

VIENNA MAN'S HOBBY IS CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTMENT!

By Gary Knehans

History has always fascinated John Viessman, whose house just outside of his hometown of Vienna is packed with history books and a vast array of old artifacts. With such enthusiasm for the past and in particular the civil war, it is quite a natural development that Viessman became interested in re-enacting civil war events.

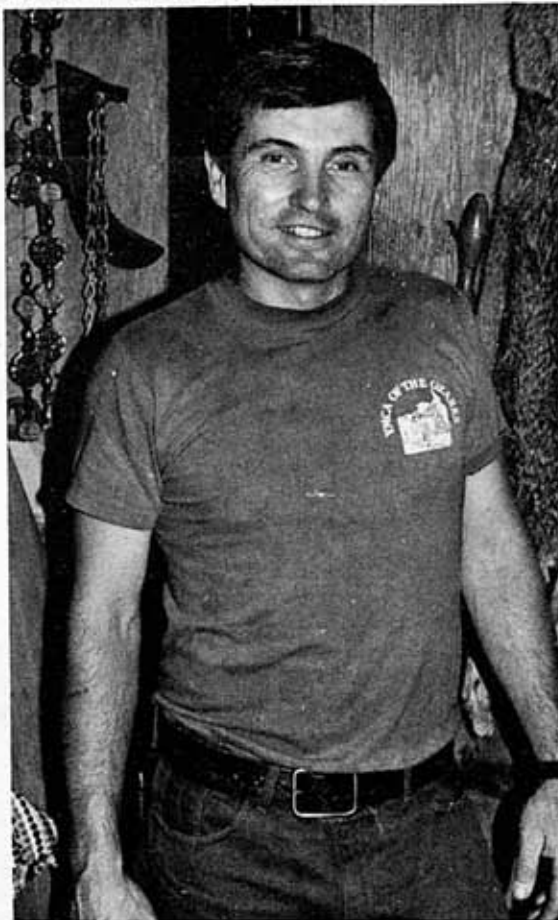
"I was always interested in the civil war as a kid," says Viessman. "Back during the centennial, re-enactments were beginning. I developed an interest then, but never acted upon it until the 1970's, when a friend and I decided to go up and get involved with a re-enactment unit close to Kansas City and participate in a re-enactment of the Battle of Lexington."

Viessman enjoyed this so much that he participated in other re-enactments. This led him to report to the sets of two made-for-television civil war movies that were looking for extras. He and other civil war re-enactors were signed up to stage battle scenes for

"The Blue and the Gray" and "The North and the South."

"They liked to hire re-enactors," explains Viessman, "because we already had the uniforms, weapons, ammunition, and tents. They used our tent city as a set."

Viessman says the battle scenes in "The Blue and the Gray" were filmed in Prairie Grove, Arkansas, and those in "The North and the South" were filmed in Natchez, Mississippi. The pay was \$50 per day and a free daily meal was provided. This would not make anyone rich doing civil war re-enactment for the few movies of this type that are made. However, the pay can help someone defray the costs of uniform, weapon, and other civil war replica items that can total up to a thousand dollars or more. "If you get involved in one of these movies," says Viessman, "what you usually wind up doing is taking the two or three hundred or four hundred dollars that you make and investing it back into your hobby by buying various things."



John Viessman
(Photo by Gary Knehans)

Very few re-enactors use authentic civil war uniforms, rifles, and equipment. These are too valuable and irreplaceable. Instead, most re-enactors purchase authentically styled and crafted civil war uniforms, weapons, and equipment obtained from specialty suppliers.

In Missouri, there are civil war re-enactment clubs in Jefferson City and Kansas City. Regular meetings are held and club members decide what re-enactment activities to schedule. Some re-enactors favor portraying union soldiers while others prefer portraying confederate troops.

Re-enactment events are held on a regular basis at various civil war historical sites in the nation, usually at battlefield locations. There are several major events this year, marking the 125th anniversary of certain battles.

What is the attraction of all this? Well, Viessman says it's trying to understand history better. "If you like civil war history, you can understand it a lot

better if you participate in a re-enactment," he says. "You know what it feels like to fix the rifles and the muskets and to march with the equipment. We try to do everything as accurately as possible and to follow civil war military tactics."



EXPERIENCE COUNTS

RE-ELECT JIM LONG Pulaski County Coroner



Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve you as Coroner. Your continued support and vote will be greatly appreciated.

Jim Long

EXPERIENCE

Pulaski County Coroner for 8 years.
Serving on second term on the Executive Board of the Missouri Coroners' Association.
Serving on Education Committee of Missouri Coroners' Association.
Chairman Troop 1, Missouri Coroners' Association.

With an excellent working relationship with the highway and law enforcement agencies in the county, Jim Long responds to every call in an efficient manner, mindful of public duty and respectful of public wishes.

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Democrat, For Pulaski County Coroner**

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