

# 150 Years later: USAHEC prepares for winter camp

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During the last weekend in September, Civil War “Soldiers” from around Pennsylvania, weary from summer fighting, will build a winter camp to sustain them as they refortify and train for the spring campaigns, on the grounds of the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center as part of the **Civil War 150: Going to Winter Camp on Sept. 30 to Oct. 2, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.**

In May the USAHEC Visitor and Education Center launched the exhibit, “**A Great Civil War, 1861: The Union Dissolved.**” This exhibit will run until next spring. It is the first in a series of four exhibits planned for the next five years to cover the full spectrum of the Civil War over the next five years.

“Going to Winter Camp” will feature a variety of activities including firing demonstrations, close order drills, cavalry demonstrations, a large Sutler’s Row of civilian merchants that sold non-military provisions to Soldiers, and the construction of a replica of the “Pine Cottage” cabin.

On Friday, September 30, programs will encourage for school-aged children to look at different aspects of the Civil War throughout the event.

Saturday’s special events include a series of lectures on Saturday, October 1, including *Remembering “The War of the Rebellion”* from the Emmy-Award winning filmmaker and Civil War battlefield preservationist Robert Lee Hodge. The lectures will be located in the Visitor and Education Center along with a book sale.

The event will conclude on Sunday with military drill exhibitions and a demonstration on Civil War engineering, as well as a demonstration of a Civil War era baseball game.

The three day event is inspired by the winter of the war’s first year when both the Union and Confederate armies ceased fighting and entered winter camps due to operational conditions. The weather conditions posed communication and supply chain problems and made maneuvering extremely

difficult. In this period of decreased activity led the armies to set up more permanent log cabin style camps, as opposed to tents or open-air camps that were used when Soldiers were on the move, and Soldiers could relax after months of fighting.

It gave troops an opportunity to train and prepare for the coming months of battle, as well as participate in camp activities such as sporting events card games. Officers were allowed to bring their families to stay with them in the camps, and civilian merchants and other entrepreneurs would also set up shop near the camp to provide goods and services to the Soldiers.

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