

Teens learn history lessons

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warmer months.

A typical re-enactment is “like camping, but in 1800,” says Rachel Jost, 17, of Lewistown.

Jost’s parents, Frank and Crystal, were instrumental in starting the Venture Crew.

Battles are, of course, the major part of a re-enactment. Both young men and women can serve their unit as soldiers. Women also can portray nurses.

“It’s really fun. You get to wear dresses and feel really girly,” Rachel Jost says.

Shaffer joined the crew when she found out they had a skirt in her size. The dresses are not like today’s fashions, though.

“They’re like an Amish outfit and they have corsets,” Shaffer says, referring to a garment traditionally worn by women to shape their torsos.

Even wearing a corset is a learning experience. “You can’t move like you usually do,” Shaffer says.

Meanwhile, the boys endure their own form of distress.

“Soldier uniforms are very hot and very sticky,” says David Monsell, 17, of Lewistown.

He always had a keen interest in history and particularly in the Civil War. He joined the Venture Crew about a year ago.

“It is cool knowing that you are doing something that was very important in American history,” Monsell says.

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— David Monsell

As a soldier, Monsell must follow orders and “go where my sergeant puts me.”

On the battlefield, soldiers will fire their muskets, using black powder blanks, at their foes. If “wounded,” they report or are taken to the field hospital.

Shaffer says special effects makeup is used to simulate wounds.

At the field hospital, “Demonstrations are given of how doctors would treat wounded soldiers,” Jost says. The surgeon works on them and demonstrates the demo tools and medicines that would have been used then.”

She says she’s learned that “the Civil War was the medical revolution.”

“They used some medications that are still things we use today,” Shaffer adds, “like chloroform. They used that to knock out the soldiers to do surgery.”

Off of the battlefield, the teens gather around the campfire and tents. They learn how to cook food — eggs, bacon, potatoes, soup — over an open flame.

“There’s a lot more just hanging out and getting to know each other,” Shaffer says, “and the adults are really good role models.”

New members always are welcome.

“If you’re interested, just hang out with us for a little bit,” Jost says. “We’re a good group.”



Sentinel file photo

Brandon Benner, left, David Monsell, center, and Bryant Hostetler are a part of the Venture Crew.

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