The Boomer Gazette 

Newsletter of the 26th Missouri Infantry October 2012

***COMMANDER’S COLUMN***

I am happy to report that we have selected the BGA Gettysburg event, June 27th through the 30th. The Colonel has secured both the Iron Brigade and Irish Brigade as impressions for us. The overall Union Commander requested that the Muddy River portray the famed Iron Brigade during the first days fighting in the railroad cut. This means that we all need to start looking at buying that Hardee hat you have always wanted. Beyond that we have the Iron Brigade impression. During the second days fighting we have been asked to portray the Irish Brigade in the Wheatfield. The MIB have agreed to do up a proper Irish flag for us and the only requirement for this impression is you have a forge cap. The third day’s fighting is still up in the air but we will end up repulsing Pickett’s Charge. Discussion was made about how we would do transportation. After looking at everyone’s schedules, and requirements, I have decided that it may be best to carpool with each other and leave when it’s best for each group. This would mean splitting gas costs and paying into a gas pool to help everyone out, especially those carrying the equipment! This will be a fun event and I know everyone is looking forward to it. Travel arrangements are not set in stone and in a few days I plan to start a facebook discussion about this and we can work out the details.

Your Obedient Servant,

1st Lt. Noah Snelson

26th Missouri, Commanding

***Houston, MO***

The Houston, MO event will be a fun smaller event that is pretty close for most of us. It would be a good event for us to support. For anyone that can make it, you need to contact the commander. There is no fee for the event, but you do have to send in registration prior to the event. If you are interested contact the commander as soon as possible.

***CALENDAR OF EVENTS***

Oct 26-28: Battle of Houston, MO

Unit sanctioned event, close to home.

Dec 2-3: Prairie Grove, AR

MAX effort event for unit

June 27-30, 2013: Gettysburg

Need I say more? This is a big one.

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***Prairie Grove, Arkansas***

Gentlemen, the reenacting year is hitting the home stretch and we have two really good events left this year. One of which is a personal favorite of mine, Prairie Grove. For those of you that have not been to this event before, you are in for a treat. The reenactment is on the actual battlefield in a pristine location. The weather tends to be cold but not too cold (Well, there was that one time…..). In the past we have been able to field great numbers here and hope to do so this year. Guys, when we put the unit back together last summer I had a lofty goal of fielding twenty men by Gettysburg 2013. Never in our history have we been able to field our own stand-alone company. Prairie Grove will be our very first chance. If you cannot attend any other event this year, or next, let it be this one! How great would it be for everyone in the unit to attend an event together with nobody missing? Not only that, but we get to show the Battalion that the 26th can do this. Please don’t miss out on this event!

-Snelson

Deadline for Prairie Grove Registration is November 16th

Make sure to register soon!

[**www.arkansasstateparks.com/prairiegrovebattlefield**](http://www.arkansasstateparks.com/prairiegrovebattlefield)[www.adpt.arkgov.net/parks/region1/pgbf/](http://www.adpt.arkgov.net/parks/region1/pgbf/)

***Christmas Party***

Now that we are ending our first full season, back I want to celebrate each other by having a Christmas Party. My idea is to do this one of two ways. First is that we pick a place, or someone volunteers up a home, and we do the party there. A small get together with some Christmas music, civil war movies, dinner, and do a small gift exchange. Second is that we do the event at Prairie Grove. We do Christmas songs, make cider, do a period gift exchange (Period wrapping, not gift) and do it there. I would love some input. To get in on this conversation, head over to our facebook page and start up the conversation. I would love to hear what you guys think.

-Snelson

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***First Sergeant’s Notes***

Gents,

So far we’ve had a great season. We have several new members and we have plenty of interest from others that may join. This is great for the 26th. As we all know our initial goal when we started the unit back up was to get back into the hobby and kind of ease back in. Well, the 26th jumped us back in where we left off several years ago. Now our goal is to have a stand-alone company. This is an important part of the hobby for our unit. It opens up new doors and offers variety for the members and future members of the unit. As a stand-alone company, we aren’t a few guys going to events and trying to find a home. We are a company with the versatility to accomplish more for the Muddy River. We can improve on our impression and look sharper out on the field, since we have more members to drill with. We also will require more than just infantrymen. We have to have supply, cooks, sergeants, corporals, officers, etc. It makes more options available for everyone. It opens up more for those of us in the hobby to enjoy. We strive hard to keep the hobby fun. That is very important. It also is important to do the hobby right, as far as impression. Let’s work together and move forward.

Your Humble Servant,

1st Sgt. Caperton

***Supply Sergeant***

I aint gots nottin ta say. Gets papa nother beer.

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**“The Little Coat That Makes a Big Impression”  
U.S. Issue Sack Coat, Part-I  
By: Joe Musgrove**  
  
In this and future articles I will be writing about uniforms and equipment used by soldiers in the American Civil War, modern versions available to reenactors, and ways to improve your impression.   
At this point in my article, some of you may be saying, “Improve my impression!” Hang on stitch count boy, were in this hobby to have fun, not to participate in some type of reenactor fashion show!”   
I could not agree more and unfortunately many participants in the hobby focus in on authenticity so much, they sound like a bunch of high school girls knocking each other’s social clicks!   
Actually my intent here is to share some history and present options available for those interested. In the next couple of articles I am going to discuss one of the most widely issued items in all theatres, the sack coat. In Part-I, we will be looking at the history of the sack coat. In the next newsletter, we will take a closer look at modern reproduction sack coats available to reenactors.   
The U.S. sack coat was born with the issue of general order three on March 24th 1858 that specified the use, design, and material to be used. The U.S. issue sack coat design was based on the civilian sack coat which interestingly enough was considered out of style by the late 1850s. The military however needed a versatile coat that could hold up to the rigors of heavy manual labor and the design fit that need.   
Unlike other issue coats of the time, the sack coat was a very unique item. The sack coat is considered the first “American” designed military coat. Unlike other issue coats that were based on a European military design.  
The sack coat was made from wool flannel. This was the first American military use of wool flannel. Per general order three, a dark blue wool flannel with a weight of 5 ½ ounces per yard was to be used in the construction of the sack coat. However, the weight per yard sometimes varied.   
One misconception today is sack coats were navy blue. However, indigo blue was the color used for sack coats. Although the color tone varied depending on factors such as the dye lot used.   
Both lined and unlined sack coats were produced, with lined coats intended for issue to new recruits. Evidence shows this was not enforced and a mixture of lined and unlined coats was worn by recruits and troops alike. Records show more lined coats were produced then unlined.

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***(Continued from Page Four)***  
Finally, the sack coat was the first time the American military called for a separate issue coat for a specific purpose, in this case, fatigue duty.   
Not long after the start of the Civil war it quickly became apparent that formal frock coats and state jackets where not practical for field use. Troops made this very clear, especially with frock coats, as it was not unusual for the frock coat to “become lost” very early into the march.   
Material, production time, and cost also played a factor especially as wartime demand ramped up. For example, the average cost of an unlined sack coat was $1.87 in 1861 and $2.10 by 1865 when taking war time inflation into account. By comparison the average cost for a frock coat was $4.08 in 1861 and $14.67 by 1865.   
Given all these factors, the sack coat quickly moved from being used specifically for fatigue duty, to becoming the standard worn by federal and state troops. It should be noted however, frock coats and state jackets did not disappear entirely, although field use was much less common especially as the war progressed.   
The Schuylkill, (pronounced “school kill”), federal arsenal in Philadelphia was an early producer and distributor of sack coats but with wartime demand, government contracts were issued to civilian clothing manufacturers to make up the shortage.   
There was some variation in the sack coat depending on where it was made that will be discussed next article. For the most part though, the overall design and material was the same and differences would not be very apparent to the casual observer.   
With the war spread over most of the nation, new Federal supply depots quickly came into existence to include New York, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. These supply depots issued millions of pieces of clothing and equipment including the sack coat.   
An important misconception worth mentioning is issue of clothing and equipment was limited to the geographic location of the supply depot. However, with high wartime demand, it would not be unusual to see troops issued clothing and equipment from various depots from all areas of the country.   
Based on surviving records, 3,685,755 lined sack coats and 1,809,207 unlined sack coats were produced from 1861 to 1865. The total number of sack coats produced will probably never be known.   
Even with so many sack coats produced, very few survive today. Like many items lost to history, at the time sack coats were just another common military issue item and little if any thought was given to preservation. The few that have survived accompanied with historical records have given us great information about the sack coat which has been extremely beneficial to historians and the reenacting community.  
In my next article, we will look at reproduction sack coats available to reenactors today and small changes that can be made to reproductions for a more authentic impression.

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