

Hello all,

My apologies for making you all wait so long for the meeting notes. Next event we have, I will tell my wife, 5 children, full time job, and part time job that Guard matters must come first and my top priority should be the summary of said activity.

There were a total of 14 of us present in one form or other at the meeting. We had 6 of us in person at the room we rented in Jackson and 8 of us on the provided Zoom meeting. The weather was pretty crappy last Sunday morning, so I greatly appreciate all of those that made the drive in. There were 3 Guard units represented in person and 5 more on the Zoom. We had guests from 2 other organizations as well (USV and Army of the Ohio). Thank you to the guys that called in from outside for their participation. I apologize for my technical issues with the Zoom, my computer has been having battery problems and isn't holding a charge.

We opened with a short discussion on the status of the Cumberland Guard and the Army of the Wabash. I'm happy to say the Guard is happy and healthy and we are getting more participation at events we are attending. Right now, the Guard comprises almost all of the active infantry units in Michigan and Indiana and a few from Illinois. The Army of the Wabash is growing as well having just had an Illinois cavalry group join up to participate with them.

The discussion then moved to a quick recap of last year's events. Hastings I think was one of the best versions of that event that I have attended in the past decade with the growing participation that we got. An Illinois cavalry group came and doubled the number of cavalry on the field which was awesome to see. We were also getting swelled infantry numbers on the federal side with the addition of the 1st Michigan Engineers from Illinois who brought their own unique skills to the event. All of these additional people and the injected energy into the event made it such a big success. Jackson last year was a new experience for most of us with the dug entrenchments and the scenarios that we worked through with them. It was just the Michigan units on the Federal side, but we proved an even match for the men across the field. Chickamauga was the one event last year I missed because my youngest daughter had been born just a few weeks before, and so Scott Lawalin was leading the Guard battalion there and reported a successful event aside from Johnny messing up the scenarios.

I gave a short update on the status of the GAR organization which is the unit we fall in with at national level events and the current 5 year plan as it stands. We are still having every other month calls for the GAR leaders which enables a lot of coordination between groups even for some smaller events. The current 5 year plan looks like this.

2024: Battle of Franklin  
2025: Bentonville (March 14th-16th)  
2026: Wilson Creek  
2027: Perryville or Resaca proposed  
2028: Chancellorsville  
2029: Resaca

Having just done Perryville and no personal desire to go back immediately, we all agreed that if we could put another scenario together, we could possibly make that work. What we had discussed was trying to do a smaller engagement which means we could go much closer to scale. If anyone has any ideas, please forward them to me and I can present them to the GAR. Andy Roscoe threw out doing Mill Spring again, so we would have to find land for that since the battlefield has gone to federal ownership. I think the desire for this is an existing property and/or event which is much easier on some of the event coordinators.

For this coming year, we are looking at another successful Hastings event. I have not spoken to the Confederate commander for a scenario yet, but we have commitments from the 1st MI Engineers as well as the cavalry group that came last year that both will be back this year. We are also happy to welcome some men from the Army of the Ohio who will be joining the federal ranks. The Jackson event is planned as Battle of Deep Bottom (aka Strawberry Plains). I'm told there will be entrenchments again this year, so we will see what that event brings. Registration is currently open, and if you plan on attending, please go and register at the below site and click the reenactor tab.

<https://civilwarmuster.org/>

Franklin has officially been announced as October 26-27 of this year. The organizers are still finalizing land, but have told us it is going to happen. Our own Ryan VanMaldegan is commanding the event, so please start pushing it with your groups so we can show Ryan our support.

Scott Lawalin gave us a run down of the events going on in Indiana this year. Those events include, but are not limited to Napanee, Billy Creek, Munfordville, and happily returning is Hartford City. If you are able, please go down and support Hartford City as it is one of the largest events in Indiana. I have been down there before and it is a great event on a nice little spot of land which has a lot of terrain features.

Doug Slagel volunteered that the USV is participating at Gettysburg and Billy Creek this year and asked for any participation that anyone wanted to make at the event in Sydney in Ohio (Sept 20-22).

Other events put into the conversation in Michigan were Van Raalte (Sept 20-22) and a drill weekend hosted by the 7th MI at Meckley's Fruit Farm around Jackson on May 18th-20th. If you want details on the drill, please reach out to Andrew McComas for info.

One of the last items on the agenda was the discussion about the website. Currently John Vohlken from the 3rd MI has been footing the bill for the website, but we all agreed that should not be the case and the member groups will start footing the bill. The units represented at the meeting agreed that the way we want to proceed is to share the load every year. In order to create a little traceability and transparency, I volunteered my home unit of the 17th MI (we are a 501c3) to collect all of the money and then provide receipts for those that need it. We will then send John a single check for everything. With the way browsers are forcing everyone to secure websites, our total costs for the website will total \$330 for one year. Doug did a rough number count and said there were about 10 active groups of size that could probably contribute. With that number in mind, if everyone could please send \$40 for the year to the below address made out to "17th Michigan Company E", I would be grateful. Unfortunately, we do not have a way to process electronic payments at this time. Please let me know if your group is able to contribute so that we can make sure our costs are covered. I proposed rounding up from the \$33 that would be the actual dividend to \$40 so that if one of the groups can't donate for the year, we aren't as off and the difference can be made up for John. Any extra will serve to pay John back for the years he has already spent his hard earned money on our website which I think is fair for him.

17th Michigan Company E.

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In our closing remarks, I asked if there was anything that anyone wanted to do at events this year. One of the suggestions made was a demonstration for the crowds of actual loading and firing techniques since we don't go through the full range during scenarios. Another suggestion that Doug McComas offered to provide the labor for is a little guard mount schooling so we can have a little more official guard mount at events. More details to come on this as Doug gets it worked out.

My last comment to those on the call was to improve your impression this year by at least one item. It doesn't have to be anything big or expensive, but let's all make one improvement. I have been trying to lead by example here by slowly upgrading my kit. One of the big things pointed out was headwear. Headwear is something that is easily seen by spectators and is something that can make us all look good as a group. It doesn't have to be a uniform piece though. Even upgrading something in camp that you are doing would be great. It could be the food you are bringing to events or the containers holding your food that are visible in camp. Let's all push each other for one thing that we can improve on and work together along that path.

I look forward to seeing everyone at this year's events.

Your Obedient,

***Col Miner***