

Special Election Issue!!!



The Edge

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In This Month's Issue...

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As always, I love to hear from fellow reenactors. If you have any need to contact me, please feel free to hit me up at the following email.

Matt Andres
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On The Cover:

A kettenkrad moves soldiers to the battlefield during the Midway Village reenactment in Rockford, Illinois. Photo courtesy Heinz Thiel, 5th Company, GD Division.

2011 Interim Election Results

The 2001 Board of Directors interim election is over, and the results are in. Out of 859 registered HRS members who were eligible to vote, 391 voted—a 46% voter turnout. Listed below are the candidates, with their total number of votes. The winning candidates are in all capitals. Thanks to all who voted, and congratulations to our new board members!

Secretary: RON KAPUSTKA, 360 votes



Treasurer: CHARLES GALLAGHER, 356 votes



Axis Representative: RICH RUSSO, 212 votes

Andrew Garrison, 104 votes

Rey Ramirez, 75 Votes



2011 Interim Election Results, Continued

In addition to the candidate elections, there was an extra question on the ballot, asking voters how they liked the computerized election. The responses are listed below:

Extremely Liked: 156 votes (39% of total vote)

Very Much Liked: 169 votes (43%)

Somewhat Liked: 61 votes (15%)

Not Very Liked: 2 votes (0%)

Not At All Liked: 3 votes (0%)

Did You Know???

America's only World War Two presidential election was in 1944. It pitted the incumbent Franklin Delano Roosevelt against New York Governor George Dewey. Roosevelt won with 53% of the vote—his smallest margin of victory of any of his four presidential races.

After Action Review: The Sinyavin Offensive

By Dustin Strong, Division Azul

The 250 Ski Company, Division Azul, recently held a small Eastern Front tactical near Ft. Scott, KS. In attendance were approximately 20 soldiers representing Division Azul, 38th Jagers, and Soviet 44th Guards, as well as Russian partisans.

The day was divided into two point-based scenarios. The first was an attempt by the Soviet forces to cut the German supply lines to Leningrad. After a lunch break, the second scenario focused on the German counterattack. Points were scored based on the number of objectives taken, kills confirmed, and any valuable intelligence gained. By the end of the day, the Germans had achieved a very narrow tactical victory (winning by only 5 points), but the Soviets had scored an intelligence coup, giving them a clear strategic victory.

What follows is the Spanish point-of-view of the battle.

After Action Report

Date: 8 October 2011

Location: Ft. Scott, KS

Event Type: Tactical

Reporting Officer: Diego Martinez y Garza ("Sucio"), Brigada
250 Cia. Esquiadores

Description:

The Red Devils once again attempted to breakthrough to the city of Leningrad and relieved their all-but-defeated comrades. But the communist heathens met the brave guripas of Division Azul and soldaten of 38 Jager.

The engagement began as Soviet 44th Guards Division and local partisans attempted to infiltrate and cut our supply lines. The threat was immediately met by 250 Cia. de Esquiadores and a company of German Jagers. Sporadic fighting erupted in the nearby woods as the enemy proved to be elusive and uncharacteristically cunning. Using hit-and-run tactics, the enemy inflicted serious casualties on our brave soldados, attacking in the most unexpected places and often surrounding small units of guripas and soldaten, only to fade away again into the forest when resistance became too tough.

By midday, the infiltrators had been defeated and the Company received orders to lead the Division's counterattack and drive the Godless demons off the field. With our German comrades in 38 Jager, the Company pitched into the main Soviet attack with the elan and spirit of Cortes and Pizarro. Unable to withstand such a heavy blow, the enemy fell back, but not without putting up stiff resistance. Small groups of determined and die-hard Guardsmen and partisans continued to harass and delay our advance but were eventually overrun and destroyed.

As the day ended, the enemy was in full retreat and our initial lines were firmly reestablished. A full-scale pursuit was not feasible as our casualties were significant, allowing the Red Beasts to escape.

Actual numbers of enemy casualties prove difficult to determine, but based on reports received as the fighting went on, they undoubtedly were heavy as they failed to cut the supply lines for any significant length of time, followed by their main attack being violently thrown back by our counterattack.

Unfortunately, however, the Red Scum did manage to disrupt supplies long enough to cause some concern. However brief their initial success, it is possible they did capture some vital intelligence regarding our communications capabilities.

Diego Martinez y Garza ("Sucio")
Brigada
250 Cia. de Esquiadores

AAR: The Sinyavin Offensive in Photos



The 250th "Blue" Division and Soviet Foes



Blue Division Riflemen Keep A Sharp Eye Out For Soviet Infiltrators.



A Soviet Frontovik Readies His Weapon.

**All Photographs courtesy
of Dustin Strong, 250th Ski
Division**



The 250th "Blue" Division Marches To The Front.

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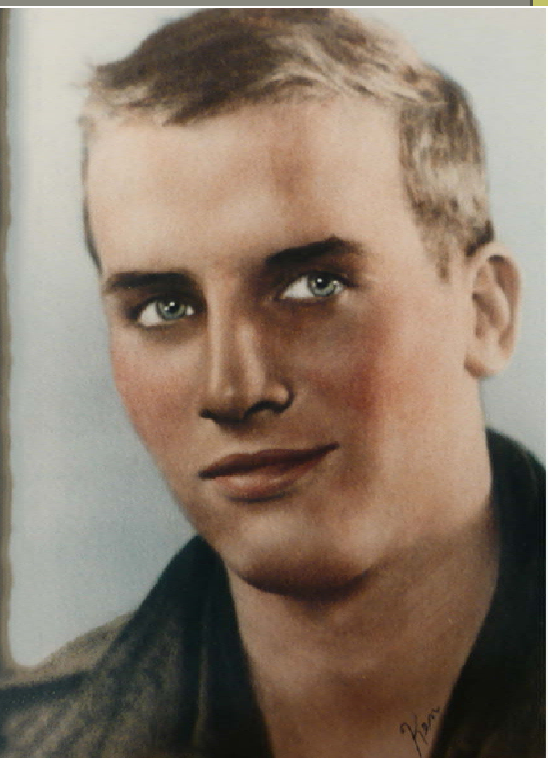
As Promised

The Return to Fénétrange, A Documentary

WWII Veteran Ken Krueger made a promise to his
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Reproduction Review: Rigger Pouches

By Matthew Andres, 504th PIR

This month's repro review is a compare –and-contrast of “rigger pouches.” During World War Two, US Army paratroopers were always looking for ways to maximize economy of space on their web gear. They were always on the lookout for the latest discovery (or fad) that would give them an edge while parachuting into combat. One item they discovered was an Army Air Force item which carried the nomenclature “Holder, Rifle, Clip.” This AAF item was a small, rectangular pouch which closed by means of a pointed flap with a single lift-the-dot snap. The back of the pouch had a simple fabric loop, made from the same cotton canvas as the body of the pouch. I was unable to locate any official US Army Air Force documentation as to why they adopted this pouch, though by looking at the pouch one can make several deductions. Primarily, one can see that the “Holder, Rifle, Clip” was cheaper to make than the cartridge belt. Also, this handy pouch, which was intended to hold four M1 Garand *en bloc* clips, would be easier to slide on and off a garrison– or trouser belt. Either way, the paratroopers saw these pouches and decided it would help them with their quandary; namely how to carry more ammo than the cartridge belt allowed.

The paratroopers begged/borrowed/stole the pouches from the USAAF, and brought them to their parachute riggers. The riggers, who were tasked with repairing parachutes and parachute related ephemera, were further tasked with reproducing the Air Force pouches (perhaps making this pouch the earliest “repro” item). This was also the birth of the name “rigger pouches.” Once issued, the paratroopers found that they could carry multiple rigger pouches on a pistol belt, and still have enough grommets available to hook the plethora of equipment they planned to jump. Three rigger pouches would yield 12 *en bloc* clips; four rigger pouches would yield 16 clips; and five rigger pouches would yield 20 clips—double the amount allowed by the cartridge belt.

There was a downside to the rigger pouches, seeing as all four clips were retained by the same flap. So when the paratrooper removed a clip, he had to be sure to re-snap the pouch. If not, there was a very real danger that the extra clips would fall out and be lost. This might be the reason that popular use of the rigger pouch was relatively short lived, and a downward slope at that. In viewing pictures of the 82nd Airborne Division, one can see that the rigger pouches were used extensively during the Sicily/Operation Husky campaign, as well as during the Paestum jump in support of Operation Avalanche. By Normandy, however, photographic evidence shows that the cartridge belt was coming into wider use, and rigger pouch use was falling by the wayside. Finally, by Operation Market Garden, I was unable to find any photographs of the 82nd Airborne (or the 101st A/B Division) using rigger pouches. This is especially of interest to those who reenact paratrooper, as it can be seen that there is no “one size fits all” airborne impression; rather one must pay particular attention to minor details such as these.



Rigger pouches can clearly be seen on the paratrooper to the left.



Rigger pouches can be seen on the trooper entering the plane, as well as on the trooper in the middle.

Reproduction Review: Rigger Pouches, Continued

Normally, when I do a reproduction review, I try to compare and contrast the repro to a physically on-hand original. However, because of the scarcity of original rigger pouches, and the fact that they were all hand made and subject to differences, comparisons would be nearly impossible. Rather, I am taking an end user approach to the rigger pouch review, and looking at it from a consumer standpoint.

I purchased rigger pouches from four different companies: Service of Supply; At The Front; WWII Impressions; and What Price Glory.

For ammunition loads, I utilized original 1942-dated Denver Arsenal dummy rounds in wartime Springfield *en bloc* clips. To test the pouches suitability for holding hand grenades, I used both the common variety “pineapple” dummies typically available at army surplus stores, as well as the army issue one piece wartime dummy grenade.

To test the pouches I placed them on a combination pistol belt/M1936 suspender system. I left all other items off the belt, lest these additional items interfere with the way the pouches rode. I went hiking with the pouches, periodically doing grass drills to see how the pouches reacted under more radical movement. Each brand of pouch was given an overall letter grade.

At The Front: ATF’s rigger pouches looked almost identical to the pouches seen in period photographs. They were approximately 4” across, and were made of cotton canvas that was approximately 1/64” thick. These pouches were sewn with cotton thread, and utilized lift-the-dot snaps, just as the originals did. They held four *en bloc* clips snugly, but each clip could easily be removed. During hiking and grass drills, the ATF rigger pouch did not shift on the belt, and the clips did not shift around within the rigger pouch. ATF also had the fastest shipping time, being about three days. ATF makes these pouches in both OD #3 (light OD green) and OD #7 (darker OD green). Price: \$15. Letter grade: A.

World War Two Impressions: WW2 Impressions pouches also looked identical to the rigger pouches seen in period photographs. They were approximately 4 1/4” inches across, and were made of cotton canvas that was approximately 1/64” thick. The WW2 Impressions pouches were sewn with cotton thread and utilized lift-the-dot snaps, just as the originals did. One interesting point is that WW2 Impressions marks the inside of their pouches with their brand name and the date 1943—rigger made pouches did not have markings of any kind. They held four *en bloc* clips snugly, though each clip could easily be removed. During grass drills, the WW2 Impressions pouches did not shift, nor did the clips shift within the pouch. WW2 Impressions had the second fastest shipping time, being about 6 days. Price: \$15. Letter grade: A.

Service of Supply: Service of Supply’s pouches looked close to the rigger pouches seen in period photographs. They were approximately 3 1/2” across, and were made of a coarser—but thicker—cotton canvas, being 2/64” thick. The pouches were sewn with cotton thread and utilized lift-the-dot snaps, as did the originals. SOS also makes rigger pouches with the tie-shut front, as seen in period pictures of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Unfortunately, the SOS pouch only holds three *en bloc* clips, not four as the originals did. Is it possible that some riggers erred, and made smaller pouches? Possible, yes, but not probable as this would defeat the purpose in using rigger pouches. The SOS pouch rode well on the pistol belt during grass drills, though it was incredibly difficult to remove the *en bloc* clips from the pouch. SOS had the third fastest shipping time at just over a week. Price: \$14. Letter grade: C.

Reproduction Review: Rigger Pouches, Continued

What Price Glory: WPG's rigger pouches bore a superficial resemblance to the rigger pouches seen in original photographs. The pouch measured approximately 4 3/8" and was made from a cotton canvas that was less than 1/64" thick. The color of the canvas was a sort of tan/brown, that bore a closer resemblance to modern "coyote" desert gear than OD #3 of World War Two. The inside flap of the pouch was stamped with the WPG name and the date 1942. The thread was some sort of synthetic, as witnessed by the thread's melting when put to flame. The snap was some sort of off brand, not the lift-the-dot as on originals. Because of the excessive width of the pouch, the *en bloc* clips shifted around and even fell out of the pouch during grass drills. WPG had the slowest shipping time, being about a week and a half as well as the highest price. Price: \$16 .Letter Grade: F.

In the end, I purchased more of the World War Two Impressions rigger pouches for my impression. They were the closest in appearance to the originals (as seen in photos); and they were the correct color and materials. A strong second in my mind was the At The Front; I would advise any member of my unit to steer clear of the Service of Supply and What Price Glory rigger pouches.



Left To Right: WWII Impressions; At The Front; Service of Supply; What Price Glory.

Patent Numbers as a Research Tool

By Matthew Andres, 504th PIR

One thing I have found useful in dating civilian items from the World War Two era is patent numbers. As the name implies, patent numbers are issued by the government when an item or invention is patented. Because specific blocks of patent numbers are issued for each year, a rough date can be reasoned. As an example, I have a “church key” can opener with a patent number in the 1.9 million range. We can see from the chart below that particular can opener was patented in 1935. Bear in mind that the patent number will tell you the year the item was patented, not the year the item was made. Still, knowing the date range of patent numbers can help vector in on wartime dates. In this case, we can fairly surmise that this particular can opener would have existed during World War Two. Though patent numbers are rarely stamped on products today, during the 1930’s and 1940’s it was fairly typical to imprint the patent number on the product. Below is the patent range for items made from 1935 through 1945. Patent dates are available at www.uspto.gov (they have patent dates from 1836 to 2009).

1935: 1,985,878

1936: 2,026,516

1937: 2,066,309

1938: 2,104,004

1939: 2,142,080

1940: 2,185,170

1941: 2,227,418

1942: 2,268,540

1943: 2,307,007

1944: 2,338,081

1945: 2,366,154

Archaeologists Find Body Of Missing WWII Airman

by Matthew Andres, 504th PIR, 82nd Abn Div.

Archaeologists excavating a hillside grave in Bosnia have found the body of an American airman killed in action on 18 May 1944.

The airman, T. Miaskiewicz of Salem, Massachusetts, was a 25 year old flight engineer aboard the B-17 “Daisy Mae,” flying combat missions against the Romanian oil fields. On the day of his death, the “Daisy Mae” was shot down while returning from an aborted bombing mission.

Miaskiewicz’s body was recovered by local Bosnians in 1944. They buried him wrapped in his parachute on a hillside in then-Yugoslavia. Archaeologists excavating the site found Miaskiewicz still wrapped in his chute, along with his dog tags, wallet, rosary beads and crucifix.

Oddest of all is the fact that Miaskiewicz was not listed as missing in action. Miaskiewicz—or remains purporting to be his—were laid to rest during World War Two. It is unknown how the error was made. Attempts to contact the Department of Defense for more information on Miaskiewicz met with negative results.

Miaskiewicz is to be buried in the family plot in St. Mary’s cemetery, Salem, Massachusetts.



After Action Report: Lockport WWII Days

This month we at The Edge present just some of the photographs taken by 5th Kompanie, Grossdeutschland's own "propaganda officer" Heinz Thiel. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we cannot show you every one of Heinz' great photos, but we do have a great selection to whet your appetite for more reenacting!

For those of you who are not familiar with Lockport's WWII Days, this first year event is the brainchild of Rich Russo, CO of 5th Kompanie. Russo has vast experience organizing events, having been pivotal in the development of both the Lowell and Rockford events. For Lockport, Russo brought together tanks, planes, troops and more—everything but the kitchen sink (come to think of it, there were mess units around...).

Every reenactor I interviewed for this story raved about the event, and promised they would be back for Lockport twenty-twelve. So peruse the following photos, and mark your calendar for next year's Lockport WWII Days! You won't be sorry you went!



AAR: Lockport 2011, Continued



AAR: Lockport 2011, Continued



AAR: Lockport 2011, Continued



Name That Celebrity:

Match The Celebrity With His Wartime Exploits

- A) Rod Serling (creator of “The Twilight Zone”)
- B) Art Carney (Ed Norton in “The Honeymooners”)
- C) Jack Dempsey (boxing champion)
- D) Buddy Ebsen (“The Beverly Hillbillies”)
- E) Hugh Hefner (“Playboy” founder)
- F) Charlton Heston (“Planet of the Apes”)
- G) Ted Knight (“Caddyshack”)
- H) Johnny Marks (wrote “Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer”)
- I) Lee Marvin (“The Dirty Dozen”)
- J) Mel Brooks (“Blazing Saddles”)

- 1) Combat engineer during the Battle of the Bulge; heckled Germans mercilessly.
- 2) Coast Guard physical fitness instructor who later fought at Okinawa, though his body could easily have gotten him out of the war.
- 3) B-25 radio operator flying out of the Aleutian Islands; which to this day has no damn dirty apes.
- 4) This funny man was all serious as he earned 5 battle stars serving with A Co., 296th Combat Engineer Battalion.
- 5) This TV personality, formerly an Army Paratrooper, hurt his head during the combat parachute jump on Tagaytay Ridge, Philippines.
- 6) This actor was perfect in military roles, probably because he was wounded on Saipan fighting with I Company, 24th Marine Regiment.
- 7) Awarded the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for capturing a castle full of Germans.
- 8) Jed was all business serving as a Coast Guard officer on the USS Pocatello.
- 9) Another TV funnyman, he was wounded on Omaha Beach before he could fire a shot.
- 10) Stateside service for this clerk-typist at Ft. Meade, Maryland, left a lot of time to think about girls.

ANSWERS: A-5, B-9, C-2, D-8, E-10, F-3, G-4, H-7, I-6, J-1

Upcoming Events

Stille Nacht

10 December 2011

Blastcamp, Hobart, Indiana

Www.stillenact2011.eventbrite.com