

ON THE WIRE

1914 THE NEWSLETTER OF spring '96 THE GREAT WAR ASSN. 1918

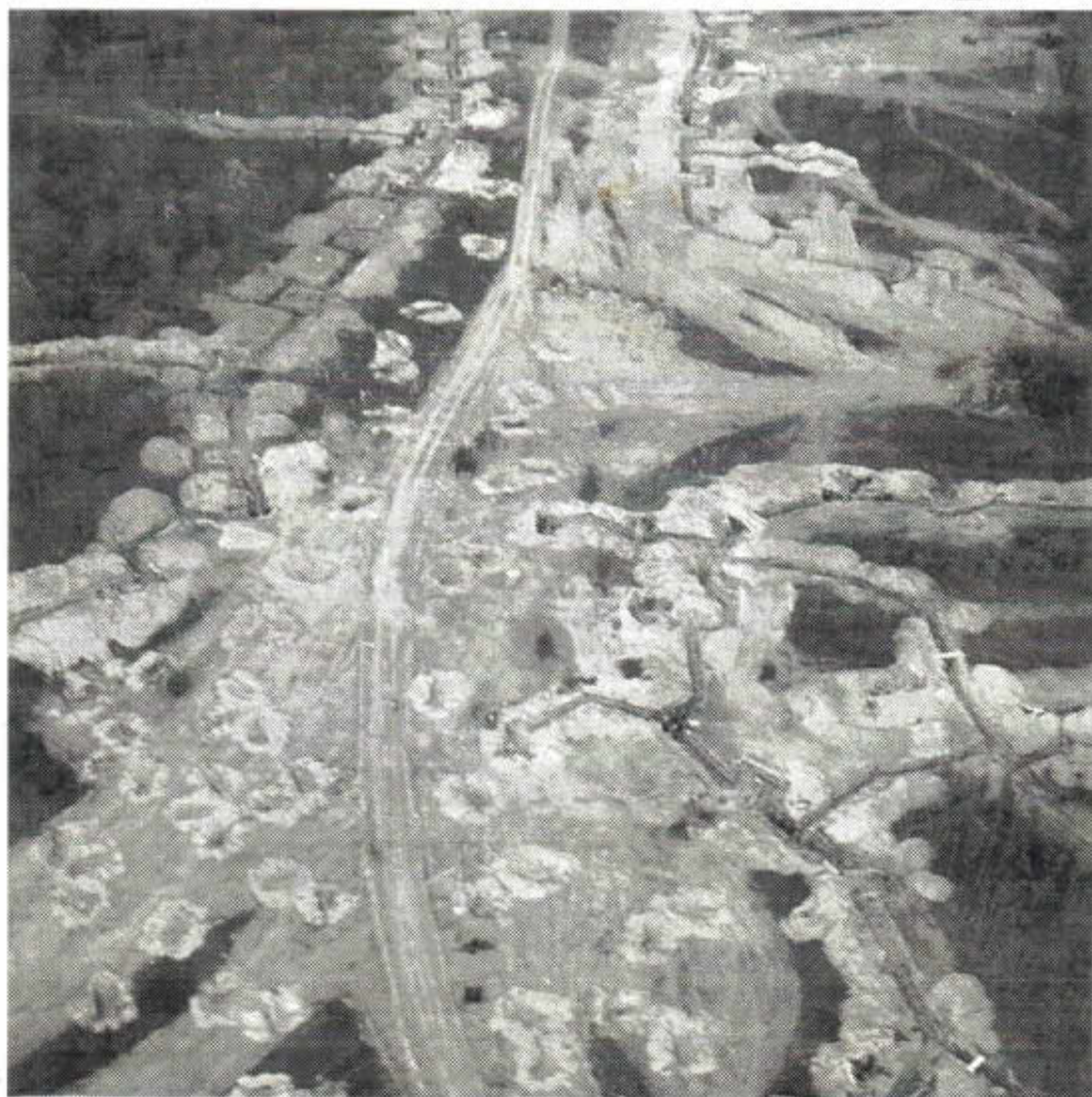


Photo: "Captain" Fred Jungclaus

Aerial view of the new Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, taken 4 November 1995.

On the Wire

Volume 7, #1 Spring 1996

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

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

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Words from the Editors' Desk

by Marsh Wise & Sue Fisher
Co-Editors OTW

First of all, we would like to thank everyone who sent in articles for this issue. It's much easier to get out a news letter when we don't have to do quite so much writing! We are also happy to print your "Letters to the Editors" either about this newsletter or about the GWA, WWI in general, or miscellaneous reenacting items.

Now for our individual comments:

Sue: I would like to make a few comments about the proposal to change or add an event so that we can have aircraft. I offer these comments as a GWA member and pilot, not in any official capacity:

I really want to see airplanes come to our events, but there are some things to consider and a few questions to be answered.

1. Right now, we only have *one or two pilots* that have even said that they would be willing to attend our events. I would hate to change everything for the sake of the possibility of just one or two airplanes.
2. Adding a third event might split the attendance at the November "big event"—but for those who want more opportunities to play WWI, a third event would be a bonus.
3. Who is going to bear the expense of building an airstrip and hangars?
4. Are we going to hold the pilots to the same standards of authenticity (written or unwritten) as the rest of the GWA members? To what extent?

Marsh: Each issue of *OtW* we do seems to be a little beefier than the one before. Methinks this issue will bring you some very interesting information; we have articles on machine-guns, barbed-wire [yeah, yeah—wire's cool!], German helmets, gas, bunkers and other assorted stuffs. I think it will meet your approval.

On a sad note, many of you may not have heard this, but a couple of our Kameraden were in a bad accident on the way to the event last Fall. The accident occurred in Chambersburg and the two men were on the way to their first event. **Jason Wozniak**, 24, from Otis, IN was killed and **John Gilley**, 39, of Homewood, IL was seriously injured, requiring many months of pain and therapy. Our condolences go to Jason's family and let's hope that John gets better and will soon be out in the trenches with us.

I would like to comment about the proposal to change the event date or add another event so that we can have aircraft. My thoughts are that, although I really like WWI aircraft and would love to see them there, moving the event date back is a bad idea. Why I sayeth you? Think about how hot it was a Ft. Pickett; do you really want to fight in September? Hell,

Continued on page 14

President's Address to the Membership

Dear Friends, I am truly amazed when I look at the calendar and realize that I have been the president of the Great War Association for the past three months. Actually, it seems more like three years, especially when I look at my telephone bill! But I am not complaining for there have been many benefits coming from my new role as President. I have been most fortunate to become acquainted with fellow re-enactors whom I might otherwise not have known. Those whose names I may only have heard twice a year are now friends with whom I have animated conversations. Long after my term expires, these friends and Kameraden will remain, and this fact makes any of the minor annoyances pale. When asked to write this communiqué, I immediately thought of a World War II newsreel that has stayed in my memory and gives me inspiration. Perhaps you have seen this newsreel clip: after the first B-29 bombers arrive at their bases in the Marianas, their youthful colonel wing commander is reluctantly ushered before the cameras and the microphones. He appears embarrassed, and after a pregnant pause, informs the American people, "We are glad to be here and when we do some more fighting, we'll do some more talking." I have always aspired to such heights of clarity and brevity, but alas, I do not come close to this goal in this report to you!

Those of us who attended the past event in November can attest to the potential of the Caesar Krauss Memorial Battlefield. The rudimentary trench system that awaited us was a vast improvement over the trenches of the preceding few battles. We need not be visionaries to form a mental image of the site after toil and sweat is added to it. With revetments, bunkers, emplacements, entanglements, readouts, communication trenches, listening outposts and even perhaps an airfield, recapturing the true horror of the Great War will become the reality for which we all strive. Our past reluctance to invest effort to improve our temporary sites was understandable, but these inhibitions are no longer necessary. Our new site is geographically acceptable to most of the membership, and our long-term lease precludes the debacle of the loss of the Shimpstown site. We are fortunate that Mark Anderson chose to honor his grandfather's service in the Great War by acquiring this parcel of land and allowing us to turn it into the devastation that was France, 1914-18. We will honor Mr. Anderson and his family by developing this site in an historically correct manner and by conducting ourselves with exemplary behavior. Our plans are to dedicate the battlefield to Cpl. Krauss in November, 1996, and we will unveil the monument that will be created in his honor as well as in the honor of his comrades and all who fought and fell during this dark moment in the history of civilization. I plan to write about Cpl. Caesar Krauss' service record and his deeds in the next issue of *On The Wire*.

I regret to report that we have lost the leadership services of two of our highly regarded GWA officers. Mike Gonzales, the German Combat Commander, and Scott Rall, the Allied Representative, have tendered their resignations. Although neither will be leaving the hobby, both have concluded that for personal reasons they cannot devote the lengthy hours their offices demand. I certainly can appreciate that. I have asked Jeff Holder, our Allied Trench Master, to assume the additional duties of Allied Representative. Fortunately, he has agreed. The position of Central Powers Combat Commander presents a difficult problem. Three exceptionally qualified candidates have come forward and have asked to be consid-

ered. I believe that all three, Rob Zienta, Tim Goodwin and Steve Fisher are well qualified to serve in this position. All three have compelling arguments why he should be appointed. Choosing between these capable leaders requires a Solomonic solution, which is beyond my modest abilities. After extensive consultation with the G-7 and the Central Powers unit commanders, I have decided on a compromise. I have appointed Werner Gruhl to assume Mike Gonzales' position. Werner has indicated to me that he will serve for this event only and intends to resign at its conclusion. I will therefore need to name a replacement for Werner. To advise me, I will hold a plebiscite limited to the Central Powers membership during the upcoming event. Based on the results of this poll, I will, as democratically as possible, name a replacement for Werner. Even though our constitution calls for a Presidential appointment to replace vacant positions, I believe by turning to the membership for advise and consent, the message that we are a democratic organization will be heard by all. If we can get away from the factionalism and the cult of personality that has plagued this hobby lately, we will all be able to advance in our aspirations to develop this new site and restore a sorely missed casualty, FUN. Yes, some of us have forgotten that this is a hobby and participation in it should be enjoyable. I appeal to you all, lighten up and start having fun again!

I promised Mike Gonzales that I would not fawn over his contributions at our next event, but I didn't say anything about this communiqué. I will however, try to emulate the B-29 colonel. Mike Gonzales serves as a role model for us all. His military bearing and his military knowledge are greatly admired, and we all have all profited by his contributions to our hobby. His absence from the G-7 will be sorely missed. I extend my best wishes to Mike and I am certain that the entire membership echoes my warm feelings towards him. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the enormous contributions made by the preceding administration. Tim Goodwin and Craig "Deks" Nordquist have literally salvaged our hobby. Without their Herculean efforts and their unselfish investment of countless hours, our hobby would have withered away and our organization would be extinct. We will forever be grateful for their effort. In addition to Scott Rall, many others have given of themselves, and I wish I could thank them all in this column. We all know who they are and our esteem and respect for them should be obvious. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the work done by our Vice-President, Richard Blair. Rick is a wonder of efficiency and organization. His contributions have made my task a cake walk, and I would be lost without him.

The final thought I wish to leave you with concerns safety. Without fanatical devotion to safety we will cease to exist. I urge all of you to pay strict attention to safety issues. Any lapse of common sense related to safety will be dealt with promptly and firmly. If you have the slightest doubt regarding a safety matter, please stop, think and take appropriate action. No one wants to be hurt and no one wants to hurt a friend. When it comes to safety, I can be downright nasty, so please don't bring out my Mr. Hyde side.

I wish you all an enjoyable and safe spring event, and be careful out there.

Sincerely,

Marvin Chadab

Battlefield Access

Dear Members,

The new permanent WWI battlefield is now reality. The site is bought and a long term lease is signed. Everyone had a great time at the Fall 1995 event, with lots of room to play. It is time to make some long term plans to develop the site and to coordinate the efforts to be cost effective. We have also forgotten how to build, plan, and fight in trenches, and with the vastness of the battlefield areas we have to traverse to get somewhere on time, we need to develop long term set "schedules" so that everyone can be on time for activities.

Since Ernie Cowen and myself are Mark Anderson's appointed caretakers of the site, we need to inform the members of our intentions to allow access to the site when not leased for an event. We are open to suggestions and ideas, and will welcome any response.

Some ideas and suggestions on use and development of the site are as follows: As of this writing GWM has installed the gates and the site will be locked by 1 January 1996, however, for the ease of all GWA members and their respective development plans, and to make it simple to work at the site without signing out a key, we will open the site on the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the first weekend in each month. (Weekend starting with a Saturday). This will be March through October. November (event weekend) will be open from the Monday before the event to the Monday after the event for 1 week. *all other activities* will need to be coordinated with GWM for access to the site. All people on the site for *any reason* must have a current GWA Membership Card; this is for safety and insurance purposes. *In Addition:* the week of July 4th (which is July 1-5, 1996), the site will be open for big projects (such as bunker building). This is the time to coordinate the back hoe to accomplish several tasks at the least cost to all. If we get enough people, we can also *possibly* march in the Chambersburg July 4th parade as units, sponsored by the VFW or American Legion posts in town. I will work on this for the future. They have already shown interests in this project.

Many units have approached me about "regional" unit sponsored "battles," since the biggest complaint I heard at the end of the November battle was that the members wanted to use the site more! This will need to be set up with the G-7 of GWA. Battles can be held at any time, with a weekend reserved by the sponsoring unit, with enough event fees to cover use of the property and expenses. An event fee of \$25 per person would cover all expenses. This would be a good way to have more battles, raise some much needed funds for the site, GWA, and the unit, plus spend more time improving the battlefield. Units should contact the G-7 for any planned event ideas. Now that we have a great place to play, we must use the time we have to turn it into the site we have all worked so hard to find. Members have expressed interest in a June (3rd or 4th weekend) and September (1st weekend) "regional" field days/event, thus spacing them at least 2-3 months apart. Units can use the site at any time for training and working, with advance notice to GWM, who are responsible for the site during "non-leased" periods.

As for actual use of the battlefield, we need to consider adopting a "set" schedule of events that will happen at EACH National

Event. In this manner, every individual can plan their moves to meet a *fixed* schedule published well in advance. We need input from the unit commanders to develop a permanent time schedule that everyone will eventually know by heart and follow out of instinct. We have a huge playground and it is *very* difficult to inform members of schedule changes. Until both sides have a good communications and command structure, we should adopt "set" timetables to follow. Please feel free to contact us a GWM to set up work details. Unit commanders need to talk to their members to see if enough interest exists to sponsor a battle, perhaps on a yearly reserved weekend identical to the now scheduled Spring and Fall events.

Remember, the future and the growth of our hobby is now in the hands of the GWA membership. The site is ours to build and enjoy, so plans should be made well in advance to make use of the new site.

Richard H. Keller

A Suggestion

Dear Members,

I suggest that the spring and fall event schedules be set up the way they were at Shimpstown. In those days, the combat scenario started at noon on Saturday, instead of at 0900. This allowed commanders enough time in the morning for unit drill, training, living history scenarios and trench work—and still give their members a chance to visit the flea market. Although I push members of my unit to come early on Friday so the above can be done then, many members have to come a long distance and cannot arrive in the afternoon. I'm sure other units have similar situations. Also, I feel that having the combat start at noon in the old days was one of the main reasons so many people still had the energy, ammo and desire to fight until 11:00 p.m. or later, unlike recent events where the action has fizzled out before 9:00 p.m. Many of you will agree that nighttime is when WWI reenacting is at its best!

Also, in the Shimpstown days, we had combat on Sunday mornings. These 8:00 a.m. fights were among some of the best that I can remember, as everyone expended their last round, grenade and ounce of energy in one final push before they had hit the road for home and wait another six months to fight again.

If we start having real 24hr., 0900 Saturday to 0900 Sunday scenarios—ones where most of the event participants actually stay and take part—I would give my full support to it. But if we aren't going to do this, then let's do what worked so well in the Shimpstown days.

Mark Graef; CO, IR63

World War I

German

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A Letter to the Central Powers from Mike Gonzales

Comrades:

After four years, I find myself in a situation which requires me to remove the mantle of Combat Commander of the Central Powers. This situation is not an unhappy one, however, and rest assures, only monumental events could possibly induce me to give up this gift you men have given me with your last three votes.

The situation is this: my wife will be giving me a son this spring. I (of course) knew this at the November election, and was confident that I would have the time and the ability to attend every event for the next two years. Then the other shoe dropped: I've been awarded a scholarship to attend the University of Oklahoma to pursue my Master's degree beginning this summer. Well, that clinched it! Between a new baby and graduate work, there just won't be time to dedicate to the position of Combat Commander that it deserves!

My first event as commander was our last event at Shimpstown. Then came "the wilderness years." The GWA without a home of its own held events everywhere from Boy Scout camps to Army installations. Many of you reading these lines remained true to the organization, paying your dues, attending these events. With apologies to our British colleagues, you men may proudly refer to yourselves from this time onward as „die alte Verachtlichen." Appropriately, my last event was our first at the GWA's new home.

My thanks goes out to each and every one of you for giving me this opportunity, and for your willing cooperation which made every event, regardless of where it was held, a ton-o-fun.

In closing, guys, I'd like to say a word about your G-7. You've got a winning team working for you, people who, after a long day's work, come home to GWA work. The postage, long-distance phone bills, travel and family weekends are sacrificed for your benefit. They do it all without thought of remuneration, and for damn little thanks. The men who sweat out the administrative end of this hobby for us are a rare breed. Were it not for those among us willing to wade into the fray and shoulder the responsibility, we'd have no GWA.

Mike

GWA Members—Come to the 1996 Dawn Patrol Rendezvous!

WHO: The United States Air Force Museum/Wright Patterson Air Force Base (Dayton, OH)/The Great War Aeroplane Association and The Great War Association

When: 0900 20 July to 1700 21 July

Where: Old Wright Field behind the USAF Museum Memorial Park next to the Air Force Museum, Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio

What: A fly in for WWI period aircraft with a WWI reenactment *in trenches*

Highlights:

- ✧ Between 20-30 period WWI aircraft will be on hand
- ✧ The period aircraft will participate with us in the reenactments
- ✧ The Air Force will dig two lines of trenches, supply barbed wire and sandbags
- ✧ Dinner will be supplied on Friday evening by the Air Force
- ✧ We will hold a battle reenactment Friday evening, Saturday, Saturday evening and Sunday
- ✧ We will be supplied with clean straw, water, Port-a-Johns, and a standby ambulance at no cost
- ✧ Alcohol is permitted after all combat is concluded
- ✧ We may hold a flea market for ourselves and the estimated 100,000 tourists
- ✧ The Air Force will make sure that our camp is in a secure area
- ✧ Free entrance to the finest Air Force Museum in the country to GWA members

Plan on coming. This event should be a rare opportunity for each of us to enjoy large scale aircraft attacks and demonstrations. There should be plenty of opportunity also to recruit. **BE THERE!**

Enlightenment from the GWA Vice President

by Rick Blair
GWA Vice President

St., Bethlehem, PA 18018). Mike will notify Rick Keller, who controls site access on behalf of our landlord, that you have paid. Rick will keep records of those who have paid their 1996 GWA dues so there should be no confusion as to who will be allowed to enter onto the property.

If time becomes a problem, don't chance it. You can stop by Great War Militaria on your way to the site and pay your 1996 GWA dues directly to Rick. Great War Militaria is located at 240 Grant St., Chambersburg, PA, 17201. Call Rick at (717) 264-6834 for office hours and more specific directions. Rick will issue you a 1996 Membership Card as your pass and receipt.

If you are a 1996 Membership Card holder, remember that your card will expire on **December 31, 1996**. If you plan on visiting the site for whatever reason after that date, your 1997 GWA dues must be paid in full and you must have a 1997 GWA Membership Card in your possession when visiting the property.

1. 1996 spring event—dates and location—The **1996 GWA Spring Combat Event** will be held on **April 19, 20, and 21** at the **Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site** near Newville, Pennsylvania. Refer to the map insert for specific directions. Signs will be posted within a few miles of the site to help guide you in. If you plan to arrive before 0900 hrs on Friday, April 19, contact Rick Keller at Great War militaria. Rick plans to open the site early in the week, but you might want to call and check. You can reach Rick at (717) 264-6834, Monday through Saturday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

2. Parking—When you arrive, park in the front parking lot off Middle Road and proceed to the Registration Tent for further directions. The front parking lot has been expanded and there may be a back parking lot located closer to the combat site by April 19th. We will park as many vehicles in the back parking lot as space allows. Campers and those who wish to deliver supplies and equipment to the combat site will have first priority for back parking lot space.

3. Registration—Register at the Registration Tent upon arrival. The Registration Tent will be located just off the front parking lot. Registration will be open from 1100 hrs to 2300 hrs Friday 19 April and from 0700 hrs to 0900 hrs Saturday April 20. Late-comers can register from 1600 hrs to 1700 hrs on Saturday. The event fee is **\$15**. If you owe the **\$20** GWA dues, you can pay them at this time. You **must** sign a "Waiver of Liability" and receive and sign for a copy of the "Safety Guidelines." You will be asked to update any personal information for the organization's files and you will be asked to fill out and return a ballot for any voting issues. At this time, you will receive a Trench Pass, GWA Membership Card, current copy of the GWA By-laws, and a site map. You must have your Trench Pass and Membership Card in your possession at **all times** while on the property. Anyone who can volunteer to provide a tent, tables, chairs, lanterns, cellular phone, etc., please contact the VP, Rick Blair, at (301) 432-2924 (evenings). I will accept a collect call.

Remember, you must have a Trench Pass and Dues Card to participate in the combat scenarios!

4. Dues and Membership cards—Due to insurance and liability concerns, your GWA dues must be **paid in full** through 1996 before you can be permitted to enter onto the property. GWA dues are payable and considered current beginning on **1 January through 31 December** of the calendar year. GWA Membership Cards will now reflect this.

If you are a 1995 GWA Membership Card holder and plan on arriving prior to Friday, 19 April, your 1996 GWA dues must be paid in full before you arrive. If you do not plan to arrive early, you may pay your dues when you register. For those who do plan to arrive early, pay your 1996 dues to GWA Treasurer, **Mike Moss** (456 North New

5. Vehicle access to the combat site—Vehicle access to the camping areas will be unrestricted unless congestion develops or the roads become impassable due to adverse conditions (i.e.: rain/snow/mud). If you are a "non-period" camper and your vehicle is your shelter, you may park it in the "non-period" camping area for the duration of the event. This is, of course, subject to availability of space and road and ground conditions. If you are a "period" camper, you must unload your vehicle and return it to a parking lot promptly.

7. Camping/site facilities and services—There are areas designated for both "period" and "non-period" camping. The "period" camping area is located just off the combat site and the "non-period" camping area is located to the rear of the Registration Tent. It is possible that these areas will be expanded prior to the event and will be serviced by additional access roads.

Be aware that you may have to clear some brush if you intend to set up a tent. All fires must be extinguished before you leave your camp. Drinking water (well water) is available on site.

Please bag your trash and deposit it in the dumpster as you leave. The dumpster will be located in the front parking lot. Portable toilets will be available on site and located as conveniently as possible.

You may also camp on the combat site. Combat site camping will be strictly authentic. **If you camp on the combat site, you are subject to attack at any time during the combat scenarios.** You will be expected to react appropriately and play the game.

Be aware of the potential for adverse weather conditions and prepare to camp accordingly.

8. Local lodging—For those of you who do not wish to camp, the following is a list of area hotels and motels:

Shippensburg Inn (717) 530-1234 Shippensburg
University Lodge Motel (717) 532-7311 Shippensburg
Hot Point Inn (717) 530-8993 Shippensburg
Theo's Inn (717) 532-5551 Shippensburg
Kenmar Motel (717) 423-5915 Exit 15/PA Turnpike

These motels are approximately 18 miles from the site. You may also try motels in Chambersburg or Carlisle. These would be further away, but still within an hour's drive of the site.

***VP's Note: The huge Carlisle Auto Show is the same weekend as our event. According to those of you who have tried to get them, motel rooms are already scarce. Don't delay!!!

9. Food services—Combat Caterers will be on site to provide the following meals:

Friday—Dinner

Saturday—Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Sunday—Breakfast

The cost for these five meals will be \$30. Combat Caterers ask that you make reservations well in advance so they can plan to have sufficient supplies of food and drink on hand. You may pay in advance or pay in person at the Mess Tent. Please bring your own mess kit and utensils if you have them. The supply of plates, bowls, cups, flatware, etc. may be limited. To make reservations or pay in advance, please contact Lou Ritter at 204 Third St., Denton, MD 21629. Phone: (410) 479-0911.

We also hope to have the Salvation Army's mobile canteen back again this year.

10. Sutlers/flea market—Sutlers may conduct business at any time during the event. Sutlers must pay the event fee and current GWA dues in order to set up shop and sell their wares. The sutlers' area will be located farther back the main access road if space can be cleared for them before the event. If not, they will be located behind the Registration Tent as they were at the 1995 Fall event. Keep in mind that no tables, chairs, booths, etc. will be provided for sutlers by the GWA. We ask that you please do not display items with Nazi insignia.

11. Event schedule—The 1996 GWA Spring Event will officially begin at 0900 hrs on Friday, 19 April, when registration opens. It will end on Sunday, 21 April at Noon after the site has been cleaned up.

12. Combat schedule:

Early War Scenarios

On Saturday: Immediately following the 0900 hrs Safety Meeting until Saturday noon. A designated area of the Combat Site will be set aside for early war combat. No artillery, mortar, or rifle grenades will be discharged anywhere on the combat site until noon Saturday.

Late War Scenarios:

1900hrs Friday to Midnight Saturday. ????

Post-Safety-Meeting until noon—only in designated areas of the Combat Site.

1330 hrs Saturday to 1700 hrs Saturday.

1900 hrs Saturday to 0800 hrs Sunday as interest dictates.

13. Safety meetings—There will be a Safety Briefing held on the combat site Friday at 1830 hrs for those who wish to participate in combat that night. The Saturday Safety Meeting will begin at 0900 hrs on the combat site. Be prompt. The meeting will be brief.

14. Safety reminder—You are responsible for your own actions. Pay close attention to what you are doing and the proximity of others while you are doing it. Be careful of obstacles on the combat site. **Unit Commanders—YOU** are responsible for the actions of your men!

a. Pyrotechnics inspection will begin immediately after the Safety Meeting. A sample of any pyrotechnic you carry onto the combat site must be detonated in front of the Safety Inspectors and Allied/Central Powers Safety Representatives. You may be asked to surrender a representative sample of your pyrotechnic for later examination. Remember that flares, smoke devices, artillery and mortar rounds, and any similar devices will be subject to testing and examination. If your pyrotechnics are not approved, you will remove them from the combat site immediately. **Using or possessing unapproved pyrotechnics will result in your dismissal from the event.** Do not throw or launch any pyrotechnic device directly at a person. Do not throw or launch any pyrotechnic device directly into heavy weapons positions or bunkers. The crews of heavy weapons will be responsible for acknowledging when they have been destroyed and will "cease fire." Never pick up any pyrotechnic device to avoid being in range when it detonates.

b. No live ammunition is permitted. No shotguns are permitted. No firearm judged to be unsafe or illegal will be permitted. If a blank misfires, do not open the breech immediately, as the round may go off as you eject it. Wait a few seconds and then carefully open the breech and extract the round. Be careful when extracting jammed rounds. Ensure that your muzzle is unobstructed by dirt and debris.

c. Do not aim and fire directly at individuals within twenty yards of you. Blanks can be dangerous at close range. If in doubt, aim and fire your weapon straight up. Or, when in close combat inside the trenches, just yell "BANG!" Because of the dangers inherent in trench fighting, you must be in control of your firearm at all times and keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Keep your finger off the trigger until your are certain it is safe to discharge your firearm.

d. Trench fighting will only be conducted in the trenches. If trench fighters are discharging their weapons straight up for safety, you are not safe if you are above the trench. Do not attempt to force your way into a heavily-defended position if it is obvious that you should be dead. By the same token, if the attacker has obviously overwhelmed you by firepower or numbers, give it up and die. Remember, **EVERYBODY DIES!!!**

e. No fixed bayonets or unsheathed knives are permitted except under conditions specifically agreed upon by

the Combat Commanders where participants will die before they come into melee range. Trench clubs must be soft enough to be tested on the user's skull. These must be approved by the Safety Inspectors at the Safety Meeting. Trench knives are to be used with restraint. Trench knives must be made of flexible rubber, soft plastic, or other material that cannot penetrate or cut human flesh.

f. Stationary machine gun positions must have range markers posted to designate a "danger zone" for the firing of their weapons. Machine gunners will "cease fire" if a combatant enters this zone. Barbed wire may be used to create the "danger zone." Wood-tipped blanks can only be used if your weapon is fitted with a shredder which renders harmless any wood discharged from the muzzle.

g. Steel helmets must be worn during late war scenarios due to the use of artillery, mortars, and grenade launchers. Always be aware of the possibility that your position may be shelled. If you are shelled, hug the trench wall or otherwise take cover. Do not look up and try to visually follow the course of a projectile. Let them fall to the ground and then try to stay clear of them. If a round detonates near you, scream, yell, and play out a good death scene.

h. There is no way to outflank the Western Front. Be a good sport.

i. No drugs will be permitted on the property with the exception of medications prescribed for you by a physician and those that may be purchased over the counter. Participating in the combat scenarios while intoxicated or impaired by drugs or alcohol is forbidden!

j. All storage containers for ammunition and pyrotechnics must have a hard lid which is to be kept closed.

k. Remember that the shout "**Corpsman!**" indicates a genuine emergency. All activity ceases immediately. Only those persons at the scene of the emergency should yell "**Corpsman!**" Those persons trained in emergency medical procedures will respond to the scene of the incident. One person at the scene will be detailed to summon the on-site emergency vehicle. A cellular phone will be available for 911 calls.

15. Site clean-up—The site must be cleaned up Sunday morning. Unit Commanders will be responsible to detail a clean-up party for their particular positions on the site to include no-man's-land. Trash bags will be provided. All trash should be collected in the area where the Safety Meeting is held so it can then be transported to the dumpster by designated vehicles.

16. Work projects—Work on projects approved by the Trench Masters through the Co-Chairmen of the Site Development Committee is encouraged until 1800 hrs Friday. You may resume work Saturday at 0700 hrs until 0900 hrs. You may also work during meal breaks on Saturday.

17. GWA executive meeting and unit commanders' meeting—There will be an elected officers' meeting near the Registration Tent Friday at 1700 hrs. There will be a Unit Commanders' meeting on the combat site Saturday at 0700 hrs.

18. Voting issues:

A. Should we schedule a third event to accommodate participation by vintage aircraft? Do we want to reschedule the traditional fall event in any case? To accommodate the aircraft, a third event or rescheduled fall event would have to occur no later than Oct. 15. A landing strip would have to be built to accommodate take-offs and landings.

B. A petition has been presented to amend the "By-Laws" so that Representatives **and** Combat Commanders may only be elected by members of their respective sides. Representatives would hold office for one 2-year term and could be consecutively re-elected for one additional 2-year term. Combat Commanders may be re-elected for an unlimited number of 2-year terms.

C. Many of you are by now aware that the post of Central Powers Combat Commander is vacant. The President is asking for a plebiscite in order to determine who the membership of the Central Powers forces believe is most capable to replace Mike Gonzales. **Only Central Powers members who have paid their 1996 GWA dues will be authorized to respond to the plebiscite.** The President has appointed Werner Gruhl as temporary Central Powers Combat Commander for the 1996 spring event and until a decision can be reached as to who will replace Mike. Any member of the Central Powers Forces may be named as a candidate for the appointment.

All three issues will allow for an absentee response. Forms for absentee response are included in this newsletter.

All GWA members who have paid their 1996 GWA dues are eligible to respond to Issue "A" (Aircraft Event/Fall Event Date Change) and Issue "B" (By-Laws Amendment) either by the absentee response form provided or in person at the Spring Event.

All members of the **Central Powers Forces** who have paid their 1996 GWA dues are eligible to respond to the plebiscite (Combat Commander Vacancy) either by the absentee form provided or in person at the Spring Event.

Absentee forms must be notarized or they will not count.

Mail your absentee form to the Allied Combat Commander, Mike LoCicero (address: 600 Valley Road, Apt. 21, Warrington, PA 18976), so that he will receive it before April 12th. Forms received by mail after that date will not be counted. Members of the Allied Forces who are neither unit commanders nor members of the G-7 will be appointed by the Vice-President to handle and count all responses. Mike LoCicero will receive all the mailed responses and deliver them unopened to the Vice-President at the Spring Event. The Vice-President will inspect the mail in his presence and turn it over to the members of the allied Forces appointed to tally the responses. Responses filed in person at the event will remain sealed until opened by the appointed Allies. The appointed Allies will notify the Vice-President of the results and turn over all response forms to him as a matter of record. The Vice President will advise the President of the results.

19. 1996 site development update—A meeting of the Site Development Committee and interested parties was held at Great War Militaria on March 8th. It is impossible to give a complete accounting of all that we discussed; however, many decisions were made that will have an immediate impact on the quality of the combat site.

Prior to the 1996 Spring Event, the earth mounds in front of both trench systems will be removed and the second line of trenches with communicators will be dug behind the Central Powers position. The second Allied trench will be funded and dug after plans have been developed and approved and the money can be made available.

Smooth wire already in place (except the green-coated stuff) may remain, but must have barbed wire incorporated into it to provide a more authentic appearance.

The front trench will not be fully revetted. The front line trench must be made to appear as though it has been shelled and fought over. It could not give the appearance of a "quiet area." The second line trenches may be revetted extensively. The responsibility for revetting will lie with the individual units who will be assigned a specific area to maintain; however, some GWA assistance may be forthcoming.

The wiring of no-man's-land may be started this year. The expense involved with this is being considered.

As I said, a complete recap of the entire ten-hour meeting is not possible here. More information will be made available at the Spring Event.

See you in the Trenches...

Rick Blair



GWA 1996 Spring Combat Event Schedule

Friday

0900 to 1100	Open Registration
0900 to 1800	Work Parties
1700 to 1800	G-7 Meeting
1700 to 1830	Dinner
1830 to 1900	Safety Briefing
1900 to Midnight	Late War Combat

Saturday

0700 to 0900	Open Registration
0700 to 0900	Work Parties
0700 to 0830	Breakfast
0700 to 0800	Unit Commanders' Meeting
0900 to 0930	Safety Meeting
0930 to Noon	Early War Combat
0930 to Noon	Late War Combat
Noon to 1330	Lunch/Work Parties
1330 to 1700	Late War Combat
1600 to 1700	Open Registration
1700 to 1830	Dinner/Work Parties
1900 to 0800 (Sun.)	Late War Combat

Sunday

0700 to 0830	Breakfast
0800 to Noon	Site Clean-up

"And tell them, 'We are under intense enemy attack and would sincerely appreciate any help that you might possibly render to minimize this extremely critical situation, including ...'"

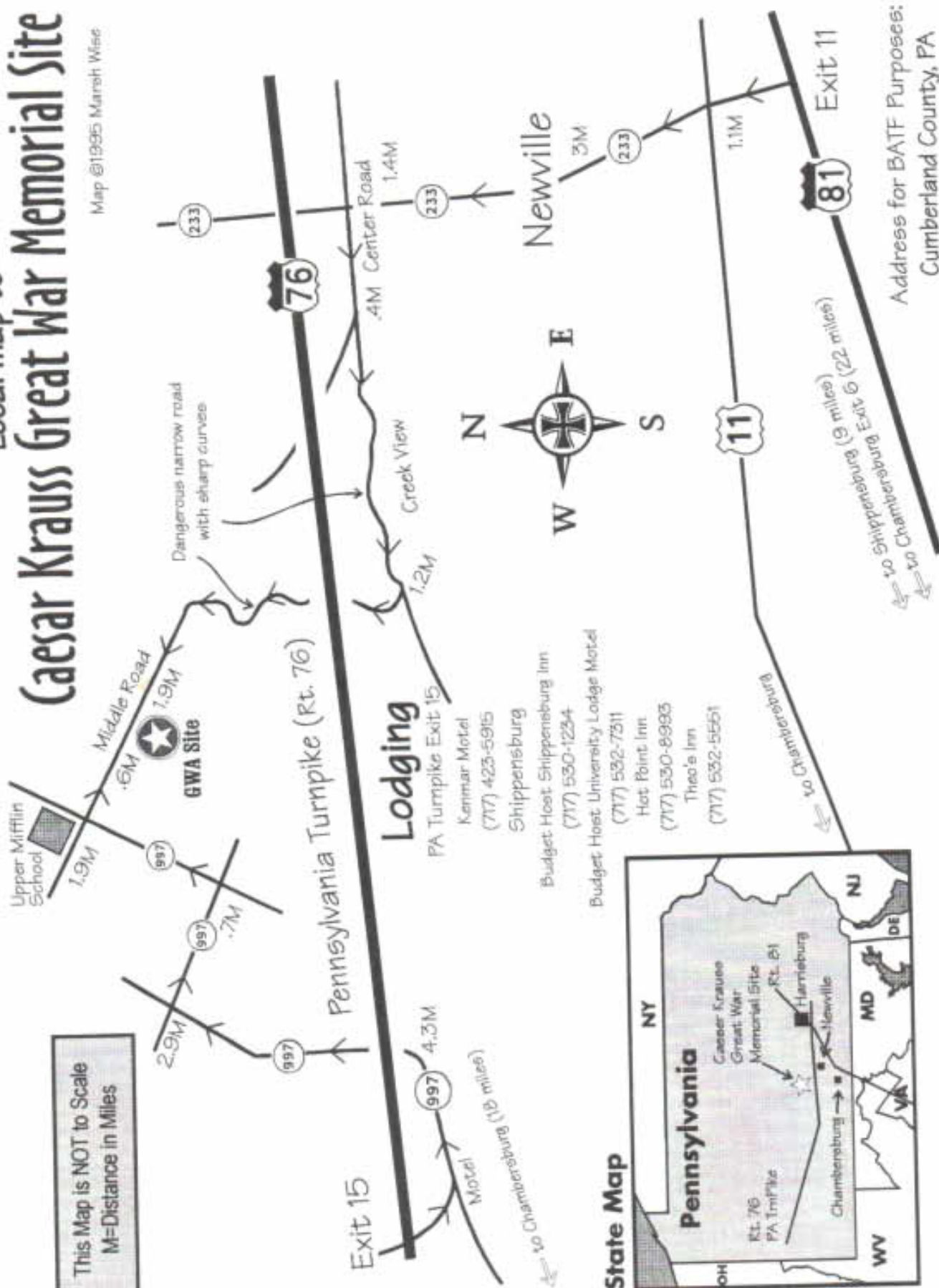


Cartoon submitted by Doug Kingdom, 3/19/63

Local map to Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site

Map ©1995 Marsh Wise

This Map is NOT to Scale
M=Distance in Miles



Address for BATF Purposes:
Cumberland County, PA

Gas Casualty?

by Mike Whalen
2/1R111

As we all know, next to trenches, gas is the most widely recognizable feature that sets WWI apart from other wars of this century. The image of a gas casualty, blinded and choking for air, coughing up pieces of lung, is a powerful one. This image may not be as strong today as it was in the past. However, the fear that must have existed in the minds of the soldiers who lived through a gas attack must have been enormous. The leaders in post-WWI Europe feared its use so much that in WWII it was not even tried, for fear of retaliation from the other side with new, improved chemical agents.

By modern standards, WWI gas was fairly weak. The weather played an important role in gas effectiveness, wind and rain having much to do with lessening the potency. But, both sides were constantly having to increase the level of protection that their soldiers needed to fight new advances in chemical weapons. Even so, gas was up to eight times more effective than H.E. in creating casualties. Why? Gas covers a larger area per shell than a H.E. explosion, and, gas being heavier than air, it can go into deep dugouts that only large-caliber H.E. shells could penetrate. The thirty-foot-deep bomb-proof bunker is no match for a closely-placed gas shell. A near miss is as good as a direct hit, in this case.

As good as gas was in causing casualties, it did not often cause deaths. Nearly 98% of gas victims did not die. Even more amazing, a very large portion of gas victims were returned to active duty within six weeks. Chemical weapons never were the killers so often portrayed in movies. At the time, however, the common soldier only saw the effects of gas on his comrades who had not donned their masks fast enough, or—even worse—never got them on at all. This burned a vivid picture in the mind of the soldier that remained with him the rest of his life. When a gas sentry sounded the alarm, I am quite sure that everyone who could hear it didn't stop to see which direction the wind was blowing to find out if the cloud was coming his way.

Gas drill was part of a man's training after April, 1915. NCOs had very effective ways of making one remember the drill. The first time at the Front under chemical attack would make you a witness to at least one man who didn't remember, was too slow, or just had faulty equipment. After that, it was a primal gut reaction to get your mask on as quickly as possible. The soldier of WWI after April 22, 1915, when chemical warfare was introduced by Germany, would sooner forget his boots than forget to keep his mask close at hand.

And what about the gas cloud? Phosgene, one of the most common war gasses, is almost invisible in the air. The method of detection, other than shells plopping all around you, is its smell—that of musty hay. Even slight traces of phosgene in the air make smoking unpalatable. So all of your smoking buddies just became an early-warning system.

Why gas? Both sides came to recognize that this one weapon had the best chance to neutralize an enemy. How? Well, as previously stated, gas can get into places that most artillery cannot reach.

Secondly, troops in gas masks are less effective. Their vision is lessened, and fatigue sets in when one's oxygen intake is cut. Not only does gas displace the air, but those filters do not let much through in the first place. Loading shells into cannons or running across a shell-torn no-man's-land is hard work. But, with a gas mask on, you have really complicated matters. Enemy batteries can keep up shelling for hours, and fatigue will start to set in—just from sitting there. Soon, you will not be able to put up much of a fight. It was not unheard-of for one side to shell with smoke and place a few tear gas shells in, just as a harassment to get the enemy to don their masks. The mixture was almost harmless, but once a soldier's eyes started to sting, he would not think twice about putting his mask on for fear something more lethal was in the air.

As those who have used their masks at an event can testify, a gas mask is uncomfortable and inconvenient to wear. But remember, we are trying to recreate just a little what it was like to be that soldier in the Great War. Think about it the next time you are in a "gas attack." Over 75 years ago, you either donned your mask or you would find yourself rolling around on the bottom of a trench, your burning lungs blistering from the effects of a chemical attack. Your only screams are for your comrades to blow your brains out to stop the pain. I, for one, prefer the mask.

Thankfully, for our hobby, some masks are now being replicated. PH helmets, Gummi masks, and some early French designs are being made through the skills of our members. Someone out there should make small box respirators or rebuild trashed originals. There should not be a single person on our battlefield without gas protection. Even our Red Cross ladies! We are recreating history, and the fact is, every living thing vital to the war effort had gas protection. That's right. Carrier pigeons and messenger dogs had gas protection. Their human handlers were charged with making sure the animals were out of harm's way during a gas attack.

Suffice it to say that we as historians have far more statistical and general information on the effects of gas warfare than did the common soldier in the Great War that we portray. This form of warfare is responsible for an estimated one million casualties during the war. It was the fear of the effects of gas and the preventative measures both sides used to lessen the effects of chemical agents that kept this figure from being one million deaths instead of one million sent to hospitals.

Remember the old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The mask in the bag or can around your neck is that prevention. Next time you see colored smoke on the battlefield, it represents a serious threat. If not to your life, then to your health. Take it seriously, as the men eighty years ago took the real thing seriously.



The Effects Of Machine Gun Fire On Troops

By Gefreiter Gerhard Dreisbach
IR23 „von Winterfeldt“

Casualties! Yes, this is the major effect, and the intended one, of a machine gun. Its ability to act as a virtual "bullet hose" driving the enemy away, leaving their will to resist broken, supplies nearly every movie maker of today with the ability to make heroes able to kill thousands of scum-like extras, walk over their corpses and still be clean enough to tango ten minutes later. Bad Guys now can fire millions of rounds and still not hit the hero, thus proving that they are truly worthless and really deserve to die.

The actual use of the MG in combat is a little different, with some more boring, average uses thrown in, like covering fire, suppressing movement, generally demoralizing the enemy, or even as a tool to hold down maps and other important papers in a stiff wind. It still helps if you have a cute girl to tango with afterwards. (Those of you who saw *True Lies* may get this.)

Machine guns revolutionized warfare beginning in the 19th century. The Gatling gun, Nordenfolt, and other manually operated guns were widely used in the colonial wars of the late 1800s, and quickly adopted by every major nation. Their presence alone would often steady troops who were otherwise shaky or prone to panic, and terrorize enemies.

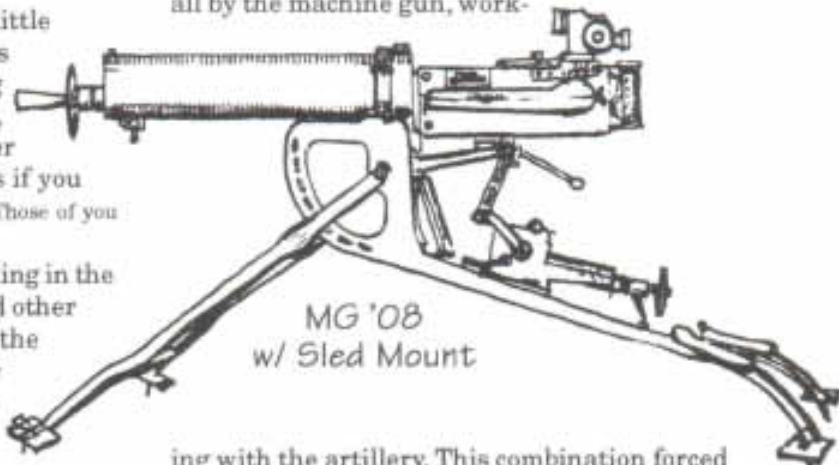
The use of the machine gun in combat can be reduced to three different types of major uses. The first is the defense, a role that was one of the first uses of the machine gun. The next is the offense, which is especially well reported on in Erwin Rommel's *Attacks*. The third use is harassment.

The machine gun was an incredible aid to the defense. The effect of the thousands of machine guns on the western front of WWI was to strengthen the defense to the point that attacks quickly became suicidal. Pre-WWI tactics stressed both aimed accurate fire and closing with the enemy to finish him with the bayonet. Many pre-WWI tacticians radically over-emphasized the latter, and included lots of volley fire, both errors mirroring pre-1866 war Austrian tactics. The tactics that many commanders were comfortable with included not only the bayonet charge, but also the shoulder-to-shoulder methods of the Napoleonic era.

A major missing ingredient in these pre-war plans was the fact that the Maxim, Hotchkiss and other machine guns of the era were capable of aimed accurate fire, at very long range, in large volumes (400 or more rounds per

minute!). Resting (mostly) on tripods and immune from accuracy-defeating problems like breathing and stress, the machine guns of 1914 were considerably more accurate than the average rifleman. This capability increased the risk of being shot at and hit considerably, dampening the interest of many in brave displays even at very long range. If the defenders could see you, they could probably hit you, especially with the elaborate telescopic sights that were standard issue for the German army's Maxims.

The wasteland of "no-mans-land" and the trench lines characteristic of the Western Front were caused above all by the machine gun, work-



MG '08
w/ Sled Mount

ing with the artillery. This combination forced all sides to dig in to interlocking networks of trenches. Movement above ground or in the open, especially an attack, was met with a hail of bullets. The artillery quickly became necessary for any forward movement to occur, blasting the opposing trenches and their machine guns out of the way.

The best example from WWI of the effect of machine guns in the defense is the British attack at the battle of the Somme on July 1, 1916. The artillery failed to clear the machine guns from their front, and the British were slaughtered. They received over **60,000** casualties in **one day**, mostly from German machine guns. There were far fewer defending German troops than attackers, and they still held. By contrast, the U.S. lost 56,000 soldiers in over 10 years of war in Vietnam.

You can't make charge after charge into certain death and not be affected. The effects of the machine gun here resulted in an increased reluctance on the part of the troops to go over the top without a huge barrage or a promise that the general in charge had some other plan. The endless charges into fire and the awful casualties eventually led to the infamous French army mutinies of 1917. The troops simply refused to go over the top anymore.

The most immediate result of machine gun fire in the defense is the sweep of death in front of it. Attacking units were wiped out to the man at the Somme, and any attack usually degenerates into probes for a weak spot or a hand grenade contest to attempt to knock out the MG and its crew. The momentum of the assault can also pass to the defense simply due to the volume of fire.

Machine guns can also take the initiative for an attacker and hold it. Machine guns in the offensive are quite common in the history of the First World War. Future German general Erwin Rommel recounts many times that the '08 Maxim was used in the offense in his book, *Attacks*. It is a work that is required reading for any serious German WWI living history enthusiast.

Rommel used the guns at his command to capture and hold the enemy's attention, or drive him away by placing a volume of fire atop one or several specific areas. An example would be an order for all guns to concentrate fire in a sudden blast into the enemy positions across from the attacking lines. At a pre-set signal, a specially-tasked group of guns shifts all of their fire onto a set point, while the other guns widen their sweeps, keeping the defenders' heads down. The concentration of fire at that one point destroys or drives off the defense there, just as an assault team heads for it, covered by that same heavy concentration of fire.

This greatly reduces the casualties among the attacking force even as it destroys the cohesion of the defending one. As soon as the assault troops reach the impact, or "beaten zone" of the MGs, the guns would then shift their fire onto other likely targets, like the support and communications trenches, protecting the attack and later widening it. Some guns were also rushed up in the first waves, to seal off approaches and allow the assault team to concentrate attacks. More followed as soon as they could be sent.

Much of the fighting on the Western Front involved automatic weapons with increasing frequency as the war continued. The volume of firepower available to company- and section-level commanders on all sides soared during the war. The greatest increase in effects and use of MGs was with the Germans, but the British also worked overtime to change their infantry.

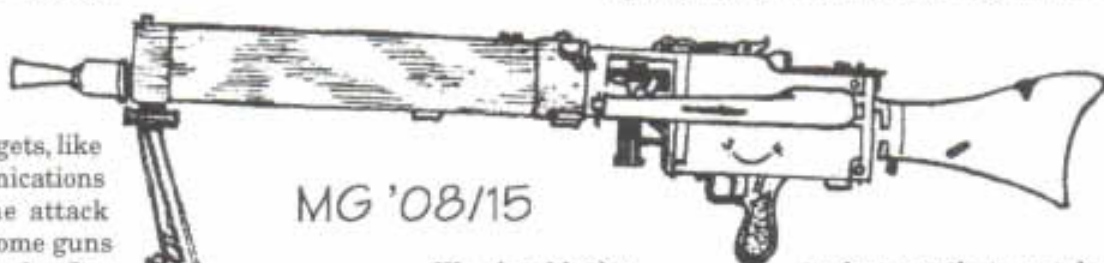
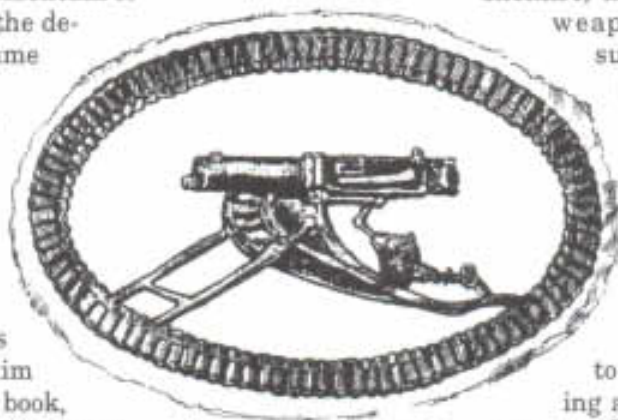
The greatest example of the effects of the volumes of MGs used in the offense and combined with other arms,

was in the Michael offensive of 1918. The "Sturmtruppen" units, and the radically changed German army, made very heavy use of machine guns in their bid for victory. The result of this was the destruction of the Allied units in their path, who, already broken up from hurricane shellfire, then had to face gusts of automatic weapons fire, including the first submachine guns. The result was breakthrough and collapse.

The third major use for machine guns in the First World War was harassment or interdiction fire. This had the effect of generally making life miserable for the troops in the field. It consists of firing at set geographic or physical targets in order to deny their use to the enemy. This can include sweeping a road with fire, especially the indirect or plunging fire that the MG '08 and Vickers excel at. This involved the use of complicated dial sights and even telescopic sights, and usually was done at very long ranges.

This is really high-intensity sniping, with a general area as the specific target rather than one individual person. This was extraordinarily common on the stalemated battlefields of the Western Front, and crews of the heavy guns became quite skilled in it as the war dragged on. It is mentioned in nearly every memoir of the war, often with memories of individual sections of trench or line that were the most affected. The biggest attractor of this kind of fire was being seen, or giving some sign that you were in the trench opposite that spot, at a certain time, every day.

As reenactors, we should add to our authenticity by camouflaging positions and vantage points carefully, against both air and ground observation.



MG '08/15

We should also make sure that we take many hits when faced with concerted MG fire, since it really would grind many attacks to a complete halt. Attacks "over the top" at sited MGs during the day were usually hopeless, especially without artillery preparation. Being pinned down in a maze of shell craters was also a likely result, which was really bad if the other side happened to have any trench mortars or artillery to wreck the area with. This isn't about winning, losing, or making the attack "work." This hobby is about living history, and attacks often failed. So did the defense. So let's get out there and reenact the war, and have fun doing it!

The 3-Inch Stokes Mortar

by Rick Whitaker
116th Inf Rgt/HQ AEF

The 3-Inch Stokes Mortar, similar to the one used by the 116th Infantry Regiment during each GWA trench event, was invented by Frederick W. S. Stokes, of London, England and was submitted for patent in the United States on 13 May 1916. The mortar was adopted by the U.S. Army because of its light weight, its ease of employment, and its effective rate of fire.

The mortar consists of three basic parts: the barrel, the supporting legs, and the base plate. The barrel was made with a removable screw cap to close the base and contained the striker which detonated the propelling charge. The supporting legs consisted of an A-frame, arranged to fold up for transport and a horizontal cross-bar hinging upward as the legs came together. The support legs also contained the traversing and elevating mechanism that allowed the gun crew to accurately aim the weapon. The base plate was formed of pressed steel, stiffened so as to dissipate the recoil of the barrel over a wide area. Altogether, these three simple items combined to make a very reliable and highly versatile infantry support weapon.

No matter how good the design of a weapon, the real business end is the shell it fires. The 3 Inch Stokes mortar rounds were classified as fixed ammunition, because all the components of the round were loaded in the mortar as a complete unit by one operator. The Stokes mortar, like most mortars, was muzzle loaded and had a smooth bore. Thus, no rotation was imparted to the round, resulting in an unstable flight. Because of this unstable flight, the round could impact nose first, base first, or on its side. To insure reliability, a special

fuze had to be developed, known as the "Always" fuze because it would 'always' detonate when the round impacted.

The Stokes mortar has only three types of rounds: **HE** (high explosive), **Smoke**, and **Practice**.

The **HE** round, painted yellow with black markings, consisted of 2.15 lb. of granular TNT, which was lightly tamped or vibrated into the shell casing. This insured a uniform density throughout the exploding charge. The **Smoke** round, painted blue gray with yellow markings, was filled with 2.53 lb. of white phosphorus. This white phosphorus was contained in a sealed container within the shell casing because white phosphorus spontaneously ignites upon contact with air. And finally, the **Practice** round, painted dark blue with white markings, was filled with 2.15 lb. of sand and upon impact emitted a white puff of smoke.

The final component to complete this ensemble was the propelling charge. The Stokes mortar propelling charge consisted of two pieces, the cartridge and the powder rings. The cartridge, similar in appearance to a commercial shotgun shell, contained a primer and 120 grains of loose sporting ballistite powder. This cartridge alone could propel the round up to 290 yards. The supplemental charges, called powder rings, were ring-shaped silk cloth bag containing 100 grains of ballistite powder, and were used to increase the maximum range of the mortar out to 753 yards (497 yards for one powder ring; 666 yards for two powder rings, and 753 yards for three powder rings). Three is the maximum number of powder rings used.

Because of its simple design, ability for rapid movement, and high rate of fire, the 3-Inch Stokes mortar was used by several Allied armies, over several decades, in many different campaigns and theaters. In every case, the 3-Inch Stokes mortar proved itself to be an Infantryman's most responsive indirect fire weapon and a valued friend.

Editorial

continued from page 2

October is still pretty warm. The Spring event is usually warm enough (and sometimes too warm) for us. I think a third event would be a better idea. Anyway, that's my thoughts on this notion!

At the Fall event, I talked to Terry Grogan about the Izonzo article we published in the last issue. It seems that the author of that piece did **NOT** survive the war; it was his brother that published the article and was a singer after the war. I was quite unhappy to find this out; after all that and he still got killed.

Many of you are perchance wondering what happened to our "French" Issue. Well it's pretty simple really; we didn't receive **ONE SINGLE THING** from the Frogs! If you don't send it, we don't print it. *C'est la Vie!* Perhaps also, you are wondering why this issue is coming to you only mere weeks before the event? Well, even at this late date (Mar. 30) people are **still** sending in stuff that was due weeks ago. What can we do about this? I don't know, but the deadline for getting stuff into us for the Summer issue is **July 31!** This doesn't mean August 5th or so, but **by the 31st**. 'Nuff said on this point!

From both of us: Some notes on input to OtW, neither of us are secretaries; we do not get paid to type out your article. Certain members seem to feel that it is our job to do their

work—**WRONG!** We do not get paid for doing this job; we do it because we like it, but that doesn't mean that we want to sit and type for hours at a time. In this day and age, most organizational newsletters like ours require that articles be sent-in by electronic format—either on a disk or over the Internet—this is all we ask. Of course there are always one or two "hold-outs" who won't buy (or use) a computer or word processor, but if you do have such a device **please** send us the file on a disk. We can take files from ANY format, IBM, Mac, word processor, etc. If you are worried about getting your disk back, mark it with your name and the words "Please Return!" We will be happy to bring it to the next event or... if you send us a self-addressed mailer we'll pop it back in the mail to you. If you are one of these hold-outs we'll try and accommodate you but this is only conditional on us borrowing a scanner. [P.S. People sending us articles typed in ALL CAPS will be shot!]

Now after all that, we look forward to the return of the feeling of Shimpstown. WWI has a bright future and the reason for that is the members who stayed with the organization through the rough times. But for them, WWI would have ended up like some of the other periods in reenacting, instead of what it is; the "**Reenactor's Reenactment!**" We hope to see you in a couple of weeks at Newville!

Just a few thoughts....

Sue & Marsh

WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS

ADDENDA No. 1, Document No. 792
APRIL, 1918

submitted by Al Fuerst
29th Division—116th Inf. Regt./Hdqtrs Co.

One of the universal experiences in the World War was dealing with barbed wire. There are countless accounts of infantry wiring parties, other parties sent out to cut the enemy's wire, or even to repair their own wire. Songs containing the fatal dark humor common to late war trench life included "Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire" sung to the British tune "Have You Seen The Sergeant Major."

Barbed wire was not thoughtlessly strewn in front of trenches, it was laid down in patterns of varying complexity. The AEF incorporated the best of British and French wire doctrine in the manuals that were published in France. Depth of the wire entanglement as well as its pattern varied by location and the tactical situation. Gaps were also included in your wiring plan so as to be able to traverse the wire in front of your own trench.

The following guidelines taken from the manual apply equally well to the troops in France as they do to us who wish to replicate their experiences:

- a. Within limits, a broad thin entanglement is better than a narrow thick one; the former being just as effective and less liable to destruction.

- b. Two entanglements separated by a space are better than the same amount of entanglement in one belt.
- c. The entanglement must be well supported and anchored to the ground by pickets and posts, so as to be difficult to flatten or drag aside.
- d. It must have sufficient barbed wire to prevent easy penetration. Some loose tangled wire is difficult to clear even after the wire is cut.
- e. It should be simple in design in order to be built rapidly and quietly at night and in close proximity to the enemy.
- f. The entanglement should be provided with blinded gaps for the passage of our men. The gap is usually 12 feet in every 50 yards. The actual number may vary largely upon the tactical situation. Means to block these gaps must be at hand.
- g. It should present in its first stages an obstacle, behind which the wiring party can work under protection and which can be added to and improved later.

Copies of this manual will be available through the Allied Trench Master. Happy Wiring!

Ankle Boots!

TO: All World War I Unit Commanders

FROM: Jim Michaud and Michael Moss

RE: WWI ANKLE BOOTS

Dear Sirs:

Recently, Jim Michaud and I have been able to purchase a quantity of WWI style military ankle boots. Part of this inventory is from the 1930's Swiss Army. These ankle boots are black and are very similar to German WWI style boots. The black boots are used but in excellent condition. New leather soles and heels have been added to insure authenticity.

The second part of this purchase is brown Swedish Army boots from WWI. These would be excellent for WWI U.S., British, and French impressions. Some are in new condition and unissued with rounded toes. Others are used and in excellent condition, some even have hobnails. The Swedish Brown boots come with heel plates, toe plates, and all have leather soles and leather heels.

We have sizes available from 6½ through 13. Finding military ankle boots in "human" sizes has become very difficult in the last few years and we are pleased to offer our selection to GWA member units first.

Our prices for the brown ankle boots in sizes 6½ through 9 are \$35-\$45 per pair, sizes 9 ½ through 11 are priced at \$45-\$55 per pair and 11½ through 13 are \$55-\$65 per pair.

The prices for the black ankle boots in sizes 6½ through 8½ are \$45-\$55 per pair, sizes 9 through 11 are \$55-\$65 per pair, and sizes 11 ½ through 13 are priced at \$65-\$75 per pair.

Would you please advise members of your unit that these boots are available for immediate shipment. We will also have a display of them for sale at the April WWI event at Newville.

P.S. Please ask individuals to include \$7.00 for shipping and handling of each pair of boots.

P.S.S. Very soon we will have available German style Hobnails and Heelplates.

Please contact either of us at:

Jim Michaud home phone#: (516) 678-5156

Michael D. Moss home phone#: (610) 865-7819

1996 GWA Spring Event Absentee Voting Ballot

Vote to have a third event or change the date of the Fall Event
(Check each number as applicable)

1. ____ I vote that a third event be scheduled to accomodate the participation of vintage WWI aircraft. The third event should be scheduled for (circle one):

September

October

2. ____ I vote that **no** third event be scheduled.

3. ____ I vote that the traditional Fall Event be rescheduled from the first weekend in November to early Fall with or without vintage WWI aircraft. The Fall Event should be rescheduled for (circle one):

September

October

4. ____ I vote that the traditional Fall Event remain scheduled for the first weekend in November.

"By-Laws" Amendment (Check one)

____ I vote to amend the "By-Laws" which will allow Representatives and Combat Commanders to be elected only by members of their respective sides. Representatives may be elected and re-elected for a period of up to four years consecutively. Combat Commanders may be elected and re-elected consecutively for an unlimited number of terms. [see page 19 for By-Laws proposal]

____ I vote not to adopt the "By-Laws" Amendment as described above.

Plebicite -- Advice to the President on appointment of New Central Powers Combat Commander Appointment

✠✠✠✠✠Central Powers Forces Members Only✠✠✠✠✠

Enter the name and unit affiliation of your choice for Central Powers Combat Commander:

Name: _____ Unit: _____

Member's signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notary Seal

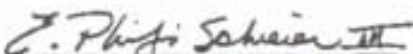
A Petition to Propose an Amendment to the Bylaws of The Great War Association.


November 16, 1995

- Whereas* the current bylaws of the Great War Association (hereinafter referred to as the GWA) allow for the election of Allied and Central Powers Representative by a vote of the whole of the general membership, and,
- Whereas* the previous three GWA elections were held without contest for the positions of representative, and,
- Whereas* there are provisions in the Bylaws for the election of Combat Commanders by exclusive vote of each respective side, and,
- Whereas* there exists the possibility of one side electing a representative to the other side without the consent and approval of those who are to be represented, and,
- Whereas* we the undersigned, being members of good standing in the GWA, have affixed our true and legal signatures to this petition proposing a change to Article # 16 of the GWA bylaws as amended on November 4, 1995 and respectfully submit this petition to the President of the GWA so that he will circulate it publicly among the GWA membership and provide for a vote of the general membership on April 19 & 20, 1996. *Now therefore,*

Be it resolved that, Article # 16 of the GWA Bylaws, as amended 11/4/95, shall be changed to read:

The President, Vice-President/Secretary and Treasurer are elected by a vote of the general membership. The Allied and Central Powers Representatives and Combat Commanders are elected by a vote of their respective sides. The term of office for all positions is two years and each incumbent may be re-elected for one additional 2 year term, so as not to exceed a total of 4 consecutive years, the exception being that the Allied and Central Powers Combat Commanders may be re-elected an unlimited number of times.


Philip Schroer, MW12, Sponsor.


Ivan Ingraham, 5th Bn, ANZAC, Sponsor.

A Brief History of the German Stahlhelm

by Rick Keller
12. MWK

The model 1916 German helmet, was designed to protect the wearer from small shell fragments that would normally wound or kill. The M16 was adopted in November 1915, with the first test production and trials successfully conducted by both the 1st Assault battalion (Sturm-troop Batl. „Rohr“) and various assault battalions (to the envy of regular army troops who “liberated” many of the new helmets from the assault units) at Verdun in Nov/Dec, 1915. Production began in January 1916 with 30,000 helmets (Eidenhüttenwerk/Thale) made and issued to assault battalions at Verdun, with full adoption of the helmet for both assault battalions and regular field armies in February 1916. The new steel helmets were made in sizes 60 to 70 (approximately 19 1/4" head to 27 1/4" head in 1/4" increments), with the maker and size stamped inside the left shield and steel lot numbers inside the top. For correct fit, the visor is to be level to the eyebrow and a space maintained between the head and the shell (to absorb impact) with use of pads, cloth, or paper strips. Ventilation is through the visor shield lug holes, which can be stuffed with wood, paper or dirt for inclement/windy weather. A handkerchief or piece of cloth can be placed in the dome for warmth in cold weather. The chinstrap, when not used, was to be placed over the visor of the helmet.

Initially 5% of all helmets were to have accompanying protective nickel-steel armor “brow” plates, but this was never accomplished due to shortage of nickel needed in its production. The brow plate lugs of the M16 helmets show a distinctive “step” as the helmet becomes smaller in size. This “step” is to accommodate the width of the armored brow plate which was made in only one size. Priority was given to German soldiers on the Somme and Verdun for the new helmets. The French captured their first German helmet and front plate in march of 1916. The U.S. military received a captured helmet from Paris in February 1917 after their request to the German military attaché in Berlin was denied due to “patent right problems!” In May, 1917, due to leather shortages, the all leather liner was changed to a metal band with leather pads. In many instances, troops polished their helmets with grease or oil for inspections, parades, and other functions. By November, 1917, a non-reflective paint was being applied to reduce the glare of the initial gloss paint. The demand for steel helmets continually exceeded the supply, thus helmets were always kept where they were needed, with none taken home on leave (thus the rarity of studio portraits with steel helmets). It is interesting to note that as late as February, 1917, leather spiked helmets were being withdrawn from the front lines as steel helmets became available.

In July 1918, the value of camouflage (whose purpose was to make an object appear shadowed by its surroundings) was recognized.

Subsequently, paint and instructions for the painting of helmets was distributed to front line troops. The colors of green, yellow ochre, and rust brown (to be mixed or used “as is”), were to be applied according to the “time of year” with one of the three basic colors matching the surrounding area. “patches” were to be large equalized portions with sharp angles with the front of the helmet exhibiting no more than 4 colored fields. Light and dark paints were to be placed next to each other, with colored segments separated by a finger wide black line. This color scheme was adopted for cannons, mortars and machine guns also, with lighter colors to be used on top (shadow) and darker paints on the horizontal. In July of 1918, matte lacquer paint was issued to troops to repair damaged helmets, and a new buckle type chinstrap was adopted, which became known as the model 1918 helmet. Many 1917 bands/pads were modified and used on the new M1918 helmet. It is our firm belief, based upon the various similar patterns on helmets in the GWM collection and those sold through our catalog, that distinctive camouflage patterns placed on steel helmets were often unit individualized, not only as a mark of “esprit de corps,” but to recognize members (or parts of) from your own unit. There can be no doubt that several members with art talents were “detailed” to paint the helmets, and thus many distinctive individualistic and unusual patterns were bound to emerge as a part of the painters personality or whim. Many helmets were painted after the war for “souvenirs” (and thus the birth of “camouflaged” trench art U.S. helmets with the same styles). An authentic “wartime” camou German helmet can only be ascertained by its traits of provenance, and the experience gained in years of handling original and reproduction helmets. The paints used in WWI were distinctively different than the paints of today, but not impossible to match. One trait displayed by old paint is that it takes a very long period of time to cure and obtain traits that can be recognized after that hardening process. Often the problem is telling exactly how old the paint on a helmet is, and if it was done properly 20 years ago, it could pass for WWI. Painting of helmets to pass as originals is still a fairly modern trend, and matching the factory colors of WWI is still difficult, as you need to know the colors that were produced, but as the years go by, and if done correctly, the collectors of the future will have to be very wary! The GWM museum contains one of the largest collections in the United States of painted helmets, both German and Allied, since collecting painted objects is one of our passions.

Bibliography:

➔ *The History of the German Steel Helmet/1916-1945*
by Ludwig Baer. R. James Bender Publishing, San Jose 1985

Working Toward an Authentic Western Front Replica

by Werner Gruhl
Central Powers Combat Commander

Werner Gruhl fought in the Korean War during the trench warfare period and later served as an artillery officer, and has had first-hand experience with weapons with the accuracy and destructive power not much different than those used in WWI. He has also researched field works of the Great War, and has personally visited many of the remaining structures on the Western Front.

The November event showed that we need to take greater care in developing our fine WWI site. The immediate problem is the rush to position and construct machine-gun bunkers and defensive works with, in many cases, little regard for authenticity: i.e. for their tactical effectiveness and vulnerability to weapons of the period. The initial trench digging carried out by Rick Keller and Ernie Cowan, however, was a good beginning.

We need to keep in mind that the lease agreement with our benefactor, Mark Anderson, rightly stipulates we are to provide and maintain an historically accurate battlefield as a memorial to his grandfather, Caesar Krauss, and the others of the AEF who fought and gave their lives in that terrible conflict. An accurate battlefield replica will also provide a much fuller understanding of WWI combat and a pride in our hobby.

In this regard more care must go into the location, design and fabrication of MG and observation pillboxes. The idea is not necessarily to build our bunkers exactly as they did, but to build them so they at least look like the originals and are realistically located.

As soon as the piled trench dirt can be leveled and firing steps built, the trenches themselves should be occupied and the sand bags moved in next to the lip of the trench. Troops lying outside a trench with only forward sandbag protection would, in reality, suffer high casualties from artillery and mortars. For the same reason trenches can not be allowed to become too wide. The wider a trench is, the easier it is to drop mortar or artillery rounds into them.

The wooden posts being used in some spots at the site to support barbed wire may not be thick enough for authenticity. Metal screw pickets or more substantial wood posts should be encouraged.

Perhaps for the next two years we should concentrate on improving the trench system itself and leave permanent MG pillbox location and construction until later. Immediate attention should be given to leveling the piles of dirt from the initial digging, revetting trench walls, building fire steps and placing sandbags on the parapet. Then living, command and support bunkers could be started in line with the GWA authenticity rules and guidelines now being developed.

In tribute to Mr. Krauss and WWI veterans like him, and to gain the most from our reenactments, this monument should be as accurate as we can make it. We must take the time to do it right!

The following guide of quotations from reliable sources provides information useful our efforts to put together a credible replica of the Western Front.

Guide for Accurate Trench Works from WWI Experience

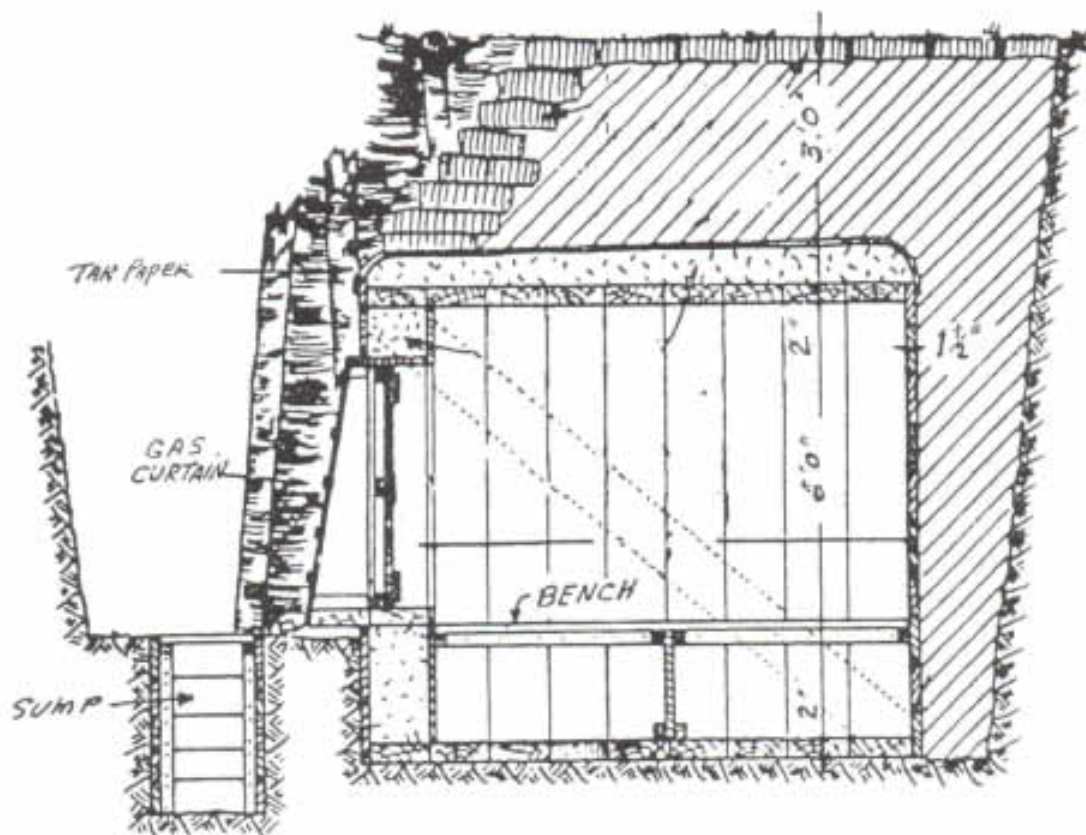
The information provided has been taken from historical sources and numbered as to the applicable footnotes shown on the last two pages. The material was gathered by the 1993 Site Committee to use for permanent site planning.

Machine gun tactics and emplacement

- 1) "MG must act by surprise,"
- 2) "Must be able to fire on flank of the enemy,"
- 3) "Movement of MG must be made quickly and in secret; otherwise they will be reported to the enemy's artillery, and their emplacement will be exactly located and disabled with a few shells." 2/

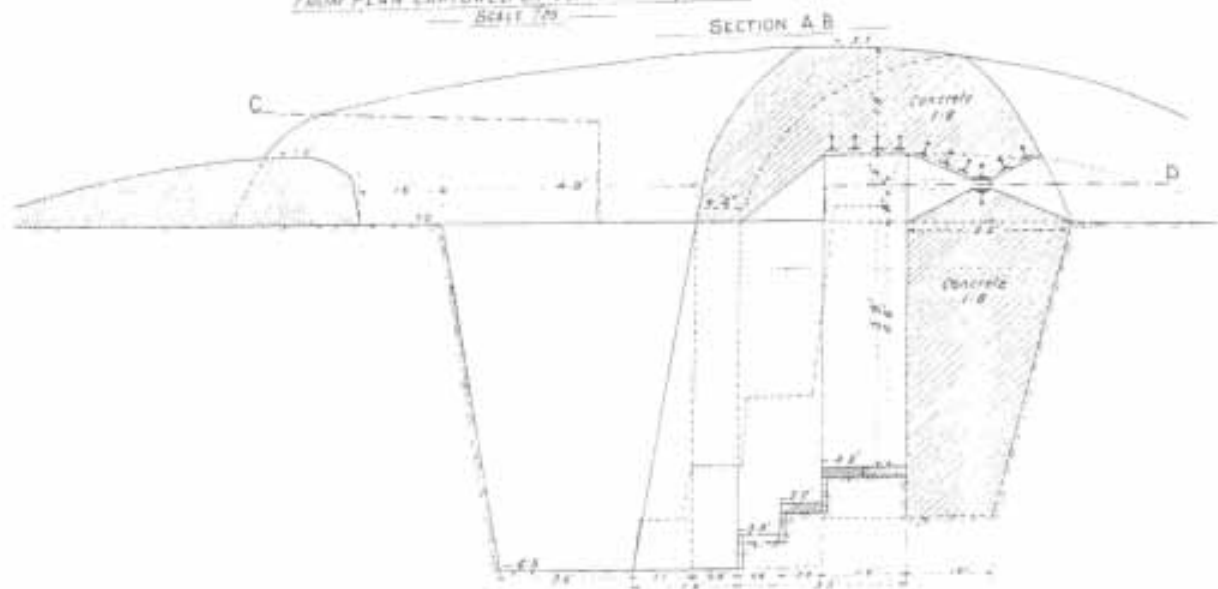
"It was usually best to keep the Vickers out of the front line

German shrapnel-proof for forward position.



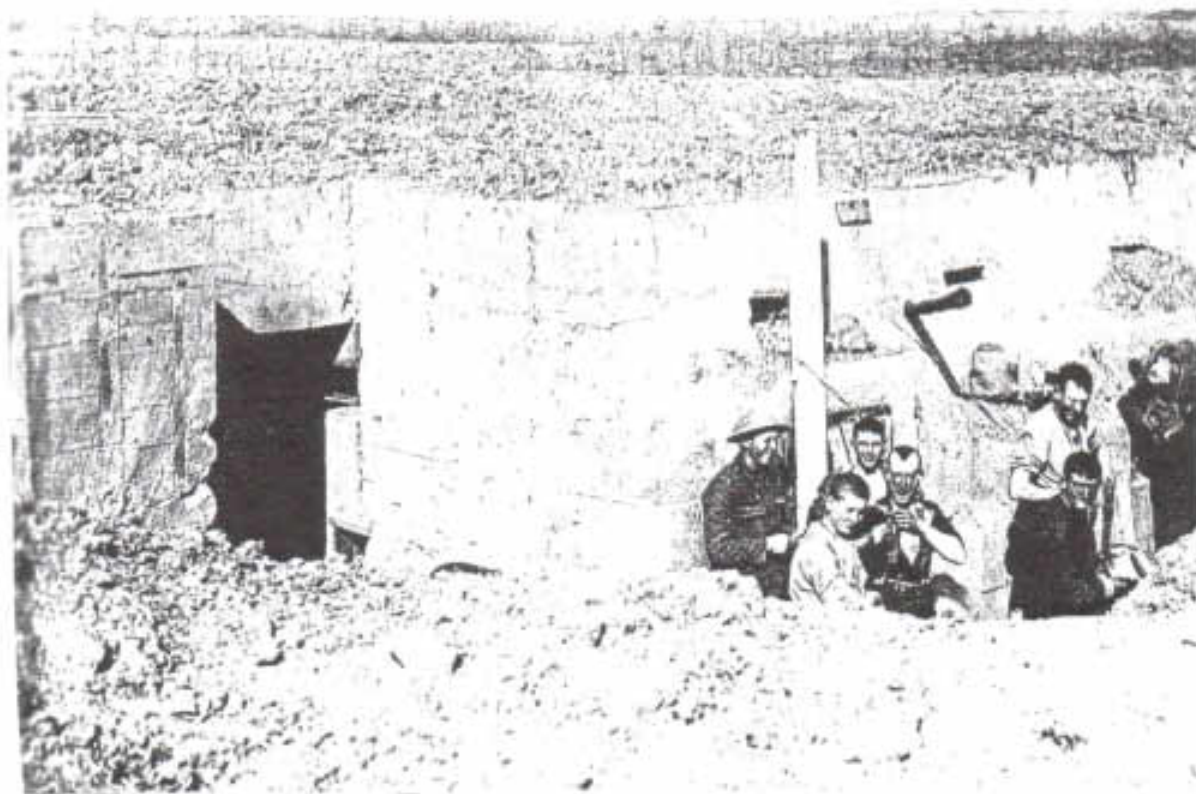
GERMAN SHELL PROOF O.P

FROM PLAN CAPTURED BY FIFTH ARMY, NOV^R 1916
 BEAT 759



Concrete protection was given to German observers at ground level. This ground-level concrete observation post allowed defenders to see when an attack was starting. This photograph was taken after capture by the British in 1916. Reinforced concrete slabs were used to give strength to weaker and more vulnerable entrances to tunnelled dug-outs.





German „Panzernebu“ or pill box along the Siegfried Stellung or Hindenburg Line.

firing trench, and by 1915 they were normally kept back in or near the second line, where one gun was given several firing points. The best posts were also equipped with two or more small bunkers for belt-filling and crew quarters. *During bombardments the gun could be dismounted and taken below.*" 4/

"Machine guns should only be placed in the first trench when they can bring flanking fire to bear and when the foreground near the enemy can not be swept from MG positions on high ground behind the line." 6/

"The machine guns firing from trenches had no elaborately prepared emplacements. The necessary means of access to the parapet from a nearby shelter was prepared, and the gun run up into action." 7/

"MG emplacements with over head protection, the so called pill boxes, were very few - probably numbering not more than 3 in the whole sector of the American attack (6,000 yards)." 7/

"From the front such positions (machine gun) were either made to be as nearly invisible as possible, or identical to nearby sections of trench." 4/

Bunkers, general

"As the war progressed heavier guns were used in ever greater

bombardments against the trench systems and sandbags, tin and timber structures were not equal to the task. Over half of all casualties came from enemy artillery." 4/

"If the roof was an iron sheet and foot of earth, the dugout was just shrapnel-proof; only 8 ft of earth would deter a 6 (or 5.9) inch shell." (W.G. note: the most common heavy artillery used by both sides) 5/

"Heavy shells could penetrate the ground several feet before exploding to form a deep crater. Among the most feared was the (German) 150 mm field howitzer shell known to British as the '5.9'." (Note: the British equivalent was the 6" howitzer or field gun) 4/

"The ideal 5.9" shelter, when not made completely of concrete, had five layers: 1) rubble or chalk, 2) soil, 3) logs, 4) second layer of soil, 5) thin splinter proof layer of brick, concrete or corrugated iron all layers adding up to about 9 feet of cover. 4/

"Concrete was ideal both for shelters and front line pill boxes, but the latter were not particularly widespread on the British side. The Germans had the opportunity to build concrete pillboxes behind their existing lines and fall back onto them as required." 4/

Three feet of reinforced concrete over a span of not more than 8 ft will withstand most field guns and 5 ft will withstand up to 8 inch caliber. 7/

"By mid 1916 most German pill boxes appear to have been made of concrete. 1/

"Cave shelters were very plentifully provided in the Hindenburg trench proper (they were not in the advanced line in front of Bellecourt) and the rear lines. The entrances averaged one to every 40 yards of trench front." 7/

Blocks of concrete were often used for bunker construction. 1/

"Dugout frames were increasingly made away from the front by engineers, pioneers local factories and moved up the line in kit form." 4/

Bunkers / Pill boxes for Machine Guns

Very few MG pill boxes appear to have been constructed close to enemy lines (within 1000 yards) in order to keep them hidden. Most MGs and crews appear to have been protected from artillery in bunkers below the surface from which they emerged and set up their weapon in a site without overhead cover. These MG positions had the advantage of being less visible and gave the crew a much wider field of view and fire than a typical confining pill box. These MGs could also be



German shell-proof bunker under construction. Machine Guns and crews weathered artillery attacks in shell-proofs like this and emerged to set-up their guns in temporary positions when shelling stopped.

moved quickly to alternate prepared uncovered sites when battle conditions required. 9/

The Germans used a number of standard designs for shell proof bunkers with MGs being fired over the roof. 1/

Most bunkers, to include MG pill boxes, were built in the support line. 1/

Some MG or observation concrete pill boxes were built on the front line when about 500 to 1000 yards from the opposing line. The nearest example was 150 yards away and built with a low silhouette of about 4 feet. 1/

"The second line usually contained fewer firing positions and more overhead cover, but it was also the main location of the Vickers Machine guns with their posts set at various angles to the front. After 1915 flexible forward defense from shell holes and positions was usually the province of the Lewis gun." 3/

Trench design

"The height of the parapets above ground level was not more than a foot and a half" (for trenches in general). 7/

"The posts (for barbed wire) were 2 feet 6 inches and 4 ft in height above the ground. Some belts were set wholly with high posts and some wholly with low and some had two types intermixed. The high post were generally of angle iron and low were often of wood." The posts were spaced from 5 to 7 feet apart. The inner belt was approximately 30 yards from the trench on average, but did not parallel the trench. The

inner belts had normally a height of 4 feet and the outer 2 feet 6 inches 7/

"For obvious reasons the wire was always placed at least a grenade's throw from one's own trench." 8/

References

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- 2/ *Present Day Warfare* by Capt. Jacques Rouvier
- 3/ *British Field Works 1914-18 (1): Trenches and Wire* David D. Vickridge
- 4/ *British Field Works 1914-18 (2): Dugouts, Posts, Concealment*
- 5/ *Deaths Men: Soldiers in the Great War, Trench Life* By Denis Winter
- 6/ *Supplementary Instructions As to the Construction of Defenses* (German 8th Army, September 27, 1916)
- 7/ *Technical Engineering Details of the Hindenburg Line in the Sector of Attack of the 11 Army Corps*, Col G.B. Pillsbury, Engineers, U.S.A. Deputy Chief Engineers, AEF
- 8/ *Eye-Deep in Hell Trench Warfare in World War I* John Ellis
- 9/ Werner Gruhl observations from visits to the Western Front
- Bildheft Neuzzeitlicher Stellungsbau 1944*, German WWII manual (in German) for field works including log and earth bunker construction which is useful. (Obtained copy from Dennis Carrers Jr. 5th March 1981)
- Notes On trench Warfare for Officers*, Revised Diagrams issued by the General Staff, December, 1916 (Obtained copy from Todd Gable, 27 Bn. CEF, Unit Leader) This provides good drawings for all manner of field works particularly for the Allied side.

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Infanterieregiment Nr. 111

(3. Badisches)
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Infanterieregiment Nr. 14

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