

RACW History Camp, 2013

What to Expect

History teachers attending the Re-enactors of the American Civil War (RACW) History Camp will be fully immersed in the life of a civil war soldier (either Union or Confederate army) for one weekend in August, 2013 at a site selected to be as close to 19th century as possible. The anticipated event date is currently scheduled to be either Aug. 3 or Aug. 10, 2013 at a site in the mountains/foothills east of Chico CA.

Students should arrive between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. to check in. At that time they will be assigned to a training corporal, issued uniforms and weapons, and a two-man "A Frame canvas tent" which they will then erect under supervision. An evening meal will be provided over an open pit camp fire. During the early evening, a discussion will be held on the causes/effects of the "War Between the States"; if desired, students can then participate in singing appropriate songs around the evening camp fires. Students will then retire for the night to sleep in their tents.

After reveille next morning, breakfast will be served and students arranged into groups to attend outdoor classes/demonstration/participation in camp life, uniforms, weapons, cannons, infantry drilling, cavalry, food, medicine, and civilian life during the campaigns of the War of Rebellion. Breakfast and Lunch will be provided. Classes and demonstrations will continue after lunch. The event will culminate in a mock infantry attack on an enemy formation with cannons with students firing blank rounds from their 58 CAL rifled muskets during this attack. The event will end about 3 -4 p.m. with check-in of equipment, cleaning of the rifles, and a review of their experiences during their War of Session.

What the RACW will provide:

Students will be provided with the following:

- Working reproduction rifles of the original 58 Cal muskets used throughout the War of Rebellion. Each students will be assigned full "leathers" to use when firing the weapons
- 20 blank cartridges of black powder (no bullets or live ammo will be used) and 20 percussion caps for firing the blanks,
- A pair of wool trousers, wool fatigue jacket (sack coat or frock coat), and hat.
- Two-man canvas tents will be issued to each pair of students who will then erect the tents and move their own personal gear into their "house".
- Prepared meals will be provided to the students for dinner, breakfast, and lunch.
- Restroom facilities will be port-a-potties located just off the camps in as unobtrusive location as possible. There will be No flush toilets, showers, running water, hot water, electricity or generators of any kind.
- No cell phones, i-pads, e-readers or other electronic equipment turned on during the day time events (there may not be any cell coverage at the selected site).

- Students are advised that this event may be fairly physically demanding. Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible, but you should be aware that you will be standing or sitting in the sun for long periods of time during the classes. There will be frequent breaks and classes held in the shade whenever possible, but you should ...

Be prepared to drill and move across open fields that may be soft and difficult to walk on. Every effort will be made to accommodate individual needs, but if you have any mobility concerns, you should immediately contact the RACW coordinator to discuss this before registration. Use of wheel chairs, canes, crutches, walkers or other mobility tools may be difficult to use. Likewise, if you have any health concerns such as heart conditions, high blood pressure medications, dietary requirements, or other prescribed medications you should make these requirements known to the RACW Coordinator prior to registration.

What you will provide:

You should come prepared to provide for your own physical requirements such as medications, eye glasses, tooth brushes or other such devices.

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Students should bring the following items:

- Bring a pair of black leather shoes with laces that are comfortable and broken in (I don't recommend brand new shoes). Civil War soldiers used what are called 'brogans' or 'boot shoes'. These were black leather high top shoes with leather laces and a ½" heel. A reproduction pair of these costs about \$80 each, so we cannot provide footwear for you at this event. Please do not bring white, red, or multi-color shoes, tennis shoes, sandals, flip-flops, or other such 21st century footwear. Do not use shoes with more than a ½' to 1" heel as it will be very difficult to march and drill on uneven loose soil.
- one or two pairs of heavy wool socks,
- a metal dinner plate about 10" in diameter (pie plates work great, but do not bring 'Grandma's prized china plates' or other breakable or plastic plates; you WILL drop or lose it),
- a knife and fork, maybe a spoon,
- a small 8 – 12 oz. metal cup (again, no plastic, china or breakable cups) with a handle on it if possible.
- Do not bring anything that you cannot afford to break, damage, or lose.
- You will sweat during this event, so bring your own shirt or two. Soldiers commonly used linen pull-over shirts, long sleeves, three metal buttons at the neck, with collars. At the beginning of the war, these were typically issued to the soldiers so they were almost all uniformly white, off-

white, or similar cream color. Don't bother wearing a t-shirt under this shirt; it will be too hot and uncomfortable anyway.

- Do not bring jewelry, expensive watches, or other 'body piercings' that can be seen by others. Do not wear perfume, make-up, lipstick, eye shadow etc., no matter how pretty it makes you look. (There were supposed to be no women in either army so women should try to at least look like a man from 10 feet away). Wedding bands are ok, but wear them with care.
- Eye glasses of reasonable design are ok. No sunglasses unless you have a doctor's prescription for them.
- If you insist on knowing the time, carry wrist watches in your pockets (they weren't invented till decades after the War).
- Do not bother carrying cell phones during the day. If you absolutely must use one at night, turn it onto vibrate only. A ringing cell phones during the day is very disruptive, non-period and just plain grating. Such an occurrence, even in the evening, is likely to bring the wrath of your 1st sergeant down on your head.
- If you want a comfortable night's sleep, bring your own sleeping bag and/or small cot. You may wish to also bring one or two additional blankets of vintage design as it sometimes gets quite cool in the mountains at night. Remember that the tents you will be sharing are not large and bringing a seven foot by three foot cot will probably infringe on your tent-mate's space.
- A small ice chest that will also fit in out of sight in your tent is allowed, but don't make it very large.
- Be very careful about where you store your wallet, credit cards, or car keys during the event. Lock as much as possible in your vehicle during the event.
- During the evening, alcoholic beverages will be tolerated if used in moderation and used in a period correct container at all times. As is true in any social setting, you are responsible for maintaining correct and suitable behavior at all times. *Abuse* of alcohol will be dealt with quickly and harshly, up to and including immediate expulsion from the camp event.
- Use of marijuana or other such illegal drugs is strictly forbidden and will also be dealt with quickly and harshly.
- Absolutely no modern weapons will be allowed in camp, even if you have a valid "Carry Concealed Weapon permit". Do not bring modern pistols, rifles, shotguns or ammo. If you have any of these, you must lock them in your car.

What you should do to prepare

During this event you will be discussing the causes and effects of the Civil War on American society. This includes effects on our current 21st century society and laws. If you have a degree in American history you may already be comfortable with these discussions. However, if your degree is not in history or you are not comfortable with such a discussion, you may wish to do some additional "homework" prior to attending. Note that there is a huge number of books on the Civil War (an internet search of "American Civil War books" produces 12,500,000 references). It is estimated that there are more books written about the Civil War than any other subject in American History, or about any other subject, save the Bible. However, we have prepared a short reading list below to help you through this information.

Highly Recommended:

- ***The Constitution of the United States***. Pay particular attention to Article I, Section III "Apportionment of Representatives" and what this means for representation of slaves. Also carefully consider Amendments 13, 14, and 15; how do these amendments affect 21st century laws concerning immigration and voting rights, how did they affect the women's suffrage movement of the early 20th century? Article III, Section 3 "Treason" is defined. Did secession from the United States constitute treason? Did the South have the right to secede? Read Article IV, the States and the Federal Government. Was it illegal to accept West Virginia as a separate state?
- **"The Coming Fury" by Bruce Catton**. This is one of the classic reference books on the causes of the war, from both the North and South perspective, i.e. did the South fight for "states' rights", freedom, or opposition to the abolishment movement; did the North fight to 'preserve the union' or to abolish slavery? Was the war about slavery or sectional economics? How did the admission of new states to the United States and the election of a republican president force these issues and finally precipitated armed resistance in 1860?
- **"Gettysburg"** the movie; vivid scenes of some of the fighting at Gettysburg, Pa in July 1863. While it doesn't encompass all of the fighting over the 3-day battle, it shows enough to enlighten the reader as to the immense scale and human cost of Civil War battles.
- **"Glory"**; a movie that is a very good and reasonably accurate depiction of the struggles of 'colored troops' while enlisted in the mostly white Union Army.

More books:

- "Battle Cry of Freedom" by James M. McPherson. An excellent, but 900 page long, one-volume treatment of the entire war.
- "Hardtack and Coffee" by John Billings. A detailed description of life of a Union soldier's day to day life in camp.
- "Company Aytch" by Samuel Watkins. A detailed description of life of a Confederate soldier's day to day life in camp.
- "Killer Angeles" by William Shaara. An excellent historical novel of the pivotal battle of Gettysburg, 1863.
- "The Red Badge of Courage" by Stephen Crane. One of the earliest novels treating the psychological portrayal of violent emotions for soldiers fighting in the civil war.
- "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe. A classic fictionalized account of slavery in the anti-bellum south before the war. Its subject appalled northern readers and enraged southern readers to the point that it is commonly believed to be one of the causes of increased sectionalism in the U.S.

Movies and Videos:

- "Gone with the Wind", movie and book. Entertaining but not necessarily accurate story of life on a southern plantation and the effects of the war on the southern "plantation aristocracy".
- "They Died with Their Boots On"; a truly appalling and inaccurate depiction of four U.S. Army officers who fought on different sides of the war. It is so inaccurate as to be humorous. Its sole saving grace may be that it shows what the American public believed as late as the 1930's when this farcical account was made.

On Line 'Suttlers' supplying Civil War Reproduction equipment and uniforms:

- Please log onto the RACW website, www.racw.org and use the pull down menu for "Links" to get a list of on-line vendors ("suttlers") who can supply you with a myriad of reproductions of civil war uniforms, both north and south, weapons, tents, tin ware, civilian clothing, and much more. This would be useful if you are interested in purchasing any of your own equipment, or just want to see pictures of these items. Before purchasing anything for your personal use, you should contact someone in the RACW for assistance in selecting it.

Above all else, be prepared to have fun and learn a great deal. Our goals for this History Camp are 1.) Be safe, 2.) Learn as much as you can, and 3.) HAVE FUN.

We at the Reenactors of the American Civil War are looking forward to meeting you. If you have any questions, please contact the History camp coordinator below.

Your most humble servant,

Dan Baldwin
Secretary, R.A.C.W.
10907 Terrace Pines Ct.
Grass Valley, CA 95945
whisperingdan@comcast.net
530-277-7712