

The Campaign of Stanton St. John 11th -12th September



Messrs. Hazzard and Wilks invite you to join them for what is set to be one of the highlights of this year's re-enactment calendar. This is an independently run private event, away from the constraints of public performance, built by re-enactors, for re-enactors. If you're bored with the traditional nine to five event and its cricket pitch 'battles' and want to truly immerse yourself for a weekend in the life of a Napoleonic soldier, then this is the event for you!

Location

The village, and surrounding country, of Stanton St. John, two miles north-east of Oxford, just off the A40.

Scenario

September 1810. A column of French prisoners of war being transferred from Dartmoor to Norman Cross overpowers its escort just outside of Stanton St. John. A detachment of troops are hastily despatched from the garrison in Oxford to recapture the escapees. Unbeknownst to them the prison column was also escorting a munitions wagon, with the result that the small British force shall not be facing a gang of fleeing prisoners, but a highly organised and armed force.

Event Programme

The main aim of the event is to make the experience as enjoyable and as realistic as is possible in our modern age.

The campaign weekend will start at 7:00am Saturday and end at 3:00pm on the Sunday. Thus once the event begins you will remain within 1810 and stick within its conventions as much as possible, so that you may experience the uninterrupted life of a Napoleonic soldier for the weekend.



The event takes the shape of two small forces patrolling in search of each other and engaging in a tactically realistic manner. As such there will be a considerable, though not exhausting amount of marching over beautiful countryside to be done. You will take part in patrols through woods and over fields and streams, hold strategic positions and lie in wait for the enemy, sleep under makeshift shelters and cook period correct rations and conduct picket duty or carry out night raids. In short you have the opportunity to take part in a re-enactment experience which is unique in this country.

We are primarily looking for infantry and artillery, both British and French, to take part. Unfortunately we are unable to cater for cavalry at this stage but we hope to in the future.

Authenticity

This event is designed to create an environment surrounding the participants that looks and feels as realistic as possible, as such obvious anachronisms, modern items and behaviours will destroy the illusion not only for yourself but those around you. It is hoped that participants take to the spirit of the event and that the following rules are unnecessary reminders.

Absolutely no modern articles may be taken on the event. For essentials and valuables such as medicines, car keys, mobile phones and money, please stow them away inside a drawstring bag in your knapsack.

Period and military etiquette is to be adhered to at all times. Officers are to be addressed as 'sir' and NCOs by their titles. Due deference is to be shown and you are to stand in an officer's presence until told otherwise.

Cross-dressing will not be allowed at this event, however, any women camp followers wishing to come along are positively encouraged. Unfortunately, given that the event is in England, female partisan impressions are not suitable.

Practicalities

As this is a private event without the advantage of funding from the sale of tickets to the public, and the express motivation of providing something different to the ordinary, you are asked to take the following into account.

Arrival

It is essential that all participants are on site Friday evening or before the columns set off at 8:00am on the Saturday morning. Arrival on Friday cannot be urged strongly enough, as it allows for last minute preparations such as food wrapping and a relaxed start in the morning. It is intended that we shall frequent the two excellent alehouses of the village on the Friday night for a little pre-event fraternisation, should you need further inducement to arrive early.

We shall be sleeping in the farmyard on the Friday night, so feel free to bring modern or period tentage for that evening. Some may prefer to simply sleep in their vehicles, or those wishing for a more comfortable night's sleep may wish to enquire at the Talkhouse Inn (www.thetalkhouse.co.uk), priced at £65 a room.

Participation Fee

The land we shall be using for this event is almost entirely owned by Richard Stanley of Rectory Farm and in order to secure its use and compensate for any damage we may do you are each asked to pay a nominal fee of £10. I'm sure you'll agree that given what we are being allowed to do this is very reasonable. We ask that the fee be paid upfront by June, so that we may confirm numbers with the landowner and plan the logistics accordingly.

Insurance

Should your group have its own insurance then that's all to the good, however, if not, we are able to provide insurance to cover the whole event free of charge.

Powder

All groups should provide 60 pre-made rounds per man where possible. If you are unable to provide your own powder then the event organisers are able to provide loose powder at cost price on the day.

Baggage

All participants must have a knapsack or blanket roll to carry their affairs and a haversack to carry their rations. Any item you wish to bring along you will have to carry. It is advised that if you are unable to eat it, wear it, shoot it, or shelter in it, then you probably don't need it.

Food

You are asked to supply the following period rations per man for the whole weekend;

2lbs (900g) of Bread, or a part-replacement of equivalent Hardtack

1½ lb (680g) of Meat, it is suggested that this be made up from Beef, Pork and Salami

2oz (60g) of Hard Cheese

You may also wish to supplement this ration with as much as you're prepared to carry of the following;

Fruit and Vegetables

Alcohol

Each soldier must be able to carry all his provisions on his person, so it is recommended that participants review their packing accordingly.

Please ensure that there are no modern wrappers, containers, labels etc, at any time once the event begins.



Food should be wrapped with brown and/or greaseproof paper and string for the weekend and it is therefore strongly advised to choose ingredients accordingly. Drink rations are to be stored in glass bottles without modern labels.

Our host has a farm shop on site and there is a village shop available to buy groceries from over the weekend should this be required. You may also wish to try your persuasive powers to scrounge or buy food from the locals, however, it is asked that modern packaging is removed.

Catering and Sundry Items

The detachments will be organised into messes (along group lines) for cooking and sleeping purposes, as this allows the load to be spread across the men. For a mess of four to six men, you will need two medium skillets, fire making kit, billhook and/or hand axe and two gun cleaning kits. Other useful items to carry individually may include, cutlery, plate, cooking oil and flavourings, and a sharp knife.

Smokers are advised that matches and lighters will not be allowed, and only cigarillos, roll-ups, cigars or clay pipes are permitted. Period methods of obtaining a light are with a burning glass or firelock and char cloth; these can be taught on the day.

Tentage

Considering the nature of the activities that the weekend entails, it is highly recommended both for historical experimentation and convenience that participants construct campaign shelters (such as that pictured) and leave their tents at home. You may wish to bring old bed sheets to provide a roof. Wood piles will be provided for this purpose in order to spare the trees. As with firewood any fallen or dead material is fair game.



Those participants that wish to have period tentage will be welcomed and catered for, but it is asked that they find a way of transporting their tent with them during the day, as the camp areas will change each night. If you do wish to have tents with you, please indicate this to the organisers prior to the event.

Information for Commanders

Given the numbers and activities involved, this event requires that a 'sensible' rank structure should be put in place to command a composite unit.

Campaign Plan



Each commander will be issued with a map and a set of orders. The orders are to be sealed and a time or place written upon them. At the specified time or place the commander is to open the order and carry out its instructions, thus simulating the effect of a higher command and strategy.

When on the march, at the halt or in camp it is the commander's responsibility to put in place pickets or advanced guards in order to secure the detachment. Delegating where necessary. Pickets are to be posted and rotated during the night. You are allowed to conduct a small night raid on the opposing camp should

you wish. The periods of breakfast and dinner are to be times of cease fire.

Officers should be equipped with a compass and pocket watch and a flashlight and mobile phone for use in emergencies. If the designated officer is unable to provide one of these items then the event organisers will.

What to do next

Whether your entire group, a select few or even individual members wish to attend please get in touch. If you are planning to take part you need to contact one of us to register your interest as soon as possible as places are limited and participation fees must be paid by the start of June.

We will be contacting individuals throughout the year with updates and a final warning order. If you have any inquiries or requests please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to seeing you there!

Kieran Hazzard 07921 506838, khazzard2000@hotmail.com **Tony Wilks** 07771 728667, alpstudio@btconnect.com