

Civil War breaks out in Camp Sherman

By **Jodi Schneider McNamee**
Correspondent

A little after 11 a.m. on Saturday, cannons thundered across the meadow at House on Metolius in Camp Sherman, signaling the beginning of a fictional battle. Northwest Civil War Council members, dressed in period-accurate uniforms, began their staged fight between the Union and Confederate camps.

This was the fifth Civil War living history event held at House on Metolius, a secluded mountain meadow with the Metolius River running through the private property.

The Northwest Civil War Council is a nonprofit, living history organization dedicated to educating the public and members about the American Civil War. Through educational drama at reenactments, participants discover and learn about history and the people who lived in the 1860s.

Civil War reenactments are as old as the war itself. The first reenactments are recorded as far back as 1861. They served many purposes: to recruit new soldiers, entertain audiences and give people back home a sense of what their loved ones were experiencing on the battlefield.

Sisters resident and event coordinator David Banks, who has been a part of the NCWC since 2012, said he finds a lot of value in helping

bring history to life through these events.

“There are things you are going to learn here that you are not going to learn in the classroom. Ideally people are transported back in time. That’s our ultimate goal: to have the public feel like they went back to the Civil War time period. We want to remind folks of what times were like 155 years ago,” he said.

It was Banks who established the location to host the event in 2013.

“It was a dream spot, a great location with over 200 acres,” Banks said. “I talked to House on Metolius property owner and it worked out and now we are in our fifth year here.”

Sisters resident and reenactment member Holly Foster, aka Mrs. Susanna H. Foster, was set up in the Confederate camp agonizing over letters from her dear brothers JW and JP — real soldiers from the war — each serving on opposite sides of the conflict.

Foster also owns a copy of an original invoice where Maryland resident Mary Long purchased sewing items on her husband’s account at Williamsport in Maryland on April 12, 1861, the very day that Fort Sumter was fired upon by Confederate forces, which started the Civil War.

Christopher Lundgren, a freshman at Sisters High School, has been a NCWC member since he was 12 years old. He wanted “a hands-on



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

The Union line fires a volley in reenactment action at House on Metolius in Camp Sherman.

experience” with history; he portrays a Union soldier named Joseph Zehntbauer, the name of one of his ancestors who actually served in the Civil War.

“There are about five events a year, and I try to make it to all of them. It’s so much fun and there is always more to learn about the Civil War, it’s like an endless fountain of knowledge,” he said.

Lundgren noted that his ancestor Zehnbauer may have been one of the first settlers to purchase land at the House on Metolius property.

Gun crews had a very important job, so they were the most well-trained soldiers in both the Union and Confederate armies. It took eight highly trained artillerymen to crew one artillery piece. Each crew member was cross-trained so they could do each job that was required with the loading and firing of

the weapon. If one member of the gun crew was wounded or killed, any member of the crew could step in and take their place.

Confederate gun crew soldier Emily Whatez, 25, has been a member of the NCWC for 14 years and knows all about Civil War artillery.

“This 12-pound Napoleon cannon was widely used by both sides and was considered the best artillery piece of the Civil War because you could shoot virtually any type of artillery shell because of the smooth barreling, and this

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