

CWRLC AUTHENTICITY GUIDELINES

The membership of the CWRLC has developed these guidelines to assist commanders and event organizers in establishing a higher level of authenticity at the events attended by its members. These guidelines should be considered minimum standards, allowing event organizers to develop their own set of guidelines to meet the needs of their event.

There are several segments of reenacting covered in these guidelines. They include the authenticity of uniforms, equipment, camps, and field operations.

UNIFORMS

During the years 1861-1865 a wide variety of uniforms were worn by the military in both armies. These included everything from pre-war militia uniforms to late war uniforms modified for comfort in the field. Add to this specialty units like zouaves and it becomes difficult to develop a set of standards that will work for each event. There are however some guidelines which cover all units.

General Guidelines

All units should develop an early, mid and late war impression so they correctly represent the period in the war being reenacted. This becomes particularly important when a unit is portraying a specialty unit such as zouaves, sharpshooters etc. At first glance this may sound hard and expensive to do but with a little thought most units can change their look fairly inexpensively.

Items that were not correct to the period should not be used. These include but are not limited to non-period tobacco products, modern eyewear, modern shoes or boots and modern clothing items.

Uniform Coats, Vests and Trousers should be of a correct period pattern and made of period materials. (broadcloth, satinette, jean cloth, etc.)

Caps and Hats should be of a correct period pattern. Civilian "slouch" hats should be properly blocked, and contain a correct liner and sweatband. (No derbies, Stetsons, hat blanks or modern straw hats.) Hats should not have excessive trimmings. (Hat cords, letters, numbers, or pins)

Shirts should be of a correct period pattern and material, either military or civilian. (Cotton or flannel)

Socks should be of a correct pattern and material. (Wool or cotton) Heels. (No modern shoes or boots or moccasins)

Shoes and Boots should be of a correct pattern and constructed of period materials. No work boots, modern military boots, or desert boots should be permitted.

Drawers should be of period construction and materials. (No union suits)

Eyeglasses should be of period style and materials. Since most people of the time did not wear glasses contact lenses may be the best answer to this area of concern. (No modern glasses)

Gloves and Scarves should be of period material and construction. They should be made of wool or cotton and subdued in color.

EQUIPMENT

Canteens should be of period style and construction. (Drum, bull's eye, wooden, period filter, or Mexican war pattern.)

Knapsacks should be of period style. (Pre-war pattern, hard packs, double bag pattern, or English imports.)

Blankets should be of period material and construction. (Wool or quilts)

Haversacks should be of period construction. (Canvas, tarred canvas and cotton)

Cups should be of proper tin construction.

Mess **gear** should be of period construction. Some latitude is available in this area since many types of plates and eating utensils were used. These include military issue and civilian styles.

Bayonet Scabbards should be of period construction and appropriate to the weapon in use. No portion of the blade should be exposed when in the scabbard.

Belts should be of period construction. (Leather or tarred canvas)

Buckles should be of a period pattern. Common

Cap Pouch should be of period construction. These can include CS issue, US issue, Militia, or English import. (Leather or tarred canvas)

Cartridge Boxes should be of period construction. These can include CS issue, US issue, Militia or English import. (Leather or tarred canvas)

Saber and Sword Belts should be of period material and construction. (Canvas or Leather) Various buckles may be used based on individual unit and impression.

Holsters must be of period construction and materials.
(Leather)

Flags should be of period materials and construction. They should be of correct dimensions for the units being represented. A correct ratio of flags to units being portrayed should be maintained.

Saddles should be of the period material and construction. Common styles were 1859 McClellan, Grimsley, Hope, and various civilian styles.

Halters, Bridles, and Link Straps should be of period construction and material. (Leather).

Lead Lines should be of leather or hemp rope

construction. **Reins** should be of either leather or canvas construction.

Surcingles should be of period construction and used at all time for safety reasons.

Saddle Blankets should be of period construction, (wool of a heavy weight). They may be military issue or civilian styles.

Bits should be of period construction either military or civilian styles.

WEAPONS

General Guidelines

Original weapons should not be used on the reenactment battlefield. They make great living history tools but they do present a potential safety hazard due to the age of the weapons. Shotguns, Flintlocks, Kentucky Rifles and modern weapons of any kind should not be used or displayed at reenactments.

INFANTRY

Three Band Muskets and Rifles should be the primary weapon of the infantry. They should be a correct reproduction of a weapon used during the war.

Two Band Muskets and Rifles are not recommended as primary weapons of the infantry. Many events do not allow their use and there can be a safety consideration when used in mass formations.

Bayonets should be of correct period construction and match the weapon they are being used with.

Belt Knives should be of correct period construction and materials. These items are useful in camp and for living history opportunities but should not be carried during battle reenactments.

Pistols should be a correct reproduction of a weapon used during the war. Pistols should be carried only by Officers or designated NCOs within infantry units.

Swords should be of correct period construction and materials. They should only be worn by Officers and appropriate NCOs.

CAVALRY

Two Band Muskets, Rifles and Carbines should be the primary long arms of the cavalry. They should be a correct reproduction of a weapon used during the war.

Pistols should be a correct reproduction of a weapon used during the war.

Sabers should be of a correct style and materials for a weapon used during the war.

ARTILLERY

Field Guns should be a correct size and of proper construction for a field gun of the period.

Two Band Muskets and Rifles should be a correct reproduction of a weapon of that period.

Pistols should be a correct reproduction of a weapon used during the war.

Swords should be of proper style and construction of a weapon used during the war.

CAMP OPERATIONS

At most events the camps are where the spectators get their closest look at the reenactor. We talk to them one on one and they look at the way we live while in the field. This is also the place where we spend most of our time with our fellow reenactors. When you consider these two factors it should be the place we strive hardest to give a correct impression of the lives of the soldiers we represent. At most events we portray both campaign and fix field camp living and we add a much larger then normal civilian presence then would have been in and around the camps. This combination of things presents us with a significant challenge if we are to present a correct picture of the time.

Fix Field Camps should be established as close as possible to the regulations of the time. Wall tents and dinning flies should only be located on headquarters row, or on the kitchen row. Wedge and dog tents should be established in streets and each camp should have a separate civilian camp where refugees and camp followers can be located. Cavalry camps and Artillery parks should be established in conjunction with the fixed camps in an area providing cover and water for the horses and solid ground for the guns.

Campaign Camps should be located near the main camp but with some separation to allow distinction between the two styles of camp to recognizable. This camp should be in an area with shade available if possible.

Living History Camps should be established near the main spectator areas to allow those reenactors involved in this specialty area of

the hobby to interact with the public and not get lost in the expanse of the main camps.

Vehicles in Camp should only be allowed during the time the camp is being established or when it is being torn down. All events have times established that vehicles should be out of camp and those rules should be followed. This includes the last day of the event when for some reason many folks just have to get in to get pack to leave. If you know you have to leave early you should travel light and walk your gear out rather than disrupt the event for your fellow reenactors.

Period Attire should be maintained from the time you finish setting up your camp till it is time to tear down. This applies to military and civilians alike. If you are in the camps you should be in period attire. Visitors not in period dress should depart the area at the end of the spectator day.

Camp Gear should always be of period style and construction. Things such as coolers, heaters, non period food containers and wrappers should be kept out of sight at all times. It does not take much extra effort to place foods in period containers before an event or prepare them in a tent before bringing them out for public view.

Camp Decorum. We should always consider what is correct when we are in camp. Recorded music, modern songs, inappropriate behavior and noisy gatherings after hours are out of line and should not be accepted. While you may enjoy your tape playing while you establish your camp, some folks may have been on site before you and are already enjoying the step back in time.

Flags displayed in camp should be of the proper style and ratio for that time in the war. Having two dozen flags on company row is just as wrong as having a modern flag. Flags should be held to one set per battalion and for headquarters^

PETs should not be brought to reenactments. At most events this is a standing rule. Pets on site present a danger to the pet and others at the reenactment.

Mounted Personnel should not ride through the camps. Roads are usually established around the camps. If a rider needs to enter the camps for some reason they should dismount and lead their mount to their destination.

Arriving At Camp. When you arrive at the event site and have registered you should locate your battalion headquarters and ask where you should camp. They have the plan for your camp and will assist you. If you do not check in you may be asked to move your equipment. It's much easier to ask first.

Field Operations

Army Organization. The event commanders establish the required army structure to accomplish the goals they set forth in the battle plan. To accomplish this they establish the strengths of units by registration and morning reports. If a unit does not have a parent organization, i.e. USV, PACS, ANV, NR etc, they should try to establish a home before the event by contacting one of these units and asking to fall in. If this does not occur they may be assigned upon arrival at the site to a unit of the commanding general's choice.

Participant's age. The established minimum age for participation in a battle is 16 years old to carry a weapon and 13 years old for a field musician. No one under the age of 16 should be used as a color bearer, guidon bearer, runner etc. This is a safety consideration as well as authenticity and they will be asked to leave the field or perhaps the event based on the wishes of the commanders and event sponsors.

Fire Works are not authorized at anytime unless approved by the event sponsors. This is also a safety issue.

Hand to Hand fighting should not be conducted unless prior approval is obtained for a specific scenario. This is also a safety issue.

Independent Charges by small groups or individuals will not be tolerated. It does not look good nor is it authentic. This is also a safety issue.

Troop Discipline is a key to making any battle scenario go smoothly. Units that do not follow orders or intentionally disrupt a scenario may be removed from the field or site.

Casualties during an engagement are usually the biggest problem area. At most reenactments the main loss of personnel is within

the last 15 minutes of the engagement. To solve this each organization should establish a system to determine casualty ratios for a battle and who will take hits when. Army headquarters should determine an appropriate ratio and notify the Divisions/ Brigades what is expected. Once the ratio is established, the battalions should implement their plan to make it work. One area of casualties often missed is the number of walking wounded seen behind the lines. Many of the early casualties could become walking wounded and then reform and come back in as reinforcements.

Rank in the units should reflect the number of men commanded. While this would vary from early war to late war, a Colonel with three other officers and two enlisted is not correct and should not happen.

Living History Personalities should reflect the event that they are attending. Having the correct personalities at an event can enhance the overall picture but two Grants and three Lees does no one credit. Event sponsors and commanders should collaborate in selecting who will do the appropriate roles and others should be assigned to the Living History Camp.

ENFORCEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY STANDARDS

Setting standards is only the first step in improving our authenticity. Without enforcement of standards we will only get improvement from those who want to participate. Enforcement must fall on the shoulders of the event organizers and army commanders who are selected for the command positions. The first step is for the event sponsor to accept these guidelines along with the CWRLC safety guidelines. Once that has occurred and the commanders have been selected, those commanders must have the authority to implement the guidelines. We as members of the CWRLC must support that temporary authority over our troops the same as we accept their command authority at events. Once that is in place change can begin. Common sense must be applied in all of this and those found lacking must be approached using the chain of command so everyone is notified. First offenders should have the problem explained to them and then they should be allowed to improve. Most problems are from a lack of training and not for a wish to do it wrong. Continued problems should be handled with a sterner hand and if the problem is serious and continuous stronger actions should be taken. A logical tool to accomplish this would be an army I.G. and staff but the selection of those folks must be done with care and an eye for their people skills.