

ON THE WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT WAR ASSOCIATION

Fall 2005



President's Message

Dear GWA Members,

Whenever we near elections for this organization the rumor mills start working overtime that adds to confusion. One such rumor concerns our budget. Some in our organization are asking, "What's happened to the money?" The fact is, our budget is regularly printed in *OTW* and our treasurer, Randall Chapman, or any member of the board, is willing to provide information to any member about our expenditures, if asked. The money continues to be spent on the mortgage, supplies, and site development projects.

Part of my re-organization of the G-8 has been to establish a procedure that goes against the previous practice of the President controlling where and when the money is spent. I believe that each member of the administration board has a job to do. Part of the frustration I have experienced is exactly how to go about setting construction priorities and expenditures.

Our first effort was to establish a site committee to develop and make recommendations for site projects to the GWA president and board. The committee did a great job in revising the site construction guidelines, which gives more supervisory power to our trench masters on either side. This was an important step to ensure that we do not have improperly built structures that are unsafe and non-period. Every unit commander and member of the GWA should read and be familiar with these regulations. They have been posted on the website.

Unfortunately, the site committee did not succeed as I had hoped. As a result and in the absence of their recommendations, I made some decisions with board input for site construction that I thought fair. Again, the administrative board was faced with the issue of how to proceed and GET THINGS DONE concerning site issues. As a result, we established a site advisory committee composed of the Combat Commanders, Trenchmasters, and chaired by Jim Kidd. The recent construction to improve NML was a result of their recommendations. This process seems to be working so far.

The reason I support it is that I believe we need to ensure that construction projects implemented by the administration board be fair and benefit both sides of the line. Again, in the past we have tried to "alternate" construction projects or complete construction projects that would have the best impact on the overall site. Our expenditures and project lists confirm this.

The site construction regulations developed by the site committee are great until we begin to enforce them. This is where we need the entire membership's help and cooperation. As individual units begin construction projects, please get the proper approval BEFORE getting started. But know this — we will support our trench masters in doing their jobs.

If you have an issue concerning their ruling, then you should appeal to your appropriate representative.

I have pushed for and continued to support active representatives. They have a place in this organization and should be helping with communication — both ways. If members need information about issues, questions, or concerns, these should be routed through the appropriate representative. In the past, the representatives have not been as active as they should have been. I have been working to change this on the board, but I also need your help to change this within the organization by holding them accountable for REPRESENTING you! By engaging the representatives to work with you or your units on issues will force them to do their very important jobs.

Communication is a two-way process, as an organization, we try to communicate to everyone through *OTW*, online

GWA Fall Event Schedule November 4–6, 2005

Friday, November 4

- 12 noon–6pm** Registration shed open
- 5pm** Modern vehicles must be moved from all GWA property beyond the registration shed gate (including the battlefield, roads, rear areas, camps) before 5pm and parked in the parking lots.
- 5:30pm** Central Powers Commanders meeting at the JR459 bunker. Mandatory attendance; if the commander cannot attend, a representative is required.
- 6pm** Safety meeting on road between trenches
- 6:30pm** Units deploy to trenches.
- 11:00pm** Stand down from combat

Saturday, November 5

- 8am–8:55am** Registration shed open
- 9am** Safety meeting formation for all units (mandatory attendance)
- 11pm** Stand down from combat

Sunday, November 6

- 7am** Gate at registration shed opened. Modern vehicles may access roads to battlefield.
- 7am–8:30am** Battlefield cleanup



discussion lists and websites. If you have a concern, information, question, or issue you can contact any board member by e-mail, mail, or telephone. As unit commanders change, the representatives and treasurer should be notified. This is an important step in the communication process.

Combat scenarios are coordinated through the Combat Commanders. Again, if you have suggestions, issues, ideas, or concerns please contact them.

Some of you who recently joined the GWA may not be familiar with the history of this organization and may be impatient with our progress. Don't be frustrated. This organization has come a long way and continues to improve as we move forward.

Regardless of the election results, know that I have been proud to serve as your President for the past two years.

Sincerely,
Rob Zienta, GWA President

GWA 2005 Budget Report

by Randall Chapman, GWA Treasurer

INCOME

Revenues—Dues & Event Fees	Spring	\$15,255.22
	Fall (Projected)	10,075.00
Revenues—Site Rental		2,979.00
	TOTAL INCOME	28,309.22

EXPENSES

Communication—Newsletter	Spring	(436.75)
	Fall	(436.75)
Communication—Website		(299.40)
Event & Site—Ambulance	Spring	(560.00)
	Fall	(560.00)
Event & Site—Flares	Spring	(519.25)
	Fall	(590.68)
Event & Site—Garbage	2005 Regular	(648.12)
	Spring	(274.00)
	Fall	(274.00)
	Misc.	(274.00)
Event & Site—Printing	Spring (Trench passes)	(53.33)
	Fall (Trench passes)	-
Event & Site—Pyro	Spring	(562.76)
	Fall	-
Event & Site—Sandbags	Spring	-
	Fall	(552.00)
Event & Site—Barbed Wire	Spring	-
	Fall	(400.00)
Event & Site—Toilets	2005 Regular	(822.00)
	Spring	(342.50)
	Fall	(411.00)
	Misc. events/work parties	(411.00)
Insurance		(2,859.00)
Site Development		(2,750.00)
Site—Mortgage Payment		(9,500.04)
Taxes		(2,205.67)
	TOTAL EXPENSES	(25,742.25)
	OVERALL TOTAL	\$2,566.97

GWA Elections Uncontested Candidates

For Vice President: **Jim Kidd**

For Treasurer: **Randall Chapman**

For Central Powers Combat Commander: **Lou Brown**

For Allied Representative: **Jon Kulaga**

(David Hughes declined the nomination for Allied Representative as he has already served for two consecutive terms.)

Contested Positions

Ballots will be cast in person at the Fall 2005 Event as part of the event registration process. Absentees voters must fill out the ballot form on page 6 and send it to the GWA Secretary by regular mail. Ballots must be received by Nov. 1, 2005.

Candidates for President

Guy Gormley

My Fellow GWA Members:

My name is Guy Gormley and I am running for GWA President. I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you about myself and why I am running for this position.

I graduated from The Virginia Military Institute (BA, History) in 1988 and from The George Washington University (MS, Acquisition Management) in 2000. I am 17-year veteran of the US Army and am currently an Active Duty National Guard Lieutenant Colonel doing Plans, Policy and Budget Formulation for the Army National Guard (ARNG) G-6 (Chief Information Officer). As my duty is at the HQ of the ARNG my potential for deployment is very slim.

I have extensive command and staff experience, including being a Battalion Operations Officer for three years and a Company Commander for two years. I changed over to the Army Acquisition Corps in 1997, working on several large Acquisition programs for the Army National Guard. As a graduate of the Defense Acquisition University Advanced Program Managers Course, the US Army Functional Area 53 (Computer Network Management) Course and the Command and General Staff Officer Course, I think I bring a solid and tested management background to this position.

I have been reenacting World War One with the GWA since 1988, exclusively since 1992. I am a veteran of Shimpstown, Beaver Falls, the Boy Scout Camp, all of the wandering years and our successful move here at Newville. I am an original founding member of the 5th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force and I am currently the unit CO and have previously served two other periods as unit CO.

I have been married for 17 years and have 2 children who support me in my reenactment hobby.

I am running for president for several reasons. First, I think it is time for those of us who have sat on the sidelines to take our turn at managing the organization. 20% of the membership does 80% of the work, gets 0% of the credit and 100% of the blame when things go wrong. I think the previous administrations have done a great job of getting us a perma-



nent site up and running, but now it is time for new people to step up and take some of the burden from their shoulders instead of just complaining about how things aren't working.

I would like to see the communication in the organization improve. I believe this is the best way to improve the harmony in the organization and improve the quality of the events.

I want to reinvigorate the process by which the Unit CO's are the primary means of communication in the organization. As a unit CO, I have felt very uninformed about what has been going on. I hear things from individuals and catch an email or two on a list, but nothing official until two weeks before an event. I want to institute a unit commanders meeting with the G-8 at each event. I would also like to have a quick gripe session (open to all members) on Sunday mornings to discuss any problems with the event and solutions to fix them. By doing this I would like to end a lot of resentment that has festered between events.

I want to develop, in conjunction with the G-8 and unit CO's, a long-range plan for site development and maintenance. I think this area has been the most neglected. We are on a good track to pay off the site and need to start thinking about where we go from here. Guys (and Ladies), we are landowners now and we need to take responsibility for keeping it up between events. We've made good starts with some GWA-wide work weekends and I would like to see that continue. It is obvious we can't just rely on Steve Wiser; the job is just too big. I'd like to draft a plan for the membership to review and approve at the next April Event. The current administration has been planning and re-planning for two years with no real accomplishment. It is time to get a "good enough" plan, get started and review the priorities on an annual basis.

By putting these plans into action, I hope to solve the largest problem facing the organization today: declining membership. Membership has been in a slow, steady decline for at least two years (probably longer). I think this is because of the condition of the site, lack of a solid long-range plan for the GWA and the pettiness and bickering that has gone on in the past. I hope that with improving the site and communication, we can entice some of our past members back and improve recruiting. I want the word to go out that Great War at Newville is THE place to be. At the same time I want to ensure that our high authenticity standards are maintained (if not improved). I believe that this all starts by more involvement with the membership, through the unit COs. I would like to make sure that our events are well advertised to the units and membership. I would like to see the Webmaster create a web based, interactive form for registration. This can be very quickly updated after each event with the next event's date. This should help to ease the registration process and make things easier on the treasurer. I will also ensure that the membership has ample written notification of events in a timely manner.

I ask for your vote in November so we can put the GWA on the long course toward remaining the premier reenacting experience in the world today. This organization has done great things and I would like to see it continue to do great things. I would also ask that you consider giving your vote to the newly nominated candidates who will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the organization. Thank you.

Robert Zienta

GWA Members —

I am running for re-election as GWA President and am asking for your vote. The current administration has provided sound and responsible leadership for this organization as evidenced by the fact that: we established a cash reserve of \$3,000; established site construction guidelines; taken on many site improvement projects; established minimum authenticity guidelines for potential members; and dealt with many other issues.

To be successful, we need the involvement and help from our members. We have tried to seek this input, although not always successfully, by making efforts to be available and open to suggestion. We have acted on many suggestions brought forward by the membership and have sought to work together as a team rather than cater to special interests.

I have made an effort to get a full working administrative board (G-8), where every member of the board is involved with the membership according to their position. The GWA needs to have every member of its administrative team functioning. This is far different from many past administrations in the fact that I believe your administrative board needs to be representative; not autocratic. While there are those who are critical of this effort, we have continued to make progress for the good of this organization and have striven for accountability for tasks completed by the G-8 for the GWA membership.

I ask that as part of our election process that you not respond to rumor. If you have a question or concern you may contact me directly, I will respond. My email address is rzienta@comcast.net. Many times the interpretations of issues depend on perception, before making a judgment, I urge you to get information first by contacting the source for the information.

I initiated an effort to develop a long-range site development plan and took steps to allocate part of our annual budget for site development. I have also led the effort to set reasonable goals that would keep the organization fiscally solvent and able to meet its financial obligations.

Your current administration has achieved a great deal on behalf of this organization. Please take time to review the site in the "common areas" that is the responsibility of the G-8. The wells on BOTH sides of the lines, port-a-johns, more shell holes, defoliation efforts and NML clean-up, and work in Death Valley, have all been addressed by an administration that works well together and is not interested in focusing on one group or those that complain the loudest. Our commitment has been to the ENTIRE GWA, as evidenced by our expenditures listed in the published budgets. Yes, there is still more to do, but with your help we will continue to take the steps to ensure progress and work **together** on a broad front. Please join me in moving this organization forward by supporting and voting for the current administration.

Sincerely,

Rob



Candidates for Secretary

Tim Kuntz

Fellow Reenactors,

My name is Tim Kuntz and I am running for the position of GWA Secretary. I believe that I have the experience and knowledge of Great War reenacting to be an effective member of the G-8. In addition, I can be non-partisan in regard to CP and Allied "sides," and will make decisions for the good of the entire membership.

In regard to experience, I have a background of twenty years reenacting overall, and ten years with the GWA. I was the Sergeant Major of the largest Civil War Union reenactment organization, and held that position for seven years while commanding up to 2000 men at CW events. I am currently a Sergeant in a WWII unit, and have been a *Kampf Gruppe* commander in the field as well as an event organizer for several reoccurring events. In Great War, I've been a unit founder and commander. I am currently on Allied HQ staff. I also reside close to the site and stop by numerous times.

I work on this hobby and my general impression by trying to improve it one step at a time. If we all take small steps forward, we will have proceeded a long way. I believe you need to help others by example and education, not criticism. Part of this hobby is learning and the need to help each other. I will work to move the GWA forward, and try to make sure we have a rewarding experience emulating and honoring the combatants of 1914-1918.

Sincerely
Tim Kuntz

Kevin Meares

Greetings. My name is Kevin Meares and I have been nominated for the position of GWA Secretary. I did not accept this nomination to achieve fame or fortune. I truly believe that there is a lack of communication within our organization. Whether it is from the top down, or basic information sharing amongst units, I have found that having an effective conduit of information is critical, whether it is through additional issues of *On the Wire* or improving the current web site.

The cornerstone of any organization is the willingness of the governing officers to be able to function as one. The distressingly juvenile behavior exhibited in the last few years has contributed to the drastic decline in membership. It's not about the price of gas to attend an event. It's not about short notification of event dates. It's about the hardcore membership being pissed off and fed up with all the BS. Whether it is defoliation issues, the condition of the site, or the way that things are perceived to be run, this organization needs to move on.

My goal as Secretary, would be to not only improve communication with the membership, but also with the G8. This would include regularly scheduled meetings of the eight elected individuals with no distractions of tourists, astronauts, pets, barnyard animals or other influences, and issues not directly related to the business and welfare of the organization and its members. Period. To accomplish this, I would

like to develop a meeting/conference call schedule for the entire year. These would be structured meetings, with agendas, and the outcome of each meeting would be published and communicated to the dues paying membership, therefore establishing an open line and process of communication. I feel this is the direction we need to take.

This election year, I have observed more activity and improvements than I have witnessed in the last five years. The "Unofficial Work Weekend," scheduled upcoming work weekends and the recent improvements in No Man's Land, all have been the result of dedicated members pulling together and realizing that we are all property owners. But to maintain this momentum, we need strong leadership and we need to insure that everyone is well informed.

This hobby has brought me great pleasure over my past 10 events in Newville. I've met some lifelong friends. I have attended Great War events in California, Britain, France and Belgium and would like to bring to our organization the successes, and learning from mistakes that I've experienced through my participation and observation of these different groups.

The reason I accepted this nomination is for the members that contribute their time and energy; the people that sustain communication by maintaining web sites and chat groups to promote this hobby, members who invest in vehicles, bunkers and period tents down to the pilot of the ride-on lawnmower. This hobby is all about "what you get out of it is what you put in."

The upcoming elections offer the membership some excellent nominees and current office holders. I trust that you all will consider a new era for our organization to insure its growth and success.

Regards,
Kevin Meares

Candidates for Allied Combat Commander

Michael S. LoCicero

Gentlemen:

If re-elected to the position of Allied Combat Commander, I will continue to plan and organize authentic Great War combat scenarios while working closely with company & unit commanders to develop effective training, communication, and offensive/defensive schemes that emulate early twentieth-century military practice. In addition, I believe the GWA should proceed with further realistic battlefield development projects that will increase the historical ambiance and authenticity of the Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site.

I have been a dedicated member of the GWA for over two decades, and Allied Combat Commander for the last eleven years. In that time, I've realized that our organization offers one of the finest living history experiences available to the reenactor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Michael S. LoCicero
(a.k.a. Captain Lowe)



Thomas (Tom) B.B. Price, Jr.

Being a candidate I would like to take the time to present my qualifications for the position of Allied Combat Commander. This Fall will represent my 25th anniversary in Great War reenacting. I began as a member of the Co I, 115th Infantry, 29th Division serving as unit commander. In 1990, I joined the 5th Battalion, AIF and have remained there since. During my service, I have held the following positions: Lance Corporal, Corporal, Sergeant (Unit Commander) and Allied Staff (SGT, 2LT). While unit commander, we developed the unit's constitution and by-laws creating one of longest lived and cohesive units in the hobby. Out of the trenches, I participate in educational activities such as Newport News, Sheppard University, McHenry Highland Festival and Romney Heritage Days. In August 2004, I was honored to have participated in the 90th Anniversary of the Retreat from Mons. I have been dedicated to preserving the history of the Great War since I was given a WWI helmet at age eight.

As combat commander, I have developed plans to divide the line into sectors, allow local commanders autonomy in conducting raids, patrols and limited local attacks. During major offenses, the attacks will be more aggressive with coordinated fire support. I plan to utilize unit commanders as such, making them responsible for training, logistics, communication and coordination of their units with headquarters. I fully intend to review staff requirements and re-allocate as needed. It is my opinion, we do not need to develop the Civil War Syndrome regarding rank. Most important, I will assure the unit commanders that I will be available between events for planning and coordination. My goal is to enhance the reenactment experience of World War I, helping to provide that little flash of insight that sometimes occurs and gives you that inkling of what it was really like over there.

My experience and education would serve the Allies well. I have served in the US Army since 1970 and am currently retired reserve. I have served in the ranks and as a commissioned officer from rifleman to primary staff positions. My training and experience has been Infantry, Military Police and Chemical Branches. I graduated from Salisbury University with a BA and a MA in History. I have been employed by the State of Maryland for 23 years as a Hearing Officer. As a collector and purveyor of militaria I have established a reputation of fair and respectful dealing. It is my wish this same tradition be carried on as your Allied Combat Commander.

Candidates for Central Powers Representative

Merlin Hanson

Hi, I am Merlin Hanson and I am running to continue in the position of CP Rep. If you like how I have been doing, find me approachable and easy to work with then vote for me. If you have worked more with Frank James and find him more accessible then by all means vote for him. You have two good choices. As always if there is anything you need contact me at

410-857-4437, or at merlin1942@verizon.net Apparently I have been out of contact for a bit as my postings on the GWA lists about change in contact info were not noticed.

Have fun,
Merlin

Frank James

Membership of the Central Powers,

My name is Frank James—many of you already know me as Max Stiebritz—and I am running for the position of Central Powers Representative (CP Rep). I have been reenacting one time period or another since 1979 and for the last eleven years, I have been reenacting World War One.

Now, why should you elect me? Mainly, because I care about this hobby and wish to see it become the “Reenactor’s Reenactment” once again. I feel the hobby has become stale and needs some refreshing to bring it back to the greatness it once held.

I personally would like to see both the CP Rep and the Allied Rep become more active in coordinating with each other. I believe that the CP Rep has to communicate vital information to the Central Powers membership. Also the CP and the Allied Reps need to provide input from the unit commanders they represent to the G-8. As I see it, the CP Rep needs to be a bigger part of the communication loop, something presently missing. I will honestly strive to make Great War reenacting the best it can be.

Your Humble Servant,
Frank James (aka Max Stiebritz)
Current GWA Webmaster
8. Kompagnie, IR459

Allied Representative

Jon Kulaga

My name is Jon Kulaga and I have been nominated to run for the position of Allied Representative. To provide the membership with information about me, I’d like to present my personal background and thoughts about the position of Allied Representative.

I’m 46 years old, married, with three children. I have a BA Degree in History Education. Having participated in ROTC while in college, I was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in 1982 and was assigned to Armor Branch. I served in the US Army from 1982 through 1986 with most of my active duty being with 1/35 Armor, 1st Armored Division in Germany. I held the positions of Armor Platoon Leader, Battalion Support Platoon Leader and Headquarters Company Executive Officer. Upon my “demob” in 1986, I spent time within the reserves and then the IRR, my reserve time being spent with an Armor Basic Training Unit in Galesburg, Ill.

Currently, I work for a large Fortune 500 company as a Corporate Strategic Sourcing Manager. My primary function is to source potential companies that can manufacture products that my company does not wish to produce using their own internal resources, conduct research and due diligence of these potential suppliers, negotiate pricing and contractual arrangements, manage ongoing relationships with numerous



manufacturers, and consistently apply consensus management in working with all internal company points of contacts/departments to ensure that all parties are in agreement with critical path decisions.

I have been an active militaria collector since the age of 13, starting out with a focus on World War II, concentrating on German Army field equipment and uniform items. In 1986 my focus switched to British Victorian military history and my collection changed with my focus. I began hearing about the GWA through contacts made at gun shows and decided to join the hobby in the mid 1990s, with my first event being the second at Newville. Being with the hobby 10 years now, I have been an assistant unit commander for two years, a unit commander for four years and have assisted the G-8 as the GWA Media Representative, with the most notable achievement being the creation of the GWA Promotional Film, negotiated by me to be furnished free of charge to the GWA. Acting as producer and editor, I worked to make sure that the GWA's message was clearly communicated. This film was then provided to unit leaders, the membership and, for a time, was posted on the GWA website.

As Allied Representative, I'd like to work towards making sure that information is communicated and solicited from all units. We are an association of hobbyists with a unique interest in the WWI period. I want to work towards making sure that everyone's voices are heard on how we conduct the hobby and not just special interest groups or selected individuals. As Allied Rep, I'd like to work towards creating and implementing a comprehensive survey to determine the demographics of our hobby and the thoughts of everyone on the directions we should be heading. ■

Absentee Ballot for 2005 GWA Election

Name: _____

Unit: _____

President

Guy Gormley Robert Zienta

Secretary

Tim Kuntz Kevin Meares

Allied Combat Commander

NOTE: Members of Allied units only may vote for Allied Combat Commander.

Michael LoCicero Tom Price

Central Powers Representative

NOTE: Members of Central Powers units only may vote for Central Powers Representative.

Merlin Hanson Frank James

Mail ballot to: Tim Kuntz
109 Hawthorn Cir.
Lancaster PA 17602

Your yearly membership dues (\$25) must be paid up or included with this form. Ballot must be received by **November 1, 2005**.

Harry Truman's Helmet

By Colin Romanick

The total American production of the M-1917 helmet surpassed 2.5 million, and of that huge number, two helmets protected a future President of the United States. Initially viewed as a novelty item — less important than a weapon or a good pair of boots — the helmet prevented casualties and brought many doughboys, like Harry S. Truman, home from World War I.

A declaration of war by the United States on April 6, 1917, mustered Truman and thousands of National Guardsmen into federal service. The guardsmen soon found themselves at Camp Doniphan and the adjoining Fort Sill in Oklahoma near the town of Lawton. Here, Lt. Harry S. Truman joined the federalized 129th Field Artillery Regiment of the 35th Division. During this period, Lt. Truman drew upon his experiences as a Missouri National Guardsman.

Previous training was not adequate for the modern warfare that lay ahead of the soldiers. Trench warfare and modern weapons changed the tactics and strategy that existed before the war. When the United States declared war, she had approximately 200,000 men under arms. This number rose to almost 2 million by the time of the armistice on Nov. 11, 1918. All of these troops needed equipment and training that the United States was unable to furnish in the short term, and the United States was forced to rely heavily upon its Allies to help fill this void. Both the British and the French instructors trained American troops in the use of hand grenades, the bayonet and a new necessity, the gas mask. The British-style M-1917 helmet replaced the Montana Peak Hat and provided much improved protection to the head and upper body. All of the soldiers at Camp Doniphan received this training and equipment.

Truman and the rest of the doughboy artillerymen used foreign-made field guns as the tool of their trade. The French M-1897 Schneider field gun was undoubtedly the most advanced gun of World War I, and it was the primary gun used by the American Expeditionary Forces. With a 75mm bore, capable of firing 25 rounds per minute, it would bring death and fear to many Germans who were on the receiving end of its barrage. Truman and the men of the 129th F.A. would use these guns through the battles ahead until the minute that the armistice took effect.

After seven months of hard training and drilling, the men of the 35th Division departed for France and reached LeHavre on May 10, 1918. During the first month in France, Truman was promoted thus replacing brother officer and friend Capt. Thacher as commander of D Battery of the 129th Field Artillery. The "Dizzy D" was comprised of Irish Catholic boys from Kansas City with a reputation for roughhousing. Truman took charge and immediately turned the unit around by holding non-commissioned officers responsible for their men. It was during this time that Lt. Householder, second in command of D Battery, came to know "the Captain" very well. Both men became friends and worked closely in the hard fighting ahead.



The baptism of fire for Battery D came in late August 1918 in the Vosges Mountains. Generally known as a quiet sector, the Vosges front came to life with the arrival of the 35th Division. Several trench raids took place in late July and early August. Company C, 137th Infantry and Company H, 138th Infantry took the largest part in these raids. The doughboys brought back many prisoners and left several German dead behind. The German raids were not as productive and were merely efforts at retaliation for the earlier American raids.

The task for Battery D was to provide accurate fire in support of these raids, which had their own hazards. Sgt. Verne E. Cheney of Battery D mentions a particularly heavy German barrage of counter-battery fire. In his memoirs, Cheney recalls how several of the men panicked and ran during the “Battle of Who Run.” Battery Commander Capt. Truman tried desperately to rally his men back to their guns to no effect. Truman’s horse toppled over, riddled by German shrapnel, and trapped the Captain under his horse in the mire of mud and debris. Good friend and fellow officer Lt. Vic H. Householder witnessed Truman’s plight and came to his rescue. Householder was able to slide the dead horse off the Captain and free him. The concussion of the shell had rendered Truman unconscious and required Householder to perform CPR. Truman revived, and Householder received a Commendation Medal for his heroic effort. This incident is partly why Truman later said in a letter home, “The tin hat is uncomfortable but very pleasant to have under certain conditions. Sometimes I wish it was about the size of an umbrella.”

The Vosges provided a brief introduction for the 35th Division of the type of intense and savage fighting that was to come at St. Mihiel and the Argonne. The first major battle for the AEF, St. Mihiel, had the 35th division held in reserve and missing the major combat. The affair was a dreary one — with the men in their pup tents in a wet woods and muddy mire under enemy shellfire. The unit would not be in reserve, however, in the forests of the Argonne.

It took some 200 French trucks to move the entire 35th Division from their reserve position at St. Mihiel to Grange-Conte in preparation for the Battle of the Argonne. The division took position between Aisne River on the left and the Aire River on the right, north of Verdun. The battle began on Sept. 26, 1918. Cheney and the rest of the men of Battery D struggled to get the guns into position due to the rain and mud. Cheney and the men had to endure this back-breaking task on little sleep and a lack of food. Also, before the assault, the men had to camouflage the guns for fear of attack from enemy aircraft. Truman and the 129th Field Artillery began artillery preparations at 2:30 a.m. on Sept. 26. The intensive artillery preparation lasted for three hours, and then the main assault began. By the end of the day, the advance had gained 10 kilometers.

Truman and the men of Battery D moved to the Sommedieue Sector for a welcome relief with the rest of the 35th Division after the hard fighting in the Argonne. This is where the division would spend most of its time, until near the armistice, where it prepared for the offensive east of

Metz. The armistice was signed on Nov. 11, 1918, and Cheney said that the French troops celebrated by “cheering, drinking and playing like children.”

The division left the Le Mans area and departed for the United States and arrived on April 23, 1919. Truman and the men of 129th F.A. paraded through the streets of Kansas City before demobilization and discharge at Camp Funston. The 35th Division had sustained casualties in France of 1,480 dead, 6,001 wounded and 167 captured.

This was, unfortunately, not the last time that Truman made use of his M-1917 helmets. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, then Senator Truman applied for active duty, but the Army said no. When Senate office buildings were marked off as air-raid shelters, Truman grabbed his M-1917 helmets and offered his services as an air-raid warden. Since no bombs fell on Washington, Truman finally stacked his helmets in his office.

The helmets remained idle until John Abbitt of the Memorial Museum of the American Legion wrote to President Truman in 1947. Abbitt, chairman of the special committee on procurement, wrote to the President hoping to obtain personal 35th division memorabilia. In a letter dated July 22, 1947, Abbitt expressed a desire to procure a “cherished trophy” for the growing museum collection. Maj. Gen. Harry H. Vaughan received the request and responded to Abbitt. Vaughan, a military aide to the President, acted on the President’s behalf and as a broker between the President and Abbitt.

After several months of correspondence, Truman donated one of his M-1917 helmets to the museum. Abbitt journeyed to Washington to accept the helmet for the museum on Oct. 14, 1947.

Abbitt presented the helmet to the museum in a special opening ceremony on May 2, 1948. Unfortunately, the President could not attend the ceremony, but Col. Nelson C. Overton accepted the helmet on behalf of the museum and placed it on prominent display.

The Virginia War Museum still has the Truman helmet on display. The second helmet resides in the Truman Library and Museum, Independence, Mo. ■

COMING EVENTS

November 4-6, 2005

GWA Fall Tactical and Living History event

Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, Newville, PA

March 3-4, 2006

Virginia War Museum’s 6th Annual World War I Event

Endview Plantation in Newport News, VA

April 21-23, 2006

GWA Spring Tactical and Living History event

Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, Newville, PA



Western Front 1918 Reenactment

**Sponsored by the Virginia War Museum
Sanctioned by the Great War Association**

by Colin Romanick, Virginia War Museum

In March 2001 the Virginia War Museum hosted the Second Battle of the Somme; which is the first Great War reenactment on the east coast open to the public. The Virginia War Museum has hosted a Great War reenactment each year at historic Endview Plantation in Newport News, Virginia since the 2001 event. The membership of the Great War Association and others have helped to make the event possible from the beginning. Last year, the G-8 sanctioned the event for the first time. This support enables the museum and the Great War Association to educate school children and the public about the Great War. Participating units or Great War Association members are also able to recruit new members, demonstrate a positive use for Class III weapons, and promote the Great War Association as more than just a reenactment community. The decision of the G-8 to sanction the event has brought the Great War Association into the realm of living historians who care about perpetuating the memory of the Great War through education. Only through education can we hope to prevent such a war from ever happening again.

The Western Front 1918 Reenactment has always taken place on a Friday and Saturday schedule. We are able to reach over one thousand school children on Friday and several hundred public spectators on Saturday. The school children receive guided tours of the trenches and are able to interact with reenactors, who usually give first person interpretations. The children learn about trench life, artillery, machineguns, gas attacks, trench raids, and period fighting techniques. They are taught about the roles that the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army played in World War I. Field artillery performs firing demonstrations for each group and during the reenactment.

The Western Front 1918 Reenactment is held on Saturday for the public. We create a typical battlefield much like the original and give an honest representation of what the combat was like. Ground charges represent a simulation of what helped to create the pock-marked landscape. Spectators leave the event with a greater knowledge of the Great War and its effect on the twentieth century.

The Virginia War Museum is hosting another Western Front 1918 Reenactment on March 3-4, 2006. Friday is for school groups who will experience living history in the trenches. Saturday will have three daytime battles and living history all day. The battles will have ground charges, opposing trenches, and dugouts. The hours for the event will be 9a.m. to 4p.m. on Saturday and 9a.m. to 2p.m. on Friday. If you would like to participate call Colin Romanick at the Virginia War Museum at 757-247-8523. You can also email us at info@warmuseum.org or contact your Great War Association event representative, Vince Petty, at ludite64@aol.com. The Virginia War Museum is located at 9285 Warwick Blvd. Newport News, VA 23607 and Endview Plantation is located at 362 Yorktown Road, Newport News, VA 23607.

The Virginia War Museum and the City of Newport News thank the Great War Association for supporting educational efforts to perpetuate the memory of World War I. ■

GO OVER THE TOP!
with us on March 3-4, 2006
at Endview Plantation in Newport News



The Virginia War Museum's 6th Annual World War I Event will be held on March 3-4, 2006, 9 a.m.– 4 p.m. at historic Endview Plantation located at 362 Yorktown Rd. in NN, VA.

Reenactors from several nations will perform living history displays and battle reenactments throughout the day. Our re-created World War I battlefield will portray a shell cratered no-man's-land, barbed wire, and dugouts just as if you were on the Western Front in 1918. See and hear deadly new inventions such as the machinegun, trench mortar, and a soldier's greatest fear — gas! Come join us and learn about trench life, bully beef, doughnut dollies and the men and women who fought the "Great War."

Call Virginia War Museum at (757) 247-8523 for information. or e-mail us at info@warmuseum.org

School group inquiries welcome for March 3, 2006.

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

Check here if you want to stop receiving a paper copy of *On the Wire* via regular mail and instead download the newsletter and registration forms from the Web site (www.great-war-assoc.org)

**GWA Membership Update and Registration Form for the Fall Combat Event at the Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site, Newville, PA, November 4–6, 2005
Pre-Register and save \$15 — see below!**

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 _____
(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. 2005 dues if not already paid
(Annual dues are due at the Spring Event each year)

\$25.00

B. Fall 2005 Event fee if pre-registered

\$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 **October 31, 2005**. 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 out to “Great War Association”

Send form and check to: **Randall Chapman, GWA Treasurer
7925 Jahnke Road
Richmond, VA 23235**

(804) 323-7159 randall@cavtel.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 **randall@cavtel.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
BTTYC 28th Div., 107th Field Arty. Btty. C (*probationary*)
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

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

Russian

RL Legion Russe

French

8BCP 8 Btn. Chasseurs a Pied
151RL 151er Regiment d'Infanterie

Austrian

63KUK 63rd KuK

German

1LR Königliche Bayerische Leib Regiment
5SB 5. Sturm Battalion (Rohr)
8KUR 3. Feldesk., Kürassier Regt. Nr 8
12MWK 12. Minenwerfer Komp. 12 Division
20MG 20. MG Scharfschützen Komp.
63JR J.R. 63 (4. Oberschlesisches)
73FR F.R. 73 (*probationary*)
90FR F.R. 90 (*probationary*)
92JR J.R. 92 (1. Braunschweigisches)
111JR J.R. 111 (3. Badisches)
120JR J.R. 120 (2. Württembergisches)
124JR J.R. 124 (Württembergisches)
459JR J.R. 459 (Rhein. Westf.)

Non-Military

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

Great War Association
7925 Jahnke Road
Richmond, VA 23235

