

Contact: Bob Minton
colonelminton@armyoftheohio.com
www.armyoftheohio.com

CIVIL WAR REENACTOR GROUP ADOPTS BATTLE FLAG

The Army of the Ohio Civil War Reenactors recently joined in an effort to save one of the American Civil War's more important battle flags. The Army of the Ohio, a regional organization composed of groups from Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York is working to help raise funds to conserve the regimental flag of the 23rd Ohio Infantry. The flag, one of almost 400 Civil War Battle Flags in the collections of the Ohio Historical Society, is at the top of that organization's priority list for conservation. The 23rd Ohio Infantry included two future presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley. The 23rd fought at South Mountain and Antietam in Maryland in the fall of 1862, losing over 200 men in these battles.

The flag, made of silk features a hand-embroidered eagle and was carried by the regiment at battles in Virginia and Maryland and what would become West Virginia. At a cost of \$24,000 to stabilize the flag and seal it in a framed, glass case, it is one of the more expensive in the collection to conserve. The cost, while high, is worth it according to Army of the Ohio commander Bob Minton. "The current conservation method of sealing the flags in glass is one that will ensure almost permanent protection. We are excited to be a part of saving this important symbol of the Civil War."

Members of the Army of the Ohio participate in reenacting to promote America's Civil War history, provide educational opportunities at events and raise funds for history-related efforts. The fundraising effort will take place throughout 2011 as the members of the Army of the Ohio conduct preservation marches, sell T-shirts and pursue other donation means. According to Colonel Minton, "These fundraising efforts are important to their mission to protect the symbols of the Civil War so future generations can better understand the events of the past and how they impacted the country we are today."

The 23rd Ohio Flag effort is made possible by the Historical Society's *Save the Flags Campaign*. The project evaluates the condition of the flags and determines which are conservable and the estimated cost for potential adopting groups. The property of the Ohio Adjutant General's office, the battle flags have been under the care of the Historical Society since 1970. To date, 19 of the almost 400 Civil War battle flags in the collections have been conserved.