivy, locust, kudzu and other troublesome weeds. Long term this will lead to less maintenance needs. To achieve this we would need to absolutely control the growth of unwanted vegetation until the grass would grow and spread, which could take several years. And this would only be effective on horizontal surfaces; vertical ones (i.e.: trench walls) would still need work. Previous GWA efforts have included controlled burns, which removes some of the unwanted vegetation for a limited time, but can only work during the end of the growing season (no help during the summer) and offers no relief beyond the immediate time of the burn. Chemical defoliation has had marginally better results. If applied repeatedly and often, it can have a positive impact, reducing growth for several years (more if grass can be put in place of the weeds, but defoliant kills grass too). Individual units who have put forth a significant effort at this in small concentrated areas have seen fair to good

results; however on a large scale (especially in common areas for which no one unit has responsibility) this has been generally a failure. We have been told of types of chemicals that may be more effective than those generally commercially available, but our proximity to protected wetlands and runoff concerns (as well as legality) may preclude us from our version of agent orange, as well as the labor cost of widespread spraying (aerial, etc). On the whole, chemical defoliation at the organizational level appears to be a minimally effective option.

An interesting idea was discussed over the past year concerning animal defoliation. The use of goat herds has seen good effect elsewhere in may hard to maintain areas. Goats apparently love to eat the stuff we hate (ivy, locust), would rather not eat grass (allowing it to grow) and certainly don't require wages to defoliate for us. Several goat herds are apparently available to graze on our land, if we can satisfy the concerns of the goat owners. The concerns are primarily related to the safety of the herd. Containment is the main issue; injury due to barbed wire, predators, etc. are secondary.

To allow for goats to be used on site, we'd be required to put electric fencing around the areas where the goats would be kept. We'd need to run the fencing & gates around the periphery, and also segment the areas inside that loop to allow the herds to be shifted for concentrated grazing. The cost of the fencing has not been ascertained, but rough order of magnitude estimates indicate considerable costs for materials, even if the GWA supplied the labor to install. There are also other logistical hurdles including coordination of removing goats for unit sponsored events and work parties, etc. Also we'd need to assess the impact of the fencing on events. Goats might represent an ideal paper solution, but actually putting it into practice may prove a formidable, if not insurmountable challenge.

Site committee members are going use contacts to contact the Agricultural Departments of local universities and other assets to make sure we have every option understood and on the table, and will attempt to get a firm estimate of electric fencing of our property; in all likelihood for 2007, we'll still be doing it the old fashioned way—mechanically. Also, as trenches become more developed, including revetting, this will help to limit growth of vegetation within trenches.

To that end, several recommendations are made to units and members:

- Arrange several work days throughout the year to defoliate your own areas, particularly trenches. Doing so even one day per month throughout the summer can have a very good effect. Extend to common areas if you can
- Schedule one or more GWA wide work weekends, toward the end of the growing season to kill what the frosts won't. The GWA should facilitate this.
- Units should use mobile vice fixed wire entanglements (knife rests vice pigtales). After the April event, pull those mobile entanglements back to the edge of your trenches to create wide lanes in NML that can be accessed by tractor for mowing. If you must have a fixed entanglement, your



unit will be fully responsible for monthly maintenance of that area, so arrange for your men to complete this.

- Additionally, we have had a few of GWA volunteers purchase and donate both materials and time to wide area site mowing; we need to ensure that we cover machinery maintenance costs to help them help us.

Minor concerns needing addressing

Site Planning tools: We need better maps, and photos of the site in its current configuration. There is an existing topographical map of the site, obtained during the purchase of the property. Pursuit of aerial photographs to be used with (and perhaps having the trenches overlaid on this map) should be pursued. The Surveying Company which produced the original map will be contacted to see if satellite imagery of the site can be obtained and placed on the topographical maps.

A port-a-john blind in the CP north area has become exposed due the clearing and will need to be relocated to a less visible area prior to the April event.

Miscellaneous

The Site Committee walked the site for the purpose of assessing any new issues, as well as discussing existing ones. Several issues were noted which will require action. These issues, while not necessarily the responsibility of the Committee per se, fall within areas of responsibility for various site committee members in their GWA roles. Issues noted for action include:

Condemnation of trenches in the CP south. A number of trenches on the southern end of the CP line have collapsed and become safety hazards. These areas will be marked and blocked off prior to the April event, to avoid injury by GWA members. The GWA unit responsible for these trenches will be notified, and they will be required to provide a corrective action plan with timetable. Otherwise these trenches will be reclaimed by the GWA, bulldozed and reassigned to other units. It was also noted that other trenches nearby, while not a safety hazard as yet, are showing signs of wear with collapse forthcoming if action is not taken. The responsible units will be required to file a corrective action plan.

Overly exposed frontline construction. Several project on the Allied and CP sides have resulted in unreasonably exposed fortifications. Those units responsible will be informed of suggested/required courses of correction, and their corrective action plans with timetables must be filed with their respective trenchmasters prior to the April event.

Overall, the site looked to be in very good shape, with the newly cleared areas offering the promise of varied activities; continued unit projects are in the works, which will further improve the site over time. If we can maintain and improve upon the developed areas of the site in the near term, we should be in very good shape for more aggressive development a few years from now when the mortgage is paid and larger sums are available for site development.

Jim Kidd
VP GWA
Site Committee Chair

Letter from the Allied Combat Commander

Gentlemen,

Allied HQ will continue to develop and implement the battalion concept. A number of recommendations to improve the content of the new standing trench orders were submitted by unit commanders during the winter months. Many of these ideas, along with some new ones, have been adopted in order to increase mutual cooperation among the three national companies.

I look forward to seeing you in the trenches.

Sincerely,
Michael S. LoCicero
a.k.a.. *Captain Lowe*

Notes From the GWA Treasurer

- 1) **EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, 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.**
- 2) For our insurance coverage, you **MUST** be 18 years or older to participate. You must have proof of age.
- 3) Consider this! As of February 2007, the GWA completed paying the sixth year of its 10-year mortgage. Given the GWA's current financial status (see proposed budget, below) it is entirely feasible that the mortgage could be paid off 2 years early using a combination of cash and donations from the membership. (300 people x \$30 average = \$9,000.) Imagine the site development work that can occur after the \$9,500 annual mortgage is paid off ...

Summary of Projected 2007 Revenues and Expenses Through December 2007

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Budgeted Revenues | \$29,870 |
| Budgeted Expenses | |
| Administrative | -\$3,425 |
| Communication | -\$559 |
| Site Purchase | -\$12,075 |
| Event & Site | -\$9,674 |
| Site Development | -\$7,000 |
| Projected Surplus (Deficit) | -\$2,863 |
| Beginning of Year Cash Balance (All Sources) | \$15,807 |
| Projected Surplus (Deficit) | -\$2,863 |
| Projected Ending Cash Balance | \$12,944 |
| Divided as Follows | |
| Emergency Fund (Kept in checking account) | \$3,000 |
| Checking account in excess of Emergency Fund, 12/31/07 | \$9,944 |
| Paypal account balance, 12/31/07 (Transfer to checking account) | \$0 |
| | \$12,944 |

**Projected Revenues**

| | Spring 2007 | | Fall 2007 | |
|--|-------------|----------|------------|------------------------|
| Membership dues @ \$25/Person | (280@\$25) | \$7,000 | (100@\$25) | \$2,500 |
| Event fees @ \$25/Person (\$15 Summer) | (275@\$25) | \$6,875 | (325@\$25) | \$8,125 |
| Late fees (\$15 at the gate) | (50@\$15) | \$750 | (50@\$15) | \$750 |
| Site donations | | \$500 | | \$500 |
| Subtotals | | \$15,125 | \$11,875 | \$27,000 90.4% |
| Usage fees & Other (see details) | | | | \$2,870 9.6% |
| Total Revenues | | | | \$29,870 100.0% |

Budgeted Administrative Expenses

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------|--------------|
| Misc./Legal Expenses | | | \$200 | 0.7% |
| Liability Insurance (assumes 7.5% increase over 2006) | | | \$1,881 | 6.3% |
| Accident Coverage (assumes 7.5% increase over '06) | | | \$538 | 1.8% |
| Directors & Officers Liability (assumes 7.5% increase over 2006) | | | \$806 | 2.7% |
| Total Administrative Expenses | | | \$3,425 | 11.5% |

Budgeted Communication Expenses

| | Spring | Fall | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Website and Software Costs (\$30 per month) | \$180 | \$180 | \$360 | 1.2% |
| Newsletter Production (Going electronic—see below) | \$100 | \$100 | \$200 | 0.7% |
| Total Communication Expenses | \$280 | \$280 | \$560 | 1.9% |

Site Purchase

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Annual Mortgage | | | \$9,500 | 31.8% |
| Taxes (Real Estate \$375.08 actual; School District \$2,200 est.) | | | \$2,575 | 8.6% |
| Total Site Purchase Expenses | | | \$12,075 | 40.4% |

Budgeted Event & Site Expenses

| | Spring | Fall | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Ambulance (\$200 + \$30/hr for staffing for 18 hours) | \$740 | \$740 | \$1,480 | 5.0% |
| Period Transportation | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0% |
| Toilets — 1 on site permanently @ \$68.50/month | | | \$822 | 2.8% |
| Toilets — 5 extra @ \$70 each | \$350 | \$350 | \$700 | 2.3% |
| Toilets — Extra cleaning, 6 @ \$25 each | \$150 | \$150 | \$300 | 1.0% |
| Toilets — 3 extra for GD event | | | \$210 | 0.7% |
| Dumpster — extra for GD event | | | \$160 | 0.5% |
| Dumpster on site permanently @ \$62.00/month | | | \$744 | 2.5% |
| Dumpster — 4 p/u @ \$160 | \$320 | \$320 | \$640 | 2.1% |
| Site clean-up (Only if necessary) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0% |
| Printing of Passes/Membership Cards/Etc. | \$50 | \$50 | \$100 | 0.3% |
| Trench Supplies | | | | |
| Flares (Red only: 576 (4 gross) @ \$2.75 ea + \$100 ship) | \$1,684 | \$1,684 | \$3,368 | 11.3% |
| Sandbags (1,000 bags & freight) | \$575 | \$575 | \$1,150 | 3.9% |
| Smoke (Inventory???) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0% |
| Barbed Wire (Bought 8 rolls from Newville Feed in '06) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0.0% |
| Total Event & Site Expenses | \$3,869 | \$3,869 | \$9,674 | 32.4% |

Note: Flare prices spiked in 2006 and Orion discontinued white flares.

Budgeted Site Development Expenses

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------|--------------|
| Defoliation and Mowing | | \$1,000 | 3.3% |
| Road Maintenance | | \$700 | 2.3% |
| Budgeted Site committee costs | | \$5,300 | 17.7% |
| Total Site Development | | \$7,000 | 23.4% |

ADDITIONAL DETAILS**GD February 2007 Event Revenues**

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 117 participants x \$10 | 1,170 |
| 3 Port-a-johns @ \$70 | 210 |
| Snow Plowing (Wiser charged \$400, GD paid \$70 that date.) | 330 |
| Dumpster P/U | 160 |
| | \$1,870 |
| Other Events (Unspecified) | 1,000 |
| | \$2,870 |

Newsletter Production Costs

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Send newsletter electronically. Only send hard copy to those who request it. 100 copies, 2 10-page newsletters | |
| 5 sheets/10 sides @ \$0.08 per side | 80 |
| Postage 50 @ \$0.39 ea. | 20 |
| | \$100 |

Treasurer's Comments

- 1) We had a VERY STRONG year in 2006. We're starting out with a \$15,807 cash balance.
- 2) As always, my projections are conservative.
- 3) If anything, the arrival of the aeroplanes has probably boosted our numbers.
- 4) We could spend more for site development. I'll await Jim's comments on specifics. We need to discuss this.
- 5) The budget does assume that we only send hardcopies of the newsletters to those who request it. We need to discuss this.
- 6) Given the cash balance, do we want to do something unique, such as pyrotechnics?

Submitted in Draft form by:
Randal S. Gaulke, GWA Treasurer



Ken Mink 1937-2007

In Memoriam



My Fellow Reenactors,

I am sorry to say that Ken Mink of JR 92 passed away on 14 February.

Ken had a very interesting life, as those who knew him could tell you.

He was born 1937 in Yeardon, Pennsylvania. While in high school his family moved to South Carolina. From there he went on to college on a football scholarship attending the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Due to a career decision change, he transferred to the University of Georgia and joined the ROTC program. Upon completion of his formal schooling Ken took a commission in the United States Army as a 2nd lieutenant of infantry.

Ken served three tours in Vietnam. His first was from 1966 to 1967 with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, assigned as an adviser to the 4th Battalion, 1st Regiment, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).

His second tour was in 1968-1969 where he was the S-3 operations officer for his battalion. Ken's third and last tour was in 1973 where he was a supervisor for the trading of prisoners. He did a lot during his early military career, which is reflected in his medals, including three Bronze Stars.

For the remainder of his career there were moves of duty station every three years (ever so common in the U.S. Army) until he retired in 1989 as the Deputy Installation Commander at Ft. Ritchie in Maryland.

Ken met Ruth DaCosta from Arlington, Massachusetts and they married in 1965. Ken Jr. was born in 1967 at Ft. Benning, Georgia and presently lives in South Carolina. Their second son, Eric, was born in 1970 in Bad Kreuznach, Germany.

After retiring from the Army, Ken took a job as a facilities director for JDSU Corporation in Germantown, Pennsylvania. He worked there for the next thirteen years until he retired in 2002.

Because of his love for military history, he joined the Stonewall Brigade in 1981, and shortly after his son Eric came in alongside him. There he moved up in the ranks from private to brigade commander, portraying America's finest soldiers. His interests expanded to include WW1, and he and a number of his fellow comrades from the Stonewall Brigade joined JR92 in 1993.

Ken served as JR92's combat commander for the past six years. He instructed us in his mispronounced version of German at which Scampi cringed every time. He has been one hell of a friend to us all.

Ken will be missed dearly by all but especially by JR92. His son Eric has joined the 92nd and will be fielding with us from now on—that will be a wonderful blessing. We are going to have a memorial ceremony at the event this spring and at the fall event we will be placing the cross in the memorial cemetery where the pilots of the GWAA want to do a fly over and drop a wreath.

Keith A. Thompson
JR92 Braunschweigs

Wound Chits

By Jeff Redrup

I've volunteered to spearhead a new concept to add more realism to our events—the use of wound chits. The concept is based on ideas from many people, including Guy Gormley (5th AIF), Max Stiebritz (IR459), Eugene Poplavky (La Légion Russe), Brett Werner (28th), Jim Kidd (28th), Jean Théophile Contamine (151st), and others.

The rules below show how wound chits work. There is more that can be added to this framework, but we do not have all the resources right now to implement them, i.e., stretcher bearers, full working aid stations, medics, and surgeons.

Aid stations

Actual aid stations will be added when there are people to portray them. For the time being we will be using buckets only.

Allied section—at the end of each trench leading back to the rear, 3 total.

Central Powers section—Please see Max Stiebritz (IR459) for locations.

Medical Reps

Allied Medical Rep.—Jeff Redrup (27th). If any of your medics or surgeons need medic chits or your NCO wants NCO chits see me.

Central Powers Medical Rep.—Max Stiebritz (IR459). He has the same chits as above.

NCO Chits

I made a bunch of these for NCOs to give to guys who do stupid things, can't keep their heads down, or shoots at their own men coming back into the line. These cards say



bullet to the head, trench foot, VD, lice, drunk, etc. This way they can take a walk and think about what they did.

Fate Cards/Chits and Finding Out Your Fate

Buckets will be set up at the aid stations before the event. As men are walking into the line, they can pull a card and place it back into the bucket. There will also be a bucket at the registration shack.

These cards will usually consist of 2 Black, 2 Red, and 2 Green. This is not etched in stone. If there is a greater amount on one side then the other, we will adjust the amount of cards or colors to even the odds.

Taking hits

If you feel you have taken a hit, this is when you will react to what color chit you had pulled earlier.

If you go on an attack, and you do not get hit, remember your color for the next time you do.

Everyone who has taken a “hit” will have to proceed to one of the “aid stations” to recycle and pull a new chit.

The reason for having the aid stations at the back roads is to give the effect of new replacements coming into the line from the rear.

If there are mortar barrages or gas attacks while in your line you will still recycle. This will enable each side to send mortars or gas before an assault and actually clear out a line of trench.

There are times when you might not be able to get to the aid station due to combat in the vicinity. In that case you should play dead so you don’t get captured and proceed to the rear when the fighting done.

Above are the basic ground rules; below is how you should react.

Black (you are dead)

You must make one loud scream, lay there and really act dead. You can only move on 3 conditions;

1. Short truce to collect the dead.
2. Another man can come out and get you.
3. If you die in or near the enemy trenches and get taken into enemy trenches, you will have to be escorted by the enemy and go around the “live area.” No walking through.

NOTE: If you have “died” you should act dead and lay still, not talking to your mates (this is for as long as it takes one of your guys to come out and get you). When you are collected you must proceed to the “aid station” and pull another chit to decide your next fate when you get hit.

Red (massive wounds)

You should scream in pain, moan, call for your mother and stay on the ground. There are 5 options for revival:

1. Lay there and die, refer to the rule for Black above.
2. Crawl back to your own trenches, then you must be helped by one person to the aid station.
3. You are assisted by another person or a medic (if por-

trayed) and you both go to the aid station.

4. A stretcher comes and get you.

5. An enemy medic or soldier picks you up.

NOTE: YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR A MEDIC

Green (you are slightly wounded)

You can proceed unassisted, but must go to one of the aid stations on your side.

Retrieving of a person

- A casualty may walk but must have his arm around his savior (medic or a mate) and proceed back to their respective trenches and an aid station.
- A stretcher may be used.

If you have been captured

There may or may not be an interrogation depending on the situation. After you have been released, there is NO walking through the “LIVE AREA” with your rifle on you shoulder. This ruins the experience for everyone. You will proceed into your lines from the rear. This is to give the effect of a replacement.

Medics (if there are any)

Eleven wound cards will be given to each medic. They will have injuries on them. Medics will pull a card when they come up to a wounded soldier and perform first aid as determined on the card.

There is only 1 KIA card; if it is pulled, the medic is dead. A medic can also recycle you or take you to your respective line and a soldier from your line can take you to the aid station.

Code of Conduct for Combatants

- Take fair hits and abide by their fates
- Carry a battle dressing on his person for use by medical personnel
- Do not fire upon medical personnel of either side (at least for now)

Medical Attendants (if any)

- Treat—without prejudice—any wounded, friend or foe
- Carry some badge of office as medical personnel, either via red cross brassard, carrying a stretcher, etc. as appropriate
- Carry a number of field dressings, to provide for those who are not carrying one (must be returned to medic during event)

* * *

You might see some people not playing by the rules, but that’s OK. Each individual, unit, platoon, etc. makes its own events better. It’s all in the attitude. Don’t let someone else ruin the event for you. Remember, the wound chit concept is to add more realism to the event. It is up to each individual to make it work. ■



The leichte Minenwerfer

As the German Army in France switched to defense in September and October 1914 the infantry started building trenches as called for in the Drill Regulations. In a short space of time there was a continuous trench system from the Swiss border to the North Sea. The French, British and Belgian Armies followed suit. German divisions began conducting attacks to gain control of key terrain. Faced with fortified field positions, the Pionier were called upon for assistance.

Since the Japanese siege of Russian Port Arthur in 1904/05 the pionier had fielded mittleren (medium) Minenwerfer and schweren (heavy) Minenwerfer to reduce enemy obstacles, forts and entrenchments. The planned leichte (light) Minenwerfer for Pionier to accompany assault units existed only in prototype form. The Krupp 1912 Grabenhaubitze was quickly adopted as the leichte minenwerfer. The weapon fired a 187 lb. round to 350 yards. Firing was triggered by a lanyard. The weapon made such an impression that by November the British produced a copy as the Vickers 2-inch Mark I Trench Howitzer. A November 1914 report by Major General Sir Henry Rawlinson stated "We also want the trench howitzer as in places where the opposing forces

charge, 75 to 450 meter range) were produced. The Lanz saw service late into 1917. In September, infantry divisions were ordered to form a Pioniere MW.kompanie with one Zug of 2 sMW, one Zug of 4 mMW and one Zug of 6 IMW. The company designation was the division's number. The 111.Division FR73 belong to formed the 111.Minenwerfer Kompanie. Reserve, Landwehr, and divisions formed later in the war used a different numbering system.

Early 1916 saw the 7.6cm leichter Minenwerfer adopted. The weapon was a scaled down mMW. Travel weight was 200 kg and weight in firing position was 117.5 kg. To make the weapon easier to move a pair of wood-spoke metal-rim wheels could be fitted. The weapon could be fired by lanyard or the firing pin locked in place so the round fired when dropped down the tube. A light explosive mine (9.9 lb. w/ 1.23 lb. charge) and a light gas mine (9.9 lb. w/ 1.76 lb. liquid agent) were issued. Both rounds had a range of 160 to 1000 meters. Tube elevation was +45 to +74.25 degrees. Like the larger Minenwerfer, the tube was rifled. The mines' rotating bands were factory cut to fit the rifling. The fit was loose to allow loading; but this caused increased barrel wear and round-to-round dispersion. The tube cradle had one

hydraulic cylinder on each side to absorb recoil, like an artillery piece, and a return spring in the cylinder on top.

Shortly after being issued, the 7.6cm leichte Minenwerfer base was redesigned to have a 360 degree traverse turn table. A crewman pushed the mount to rotate it to line up with the intended target. A screw-type clamp between the elevation gearbox mounts was tightened grasping an outer ring. Fine traverse adjustment was by rotating a handwheel on the right side of the mount.

In the spring the 7.6cm leichte Minenwerfer neuer Art was adopted. The weapon had a new base. A new 1916 light explosive mine (9.9

lb. w/ 1.23 lb. charge) and light gas mine (9.9 lb. w/ 1.76 lb. liquid agent) were developed for the weapon. Both rounds had a range of 160 to 1300 meters. All existing 7.6cm models had "alte Art" added to their designations to prevent confusion. Larger diameter metal-disc wheels (with five large circular cut outs) eventually went into use to make the weapon easier to move.

In April the infantry division MW.kompanie was ordered to reorganized in one Zug of 3 sMW, one Zug of 6 mMW and one Zug of 12 IMW. The first mention I have found of MW being used by infantry is Infanterie Regiment 187 in the



7.6cm leichte Minenwerfer neuer Art

are only some 30 to 50 yards apart we have nothing to compete with the German trench howitzer which throws bombs containing very heavy charges of high explosive and they do serious damage to our trenches." The Grabenhaubitze, while effective, was very complex, heavy, and large making it unsuitable for trench warfare.

In early 1915 the simple Behelfsminenwerfer (Lanz) was adopted. The 9.1 cm weapon weighed 106 Kg and was lanyard fired. Two types of ammunition were adopted. The Glatte Granatmine HL (3.8 Kg w/ 375 gram charge, 75 to 320 meter range) and Granatmine (3.5 Kg w/ 360 gram



Vosges between 3 January and 18 April. In June Ernst Junger's infantry platoon of 6.Kompanie/FR.73 used a Lanz Minenwerfer in a duel with a British 2-inch Mark I trench howitzer. In September 1916 there were 1,345 IMWs in service with German units.

The battle around Verdun demonstrated the difficulty forward units had in requesting and controlling artillery fire on an enemy position that was previously unknown. Such a target required a control of heavy weapons fire at the small unit level. In response an order was issued in November for infantry division pioniere to transfer the leichte Minenwerfer to the infantry battalions. Each infantry battalion was authorized a Minenwerferzug of eight throwers (same number of weapons as in Sturmbatallion Rohr). The unit was also called a Batterie, Abteilung or Trupp. Units would be equipped as new weapons were manufactured. I have seen a photo of a IMW with troops around it and a sign board in the center identifying the unit as II./247. The back of the photo was marked II./247.IR. The other user of the IMW were the Heerestruppen MW.Batl. The infantry division MW.kompanie was reduced to 1 Zug of 4 sMW and 1 Zug of 8 mMW while retaining the number of authorized soldiers.

The January 1917 company leader guidance book stated to attach one leichte Minenwerfer to a Stosstrupp. The leichte Minenwerfer was to briefly hold the point of penetration under fire before the Stosstrupp makes the penetrating attack. After executing their task the Minenwerfer follows the Stosstrupp for further employment against obstacles to the attack that appear. In May the number of leichte Minenwerfer authorized for an infantry battalion was reduced to 4 because of the shortage of troops to operate them.

Vorschriften für den Stellungskrieg für alle Waffen-Teil 7-Minenwerfer was published on 1 July. Section B, MINENWERFER FORMATIONS states "1. Infantry is equipped with light mine thrower. Every battalion has four light mine thrower." II—EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND states "11. Battalion commanders are responsible for the employment of the light mine thrower belonging to the infantry. They decide on the emplacement and targets, control their activity, and regulate the supply of ammunition. When the light mine thrower of several battalions are concentrated or when mine thrower companies are undertaking a joint bom-

bardment with infantry mine thrower, an officer will be appointed to assume command of the whole. ... 14. For actions on a larger scale, and for the preparatory measures connected with them, it is usually advisable to place mine thrower units under the tactical control of the artillery commander, in order that their fire may conform to that of the artillery." In August German units had 12,247 IMWs (over a nine fold increase in ten months).

On 19 August during the Rommel Abteilung attack on Mount Cosna, Rumania the Minenwerfer company fired on the enemy trench to drive the sentries under cover while a scout squad cut through the wire obstacle. The scouts were able to continue cutting a gap while MW rounds landed 50 yards away. When the gap was completed and assault forces in position the Minenwerferen hit the breakthrough point while artillery hit to each side. When the MW stopped firing the Stosstrupp charged through the gap and into the enemy trench followed by the reserves.

During a 30 November German counterattack II/109 IR's advance was held up by three British machineguns. 5./110 IR was ordered forward from reserve to take out the British position. The regiment commander ordered machinegun platoons to fire on the flanking British positions and a Minenwerfer to fire on the British MGs. German artillery fire became available and was directed to hit behind the British MGs. Every time a MW round landed a few 5./110 IR members made a short rush forward to the next cover. 5./110 IR moved into the trench connecting the machineguns and knocked them all out.

During 1917 some regiments formed a Minenwerfer Abteilung to provide administration and training of the 12 Minenwerfer crews. During operations the weapons remain under control of the infantry battalions.

The need for direct-fire gun support (Infanteriegeschütz) had been well demonstrated by Sturmbatallion Rohr. Begleitbatterie (division artillery), Nahkampf-Batterie or Infanterie-Geschütz-Batterie were attached to infantry regiments to provide this capability. Six horses were needed to move a 1050 kg 7.7cm fk96nA and 890 kg limber. The nine man crew could not drag the weapon across typical crater-strewn terrain to keep pace with attacking infantry or avoid enemy infantry. The lightened Krupp 7.7cm Infanteriegeschütz L/20 and L/27, and 608 kg modified Russian Putilov 76.2mm M/13 were effectively no easier to move. In addition to lacking tactical mobility there were too few (50 Nahkampf, 50 Infanterie-Geschütz units) and divisions were reluctant to assign their scarce artillery the mission. Industry was fully occupied keeping up with existing demand so producing additional ordnance was not possible.

The answer was the Flachbahn-Lafette (flat-trajectory mount) for the 7.6cm leichter Minenwerfer. A large number of mounts were in use during the Michael Offensive (March 1918). The infantry battalion commander now had a surrogate Infanterie Geschütz and a limited tank defense capability in addition to indirect fire. The Flachbahn-Lafette was a conventional looking artillery trail that hooked to the existing weapon. Larger diameter wood-spoke wheels were issued to improve mobility. A front sight clamped near the

ON THE WIRE

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Mark Graef, Editor

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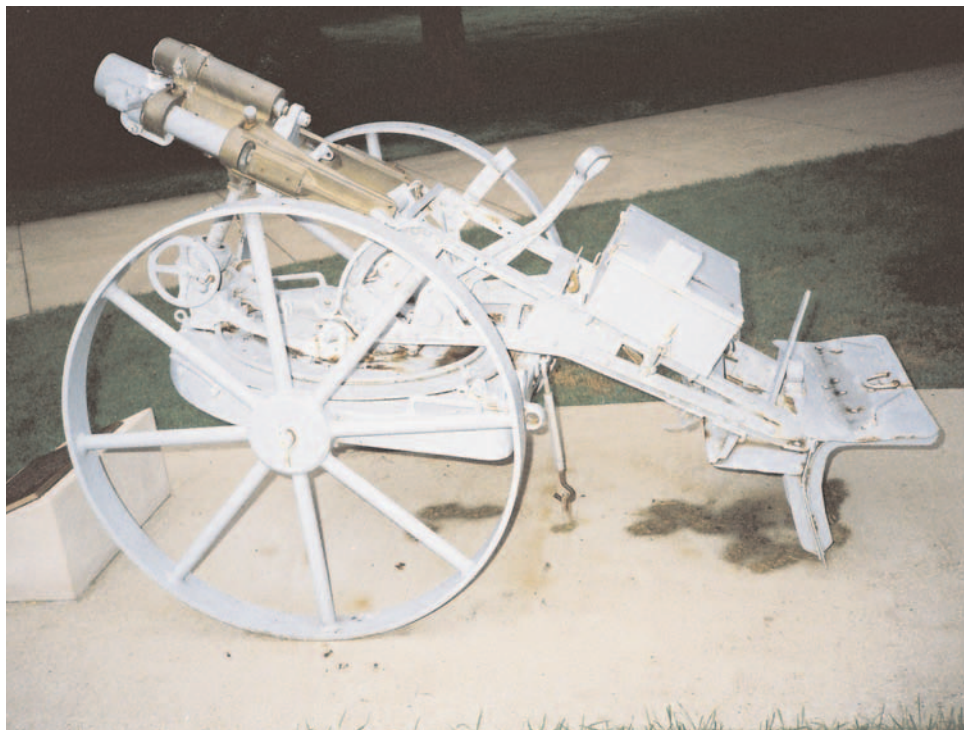
front of the left hydraulic cylinder and the rear sight attached behind the Visiereinrichtung. The tube cradle could be locked in a position for direct (0 to +27 degrees) or indirect fire. The weapon could fire with the wheels mounted at tube elevations up to 12 degrees. The trail had a ratchet-type mechanism on the top of the spade for limited traverse. For greater traverse the trail was lifted and the entire weapon rotated by the crew. The travel weight with the trail attached was 270 kg and 185 kg without wheels. Four different Flachbahn-Lafette have been identified with the frame-type Flachbahn-Lafette being the last detachable version built during the war. I have examined one of the frame-type Flachbahn-Lafette. The serial numbers on the rear of the tube are H2/1917 & Nr 16439/H2. The last version of leichte Minenwerfer built during the World War had a permanently attached trail. I have not yet seen a picture of this version.

By March 1918 some infantry regiments had renamed the Minenwerfer Abteilung a company. The company had three Zugs of four Truppen each (12 throwers). For the Michael Offensive the Armee-Oberkommando 18 artillerie befehl assigned control of assault regiments' Minenwerferen to the division artillery commander for positioning and fire direction. The IMW were part of the Feuerwalze (creeping barrage) because their high rate of fire was better at keeping the enemy's head down as the infantry advanced and the light weight allowed quick movement forward once the advancing infantry reached the weapons' maximum range. The artillery commander could detach Minenwerfer from the Feuerwalze to engage enemy positions holding up the advance or to help eliminate bypassed pockets. This use of the IMW is mentioned six times in British unit histories in "The Kaiser's Battle." After the breakthrough two IMW were assigned to the battalion's third wave and the other two were kept with the regiment Gefechtsross.

During the March Michael Offensive the IMW often could not keep pace with the advancing infantry. For the Blucher-York Offensive (27 May) a single-horse drawn trailer was attached to select IMW m. Flachbahn-Lafette to speed up movement. The other IMW were kept with the regiment Gefechtsross.

August 1918 saw many changes. An infantry regiment Minenwerfer Kompanie was ordered formed by consolidating the infantry battalions' IMW. The company was to have two mMW, nine IMW m. Flachbahn-Lafette and nine T-Gewehr. The primary mission of the company was fighting enemy tanks. Two IMW alternate positions started being used in each regiment's outpost zone for tank defense and tank forts 1,000

meters behind the front were to include two or three IMW m. Flachbahn-Lafette. The 4.Kompanie (Minenwerfer) of the division Pioniere battalion was ordered disbanded. Weapons and troops were to be sent to the infantry regiment MW kompanie. The regiment Minenwerfer companies initially used the number of the regiment. Later the unit was designated 13.Kompanie (MW). During September the number of operational leichte Minenwerfers in the infantry regiment company was reduced to eight because of ammunition



IMW m. Flachbahn-Lafette (flat-trajectory mount)

shortages. At the end of the war there were 12,329 leichte Minenwerfers in service.

The IMW's history did not end on 11 November 1918. The Finns used large numbers of IMW through the early 1930s. The Royal Belgian Army used the IMW. The German Reichswehr infantry regiments' 13.Kompanie had four IMW for indirect fire, direct-fire infantry gun and anti-tank gun duty plus 17cm m.MW. The one improvement was fitting a panoramic artillery sight in place of the original Visierenrichtung. In 1927 the 7.5cm leichte Minenwerfer 18 (renamed the Infanteriegeschütz 18 in 1935) and 15cm sIG 33 began slow-rate production to replace the WWI era Minenwerfers; which remained in service well into the 1930s. With the adoption of the 8cm GrW34 the German infantry battalion got back the organic indirect fire support it lost in August 1918; but it would be late 1944 when IGs were assigned before there was once again organic direct fire support in a battalion.

The IMW is still with us today. French bomb disposal units lose more people to 7.6cm IMW rounds than to any other type. After 90 years in the ground the Zamac copper substitute in the fuze corrodes and turns to powder opening the main cavity to the atmosphere. Unearthing a gas shell releases the chemical agent.



Part of Fusilier Regiment nr.73's impression is a battalion Minenwerfer formation. This article contains the basics of what has been found so far. If anyone has additional information I am interested in a copy. For those interested in additional information visit our unit website at www.fusregt73.net

Chris Schneider

Commander FR.Nr.73

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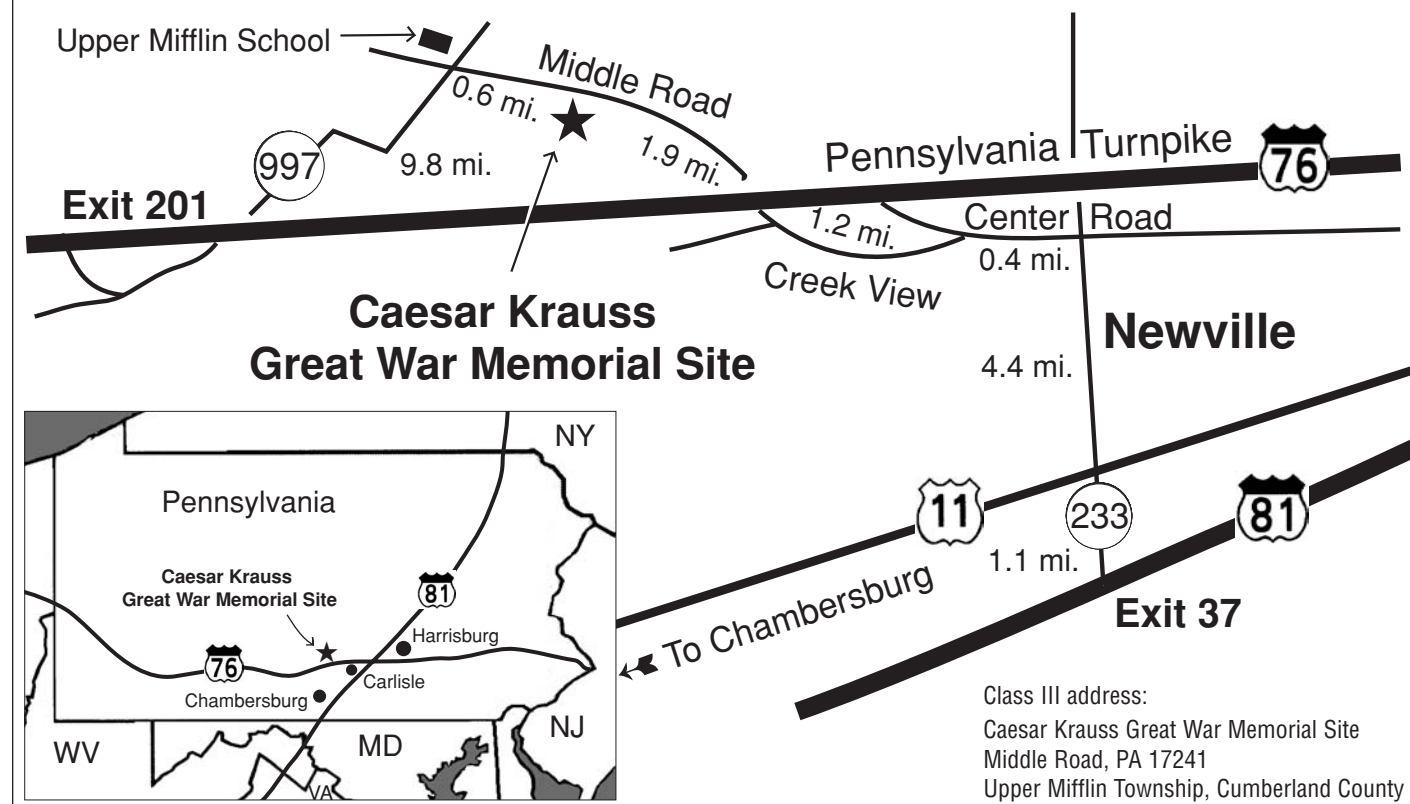
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COMING EVENTS
at the Great War Site near Newville, PA

April 20-22, 2007
GWA Spring Tactical and Living History event

November 2-4, 2007
GWA Fall Tactical and Living History event

Map to Event Site



POLICY CHANGE: EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, 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 20-22, 2007
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. 2007 dues

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

\$25.00

B. Spring 2007 Event fee if pre-registered (see below)

\$25.00

C. Optional site development donation

\$

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

\$

E. Gate registration fee

\$15.00

F. Gate registration total (D+E)

\$

*Pre-registration: Members are encouraged to pre-register to save the gate fee. If you pre-register but are unable to attend, your event fee (only) will be returned within two weeks. All pre-registrations must be received by the Treasurer on or before **April 16, 2007**. 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@patmedia.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@patmedia.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
L109AEF 28 Div., 109th Inf. Co. L., AEF
116AEF 29th Div., 116th Inf., Hdqtrs. Co., AEF
33AEF 33rd Div. (Prairie Div.), AEF
80AEF 80th ID, 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 (*probationary*)
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

French

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

Russian

RL Légion Russe

Non-Military

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

Austrian

63KUK 63rd KuK

German

1LR Königliche Bayerische Leib Regiment
5SB 5. Sturm-Pionier-Bataillon "Rohr"
8KUR 3. Feldesk., Kürassier Regt. Nr. 8 (Rheinisches)
12MWK 12. Minenwerfer Komp. 12 Division
13PB 13. Pionierbataillon
20MG 20. Maschinengewehr-Scharfschützen-Bataillon
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.)

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