



The Union Eagle

Newsletter of the U.S Frontier Brigade

September, 2009

Greetings!

Well, the long, hot summer is finally over, and the fall campaign season is finally upon us. The main event will be the combination spectator/tactical that will be held at Fort Washita, Oklahoma on the weekend of September 26-27. Whit Edwards has done a fine job of organizing this, and it promises to offer something for everyone. Please encourage all in your unit to attend, as this will likely be the largest and best event in our area of the country during this time period.

The board of officers that met at Okmulgee last month was divided upon their choice of a second event for later in the fall. Two battle reenactments, one at Washington, Arkansas and the other at McKinney, Texas, are on the same weekend, and both have a certain degree of support. The 1st U.S. has already made a firm decision to attend McKinney because it is in their backyard, and they feel it important for recruiting purposes. The 77th Pennsylvania has already made a commitment to Old Washington because it promises to have a lot to offer the ladies' contingent of their group. The other units – 2nd Colorado, 8th Kansas, 10th Kansas, etc. – were a little unsure about which to support, although most seem to lean toward McKinney. I suspect that another meeting will be needed at Fort Washita to work out the exact details of who is going where.

Lastly, on a personal note, I will be stepping down as the Brigade Adjutant/AIG following Fort Washita. My wife and I are planning to relocate to the Springfield, Missouri area in about three years when we retire from our present jobs. Along with several other reenactors who live in that region, I am trying to help organize a new Federal infantry unit, the 24th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. This regiment was raised in that area, and we believe that there is enough interest to build a new organization there. However, rather than wait until I actually move up there, we decided to go ahead and begin laying the groundwork now so as to have the unit up and going in time for the 150th anniversary cycle of events – the beginning of which is **ONLY ABOUT FIFTEEN MONTHS FROM NOW!**



Developing a Living History Display

The following photos and text are from the 19th U.S. Infantry's website, and contain many good suggestions for setting up living history displays in camp.



The O.V.C.W.A. camp street at Bardstown, KY. [Editor's note: modern hay bales should not be used as camp furniture, and have no place being seen in an authentic camp!]

- **Shut off your cell phones and pagers or leave them in the car. More than one embarrassing moment has been caused by an inopportune phone ringing.**
- **Do NOT let visitors eat your hardtack. It is natural for kids, and some adults, to want to try the hardtack. If they damage their teeth you may find yourself in trouble. Instead, pass out a small sheet with a hard tack recipe for them to take home and make.**



This is a simple layout on a poncho in front of a soldier's tent. This is a great sample of a simple display that works very well at living history events.

- **Man your displays.** There is no use in having a great display and walking away. Take turns with your pards working it if you need to take breaks. Although pilfering is rare, you do not want your expensive collections to walk away!
- **Mold or buy some mini-balls.** It is difficult trying to explain how a mini-ball works without having one in your hand. They are also impressive to the public to hold because of the weight. If you can purchase original canister shot, they make great conversation pieces too.



Jan Ketron talks about Civil War weapons. Members of the 19th U.S. have some of the best weapons collections around. These collections hold original and reproductions and make for fantastic demonstrations and teaching.

- **Maintain control of all your weapons. This seems simple but many a kid will haul off with your bayonet when you turn your back. That is an accident waiting to happen. Do NOT let visitors handle any weapons unless you are with them.**
- **MAKE SURE ALL MUSKETS ARE CLEAR AFTER A LIVE FIRE IF YOU ARE DOING FIRING DEMONSTRATIONS. Cap off your muskets often!**
- **Do not let any visitors fire the muskets or firearms. This is asking for trouble and can be a hard situation to manage, not to mention a big liability. If they insist on firing a musket, hand them a recruiting packet!**



Another great layout of period items. This display is on a table that adds to the display.

- **Develop a 'first person'. This is not as easy as it sounds and can take some time. This is a great way to engage your visitors. But remember, first person works best when the entire camp is engaged in it and the camp has no displays. It should appear as natural as possible, like visitors are walking back into history!**
- **Know your facts. As a living historian, you want to give your visitors the best possible experience. Although some Civil War subjects do lend themselves to a certain amount of subjectivity, do not be afraid to say "I don't know!" Ask others in the camp, chances are someone will know the answer to the question.**



Company street of the O.V.C.W.A. at Antietam National Battlefield.

Brigade Events

September 26-27, 2009 – Fort Washita, OK. Campaign-style camping is recommended. Public battle on Saturday afternoon, non-spectator tactical situation from Saturday night until noon Sunday. Contact Whit Edwards at: wedwards@okhistory.org. **Note: Whit has strongly urged all units to pre-register. This can be done online at: <http://www.okhistory.org/outreach/military/ftwashita09.html>**

Other Events of Interest

September 19, 2009 (Saturday only) – Beggs, OK. Family Frontier Days.

September 19-20, 2009 - Holden, MO. Battle reenactment. MCWRA sanctioned.

October 3-4, 2009 - Perryville, KY. – Battle of Perryville reenactment.

October 10-11, 2009 - O'Fallon, MO. Battle reenactment.

October 24-25, 2009 - Tyler, TX. Battle reenactment.

November 7, 2009 (Saturday only) – Fort Gibson, OK. Fall bake day living history.

November 7-8, 2009 – McKinney, TX. The Battle of Myers' Landing. For more information, go to: <http://www.co.collin.tx.us/living/MyersLanding.pdf>. This will be a recruiting event for the 1st U.S. Contact: Alan Prendergast.

November 7-8, 2009 – Washington, AR. Living history and battle reenactments in the oldest town in Arkansas, and the site of the Confederate capital after the fall of Little Rock.

December 5-6, 2009 – Prairie Grove, AR. “Off-year” anniversary living history. A Federal living history encampment (no battle), with a “Christmas in Camp” theme. Contact: Cal Kinzer at ckinzer@juno.com.

How to Recruit??

Recently, a rather interesting discussion has been held on the Authentic Campaigners' Forum concerning how to recruit. Here are some of the ideas that various reenactors have posted:

Paul Norris, 19th Alabama Infantry, writes:

How exactly do units out there try to draw recruits? Posters? Advertisements? Open Bars? What strategy do you try to get interested people into the uniform? I'm asking because we're starting to despair here and are getting stuck in a rut of only doing a couple of public events per year with the rest private. Fun and as relaxing as this is, the hobby here, perhaps nationally, is imploding rapidly. We NEED 'new blood' so how do we get it besides the occasional dog-and-pony show?

Andrew Schultz, from Alabama, replies:

Talk to friends with like interest and bring them out to events. Have yourself an extra rifle or two as well as uniform accouterments etc. to outfit these fellows. The best way to get someone in from my experience is to "get them on the field". Let them feel the "rush" that a battle reenactment brings. They won't be interested in sitting around doing a living history, people want to do something. My groups that I have been a part of have not had any luck recruiting from the public at public events. Groups may have that happen now and again, some even have extra gear ready to go so that they can put an interested fellow onto the field. The key is getting them out there and doing some thing.

Use "friendship evangelism" when recruiting for your group get them into uniform (even if its all your old farb stuff at this point) and get them on the field. Once they get the taste and actually see how fun it is, if they want to do it they will get past the expense (a major hang up for most people) and get into the hobby.

Friendships and the recruits they bring are the life blood of the hobby in my mind. This has worked well for me in the past and I figure it will work again in the future. Good luck in your endeavors.

Andrew Gale, N.W. 15th Arkansas Infantry, writes:

One thing I've done lately is to join "groups" on social networking sites (facebook and such) and posting recruitments or mentioning events and having people contact me if they are interested. I've gotten a few "fresh fish" doing it that way, but nothing beats the good old fashioned way at events and good friends to help spread the word.

Christian Sprakes, 19th Indiana (U.K.), adds:

Here in the U.K. gun laws hit hard. But, we have several inert guns for training, not quite the perfect solution I know but at least A solution, at least until folk can get licenses sorted out. We are also massively lucky to have a regimental guy with a big car who rounds up all that spare, grown out of, got better than now, kit, shoves it in a sack and brings it along as a stock to equip potential new members there and then.

Now I get contentious..... Probably the worst thing that happens is your new member gets all excited, so burn powder during the day and drink beer at night, Maybe? Or, on the other side he gets put off by all the restrictions and sudden seriousness about him in what he/she/it thought was going to be a fun hobby. Guess what I am trying to say is do not recruit too much on the obvious fun side of the hobby, don't over emphasize this and when they have started go gentle n coaxing them into being a high standard re-enactor. Many of us started in A frames with modern kit inside hidden away, not seeing the point of cooking period style etc etc and then began to get it gradually over a season or two. had it been enforced straight away, or we felt so, we would not be in the hobby today.

I say none of this lightly as I work as a recruiter at events and also in my own time. One thing I will say is look for a foot in the door of your new prospective recruits skill set or desire. Fact find, don't just present what you think is cool about the hobby.

THINK - WHAT DOES HE WANT OUT OF IT?

Sorry if this is getting all salesman but it works!

A bit of background on your new recruit will pay dividends and may ease his mind or fears as well.

Useful background hooks I have found include.

Scouts, any paramilitary organizations etc - Drill, camp routine.

Role players or LARPerS, and yes I do mean D&D players. - First person, narrating or story telling.

Musician - obvious really

Historians - Experimental archeology, chance to exchange views with others of the same interest type.

If they have done any of these then you can say mind easing stuff, after all they have done some of it before, one way or another. build on existing foundation, don't make them feel like they are starting at the bottom.

Now I guess some of you are reading and thinking I am telling you what you already know, but next time you are recruiting stop and listen to yourselves and I bet what you are selling as a hobby is what you enjoy, and not what they would.

P.S As far as Bronwald the Barbarian goes, I am not suggesting that D&D translates directly across but someone who has created a character and stays in character for four hours during a RPG night is doing fantasy living non history. I know many re-enactors who cannot do first person and many RPGers who can once they have been given relevant details.

Brian Gauthier, 1st TN Partisan Rangers, adds:

When I started up in the hobby several years ago, I had many of the negative preconceptions that are unfortunately associated with the term "reenactor". I thought it was a bunch of old fat men pretending to play war while drinking copious amounts of beer. That's all well and good, but there is so much more to be learned and enjoyed from this hobby than that. When we recruit, we must keep this in mind. We will not, I repeat will not encourage new members to join if the first thing they hear is the sometimes overwhelming price tag associated with things like uniform, musket, etc. It is incredibly difficult to start off as an authentic, let alone maintain it for people like me (recent college grad).

I liked what Christian mentioned and that is meeting people where they are. Private events such as LBL and Knoxville (this past year) are great events, but it's not a spectator event. And yes, we all have friends that we know might be interested, but how great is it when a father and son, looking for something to connect over, come to a reenactment, farb it up together and have a great time learning a new hobby? Or what about the people who come to reenactments and FINALLY get a sense of what life must have been like 150 years ago. I've come across too many reenactors who shun people away from camp simply because they are too caught up in themselves to deal with the public. If you don't want to deal with the public, why go to a public event? And to follow that up, where else are you realistically expecting new recruits will come from if not from some fresh blood?



Organization of the U.S. Frontier Brigade

Brigade Headquarters

Lieutenant Colonel Don Gross
Brigade Commander
Ft. Worth, TX

Major Doug Kidd
Chief of Cavalry

Major Pete Stoddard
Chief of Artillery

Captain Cal Kinzer
Assistant Adjutant General
Beggs, OK

Sergeant Major Mark Vlahos
Senior NCO
San Antonio, TX

Neal Rudy
Principal Musician
Chicago, IL

Captain Lee Burdine
Signal Corps Detachment
Midwest City, OK

Captain Herschel Stroud
Medical Corps Detachment
Topeka, KS

Infantry Battalion

Eighth Kansas Volunteer Infantry

Captain Jonathan Goering
Wichita, KS

Eighth Missouri Volunteer Infantry

Captain Mike Bryant
Vicksburg, MS

First United States Infantry

Captain Alan Prendergast
Dallas, TX

Second Colorado Volunteer Infantry

Captain Jim Trent
Stillwater, OK

Seventeenth Missouri Volunteer Infantry

Captain Greg Zellinski
St. Louis, MO

Seventy-Seventh Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Captain Rex Griffin
Jenks, OK

Tenth Kansas Volunteer Infantry

Captain Mike Kirk
Oklahoma City, OK

Thirteenth United States Regular Infantry

Tom Whitesides
Houston, TX

Thirty-Seventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Captain Tom Ezell
North Little Rock, AR

This Newsletter is Written and Edited By

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