

Prospective Member Frequently Asked Questions.

Q: Once I fill complete the membership application, am I a member of the Wyse Fork Historical Society?

A: Not yet. At that point, you are just getting started. Before the membership votes upon your application, you must complete a three event trial period and our required safety course. During this time, both you and the unit will become better acquainted with one another. This will give you an opportunity to make an informed decision about membership in the 27th NCT.

Q: You mentioned a safety course. Why do I need to take this course?

A: Many of our members are experienced firearms users. Some are soldiers and police officers. That aside, all of our members have taken the required safety course. Napoleonic Tactics, like those used during the War, involve firing weapons in very close proximity to others while standing in a battle line. This setting presents dangers not normally encountered in modern weapon usage. Therefore, we will train you to shoot safely while standing shoulder to shoulder with your comrades.

Q: What is a "Big Brother"?

A: At the beginning of the recruiting process, the unit assigned you someone to help you during your first months as a re-enactor. If you have general questions about the hobby such as how to make cartridges, how to take care of your shoes, how to clean your musket, etc..., this person is there to answer them. Your Big Brother will also do his best to make you feel welcome during your first few events with us.

Q: I'm anxious to get started. When can I start buying my uniform and gear?

A: As a general rule, we advise that prospective members wait until they complete the three event trial period before spending any large sums of money on kit. It is best to see if you will enjoy the re-enacting hobby before you make any large financial commitments.

Q: Since I don't have any gear, how will I complete the three event trial period?

A: The unit will supply you with loaner gear during that time.

Q: Where do I buy my gear?

A: The Uniform Committee will supply you with an approved source and model list once you have joined the 27th NCT. Use only the items and sources shown on that list.

Q: Once I receive my source list, what should I buy first?

A: The source guide lists items sequentially in order of importance. For example, shoes are the first items to buy. Therefore, they are the first item shown on the list.

Q: How long do I have to buy all my gear?

A: We give new members one year to buy their kit. During that time, we will help you secure loaner gear so that you may participate.

Q: Where do I buy my black powder and percussion caps?

A: The unit sells percussion caps and 2F powder to the membership.

Q: In addition to my impression, what kind of items can I bring to events? Can I bring stuff like coolers and cots?

A: Yes, you may bring items like coolers and cots. You may also want to either bring a pillow, a sleeping bag, an air mattress, or a mosquito net for summer use. While you may use these items, we ask that you keep them hidden from the public or other re-enactors while camps are open. Extra blankets or ground cloths work well for hiding these items. If you'd like, you may also want to invest in a good camp box to transport and store some modern pieces. A good, period camp stool or chair will also make your time in the field more pleasant.

Q: Until I purchase my period tent, can I use my modern tent as long as I take it down in the morning?

A: No. Until you purchase your period tent, we will find a space for you with one of our established members.

Q: What kind of tent may I buy?

A: You may buy either an "A" (wedge) tent or a "dog" tent. If you want to camp a little heavier (i.e. cot or cooler), buy a wedge tent. If you want a campaign type impression (light marching order with fewer comforts), get a dog tent. When you make a choice, keep in mind that events are seldom cancelled due to inclement weather.

Q: What kind of personal items can I bring? I assume I'll get a chance to clean up some?

A: I'm glad you asked that question. While many potential members correctly assume they can bring a modern toiletry kit, a few have thought that they can only use "period" or "correct" items. We encourage you to bring items like white towels, white wash cloths, a comb, a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, aspirin, baby wipes, sun screen, Pepto Bismal, antihistamines, or even bug spray. We just ask that you use these items discreetly when the public is present. Proper personal hygiene benefits both you and the people around you.

Q: Speaking of coolers, can I consume adult beverages at these events?

A: It depends on the event rules. While there are times it is prohibited on certain properties, most events allow for the consumption of alcohol. However, we ask that you drink in moderation.

While we are on this subject, we do have a rule concerning the use of alcohol. If one drinks and becomes profane or disruptive, he will receive a warning on the first offense. For the second offense, he will receive a six month suspension from participating with us. On the third offense, the member will be expelled from the Wyse Fork Historical Society. We are a family oriented group. While we encourage all to enjoy themselves, we require that our members do so in a non-offensive manner.

Q: What kind of food can I bring?

A: For your first few events, I encourage you to bring canned or backpacking food. These items require minimal maintenance leaving you time to concentrate on other areas.

Once you are comfortable in a field/camp setting, you may want to cook. At times, we all throw our food together for a field potluck meal. We have people who cook anything from bacon to prime rib. Your only constraint is your pocket book and the size of your cooler.

Concerning your cook wear, do not use speckled enamel products. These were not correct for the common soldier. The best thing to get would be a steel frying pan. The handle should be riveted to the pan. A good

steel frying pan is available through the Village Tinsmith. Cast iron is acceptable if you cannot locate anything else. Original wood or bone handled utensils are still available through some sutlers.

While we are on this subject, I want to address drinks. Carbonated beverages are alright to enjoy as a supplement to other drinks. Just do not rely upon them for your hydration. The larger events are normally held in hot weather and a strict diet of carbonated drinks will do more harm than good. For this type of environment, good ol' water or Gatorade is preferred.

Q: How do I register for events?

A: The newsletter editor will place a registration notice in the *Dispatch*. The notice will post the registration fee, deadline, and address to which to send it.

Q: Can I get involved on a committee?:

A: Yes you may. Our committees are open to all members. While being part of a committee requires some off-the-field work, our current committee members find it very rewarding.

Q: In the course of reading and studying, I may find an article of interest that I want to share with others in the group. Can I contribute to the newsletter?

A: Sure. The Newsletter Editor welcomes the help. He does, however, reserve the right to decide whether or not submissions are published and when they are published.

Q: How often do you all meet?

A: We have one annual meeting. The annual meeting is usually held after our Christmas party to ensure maximum participation.

In addition to the annual meeting, we also have quarterly unit management meetings. All members are invited to attend. These are usually held at a member's home. While we are prohibited from voting on issues at these meetings, we use them as brainstorming sessions to address any unit needs. These management meetings are an excellent opportunity to make your concerns or ideas known. Proposals are usually drafted at these meetings for presentation to the membership at a regular meeting.

Q: When do I renew my membership?

A: Dues are due January 1. There is a grace period until April 1. If dues are not paid by April 1, the delinquent members are dropped from the rolls.

Q: Why do members of the 27th have to purchase "re-enacting" insurance? What kind of policy is it?

A: The 27th NCT is a member of the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV). The ANV is a larger, umbrella organization to which many local re-enacting organizations belong. Due to the nature of re-enacting, there are inherent risks. Given that, one of the ANV requirements is that its members carry special insurance. The required insurance are a liability policy and an accidental policy. It is secondary to your primary policy. \$8.50 of your membership dues pays your premium.

Q: What kind of medical attention will I receive if injured at an event?

A: We have members who have medical training ranging from R.N. to EMT-D to basic first aid.

Q: How do I get promoted?

A: We elect our non-commissioned officers every two years at the annual meeting. If you desire a promotion, the formula is to be patient as you gain time in the unit, attend events regularly, show initiative, and help with a committee. Like anything else, if you work hard you will advance.

Q: I have heard the term "Pard" used. What is it?

A: A "Pard" is a grown-up that likes to dress up in clothes that are way out of style, fire a weapon that is obsolete, run around in the woods, sleep in a tent, sit by a fire in the evening and enjoy the company of your comrades in arms.