Bringing The Great War Alive

Leveraging WWI Re-enactments and Living History Events for Public Education
Battles Get All the Glory
Springfield Trench Battle
Springfield Trench Battle
Rockford Field Battle Gas Attack
But Re-enacting is Also to Tell a Story
Experiencing What They Endured

Keeping dry in the rain, mud and trenches

Keeping warm in 15 Deg. weather
Learn First-hand Using the Equipment
What we do on our weekends off

- We have day jobs
We Have Families
Love show and tell
Serious historians/collectors
Serious Collector are Concerned With Details
Expensive Sticks
Diversity in WWI

- WWI was a massive agent for social change
Recruiting Re-enactors to WWI

- Pulling re-enactors from other time periods
- Amenities draw people (dances, café, billets)
- Offer food
- Trenches draw WWI re-enactors and public
- Don’t overlap with other regional events
- Large crowds, good venue and media coverage
- Good partnerships between hosts/re-enactors
Trenches

• Re-enactors have helped build WWI trench systems for 5 museums in Illinois and Indiana for public WWI events
Trenches
Indiana Military Museum
Volunteers building bunks in Rockford bunker.

Same bunker in use as a display at event 3 weeks later.
Considerations for Trenches

- Blow grade vs. at grade trenches (flooding)
- Tripping hazards
- Height consideration (how far will kids fall)
- Splinters, sharp metal, nails, slick duckboards
Alternative to Digging
First Place Display at Convention
Safety Considerations

- DO NOT use real gas masks
- Inspect all weapons (chambers, bores)
- Have clear rules of engagement (trench, guns)
- Waivers need to be signed by everyone
- Who has the liability for insurance claims
- What does the insurance cover exactly
- Assign accountability for battle coordination and briefings, pyro, buildings, trench safety
Hold a morning briefing and inspection so everyone is on the same page.
Projects to Attract Visitors
First Place Display at Convention
Questions
Gen. Pershing Inspects Troops
German and U.S. Cavalry
Behind the Scenes
Thank You for Your Attention