

ADVICE FOR NEW REENACTORS!!

Going to a National Event

For the new reenactor, a national event can be an overwhelming experience. My first national event was the 130th Gettysburg, and I remember that the scale was incredible. It wasn't just the battles, or the brigades of men, but it was also the lines, the parking lots, the camps, the sutlers, (as well as the walk TO the sutlers) and even the rows of porto-johns. Some important things to remember:

- 1) **Things are going to be very far away.** Plan on going to the sutlers once, preferably on Friday while you still have energy to do so. Saturday and Sunday will be incredibly busy. The plan for Saturday at Gettysburg is for a full day of engagements. Likewise, the parking lot may be a mile away, so don't plan on frequent trips to the car, or you'll kill



yourself with walking.

- 2) **Traffic will be horrendous.** There's no way around this. 25,000+ people means thousands of cars. Add that to hundreds of thousands of spectators, and the Pennsylvania country roads will be parking lots. My advice to you is find a way to campaign at the event. Yes I'm a campaigner by practice, but no I'm not trying to convert you. This is a practical consideration. If you can rough it for a weekend, you'll be able to forgo the camp traffic on Friday and Sunday on the one-lane dirt tracks that experience has told me to expect in the field. For Sunday, you pack your pack, fight the battle and walk off the field to the parking lot.

- 3) **Pack food in your haversack for Saturday and Sunday.** Saturday will be spent almost entirely in the field. Whether it is period rations, (preferable) or not, bring enough food for snacking and for lunch at least.

Water, Water, Water. Keep your canteen on you at all times. Hydrate constantly, and drain and fill your canteen at every opportunity. This

will make the difference between enjoying the event, and a miserable heat headache, or worse. Please trust me on this one.