

# Federal Battalion Charter

## American Civil War Associations

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### **Federal Battalion Mission**

The Federal Battalion of the American Civil War Association (hereafter ACWA) endeavors to enact an accurate and honorable portrayal of an infantry battalion with attachments of artillery and cavalry serving in the Army of the Potomac in our nation's Civil War from 1861 to 1865.

### Section A. Battalion Regulations:

1. All Federal Battalion Regulations are subordinate to the Bylaws and Regulations of the ACWA.
2. Membership.
  - a. To be a member of the Federal Battalion, ACWA one must have paid or be a member of a family that has paid ACWA dues, must be a recognized member of one or more existing companies or batteries in the Federal Battalion and if over the age of 12 must have passed the ACWA safety test. Assurances of these criteria are the responsibility of their respective company or battery commander.
3. Operations.
  - a. The Federal Battalion will, where ever possible and practical, guide its operation on military regulations of the Civil War period. This includes but is not necessarily limited to camp layout, chain of command, staff positions, camp and battlefield conduct.
4. Official Meetings.
  - a. The Federal Battalion will hold a meeting at ACWA events as needed to discuss business that pertains to all members of the battalion.
  - b. Announcement of Official meetings with their agenda must be published in *The Courier* prior to the event at which the meeting is to take place and with sufficient notice so that all members of the battalion are given an opportunity to attend.
  - c. Decisions concerning the battalion issues shall be decided by majority vote by those present at these meetings.
  - d. Meeting minutes will be recorded by the Battalion adjutant or other aides and published on the ACWA website in an appropriate website location.
5. Safety.
  - a. The Federal Battalion will observe and enforce all ACWA safety regulations.
6. Authenticity.

- a. The Federal Battalion and its members will strive for an appearance of authenticity in regard to uniforms, equipment, weapons and battlefield tactics. This will be especially important during public hours for matters of living history.
7. Drill.
    - a. The primary drill manuals used by the Federal Battalion shall be *Casey's Infantry Tactics* by Silas Casey and *Parade, Inspection and Basic Evolutions of an Infantry Battalion* by Dominic Dal Bello.
    - b. Other drill manuals of the period with historical basis for their use in the Army of the Potomac will not be excluded.
  8. Battle.
    - a. During battle reenactments, for purposes of safety and authenticity, the chain of command will be observed by all members of the Federal Battalion and all guests who participate under its command.
    - b. Insubordination will not be tolerated unless it is required to remain within ACWA safety regulations or is part of a 'scripted' living history scenario.
    - c. During battle, participants in the Federal Battalion deemed insubordinate by the battalion commander may be immediately dismissed from the battlefield for any length of time up to the end of that particular event.
    - d. Participation in battle is at the discretion of the ranking federal officer and any member maybe dismissed prior to the battle for behaviors or equipment deemed unsafe.
    - e. No Federal Battalion member who can not demonstrate that he or she has passed the ACWA safety test will be allowed on the battlefield.
    - f. No member without proof of ACWA membership will be allowed on the battlefield with the exception of re-enactors who have membership in reciprocal clubs and guests who have been trained and certified by the company or battery commander.
  9. Court of Inquiry (CI).
    - a. CI's will be inquiries conducted by the ACWA at large, it's Board of Directors and Executive Committee based on the ACWA bylaws.
  10. Suspension. Members of the Federal Battalion may be suspended from the Federal Battalion for a term of no more than one year only by the following process:
    - a. Any member may initiate the suspension process against any other member of the battalion at an official battalion meeting for reasons of illegal or inappropriate conduct, safety infractions or gross acts of insubordination toward the battalion elected staff or subordinate officers. The initiating member must state their reason for initiation and for how long they wish the suspension to last. The individual in question must be made aware of the matter and given the opportunity to attend the meeting.
    - b. The matter may be discussed and/or rebutted at the same meeting as it is proposed.
    - c. The matter will be published in *The Courier* under the agenda for the next meeting.

- d. At the next meeting, once any arguments have been heard, the commander and XO will convene to decide how long the suspension will last should it be issued. This may be any period of time up to one year.
  - e. The commander will then call for a vote of those in attendance of that meeting; simple majority will issue or deny the suspension.
  - f. Once a decision is rendered, this process can not be repeated for the same instance of the same offense. This does not preclude the process from being initiated for another instance of the offense or any other offense.
  - g. Federal Battalion decisions can be appealed to the ACWA BOD via the CI process.
11. Expulsion. Members of the Federal Battalion may be expelled from the Battalion only by the following process:
- a. Any member may initiate the expulsion process against any other member of the battalion at an official battalion meeting for reasons of illegal or inappropriate conduct, safety infractions or gross acts of insubordination toward the battalion elected staff or subordinate officers by announcing their intention to do so. The individual in question must be made aware of the matter and given the opportunity to attend the meeting.
  - b. The matter must be posted by the initiating individual in the next edition of *The Courier* with specific supporting reasons and may be accompanied by any rebuttal.
  - c. The commander must then administer a battalion wide vote by mail to the current membership. If the commander is the member in question, the Executive Officer will administer the vote.
  - d. A majority of two-thirds or more of the returned ballots is required for expulsion of the individual in question.
  - e. Once a decision is rendered, this process can not be repeated for the same instance of the same offense. This does not preclude the process from being initiated for another instance of the offense or any other offense.
  - f. Federal Battalion decisions can be appealed to the ACWA BOD via the CI process
12. Changes to Charter.
- a. Any member may propose a change, or addition to the Battalion Charter in writing at any Official Battalion Meeting.
  - b. The augmentation may be debated and/or rebutted by all members in attendance of that meeting.
  - c. The proposed augmentation must be published in the following edition of *The Courier* for the next meeting's agenda.
  - d. Any augmentation may be adopted or defeated by a simple majority vote of those in attendance of the next meeting.
  - e. Any augmentation that is approved by this vote is immediately adopted into the charter; any effects of the augmentation are also immediate.

## Section B. Staff:

The Federal Battalion Staff shall, at the minimum, consist of the following positions:

1. Commander.

- a. The battalion commander shall be elected annually in accordance with the ACWA general election.
  - b. The battalion commander shall hold the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and shall be the ranking officer of the battalion. The commander may hold the rank of a full Colonel only when he has been selected to command multiple battalions as at joint-club events. After such an event has been concluded he will return to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.
  - c. The commander's responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to ensuring the observance and enforcement of ACWA and Federal Battalion regulations, appointing a competent battalion staff, commanding the battalion in camp and in battle, ensuring the practice and execution of proper battalion drill, chairing battalion meetings, acting as liaison to the ACWA Board of Directors and Executive Committee, regularly communicating pertinent information to the company commanders in the battalion whether himself or through subordinates and serving as chief representative of the battalion to other reenacting organizations.
2. Executive Officer.
- a. The battalion Executive Officer (hereafter, XO) shall be elected annually in accordance with the ACWA general election.
  - b. The XO will hold the rank of Major and serve as the second-in-command under the commander.
  - c. At the absence or incapacitation of the commander, the XO will serve as the commander.
  - d. The XO's responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to assisting the commander in the enforcement of ACWA and Federal Battalion Rules and Regulations, assisting the commander in the appointment of his staff, ensuring the execution of orders given by the commander, leading the battalion in the practice of proper battalion drill under the direction of the commander, naming Officer of the Day at events and serving as a relations officer with other reenacting organizations on behalf of the commander and the battalion.
  - e. The XO will also serve in any reasonable capacity that is deemed appropriate by the commander.
3. Adjutant.
- a. The battalion Adjutant shall be appointed annually by the commander.
  - b. The Adjutant shall hold the rank of Second Lieutenant.
  - c. In keeping with historical authenticity, the Adjutant shall have no direct field command or authority but he may and shall relay orders to and from the commander and XO to subordinate commanders.
  - d. The Adjutant's responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to maintaining a supply of ACWA membership forms and safety tests for all members of the battalion, keeping general Battalion records such as membership information, morning reports, guard mount reports etc., planning the layout of the battalion camp, writing and disseminating battalion orders of the day under direction of the commander, assisting the

commander and XO on parade and in battle and serving in any other administrative capacity the commander or XO deem appropriate.

4. Sergeant Major.
  - a. The Sergeant Major (hereafter, SM) will be appointed by the commander and shall be ratified by a majority battalion vote at a subsequent battalion meeting OR formation.
  - b. The SM's responsibilities include but are not necessarily limited to training the NCOs of the battalion in drill and commands, holding First Sergeant's call to collect morning reports, assisting the rest of staff on parade and in battle and serving in any other reasonable capacity that the commander or XO deem appropriate.
5. Officer of the Day.
  - a. The Officer of the Day, as is historically accurate, will be an officer from one of the battalion's companies that is responsible for guard mount.
  - b. His appointment, made by the commander or XO, will be rotated between the companies changed either daily or from event to event.
  - c. The Officer of the Day's responsibilities are naming a Sergeant of the Guard to serve at that post as long as he is Officer of the Day, maintaining a provost guard for battle and camp (if necessary) and seeing to the manning of night provost at events.
  - d. His guard will be made up of members of all companies on a basis proportional to attendance of the companies at that particular event.
  - e. The Officer of the Day may also be responsible for finding volunteers and overseeing other tasks such as but not limited to: helping with the pyrotechnic placement, crowd control, parking duties, and money collection during the event.
  - f. The Officer of the Day may be asked to assume the duties of wing commander at the discretion of the battalion commander.
6. Any member of the battalion serving in the afore mentioned positions may be deposed for reasons of incompetence, poor attendance, inappropriate conduct or safety infractions at an official battalion meeting by majority vote of those present at the meeting.
  - a. If deposition of any staff position other than the commander is made the individual shall return to his home company at the rank of private and the commander must immediately appoint an interim replacement to serve in that capacity. This appointment may be ratified as permanent at the next official battalion meeting by a majority of those in attendance of that meeting. If the appointment is not ratified the commander must appoint a different individual and repeat the ratification process.
  - b. If the battalion commander is deposed he shall return to his home company at the rank of private.
    - i. The XO will immediately take on his responsibilities and serve as commander.
    - ii. The XO will post the matter in the following edition of *The Courier* to inform the membership of the situation.

- iii. A replacement for the commander may be any member of the battalion that presents himself for that purpose at the next official battalion meeting.
  - iv. The replacement will be instated by majority vote of those present at the battalion meeting.
- 7. The following are non-mandatory staff positions that may be filled if necessary or if desired by the commander. They are appointed by the commander, will not have command authority and their duties shall be based on historical responsibilities and whatever the commander deems appropriate. Their rank shall be what is historically appropriate for their position.
  - a. Aids.
  - b. Engineer.
  - c. Quartermaster Sergeant.
  - d. Orderly.
  - e. Battalion Surgeon
  - f. Chief Musician/Drum Major
  - g. Bugler
  - h. Chaplain    i. Provost

### Section C. Companies of the Battalion:

1. New companies or batteries wishing to be formed within or admitted into the Federal Battalion:
  - a. Must submit a proposal to the ACWA Board of Directors.
  - b. Must pass a majority vote of approval at an official battalion meeting.
  - c. Must Portray a unit that fought with the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War.
  - d. Must have a starting membership of at least six combatants.
  - e. Must increase their roster to nine combatants by the end of its first year in existence.
2. Companies or Batteries that do not have/obtain a roster of nine combatants will be deactivated.
  - a. Once an existing company or battery has fallen below a nine man roster strength it will have one year starting from that time to attain nine or more members. If the company or battery remains below a nine man strength for this time, it will be deactivated.
  - b. Deactivated companies or batteries will cease to exist; the members of this company must join another recognized company within the Federal Battalion to remain a member in good standing and participate in any activity with the Federal Battalion.
  - c. If the deactivated company is to be reinstated, it must be treated as any other company or battery wishing to begin membership in the Federal Battalion, anew.
3. All companies or batteries are strongly encouraged to have their own bylaws and to have them on file with the battalion staff.
4. Each company or battery within the battalion is free to arrange its own rank structure provided a reasonably accurate portrayal of rank ratio is observed by the company or battery.

5. The company or battery commander, who is elected by their company at least once annually, may be any rank that his company decides provided that he not hold a rank higher than captain.
  - a. Company or battery commanders must be reasonably well versed in period drill and commands, ACWA and common sense safety procedures and must understand and respect their position as it pertains to the entire battalion.
  - b. Company or battery commanders must make certain that all members in their company are paid members or guests of the ACWA and the Federal Battalion and have passed the ACWA safety test or are a member in good standing of another legitimate reenacting organization.
  - c. Company or Battery commanders must be willing to serve as Officer of the Day.
6. All company bylaws and rules are subordinate to the Federal Battalion Charter and the bylaws and regulations of the ACWA.