



Trench Lines



A Newsletter of the WFA East Coast Branch (USA)

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Summer 2011

WFA East Coast Branch (USA) Established

At the 4 June 2011 WFA East Coast Seminar, attendees voted to accept the invitation of the Western Front Association to remain a direct component of the worldwide organization. As a result of this special ballot, the former WFA East Coast Chapter is now officially **The WFA East Coast Branch (USA)**. We will now be listed as such in all WFA publications and our relationship with WFA worldwide will continue accordingly.

Ballots were completed by mail, email, and in-person on June 4. When tallied, the votes were 57 to 3 in favor of WFA Branch Status. 17 of those voting “yes” indicated a preference for affiliation with the newly created World War 1 Historical Association (WW1HA) in addition to WFA Branch Status. As per the open-forum discussion on 4 June, WFA East Coast may consider “dual branding” once the WW1HA publishes

its organization-specific bylaws and forwards an exact proposal for review. In the meantime, WFA East Coast will be working with Mr. David Tattersfield, The Western Front Association’s Development Trustee, to study the issue of “dual branding.”

The WW1HA is recognized by the Western Front Association as an “Affiliated Organization” and as such the WFA East Coast Branch (USA) looks forward to cooperating with the WW1HA on all matters of mutual benefit.

Spring 2011 WFA East Coast Seminar Deemed a Huge Success

65 persons attended the Spring 2011 WWI history seminar held on Saturday 4 June at the historic 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, MD. Many attendees were intrigued to learn that the armory had been the site of the 1912 Democratic National Convention where Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey received the party’s nomination for President of the United States. Beyond

the historic significance of the venue, the caliber of the speakers and the quality of the presentations was first-rate. First up as the morning speaker, was long-time WFA East Coast attendee Paul Walsh who completed part three of his extremely popular history of Ireland in The Great War. Following the WFA East Coast Special Ballot, attendees toured the Maryland Military Museum housed within the armory with exhibits covering many aspects of military history from the War of 1812 to World War II and beyond.



Dr. Bruce Gudmundsson listens to an artillery solution from a seminar attendee – in Staff College fashion.

First up in the afternoon was Dr. Bruce I. Gudmundsson of the US Marine Corps Staff College who gave a fascinating audience-interactive presentation titled “Joffre’s Dilemma” in which the problems of French WWI artillery procurement were put to the audience to evaluate and solve then compare with Joffre’s actions – in much the same fashion as USMC Staff College pupils. Retired National Archives archivist Tim Mulligan next took the floor to present a brilliantly delivered examination of the long term effects of the Battle of Jutland. Using new historical research which draws heavily on WWI *Kriegsmarine* records (his specialty at the National Archives) Tim drew conclusions which challenged a number of concepts familiar to WWI scholars with respect to the war in the North Sea. Finally, Dr. Terrance Zuber of the University of West Virginia drew from his book *Inventing The Schlieffen Plan* to

challenge the traditional historiography of the 1914 campaign in the West.

Credit for the success of the seminar must go to **Marc Romanych** who lined up several of the speakers, and to **Karl Klusewitz** who did all of the “legwork” needed to coordinate with the venue and the Maryland Military Museum. A special thanks also goes to long-time WFA East Coast Attendee **Paul Petersen** who donated a wonderful reproduction German regimental beer stein which was auctioned off for the benefit of the Branch.

Bids Sought For Branch-Sponsored Preservation Project

Known as “Baltimore’s Own”, the 313th Infantry was raised and trained at Camp Meade in 1917, and went overseas to France with the 79th Division AEF the following year. As many attendees of WFA East Coast seminars at the Maryland War Memorial Building are aware, the base drum for the 313th’s regimental band has been on display in the building’s lobby for many years. This drum is a one-of-a-kind WWI artifact and over time has deteriorated due, in part, to wide fluctuations in environmental conditions and exposure to UV light.



Over the past several months WFA East Coast has been working with Barbara Taylor, Exhibit Specialist at the Fort George G. Meade Museum, to develop a set of specifications for a custom-made exhibit

case which will help stabilize and preserve this significant object.

The specifications for the case have now been finalized and requests for bids have been sent out to several custom display fabrication companies in the Baltimore area. Provided the bids fall within the cost capabilities of the Branch, WFA East Coast will fund this important project. It is hoped that drum will be installed in its custom case in time for the 29 October seminar which will be held at the Maryland War Memorial Building.

Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 Seminar Dates and Venues Confirmed

The WFA East Coast Branch (USA) is pleased to announce the dates and venues for its next two WWI history seminars. The fall 2011 seminar will be held on **Saturday 29 October** at the Maryland War Memorial Building, Baltimore. The program for this seminar is nearly complete and the specific announcement will going out in the coming weeks.

The Branch's spring 2012 seminar will be held on **Saturday 12 May** in York, PA, at the invitation of the York County Heritage Trust. WFA East Coast will be joining forces with the Heritage Trust to promote the seminar as public program in conjunction with an exhibit on York County veterans of "The Great War" (as well as WWII and Vietnam). We are delighted that WFA East Coast's reputation for quality events has caught the attention of the yet another organization devoted to public history and we look forward to planning for this exciting event – more details to follow in the coming months.

Mid-Atlantic WWI-Themed Event Scheduled for July

Thanks goes to long-time WFA East Coast attendee **Mike O'Neal** who brought to our attention the upcoming "Wings and Wheels Extravaganza" put on by the Golden Age Air Museum of Bethel, PA. This event will take place on the weekend of 9&10 July and will combine a vintage air and vehicle show

centering on World War I. For more details, visit the Golden Age Air Museum's website: www.goldenageair.org



306th Tank Brigade Photo Album Acquired for Ft. Meade Museum

With the assistance of WFA East Coast, a rare original photographic album from the 306th Tank Brigade 1917-1918 was recently acquired at auction on EBay. The album contains numerous unpublished images showing both stateside training as well as scenes from the American tank school at Bourq, France.

In October 1918, the 331st Tank Battalion, which was one of just four American tank battalions to see action in WWI, was reorganized into the 306th Tank Brigade and took part in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, equipped with British Mark V tanks. In September 1919, the 306th Tank Brigade was demobilized at Camp Meade, MD.

WFA East Coast contributed \$500 to the cost of the album in gratitude for the recent hospitality of the Fort Meade Museum which hosted our spring 2010 seminar. "Please accept a heartfelt THANK YOU from the staff of the Fort George G. Meade Museum for your generous contribution enabling us to acquire a 30-page WWI photo album with provenances to the 306th Tank Brigade," wrote Barbara Taylor, Exhibit Specialist at the museum. "Those [photographs] of particular interest are of the Tank School itself in Bourq, France. Again, many thanks for your support of our

mission to tell the early American Tank School story.”



British Mark V heavy tanks at the Tank School, Bourg, France, from the 306th Tank Brigade Album. Courtesy Ft. Meade Museum.

Over 170 Facebook Members

At the time of writing the WFA East Coast Branch (USA) Facebook group has over 170 members. This extremely popular social networking site is providing a great way for seminar attendees to stay in touch, get to know people with similar interests, share photos and documents, and engage in discussions of WWI topics. If you are not part of this group yet – consider looking us up on Facebook and getting involved with WFA East Coast in between seminars!

314th Infantry AEF Memorial Cabin

In Valley Forge, PA, stands a one-of-a-kind WWI memorial structure – the one-time Officer’s Club for the 314th Infantry, 79th Division. This cabin was originally constructed at Camp Meade by the men of the 314th, and after the war was purchased from the government, disassembled, and transported to a plot of ground near the George Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge. Since the 1920s, the cabin served as the repository for the mementos and war trophies of 314th Infantry veterans. Presently, the collection of artifacts is being considered for acquisition by the Fort Meade Museum, but the ultimate fate of the cabin itself remains to be determined. Visit the 314th Infantry Descendants and Friends website to find out more about this

fascinating structure and collection – and also learn **how you can help:**
www.314th.org

Membership Has Its Privileges

If you have not considered joining The Western Front Association – now is a great time to do so. Joining WFA has never been easier than in today’s digital world.

Full WFA membership (£37 – approximately \$60 US) gets you four issues of **Stand To!** – the terrific WFA journal, and two issues of **The WFA Bulletin** – both of which are loaded with articles on WWI history, information on WWI commemorations and tours, and updates on WFA Branch activities around the world.

WFA also has a new **Overseas Supporter** membership category which gets you the issues of **Stand To!** for your membership year – a great way to try out the publications and to get to know the organization. At £26 (approximately \$42.25), it’s a great value.

For more information visit the WFA Website: www.westernfrontassociation.com

You can order online with a credit card or with PayPal and within weeks, you’ll receive your first publications and membership materials.

