

Trains and Troops
Strasburg, PA

On 1-2 November 2014, the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) supported the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum and the Strasburg Railroad during the annual "Trains and Troops" event. This unique event chronicles the use of railroads throughout American military history from the Civil War to today.

The members of AGFA that participated in the event were Donna Cusano, Paul Cusano, Doug and Lynda Houck, Tom Minton, Anne Lutkenhouse, Deanna Weaver, Gary Weaver, Shawn Welch and our guest LT(jg) Bob Krause (WWII, USN). The educational objective was to provide interpretation of the oft-forgotten and overlooked mission of the U.S. Army's Coast Artillery mobile railway guns and medical support during the World War Two era as well as the U.S. Army in the Korean War period.

The photo below shows the participating membership on Saturday, 1 November in front of a restored Pennsylvania RR steam locomotive and coal car. The museum features a wonderful collection of excellently preserved locomotives and rolling stock within its main building. Interpreters for the Trains and Troops event set up shop in the museum proper, and use the rail cars and engines as a historic back drop.



Many historians attend Trains and Troops. AGFA friends Lt Bill and Ensign Sharon Krause (Naval Nurse Corps), attired as Navy personnel, are on the left, with 2LT Cusano, 1LT Lutkenhouse and LT(jg) Krause's WWII Navy display.



Below LT(jg) Krause discusses his activities as a Naval Flight Instructor with a visitor as SGT Minton (in blue denim uniform) talks with other public attendees.



1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano set up the medical display, seen below, which included several rare medical devices and materials from WWII.



During the event, we often spent time brushing up on our knowledge of Coast Artillery equipment. Below PFC Cusano reviews the instructions for operating the Wind Component Indicator (circular object at which he is pointing). This device resolves the effect of wind conditions upon the travel (flight) of a seacoast artillery projectile for both distance (range) and direction (azimuth).



Following his study, PFC Cusano explains the workings of the Wind Component Indicator to a visitor. This particular instrument was built in 1906 at the Frankford Arsenal and was used through WWII.



As PFC Cusano continues his discussion, SSG Weaver, wearing the blue denim uniform, stands next to the M1910A1 azimuth instrument as he prepares to greet some visitors.



In the photo below, SSG Houck prepares an M1 Carbine for display on his Korean War table exhibit as Lynda Houck speaks with a home front display to the right of the Korean War table.



Below is another view of SSG Houck's Korean War displays.



Below 1LT Lutkenhouse explains various medical items in her display to visitors.



SGT Minton, also in Blue Denim, takes a moment for a photo with Ms. Esther Rea, in her WWI-era "traveling attire." Although hard to fathom now, women's fashion once had an outfit for every activity - including that for often long and uncomfortable train trips.



There were many other exhibits to see at Trains and Troops. Below is an exhibit on train track repair, with various vintage and period tools. As America lived on its railroads for over 100 years, repairing broken track was an extremely important part of railroad operations.



The military also operated its own trains and railroads. The historian below represents a member of the 746th Railway Operating Battalion. His display includes various pieces of equipment used by Army railway operating units during WWII. Such units were of extreme importance, as entire Army divisions - over 10,000 men and all support equipment - could be moved by rail in nearly one instance.



Inside the museum is an outstanding replication of a "train station" to include a functional "Western Union" telegraph station. Below, CAPT Krause of the US Public Health Service (USPHS) impatiently checks his watch as "Graduate Cadet Nurse USPHS" Sharon Krause "awaits" the next train.



One of the best parts of the event is the actual train ride on the Strasburg Railroad - a vintage railroad with wooden circa 1915 railroad cars. In the photo below, CAPT and Graduate Cadet Nurse Krause enjoy their seat in the "club car".



Below Graduate Cadet Nurse Krause, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano prepare to enjoy a drink in the club car. This beautifully adorned car from the early part of the 20th century is a must ride on the Strasburg Railroad.



Two other views of the “club car” below give a good view to its beautiful architecture and outfitting. Equipped with a full bar as well as light foods, the “club car” is the perfect venue to enjoy a scenic train ride in the Pennsylvania countryside!



Throughout the event there were many excellent displays of an individual soldier's equipment and materials, such as the seen one below. Every piece of equipment in the display would be tightly and neatly folded into a Soldier's pack.



Some displays even included such items as an M1917A1 Browning .30 caliber water cooled machinegun.



Below is an exhibit of small arms starting (top left clockwise) with M1903 rifle (commonly called the Springfield rifle), M3 .45 caliber submachinegun, M1928 Thompson submachinegun, M1911 .45 caliber pistol, M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), T-77 Japanese Arisaka rifle, M1 rifle (also known as the Garand), and the M1 Carbine.



Below 1LT Lutkenhouse and LTC Welch spend some quality time with "Uncle Sam".



The Saturday evening of Trains and Troops includes a period swing dance with a live band. Below the Krauses arrive at the AGFA table.



Below Ms. Kristin VanDerlaske, SGT Minton, Mrs. Weaver, and SSG Weaver enjoy the snacks and music.



Below Alice Mellon, LT(jg) Krause, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano talk at the table.



Below CPT Cusano, SGT Minton, Miss VanDerlaske, Mrs. Weaver, and SSG Weaver enjoy a break in the dancing.



And the Dancing was quite spirited, as can be seen below.



Lt Bill and Ens Sharon Krause and 2LT Cusano and CPT Cusano “cut a rug,” below.



Some close-up photos of Ens Sharon and Lt Bill Krause, SGT Minton and Miss Van Derlaske, and SSG and Mrs. Weaver enjoying the music and moves.



At the end of the evening we all got together for a group photo, below.



On Sunday we resumed interpretation. The M1910A1 azimuth instrument was powered for the event as evident by the lights on the side of the azimuth scale just below the scope.



Below SSG Weaver explains the functioning of the M1910A1 azimuth instrument to a visitor.



The public visited continuously throughout the day. It was rare to catch a break. Below, 2LT Cusano and 1LT Lutkenhouse take a short break at their table next to the BD-71 six line switchboard. The board itself would have been used with mobile seacoast railway guns and towed howitzers. Even field hospitals used this switchboard.



Below PFC Cusano and 2LT Cusano speak with visitors as 1LT Lutkenhouse looks on.



During the event PFC Cusano, who is in fact a doctor, backed up 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano at the medical table.



In the two photos below we see LTC Welch in an OD wool circa 1941 field uniform, 1LT Lutkenhouse in a circa 1941 nurse's blue uniform, and Lt Bill & Ens Sharon Krause wear WWII USN aviation green (aviator and nurse, respectively) uniforms.



Visiting historians such as SGT Tim Kuntz assisted in interpretation. SSG Weaver stands next to the M1910A1 as the visitors prepare to move to his station.



As the event came to an end, a visiting historian looks through the M1910A1 azimuth instrument prior to leaving for home.



We look forward to returning to Strasburg for Troops and Trains on November 7th 2015. We hope to see you there! For more information, visit the Army Ground Forces Association Website <http://armygroundforces.org>