

Impression Guidelines for “Taps 150”
Harrison’s Landing, Virginia, June 22-24, 2012

General

Participants will portray soldiers of the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry encamped at Harrison’s Landing in the summer of 1862. If you have any questions about these guidelines please contact **Michael Schaffner** at m.a.schaffner@comcast.net.

If you believe you can contribute to this event with a different impression, such as a visiting civilian, laundress, “contraband,” or the like, please contact Michael with your proposal. Include a description of your impression and camping requirements and we’ll see what we can do.

Registration and Ranks

You may register individually or as part of a group. Reenactors that register as groups may have one officer for every 15 registrants and one NCO for every 5. Captains and first sergeants are subject to approval by the event organizers depending on how many total registrants we get and how many companies we form.

Individuals must register as privates but can state a preference for higher rank. After registration closes we will form companies and select the leadership cadre according to registrants' preferences and the needs of the event.

Uniform Requirements

At the time of this event, the 83rd PVI has seen hard fighting but nonetheless has prepared for a review by the President and the army commander. As a general standard, **all brass should be polished, leather blackened, and weapons cleaned.** Clothing should be brushed clean with no obvious filth, missing buttons, or un-mended tears.

Clothing

The enlisted uniform will consist of a forage cap, fatigue blouse, sky blue trowsers, and army issued bootees. Quality reproductions will prove more comfortable and attractive, but while garments from high-end vendors are desirable they are less important than a neat and soldierly bearing.

The army issued domet or gray flannel shirts. Participants may wear these or other shirts of period make and construction.

Period drawers will work best for you but I won’t even pretend we’re going to check.

You should have gray or off-white wool socks. Period cotton socks are acceptable, but also their own punishment.

Noncommissioned officers will wear appropriate rank chevrons. Trowser stripes are desirable.

Commissioned officers will dress at their discretion, bearing in mind that the army commander and the President will see them.

Officers should have sashes for parade.

We expect officers and noncommissioned officers to set an example of neatness and military appearance.

Camp and Garrison Equipage

Enlisted men will have smooth-side canteens with either leather or cloth straps, painted haversacks, and one shelter half per man. We strongly discourage stainless steel canteens, but will accept such if it's all you have.

Officers will have smooth-side or private purchase canteens, enlisted or private purchase haversacks, and one shelter tent (two halves) each.

Ordnance – Accoutrements

Enlisted personnel will have **cleaned and freshly blackened** cartridge boxes with belts, waist belts with leather or no keepers, and two-rivet scabbards.

Cartridge boxes will have US plates, cartridge box belts will have eagle plates, and waist belts will have US buckles.

Sergeants should have noncommissioned officer buckles for their waist belts.

Ordnance – Weapons

The quarterly ordnance return from the end of 1862 shows the 83rd PVI armed with 201 Springfields and 18 Enfields, but does not distinguish between the 1855, 1861, or contract Springfield.

Based on this, enlisted personnel should bring an **1861 Springfield**, with an 1855 as a second choice, and an Enfield as third. If you only have an 1863 Springfield we'll squint and call it a Colt contract variant.

Bring twenty rounds of ammunition for firing demos – 40 to 60 grains per round, wrapped in off white or brown paper (masking paper works well) with no staples or glue.

All rifle-muskets should have a bayonet that fits and a functional locking ring. All rifle-muskets and bayonets must be clean, free or nearly free of rust, and pass a safety inspection at registration.

We will pay close attention to this – **a dirty or unsafe weapon will keep you out of the event.**

Officers should have a foot officer's sword and belt with eagle plate.

Other Items

We encourage period cutlery, tin boilers or muckets, and tin plates or canteen halves. You can also bring a light steel skillet. Please don't bring cast iron frying pans, anything stainless steel, or any enamelware, speckled or otherwise.

Rations will be issued and will cover your nutritional needs for the weekend. If you have special dietary needs please let us know and we'll try to accommodate.

You may bring additional food in any case, but it must be something reasonably accessible to the soldiers of the 83rd PVI at Harrison's Landing and it must be wrapped in parchment paper, wrapping paper, or cloth.

Since we'll portray the 83rd during the approximately five weeks they spent at Harrison's Landing, you may bring additional appropriate baggage such as books, newspapers, magazines, bottles, boxes, stationery, chess sets, dominos, cards, and the like.

Keep it reasonable, though, and authentic to 1862 – we will do a spot check of haversacks and other gear at registration. We will politely ask you to remove any non-period items, confident that they got there by mistake.

Additional standards

It should perhaps go without saying, but here's a list of what we **don't** want to see:

- *corps badges, harps, thistles, Masonic emblems, hat brass, animal appendages
- *modern glasses
- *wrist watches
- *ear-rings or jewelry in lip or nose
- *eccentrically colored or styled hair
- *hair below the collar or a pony tail

Women may portray men in the ranks but should make every reasonable effort to conceal their sex.

For that matter, endomorphic men of a certain age should lose weight and look younger, too. If you figure out how to do that, please let me know.

All that said, we assume that anyone interested in registering for this event has a sincere interest in American history and in honoring the boys of the 83rd PVI. Work with us, and we'll happily work with you.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.