

5th SS 'Wiking'

Unit Handbook



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About the 5th SS Reenactment Society

The 5th SS Reenactment Society was founded in 2012 by a small group of reenactors in Texas who desired to create a different kind of reenacting group that focused primarily on camaraderie, hard work, integrity, and self-education. Since those early days the unit has grown to have multiple satellite members across the country and even around the world. Wiking also boasts as a high-tier unit and an ally of multiple progressive units throughout the United States.

Background Information and History

The Schutzstaffel

The Schutzstaffel (Protection Squadron), also known as the SS, was a paramilitary branch of the Nazi party between 1933 and 1945. The SS was composed of a number of different sub units and branches, with the most well-known being the Waffen SS (Armed SS). Unlike other branches of the SS, the Waffen SS focused solely on military combat operations and often worked hand-in-hand with the all branches of the Wehrmacht, specifically the regular army (Heer). Many Waffen SS divisions gained a fierce reputation as hardcore but incredibly skilled soldiers. They would become both an object of fear and hatred by Allied soldiers on all fronts, especially the Eastern Front.

The Waffen SS started as three small regiments and eventually grew into thirty-eight divisions, employing nearly one million personnel by the end of the war. Of the thirty-eight divisions, fourteen were considered "Germanic", and the others being composed of volunteers from a variety of countries, from France, to Serbia, to the Middle East. One of these divisions, 5th SS 'Wiking', was made up of Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, Estonian, and Flemish volunteers, as well as German recruits. The volunteers themselves joined for a variety of reasons, but the majority joined out of a fear and hatred for communism as at the time many of these foreign countries were far away from the fighting on the Eastern Front.

Wiking

5th SS Wiking was originally formed as SS-Division (motorized) "Germania" in December 1940, but renamed SS-Division (mot.) "Wiking" in January 1941 due to confusion with the regiment "Germania." Wiking was formed around three motorized infantry regiments: Germania (comprised mostly of ethnic Germans from outside of Germany), Westland (Dutch and Flemish), and Nordland (Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes), although there were Germans throughout all the units. All but Westland did not participate in the opening phases of Operation Barbarossa (the German invasion of the Soviet Union), being stationed in Heuberg, Germany for training at the time. At the end of June 1941, Wiking was combat ready and deployed to Ukraine under orders to hold a bridgehead over the Rostov-on-Don River. Wiking engaged in constant brutal fighting for the river before being called back to defend the Mius.

After the winter of '41, Wiking retook the Rostov-on-Don during Operation Maus, and worked to secure the Caucasus for Army Group South as part of Case Blue and the march on Stalingrad. Wiking fought bravely for the Caucasus oilfields and lost over 1,500 men attempting to take Grozny, one of the key cities in between the Germans and the oilfields. Due to the fierce fighting, Wiking solidified its reputation for being an elite combat formation. Though they succeeded in breaching the heavily defended defensive line around Grozny, their casualties were too high to keep up the drive and they were forced to halt their advance. Smaller actions afterwards happened and, due to the failures surrounding the battle for Stalingrad, they acted as rearguard as the remainders of General Manstein's forces retreated through Rostov. After passing through Rostov, they were resupplied, rearmed, and re-designated as 5th SS Panzergrenadier Division 'Wiking'.

In early 1943 Wiking was ordered back to assist in the recapture of Kharkov (Third Battle of Kharkov), and while Wiking was still undermanned and exhausted from the brutal campaign in the Caucasus, they held the line against Soviet assaults. Their shining moment came when they were tasked with protecting a

vital rail-transport network. They not only held off the Russians, but badly mauled a major armored Soviet formation despite a lack of sufficient armor support.

While being refitted with additional armor and changing of infrastructure (including new leadership and switching out its Finnish battalion for an Estonian one), Wiking continued to show skill and bravery as it engaged local partisans in several skirmishes. Once outfitted, it joined several units in preparation for Operation Citadel and would assist in the defeat of two Soviet tank armies at the Battle of Kursk. Wiking was then pulled off the front line to receive an additional armored battalion and was re-designated as a Panzer division in October 1943. As Wiking was still undermanned, a brigade of Walloonian (French-speaking Belgians) volunteers was attached to Wiking. Shortly afterwards Wiking was sent to help hold the line on the Dnieper near Kiev.

After a number of Soviet offenses during November and December that pushed back several sections of the line, the SS soldiers soon found themselves in a bulge near Cherkassy. In February of 1944, they, along with almost the entirety of Army Group South, were encircled and cut off in a pincer move. With memories of Stalingrad's fate, the German soldiers fought bitterly, particularly the skillful Wikingers around the eastern side of the pocket. Wiking took devastating losses as they made a fighting retreat with the rest of Army Group South towards the relief forces outside of the encirclement. They acted also as the southern flank of the breakout force and held off many Russian attacks, but lost most of their tanks. Despite the loss of equipment, the majority of the division escaped what the Soviets were (inaccurately) calling a "Second Stalingrad". After being only partially rearmed, Wiking was quickly sent to set up a defensive line near Kovel and, despite being encircled shortly afterwards against a staggering enemy, kept fighting until a relief force broke through and once more pulled themselves out of harm's way.

Throughout the summer of 1944 Wiking recuperated parts of its losses and participated in a number of actions in Poland. They were officially absorbed into IV SS Panzer Group alongside the 3rd SS "Topkenkopf" and numerous other SS/Heer units, of which Wiking would remain with for the remainder of the war. Around late summer Wiking, who had by now seen some of the heaviest fighting of the war and was highly decorated, was sent to Warsaw to pit against the advancing Russians and the armed partisans in the city. Later they were deployed to aid in the failed relief of Budapest in January 1945. Fighting was extremely brutal, and by the end of the month, Wiking had suffered over 8,000 casualties and ultimately became too weak to continue offensive actions. Severely undermanned and low on supplies, Wiking continued fighting a defensive retreat back to Austria where they surrendered to the advancing American forces in May 1945.

On War Crimes

NOTE: We include this information because we do not take on a Nazi apologist stance nor claim that the 5th SS was a 'clean' division. We feel that our members must be informed on what the public conceives as crimes done by an SS soldier compared to what realistically happened. However, as stressed before, our aims are not to glorify the few cruel killers who were associated with the division, but large majority of ordinary men who only concentrated on fighting the Soviets and serving their countries.

After the war ended, many Waffen SS officers were arrested and put on trial at Nuremburg. Although the 5th SS as a division was never formally convicted of war crimes, reportedly accounts exist of repeated instances of the abuse and murder of civilians. These go up until 1943 in Ukraine and a few unconfirmed cases near 1945 in Hungary. At least for one small stint in 1942, Wiking had an einsatzgruppe attached to the division, though few records indicate that members of the division actively assisted them on their mission.

Reenacting and the Hobby

Unit Philosophy

The 5th SS Wiking Historical Reenactment Society seeks to accurately portray the Waffen SS beyond just knowing facts and wearing the uniform. Using a progressive mindset and concrete evidence, we seek to understand the tactics and mindsets of the SS in a fun and enjoyable manner. As a progressive unit, this means ensuring that unit standards are held up and that all members are held accountable for one another both on a physical and intellectual level. While our selection process is rigorous, we do not turn anyone away based on gender, race, politics, or religion. We do not tolerate bullying or “farb-hunting” in and around our unit, as we do not believe this is constructive in any way. We also are forgiving for beginners who can show themselves to be capable, as we truly value a good spirit for reenacting and wish to help new people contribute to this fantastic hobby.

We boast to be a high-tier unit in the hobby due to our belief that we have a lot to offer to the hobby. Many of our unit members are veterans and knowledgeable in multiple aspects of military life. Several others are also researchers and actors who use their knowledge to help build better impressions and overall contribute to our knowledge base. Out in the field we act as a working unit and always strive for an energetic combat performance. We make it a point to build camaraderie not only with other German units, but with our opponents as well. In total, having great experiences is what our unit strives for.

Picking a Role

Reenacting is at heart a form of role-play. Role-playing is defined as the act of playing out a role or a particular type of character. In your role, you are playing a soldier in the 5th SS Wiking sometime between 1943 and 1945. Roles, or positions/jobs in the unit, may be assigned based on experience and skill, but it must be earned. You must demonstrate a proficiency in knowledge and skill at the role, and may have to compete with another for the position (ex. only one person in a gruppe (platoon) may hold the title of unit marksman and carry a sniper rifle in the field).

With that said, sometimes you may have to assume a different role based on the setting of the event (time and location) as well as the roles of fellow members. For example, for Italian theatre events we assume the roles of standard infantry of the 16th SS “Reichsführer” Division. In Western Front events, we go as generic infantry or the 12th SS “Hitlerjugend” Division.

Role Playing in the Field

Training

As a progressive unit, we want our members to know what the average German soldier knew during WWII. This includes practices and tactics derived from original training manuals as well as real-life application. On occasion our unit participates in training events, attends classes hosted at events, or may choose to take a moment during an event to have drill sessions. Unlike German soldiers during the war who had this information drilled into them, we have to make an extra effort to adopt their methods. Do make an effort to fully engage in these training sessions as well as review over the information in between events. The more you train, the better!

Operating with the Unit

As a unit that reenacts military operations, it is expected that you participate as an active member of the unit when out in the field. Our tactics hinge on the actions of each and every soldier, so you are expected to follow orders or make tactical judgements if the moment calls for it. Sometimes you will be ordered to be a part of the forward scouting party, or you may have to sit back and hold down a secure position away from the fighting. At times this may seem boring, but there are two things you must remember.

- *Real combat is not like the hyper, intense scenes Hollywood portrays.* Military combat has several long periods of nothingness occasionally stabbed in with short moments of pure terror and chaos. This is not to say that tactical battles are not exciting, but they behave far differently than what the media would have you believe. If your objective is to recreate your favorite first-person shooter video game, you may have some trouble doing so.
- *Your role in the field is equally as important as anyone else's.* Not everyone in the field is a Rambo-character who can go out and win the whole war by himself. The reality is that in actual combat, you are just one part of the grand strategy, but your part can make a big difference. One job sometimes can make the difference between an operation's success or failure.

Hits and Dying

“Hit” is reenactor term for a successful shot, or kill during a tactical battle. When you see another person point their weapon at you and fire, and you believe that if this were real life you would have been hit by their shot, it is appropriate to “take a hit” or “die”. You as a reenactor have to decide for yourself if you believe you were hit. In general, if you are unsure as to whether or not you were hit, be a good sport and take it. As a unit we do not want the reputation of being unfair, so it is always better to take a hit and get back to the battle in a few minutes versus starting an argument.

In addition, if you shoot at someone and they do not take a hit, do not start “hit calling” or telling them to take a hit. This leads to “character breaking” and makes us look bad as a unit. The point of these battles is to get into the mindset of a soldier in World War II, and not to “win the game at any cost.” Nothing spoils one's “time warp” into 1944 like someone stopping all operations and getting upset because someone didn't take a silly hit.

If you are running or sprinting between cover while under fire, it is appropriate to ignore the first two shots, and take the hit on the third one (the first one was forward, the second behind, and the third dead on). If running from a machinegun, use the same principle but count them by bursts.

Wounds

Depending on the event and atmosphere, it can be appropriate to “take a wound” and stumble to cover and act hurt during a firefight. This is uncommon during a tactical as, unless a medic is attached to the squad, you will likely not be recovered or brought to life. If you choose to take a wound in a tactical situation, do so with the understanding that you are already considered “dead.” The use of medics is usually more common at public battles, but medics certainly have their place in tactical battles. It will be made known to you if there will be a medic in attendance at an event.

Surrendering

An often under-used thing in reenacting is surrendering. Depending on the event, atmosphere, and the time period it can be appropriate to “surrender” to the enemy. They may either just let you be “dead” at which point you will respawn like normal, or they may role-play with you and ask you questions. In these situations it is not necessary to speak German, but doing so can add to the atmosphere of an event.

If captured, you are only required to give your name, your rank, and your serial number, as set by the German military standard. Do not divulge information on your unit, defenses, manpower, or plans.

Likewise, if you ever take an enemy prisoner, feel free to ask him questions but understand that he will probably lie to you. Search him carefully as he may have maps or plans on him (especially if he is an officer), and feel free to keep him about five minutes, then allow him to “escape” or “be sent back to a prisoner camp.” While prisoners were executed during the war on both sides, reenactors tend to look down on this behavior.

Persona

Your “persona” (character) is who you are in first-person reenacting. While we do not require much more than your name and serial number, it is highly encouraged you develop your reenacting persona through research and creativity. It is particularly influenced by your rank, equipment, role, and backstory, but ultimately you still have a lot of freedom in deciding your persona. Is your character a volunteer that joined to help conquer the world in the name of the “Gross Deutsches Reich,” or some poor slob that was originally drafted into the Luftwaffe but later transferred over to the Waffen SS.

It helps to ask yourself questions about the individual soldier you are portraying, and not just the general type of soldier. What were you before the war? Where did you grow up? Do you like the war? Are you or a family member of yours a party member? Did you enlist or were you drafted, etc. These are all questions to figure out so that in the long run you may portray a more accurate, fleshed-out soldier and not just a guy in a uniform. You may also use personal real-life experiences in and out of reenacting.

Regardless, make sure to fill out your Soldbuch with your persona info and that you keep both matching. If you have trouble creating a persona, let an NCO or your mentor know and they can provide tips or assistance.

Personal Items

Soldiers often had to live from day to day with only what they could carry on their backs. While combat equipment is important, many people tend to forget that soldiers also did a lot of everyday living. They carried whatever they needed or deemed valuable – pocket knives, hygiene kits (required for all members!), candles, bandages, and food would be needed for everyday survival. However, they also carried things of sentimental value, such as photographs, rings, handkerchiefs, paperwork like their driver’s license, and even the keys to their home! There are many, many different options to helping immerse yourself in the world, whether it be stuff for daily convenience or things that hold meaning to you or your persona. It is recommended that as you gather your equipment, you take into consideration these items. You will also know what you want on your person as you attend more events.

Language

No unit member is expected to be fluent in German, but everyone is expected to learn basic German field commands. Learning a second language is a lifelong pursuit, so get into the habit of using your German. When you know the German word for something, always use that first, as it will benefit the unit in the long run if we all speak as much German as possible. At public events make your best effort to use your German, but do not feel pressured to use it, especially when it could result in confusion. To assist any beginners, we have provided a basic list of German commands below.

GERMAN

Formation

Achtung!
Angetreten!
Stillgestanden!
Ruehrt Euch!
Wegtreten!
Recht Euch!

ENGLISH

Attention! (As in “Listen up!”)
Fall In (At attention)
Attention (“Stand at Attention” ; Used when in formation)
At Ease
Dismissed
Dress Right (Close the lines to your right)

Marching

Im Gleichschritt, Marsch!
Ohne Tritt, Marsch!
Rechts Um!
Links Um!
Kehrt Um!
Links schwenkt, Marsch!
Rechts schwenkt, Marsch!
Abteilung, Halt!

March (in step)
March (out of step; similar to a casual group march-in)
Right face
Left face
About face (turn 180 degrees going left, **not right**)
Column left, march
Column right, march
Unit, halt

General

Weitermachen!
Vorwaerts!
Das Gewehr umhaengen!

Carry on
Forward
Sling Weapons (right shoulder)

You will be taught the commands (and what they sound like) when you attend events, but any commands memorized now helps.

Uniform and Equipment

NOTE: As a policy, members must acquire both Category I and II items before becoming full-fledged cuff title members. Candidates have one year to acquire their Category I items and six further months to acquire their Category II gear (thus giving each member one year and a half to gather their gear together). This can be extended depending on circumstances.

It is recommended that if possible you acquire high quality items first, as in the long run they are a better investment and will retain value. However, we stress you get what you can.

Listed here are the Category I items. If you wish to see more items, please see “Uniform and Gear for Stabs Kompanie/ PanzerJager Abteilung 5. “SS Wiking”” document.

Category I Gear Uniform

Wool Field Caps (Feldmütze) – 1940 Overseas Cap (Schifflin) or M43 Field Cap (Einheitsmütze)

A standard SS M40 Overseas Cap or a M43 field cap with correct insignia. Insignia can be bevo or embroidered, but the former is highly recommended.

Wool Tunic (Feldbluse) – M43, M42, or M40

The uniform includes shoulder boards in white (to denote infantryman or panzergrenadier) and SS sleeve eagle. This is all that is worn on the uniform until you have earned your collar tabs and cuff title. All above-mentioned uniform models are accepted, though the M42 and M43 must be SS versions which have five buttons. It is recommended that you purchase a good tunic the first time as there are many cheap but bad reproductions out there.

Pro Tip: It is also highly encouraged you also distress (wear down) your uniform. Remember that we portray a frontline combat unit where it was rare to see a clean, neat soldier! For advice on the feldbluse and distressing, contact an NCO or your mentor.

Wool Trousers (Feldhosen) – Langhosen (M40) or Kielhosen (M43)

The older styles were called “Langhosen” and were very similar to those in WWI. They were originally steingrau (stone gray), but became feldgrau (field gray) after 1940, although NCOs and officers often got the langhosen as private purchase. Keilhosen were introduced in 1943 and were modeled off of ski pants. They included modifications such as extra reinforcement and stitching in the crotch region, and belt loops.

Suspenders (Hosenträger)

Period correct suspenders are highly recommended over trouser belts as they provide better support for holding your trousers. While there are many variations, the most common ones tend to have either rayon or brown/undyed leather loops (leather was more common). Recommended you acquire either white or green-colored elastic ones.

Service Shirt (Diensthemd)

Grey service shirt (sleep shirt) with or without pockets. Cotton is recommended for hot summer events, but knit shirts are more commonly used. Brown shirts are only recommended for pre/early war impressions or walking out uniform. These will have no insignia apart from shoulder boards under certain circumstances.

Boots (Marschstiefel or Schnürschuhe) – Jackboots, or Low Boots

Boots must be blackened, hobnailed, wood-pegged, and have a heel iron; toe plates are optional. Either jackboots or low boots are appropriate, so buy what you feel comfortable wearing or is appropriate to your persona. Due to shortages of leather and labor, low boots became more common as the war went on and were seen commonly from 1942 onwards.

NOTE: Out of all the pieces of equipment you buy, ensure you **buy good quality boots the first time.** Many modern reproductions are poorly made and may fall apart on you. Your mentor can recommend several good vendors for your first boots as well as some to avoid.

Pro Tip: It is also recommended you **take care of your boots.** This applies to other parts of your kit. Equipment maintenance ensures the longevity of your equipment and, more importantly, your investments.

Socks/ Foot Wraps (Socken/Fusslapen)

Any period civilian or military socks are correct. German socks generally were dark feldgrau with white rings around the leg of the sock. Foot wraps are also an appropriate and cheap alternative for those unable to afford socks.

Leggings/Gaiters (Gemaschen)

If you wear low boots you need to wear gemaschen (gaiters) over them to ensure your trousers stay in place. Originals are not recommended as the leather tends to be too dry and fragile, though refurbished originals are an exception (ones with new leather replaced on them). If you can, buy high quality ones or modified ones. Otherwise you will be constantly adjusting your pants.

Field Gear

Equipment Belt (Gürtel)

Standard black leather belt and first field gear item for your impression. Make sure to measure the area around your stomach. 1940s fashion dictated that the belt should fit just across your navel, **not on your waist.** Wear a jacket when you measure to ensure a good fit over your uniform.

Belt Buckle (Gürtel Schlosser)

Standard belt buckle with two-prong hooks for slipping onto the equipment belt. Do not purchase a very

cheap reproduction buckle, as there is a greater risk of it being flimsy and prone to breakage. Good ones can be had for \$20 from reputable dealers.

Pro Tip: If you want to go the extra mile, paint your belt buckle in feldgrau (light or dark) to avoid having a bright silver target on your stomach. This was common towards the latter half of the war.

Helmet (Stahlhelm) – M35, M40, M42

Required for any participation in a tactical battle. The helmet should have only the SS decal on the right side, if any at all; very, very few of the double decal helmets (with both the SS and the swastika decals) made it to the end of the war intact. Correct feldgrau paint with either a flat, glossy, or textured surface is acceptable. Recommended you obtain a refurbished original or a high-quality reproduction.

K98k Ammunition Pouches (Patronentaschen)

Two black ammo pouches to fit your k98k ammo, each one with three cell pouches. Each cell contains a divider, allowing you the ability to carry sixty rounds of 8mm Mauser ammo on stripper clips. Many modern reproduction pouches have a very irregular pebbling pattern, so it is recommended (but not necessary) to use serviceable originals or high-quality reproductions.

Y-straps (Koppeltragegestell)

These are the leather straps that help secure your belt and its equipment. They may have the one-piece or two-piece hooks; the latter is preferred. Be sure to get the correct pair, as several vendors sell a cheap kind with the wrong front hooks (they are similar to some early variants but are longer). These can be converted, but it is better and cheaper to invest in a good pair instead.

Pro Tip: If you wish, you can also invest in tunic hooks. These were popular early in the war and appear quite often in photos throughout the war. However, the Y-straps are still required to be purchased.

Equipment Straps

It is recommended you get enough straps to attach all your gear onto your person (you need a specialized one for your canteen; it is not one of these). At least two are needed for the zeltbahn and one specialized one for the mess kit. Tornister straps are also acceptable.

Breadbag (Brotbeutel) – M31, M40, M44

Only quality reproductions, serviceable originals, or acceptable postwar breadbags are accepted. A good breadbag must have pointed loops and must not have an internal divider. The M44 breadbag is appropriate only for late war events.

Pro Tip: Stuff your breadbag with a towel in between events to prevent it from having a “flat” look. Stuff it with extra socks, food, shaving kit, toilet paper, etc. during the event. An empty breadbag on a wartime soldier looks very fake and immediately screams “reenactor!”

Canteen (Feldflaschen)

Ensure you purchase with it a good strap, canteen cover, and cup (aluminum or bakelite). Purchasing a

second canteen to place in your breadbag or around a belt loop is a good extra investment in the long run.

Mess Kit (Kochgeschirr) and Eating Utensils (Geschirr)

For eating and carrying small items. Be cautious as to what mess kit you get. Most postwar mess kits have incorrect details to them, so it is suggested you either study the characteristics of an original one or ask your mentor/NCO about finding a correct mess kit. Recommended you use a refurbished original or an early postwar variant. Also be sure to acquire an accurate spork as they are the most common eating utensil seen on soldaten.

Pro Tip: A small hand towel, a fork, spoon, and Esbit stove can fit inside of here easily; make sure to have a strap for this. Pack it so it doesn't rattle!

Gas Canister (Tragebusche)

Even though gas attacks were never seen in World War II, German High Command mandated that all soldiers carry a gas canister with a gas cape. You do not need to actually put a gas mask in here, but make sure that you acquire a sturdy one with the correct straps. Originals or early postwar variants are the best for this and while not recommended due to their flimsy construction, reproduction gas canisters are acceptable.

Shovel (Schanzzeug)

Because we make an intention to use our equipment, you should only get either solid originals or acceptable postwar variants with a shovel cover. Either the standard straight or folding shovel is correct for all events.

Bayonet (Nahkampfmesser) with Bayonet Frog

We do not unsheathe bayonets, but it is still required that everyone have one. Original or reproduction bayonet with a correct bayonet frog.

Paybook (Soldbuch)

This serves as a record of your "time" and experiences in Wiking and must be filled out. You will also need to get a photo of yourself taken and have a wallet or cover for it. Please contact the unit commander or an NCO for help in filling it out.

Pro Tip: While most vendors have soldbuch wallets or covers, if you are looking for a cheap alternative you can use a slip of cardboard folded around the soldbuch. This was done, albeit it does little to truly protect your soldbuch.

ID Tag (Erkennungsmarken)

An ID tag with your unit designation and your serial number stamped in. Be careful when ordering as some vendors have tags that are made of weak material. This is to be worn around your neck on a string. ID tag cover is optional, though recommended during extreme weather.

Category II

Uniform

NOTE: There are many different variants of camouflage that were produced throughout the war. The most common seen in photographic evidence was Plane Tree, particularly in the early stages of the war. Oak A was widespread in 1944 onwards, so our unit has adopted it as our primary camouflage pattern. However, there are many different patterns and we do recommend trying other patterns out. One look at original photos shows that it was common for soldiers to have a mismatch of camouflage items.

Camouflage Smock (Tarnhemd) – M40 or M42

Perhaps one of the most signature items used by the SS throughout its existence, the smock was designed in a large size to go over your tunic. The M40 is unique in having two slits around the chest area as it was originally designed to go over a soldier's equipment. All M42s have foliage loops, so it is recommended you get this though both are perfectly acceptable. There are many variants of camouflage patterns, so we require Oak A as it was the most common pattern in 1944 onwards.

Dot 44 or HBT Uniform (Erbsenmuster or HBT)

Early on the Wehrmacht never had a standardized uniform for hot weather environments. Though there is much ongoing debate in the reenacting community about its use, it is recommended you acquire both sets eventually. Most HBT designs were based off of drillrich (made of twill-reed) uniforms modified with pockets and developed from there to mimic the M42 and M43 patterns. Erbsenmuster (commonly called 'Dot 44' by reenactors) was issued out to SS units in early 1944 and was commonplace throughout the remainder of the war. Drillrich uniforms are permitted, although not necessary.

Greatcoat (Mantel) – M40 or M42

A standard issue item for the cold months, this is required before acquiring a reversible parka. Like other bits of our uniform, we do not allow any conversions or non-German patterns.

Helmet Cover (Tarnüberzug) – M40 or M42

Made alongside zelts and smocks, helmet covers were widespread in use with the Waffen SS. The M40 cover differs from the later models in not having any foliage loops. When picking out a helmet cover, keep in mind that they correspond with your helmet shell size, although an ill-fitting helmet cover is not at all inaccurate.

Field Gear

Camouflage Shelter Quarter (Zeltbahn)

A part of a full tent, zeltbahns have a variety of uses including blankets, rain tarps, and camouflage under

certain circumstances. We recommend finding a quality reproduction as some reproductions have either bad prints or are too flimsy for proper use. Make sure to also include zelt ropes and eventually acquire both stakes and poles.

Mountain Backpack OR Horse Hair (Rucksack OR Tornister)

Though the SS usually went into combat without packs and the A-Frame (a simple carrying rig) was widely used by the Wehrmacht, we require that at some point you get a pack for carrying gear. Originals are easy to come by though it is recommended you use a reproduction if at all possible. An A-Frame may act a substitute on a case-by-case level.

Wool Blanket (Decke)

This is just a standard wool blanket for chilly nights. The Germans used a wide variety of blankets, from official ones with stripes on the ends to even captured stocks from France and Italy.

Pro Tip: Recommended you use a dark gray surplus blanket if you're on a tight budget. This type of blanket can also be used with other impressions.

Field Flashlight (Feldtaschenlampe)

Throughout the war the Germans used a wide variety of flashlights. While originals are obtainable, a good postwar copy can work just fine. Recommended you avoid any with plastic parts and ensure that any you use have either a solid leather strap or a ring for putting around a button. Contact your NCO or mentor if you are unsure of a flashlight.

NOTE: Any items not mentioned here are not required, but highly recommended to acquire over time. These include accessories or personal items such as watches or grenades. They are listed on the main equipment list document. Please check with fellow unit members about these items if you need guidance.

Weapons

Mauser Kar 98k Rifle – Ensure it is an 8mm German rifle, Russian Capture (ones modified by the Russians), or Israeli reissue. Do not purchase a VZ24 or M48, as they have a different wooden sight guard. All Soldaten must have a K98k, even if they have another weapon as certain events may require K98s. If you have any questions on if a rifle is correct, contact the unit commander.

NOTE: Many were converted to 7.62 (.308) after the war. You may get one, but most of us carry 8mm blanks so if you run low on ammo, we may not be able to help.

Machinenpistole 18/28 (MP28) – 9mm Submachine gun based off of the first submachineguns built in the world. These are more appropriate for early war or veteran troop impressions. Can use converted Sten gun magazines.

Maschinenpistole 40 (MP40) – 9mm Submachine gun commonly associated with the Wehrmacht. Do not purchase a GSG or ATI .22 Rimfire variant as they are too quiet for use in the field; semi-rebuilds are appropriate. If you wish to get one, contact Darr von Lehman for help.

Gewehr 41 (G41 W) – Semi-auto rifle that loaded ammo only from the top via stripper clips. Appropriate only for 1941 and some later events.

Gewehr 43 (G43/K43) – An improved version of the G41, the only significant difference is the ability to load ammo from magazines instead of stripper clips. Appropriate for 1943 and later events.

Maschinengewehr 34 (MG34) – First air-cooled machinegun implemented by the German military in 1934. Though it was an expensive machinegun to build, it was commonly seen throughout the war.

Maschinengewehr 42 (MG42) – An enhanced version of the MG34 that was universally known for its high firing rate (giving it the nickname “Hitler's Buzzsaw” by American troops). This was used in 1942 onwards.

Sturmgewehr 44 (STG43/44, Mkb 42H) – First assault rifle built in the world, this rifle is useable for 1943 and later events only. Do not purchase a GSG or ATI .22 Rimfire variant, as they are too quiet for use in the field.

Pistole 1908 (Luger P08) – A classic pistol, the Luger was not as common as one would believe. Only NCOs, officers, and machine gunners may carry handguns.

Walther Pistole 1938 (Walther P38) – Recommended as it was the most common pistol fielded throughout the war. Only NCOs, officers, and machine gunners may carry handguns.

Walther PPK – Rarely used by frontline soldiers and only by Feldgendarmerie and officers.

NOTE: “Captured” weapons will be approved on a case by case basis by our Waffen Meister. Some were used commonly in the Waffen SS, but our guiding principle is that we attempt to ‘portray the average, not the exception’. Rule of thumb is that if it’s not German, odds are you can’t use it.

Any weapons besides the K98k will also need approval by the unit commander.

Vehicles

When available, our unit uses vehicles owned by fellow members at both public and tactical events. All vehicles **MUST** go through an inspection and approval by the unit commander before use. Because a vehicle is a huge investment, we give certain liberties to the owners on what they want to do with them such as condition (how well it runs if at all), color scheme, mounted equipment, usage, etc. Uniformity though is always encouraged and we ask that anything done to the vehicles be backed with research. If you wish to acquire a vehicle, talk to the unit commander or any fellow vehicle owners on where to start and how much you may have to invest in it.

Personal Grooming

Facial Hair

As a person portraying a German soldier you are expected to adhere to the standards of grooming accepted in the SS at the time period. Though there is evidence of facial hair worn by soldiers, more often than not soldiers were clean-shaven. We seek to portray the average, so as a rule, **no facial hair** may be worn at all, period.

Haircut

Germans were more lax regarding haircuts than the US Army. Anything beneath your cap was considered yours to do with as you wish, and everything below your cap had to adhere to the standard.

In general, soldiers that were in their late 20s and older wore their hair in a standard form.

“Shaved from the neck and tapered up to the top above the ears all the way around. The hair was usually very long on top, combed (& slicked) straight back from the forehead. If parted, the part is very high on the head.”

Younger soldiers, especially those that were in the Hitler Youth often wore a style similar to a modern undercut.

“Shaved from the neck up to the base of the skull. Sideburns shaved off and the hair on the side of the head with the part faded from 1mm at the ear to 3mm at the part (at the start of the top of the head). Leave the hair on top long and shave the part down to the skin. On the side of the head opposite the part blend it in with the tips of the hair from the top of your head and faded from 1mm at the ear. Slick your hair opposite the direction of the part with pomade.”

Other

Tattoos – Based on photo evidence, **no tattoos** are to be visible at any time while in uniform. There are products available that can hide tattoos if needed.

Weight – We understand that modern life makes it easy to let yourself put on more weight than a German growing up in the Great Depression. However, we ask that you actively seek to make the best attempt to maintain a healthy weight. It is expected that every member be fit enough to undergo rigorous periods of long marching and fighting. All members should be working towards their sports badge, so keep fit and eat healthy.

Jewelry – For men, no jewelry is to be worn while in uniform excluding period wedding rings. Women may wear one small pair of period earrings in addition to a period wedding ring.

Eye Wear – Period eye-wear or modern contact lenses are acceptable, but no other modern eye-wear is allowed.

Ranks and Awards

Wiking gives ranks and awards for service and commitment to the unit. A number of awards are earned for participation in battles, out-of-battle leadership and behavior, prior service, and miscellaneous awards for contributions to the unit. You will find that these are hard to obtain, and for good reason.

Ranks

Note on the spelling of German – *The German umlaut (two dots above a vowel, such as Ü), modifies the sound of the vowel to end with an “e”, making a word like “mutt” sound like the word “mute”. For simplicity sake with English-language computers, we will not include umlauts in this section of the handbook, and will write all umlauts as the vowel with an additional “e”.*

All new members start as an SS-Anwaerter (Candidate) and remain as such until they have acquired all of their Category II Gear. An SS-Anwaerter may not wear an SS-Cuff Title nor collar tabs. Once the Candidate has acquired all of their Category II Gear, they are promoted to SS Schuetze (Private). After reaching SS-Oberschuetze (E2) all normal SS ranks apply.

SS-Candidates are encouraged to participate in any and all events, but they may not wear an SS Cuff Title and are not eligible to earn or wear any awards.

Enlisted

E0	SS-Anwaerter	SS-Candidate	Candidate
E1	SS-Schuetze	SS-Rifleman	Private
E2	SS-Oberschuetze	SS-Senior Rifleman	Private E2
E3	SS-Sturmmann	SS-Storm Trooper	Private First Class
E4	SS-Rottenfuehrer	SS-Squad Leader	Corporal

Non-Commissioned Officers

A soldier can either go down the standard non-commissioned officer track, or go to an Officer Candidacy School where there are separate ranks. For now, most members will pursue the NCO track until there are enough members regularly attending events to warrant candidates going into OCS.

All standard NCO ranks have “Scharfuehrer” in the title, and OCS ranks have “Junker” in the name.

E5	SS-Unterscharfuehrer	SS-Junior Section Leader	Sergeant
E6	SS-Scharfuehrer	SS-Section Leader	* (See Note)

* (This is actually a rare rank in the Waffen SS, and was seen as “dead end” for many people, and so is given no equivalent rank)

E7	SS-Oberscharfuehrer	SS- Senior Platoon Leader	Staff Sergeant
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E8	SS-Hauptscharfuehrer	SS-Chief Platoon Leader	Master Sergeant
E9	SS-Sturmscharfuehrer	SS-Storm Platoon Leader	First Sergeant

Officer

O1	SS-Untersturmfuehrer	SS-Junior Assault Leader	2 nd Lieutenant
O2	SS-Obersturmfuehrer	SS-Senior Assault Leader	1 st Lieutenant
O3	SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer	SS-Chief Assault Leader	Captain
O4	SS-Sturmbannfuehrer	SS-Assault Unit Leader	Major
O5	SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer	SS-Senior Assault Unit Leader	Lieutenant Colonel
O6	SS-Standartenfuehrer	SS-Standard Leader	Colonel
O7	SS-Oberfuehrer	SS-Chief Leader	* (See Note)

* (This has no equivalent either in the US Army or the Heer, but can be regarded as a Senior Colonel)

After this point are the general ranks, which you should not run into on the field.

Awards

All new members start as an SS-Anwaerter. After Cat II gear is acquired collar tabs and cuff title are awarded and the candidate is promoted to SS Schuetze. After that all normal SS ranks apply. SS-Candidates are encouraged to participate in any and all events but they may not wear an SS cuff title and are not eligible to earn or wear any awards.

Each candidate has 12 months to acquire all of his Cat I gear, and a further 6 months to acquire their Cat II gear. Special exceptions can be made in certain circumstances. See your NCO if you think it will take longer.

Cuff Titles

When an SS-Candidate completes his required equipment lists and passes inspection, he becomes a full member of the 5th SS and is awarded a Wiking cuff title and his collar tabs. This will also apply to Candidates in our sister units, SS-Westland and SS-Germania as well in that they cannot wear a cuff title until they have been awarded it.

Attendance

Some awards are for total days of activities, which requires a record to be kept of attendance at battles and other events. "Total days" includes combat, support and public event days.

The unit commander is ultimately responsible for maintaining these records, although he may delegate

responsibility to subordinates. “Combat points” (or combat days) are points earned as a combatant at tactical battle events. One tactical battle equals one “combat point” or “combat day”. If two separate and distinct tactical battles are held on the same day, it shall count as two combat points.

“Public event days” are defined as points given for days spent in uniform at public events where all members of the unit in attendance participate as Wiking. If the commander determines that we will not be Wiking for an event such as Western front events, it still will qualify. This includes show battles, air shows and parades. Other types of public events, such as gun shows and school programs, must receive prior approval from the commander in order to count as public event days.

Certain public battles, due to the nature of the event, can be counted either for combat, support, or public event days at the soldier’s discretion. These events will be determined by the unit commander.

If you travel more than 300 miles one-way to an event, it is counted as double points as compensation for long travel times. Certain events (Ft. Indiantown Gap for example) are living history events that have a tactical element. Due to the special nature of these events, each day of the event is considered a combat day, even if there is no tactical battle held on that day.

Female personnel will be awarded support points for events attended where they do not take part in a tactical battle. When taking part in such battles, points will be earned as for males, however combat awards can only be worn on combat uniforms. Only non-combat awards can be worn on SS Helferin uniforms.

For the time being, *all awards at this time will be procured and paid for by the soldier wearing it.* All awards and rank will be awarded during a formal ceremony held at an event. The wear of any award earned is optional.

Wear of an award that you have not earned is a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action including reduction in rank or, if a repeated offense, expulsion from the unit. In short, if you have not been awarded something, don’t wear it!

Transfer of Awards from Other Units

When an individual who was previously a member of another German unit joins Wiking, some or all of his previous awards may be transferred and authorized for wear. Authorization of transferred awards will be dealt with on a case by case basis, with approval required by the unit commander.

The general guideline for approval in such cases is whether the other unit’s criteria for the award in question is equivalent to Wiking’s criteria. Personnel transferring to Wiking from other units must still pass inspection before they are authorized to wear the Wiking cuff title, or any of their transferred awards. Rejection of an award is final and cannot be repealed.

Awards from Allied impressions may not be transferred. No exceptions.

Policy on Presentation of Awards by Other Units to Members of Wiking

Except for awards transferred as above, members of Wiking may not accept or wear awards presented directly to them by other units. If another unit wishes to recommend a member of Wiking for an award, the other unit should make a formal written recommendation to the Unit Commander of Wiking. The

recommendation can then be handled as any other recommendation for award within the unit.

Tactical Event Attendance Awards

Note - The term “consecutive” here refers to events that happen “back to back”, so to be consecutive, the individual cannot skip events.

Infantry Assault Badge – 4 consecutive combat points, or 10 total (non-consecutive) combat points.

Close Combat Clasp in Bronze – 25 consecutive combat points, or 50 total (non-consecutive) combat points.

Close Combat Clasp in Silver – 50 consecutive combat points, or 100 total (non-consecutive) combat points.

Close Combat Clasp in Gold – 100 consecutive combat days, or 200 total (non-consecutive) combat points.

Russian Front Medal – 4 total combat and/or support points at advertised Eastern Front battles (no Western Allied soldiers) held between November 15 and April 15 OR 4 total combat points at any battle where snow is on the ground.

Anti-Partisan Badge in Bronze – 4 total combat days at advertised partisan battles. The opposition force at these battles must consist of partisans only.

Anti-Partisan Badge in Silver – 8 total combat days at advertised partisan battles. The opposition force at these battles must consist of partisans only.

Anti-Partisan Badge in Gold – 12 total combat days at advertised partisan battles. The opposition force at these battles must consist of partisans only.

Public Event Attendance Awards

Westwall Defense Medal – 15 total public event days as either a combatant or non-combatant. Authentic secondary impressions are allowed for public education purposes.

Commemorative Medal of the Return of the Memel District – 45 total public event days as either a combatant or a non-combatant. Authentic secondary impressions are allowed for public education purposes.

Spanish Cross with Swords – 60 total public event days as either a combatant or a non-combatant. Authentic secondary impressions are allowed for public education purposes.

SS Long Service Medals – These are given for 4, 8, 12, and 25 years of cuff title membership in Wiking. These are awarded on a real-life, year-to-year basis. However, they are for continuous time spent in the unit, not total time reenacting. Time spent in another recognized Waffen SS unit can transfer at the commander’s discretion. Time spent as a candidate or on inactive status does not count toward these

awards. Inactive status merely stops the clock, and when you return to active duty your time starts back up where it left off.

Police Long Service awards may be given or transferred for the proper number of years of continuous service in another Waffen SS reenactment unit.

While Wiking has no issues with any of our members reenacting with other units, if you do not attend any Wiking sanctioned events for a period of one year, but during that year you do have membership in another unit, the time clock for long service awards will be reset.

Combat Performance (Valor) Awards

1939 Iron Cross 2nd Class – Given for one or more significant actions and efforts on the battlefield requiring skill, dedication, initiative and/or leadership. Two witnesses must recommend the award in writing, and the Unit Commander must approve the recommendation. This award may be given for the cumulative effect of several actions or superior performance at several battles, no one of which would be adequate by itself.

1939 Iron Cross 1st Class – 1) A single decisive action on the battlefield requiring unusual skill, initiative and/or leadership. A good rule of thumb is to say that you personally had to have won the scenario for your side in order to qualify, either through an outstanding and decisive act of leadership which led to victory or through an individual act. Or- 2) For three or more significant actions and efforts on the battlefield, requiring skill, dedication, initiative and/or leadership, on three or more separate days.

Note - These actions are in addition to and beyond those required for award of the Iron Cross 2nd Class, but are otherwise comparable to those for which an Iron Cross 2nd Class would be awarded. Separate recommendations and approvals are required for each action. In all cases, two witnesses must recommend the award in writing and the Unit Commander must approve the recommendation. Prior award of the 1939 Iron Cross 2nd Class is a prerequisite for the Iron Cross 1st Class.

Honor Roll Clasp – Given for a second award of the 1939 Iron Cross 1st Class. German Cross in Silver or Gold, all Knight's Cross awards – these can be given only for continuous, outstanding leadership either on or off the battlefield (as appropriate for the award) over a period of years. All of these awards require the unanimous consent of everyone in the unit with the rank of Unterscharfuehrer and above. There will be no awarding of oak leaves, swords, or diamonds due to the relative rarity of such awards.

Note - Both the 1939 Iron Cross 2nd Class and the 1939 Iron Cross 1st Class are prerequisites for award of the German Cross in Gold or the Knights Cross to the Iron Cross.

Note - Both the War Merit Cross 2nd Class and 1st Class are prerequisites for award of the German Cross in Silver or the Knight's Cross to the War Merit Cross.

Injury Awards

Wound Badge (Black) – Sustain a serious injury while in uniform at an event that requires that you be seen by a medical doctor. Two witnesses must recommend the award and it must be approved by the unit

commander. This award can also be earned by getting 20 event points, either public or tactical without being injured.

Wound Badge (Silver) – Sustain an injury serious enough to require a hospital stay of at least two days. Two witnesses must recommend the award and it must be approved by the unit commander. This award can also be earned by attending 60 events without being injured. (Travel distance modifiers do not apply!)

Wound Badge (Gold) – Sustain an injury serious enough to cause loss of an eye or amputation. Two witnesses must recommend the award and it must be approved by the unit commander.

Other Combat Awards

Tank Destruction Badge in Silver – Single-handedly destroy an enemy tank at a tactical event with a panzerfaust, demolition charge, anti-tank mine or grenade from a range of 20 yards or less. Halftracks, armored cars, and Bren gun carriers each count as 1/3 of a tank, (i.e. three such kills are required to earn the badge, but only one tank is required). The individual must survive the action, two witnesses must recommend the award, and the recommendation must be approved by the unit commander. A maximum of 4 of these may be earned.

Tank Destruction Badge in Gold – This will not be awarded except under unusual circumstances in exceptional conditions. 4 silver tank destruction badges must already have been earned before the Soldat may be considered for the gold badge. This is not just for killing 5 tanks.

Snipers Badge 3rd Class – Procure a period correct rifle with period correct scope, demonstrate proficiency knowledge regarding the weapon, scope, history of the German sniper, and can demonstrate sniper skills in the field (as well as actually demonstrating live fire ability on a rifle range). Only a single soldat per unit in Wiking may earn the sniper's badge at any time due to rarity.

Note - At this time the 1st and 2nd class of this award cannot be worn.

Special Service Awards (Non-Combat)

War Merit Cross 2nd Class without Swords – For outstanding service to Wiking in the form of the successful completion of a special project (such as putting together and teaching a particularly successful class) or the satisfactory discharge of special responsibilities. This award requires a written recommendation signed by two witnesses, and the recommendation must be approved by the unit commander.

War Merit Cross 2nd Class with Swords – Given as a second award of the War Merit Cross 2nd Class without swords. Recipients of this award may not simultaneously wear it and their previously awarded War Merit Cross 2nd Class without Swords.

War Merit Cross 1st Class without Swords – Given as a third award of the War Merit Cross 2nd Class without Swords. Recipients of this award may simultaneously wear it and their previously awarded War Merit Cross 2nd Class with Swords.

War Merit Cross 1st Class with Swords – Given as a fourth award of the War Merit Cross 2nd Class

without Swords. Recipients of this award may not simultaneously wear it and their previously-awarded War Merit Cross 1st Class without Swords, but may simultaneously wear it and their previously-awarded War Merit Cross 2nd Class with Swords (the 2nd class one only as a ribbon).

Note - When the recipient does a particularly outstanding job, the next higher award may be given at the commander's discretion.

The SS Honor Ring – Awarded to senior NCOs and Officers for outstanding leadership and long term service to the unit. This award is actually reserved for cuff title members of the unit to award to leaders. A vote is taken (only cuff title members are allowed to vote) and the award is granted if the vote is unanimous.

Veteran's Awards

If you are a veteran of any nation's armed forces you may apply for ribbons to pay homage to your service.

Sudatenland Occupation Ribbon – If you were active duty military at any time you may wear the ribbon.

Prague Bar – If you served in a war zone for at least 30 days, you are eligible to add the Prague Bar to the ribbon.

Austrian Anschluss Ribbon – If you were actually in combat (earned the Combat Infantry Badge or equivalent for whatever MOS or branch you served in) you are also eligible for the Austrian Anschluss ribbon.

Note: A copy of your DD 214 form (or equivalent) must be submitted for verification.

In addition, if you were awarded a Purple Heart for active duty, depending on the number and severity of your wounds you can also be awarded the Wound Badge in Black, Silver, or Gold.

Note: There will no wearing of unit specific insignia (for example: mountain troop badges on caps). Such insignia represents the unit you are now in, and is not a sign of any qualification.

SS/SA/Heer Sports Badge and the Germanic Proficiency Runes – In an effort to promote physical fitness in unit personnel (as within the Waffen SS), the Sports badge shall be awarded when the soldier demonstrates ability to complete the 100 m sprint, long jump, grenade throw, and 3000 meter run, along with a 10 kilometer road march with full gear. Optimally this event will be held twice a year. Most members will be eligible for the SA badge. Members that do a Heer impression may attempt the Heer badge. The SS sports badge was actually very rare and only awarded to "Volksdeutsch", that is ethnic Germans not from the Reich. The Germanic Proficiency Runes would have the same criteria but are only for non-German volunteers.

Note – Members of Westland portraying non-Germans may wear the SS Sports Badge, while members of Wiking portraying Volksdeutsch may wear the Germanic Proficiency Runes.

Hitlerjugend (HJ) Proficiency Badge – The Hitlerjugend Proficiency Badge is authorized for optional wear for members below and up to age 25 who have passed the requirements of the SS/SA/Heer sports

badge. On the members 26th birthday, they must cease wearing the badge and instead wear the SA/SS sports badge.

The Equestrian Badge – This badge is awarded to German horsemen (and women) who display a proficiency in horsemanship. To earn this badge a unit member must own a horse and display proficiency in riding (mounting, dismounting, riding at the walk, trot, canter, etc).

Vehicle Related Awards

Panzer Assault Badge in Bronze – Serve as a crew member on an armored vehicle for 4 tactical event days and complete a total of 4 additional days of training, maintenance and/or repair work on that vehicle (not at events). “Crew Member” is defined as any regular crew position on a fully tracked vehicle, or the driver or vehicle commander of a half-track. At least 3 of the training and maintenance days must be performed prior to the first tactical day, so that the individual will be properly trained before going into action. This vehicle does not have to be in the unit, but must serve WITH the unit at the event.

Panzer Assault Badge in Silver – Cuff title members who have earned the Panzer Assault Badge in Bronze (above) and who have a correct panzer crew uniform (black wool or HBT or '44 dot) are authorized to wear the Panzer Assault Badge in Silver on their panzer uniform if they wish.

Motor Vehicle Drivers Badge in Bronze – Own and or serve as the driver of a 1-ton or larger unarmored reenactment vehicle for 10 total days including admin movement not at battles.

Motor Vehicle Drivers Badge in Silver – Serve as the driver of a 1-ton or larger unarmored reenactment vehicle for 30 total days, including admin movement not at battles.

Motor Vehicle Drivers Badge in Gold – Serve as the driver of a 1-ton or larger unarmored reenactment vehicle for 60 total days, including admin movement not at battles, or own and maintain such a vehicle which is used for 20 total tactical event days (not including admin movement).

Policy Statement on Ceremonial and Dress Daggers

Dress daggers are not considered to be awards by Wiking. They have the status of optional uniform items which may be worn by any cuff title member for dress occasions. Honor daggers and chain daggers are prohibited. SS-Candidates may not wear daggers.

Policy Statement on the Wearing of Pocket Badges

Members of Wiking may wear a maximum of four left pocket badges. All medals will be earned and awarded normally at awards ceremonies, but if an individual has been awarded more than four of these, he may only wear four of them (whichever he likes best out of those that have been awarded). This does not apply to close combat clasps, button hole or ribbon bar ribbons, sleeve awards, the 1939 bar to the 1914 Iron Cross, or medals normally worn on the right pocket (Spanish and German crosses.)

Policy Statement on Political Insignia and Uniforms

In keeping with the actual regulations of the wartime Waffen-SS, NSDAP party pins, swastika armbands and other political insignia shall not be worn on any uniforms.

Safety & Rules

Rules of Engagement

We all have a part in ensuring everything we take part in is a safe and fun event for everyone. To that end, **all members are responsible for following the safety rules at all times. Failure to do so will result in severe consequences.**

Firearms

1. Treat all firearms as if they are loaded.
2. Do not discharge a blank firearm directly at someone, aim above their head to prevent heat blast. (*Do not fire at their feet, because this can kick up debris.*)
3. Do not discharge your firearm **period** if someone is within 25 feet in front of you. If this is the case either yell “BANG,” discharge your firearm pointed directly into the sky, or take the hit.
4. Be mindful of where you discharge your weapon in relation to your proximity to a fellow soldier, especially one within less than three feet of your firearm. You may blow out someone’s ears.
5. Weapons are to be on safe while marching or resting, or in a vehicle, and unloaded while in camp.
6. Keep your finger off of the trigger until you are ready to fire.

Close Combat

1. Ensure the person you are going to engage in close combat with is aware of you.
2. Pull or let back on any hits you throw. Do not try to hurt the person.
3. No bladed weapons (metal) are to be pulled out at any time while in the field (rubber close-quarters weapons are approved).

Behavior

One member’s behavior in Wiking reflects on every other member, and the unit as a whole. As such, we must do our utmost best to present a professional image within the community and to the public at large.

1. Do not wear swastikas or your field tunics on the way to an event or while off the event site premises. There are some people who simply do not understand what we do, and while we may have innocent intentions, such actions can draw negative attention to our hobby and our unit.
2. Do not present the “Hitler/Nazi Salute” at a public event **at any time**. Although after 20 July 44 all people in the German military were required to render this salute, it is completely period accurate to use the traditional salute. Exceptions include private formations and awards ceremonies typically at tactical events where the general public is not present.
3. At no time is any member of Wiking to be intoxicated while in uniform. Also be considerate of non-drinking/non-smoking members, and vice versa.
4. Do not swear profusely in public, instigate a fight, or do anything that would reflect badly on the unit, especially in dealing with other reenactors. Use good judgement when talking about touchy issues.

Authorized Hardship Leave

Excused Absences

When a cuff title member of Wiking is unable to attend a unit-sanctioned event due to extraordinary circumstances that are beyond his control, he may apply for Hardship Leave. If granted, an approved Hardship Leave shall constitute an officially excused absence for the event in question. No days of credit shall be given for the excused absence, but the individual's string of consecutive days shall not be considered broken.

Hardship Leave must be applied for in writing. The reason for the absence must be fully explained. (Email counts as writing for the purpose of hardship leave). An individual may file his application with his squad leader, assistant unit commander, or unit commander. The application may be filed either before or after the event in question.

Each application shall be considered and decided by the unit commander and NCOs (the staff) during the next regular Staff meeting. If approved by the staff, a notation to that effect will be made in the official unit records.

Each application for Hardship Leave shall be considered on a case by case basis. The general guideline for approval shall be the seriousness and non-routine nature of the event that caused the absence. For example, a serious automobile accident immediately before the event, a death, serious injury or serious illness in the individual's immediate family, or a wedding in the immediate family would normally constitute grounds for approval. Work schedules do not constitute sufficient grounds for Hardship Leave.

Note - Events will be known for months in advance normally so it should be possible to get prior approval from work. If however a work schedule changes at the last moment, this can be considered.

Public Relations

Wiking is a historical reenactment organization, and as that concept is foreign to many people, quite a few may have questions. As stated above, if asked who we are, answer that we are a "Historical reenactment group who participates in events and displays to honor military veterans" or a variation of thereof. If a member of the public begins asking more specific questions about the unit, or displays any hostility, direct them to a unit Public Information Officer (PIO) or your Commanding Officer (CO).

At no time is any member of Wiking, excluding Public Information Officers, to speak to the press. If someone walks up to you with a camera, and wants to ask you questions, tell them you are a reenactor, you play German to give the American reenactors someone to fight, then point them to the PIO or the Commander. Do not continue to engage them in any further form if they persist.

In addition, only Public Information Officers may give permissions for an interview, offer to be recorded, or allow recording of the unit. If someone asks to take a picture, asks to record the unit, or you see them attempting to record the unit, immediately contact your Commanding Officer or the nearest Public Information Officer.