In 1889, the West Virginia Legislature enacted a new militia law that reorganized state military forces and placed them on a permanent basis with a new designation as the West Virginia National Guard. All able-bodied males between age 18 and 45 were subject to military duty as ordered by the governor, who served as commander-in-chief and could turn the organization over to the U.S. president if requested. In the early years, Guard forces were periodically called on to intervene in labor disputes between coal miners and operators. As in other states, the West Virginia National Guard entered active federal service during World War I. However, there was no coordination between federal and state authorities to reestablish National Guard organizations at war’s end.

When armed miners threatened to march on Logan and Mingo counties in August 1921, Governor Ephraim F. Morgan sought to create a state military force to handle the rapidly devolving situation. He commissioned reserve officer William E. Eubank of McDowell County, a former coal mine superintendent, to form companies to meet the miners’ challenge. Colonel Eubank hastily organized volunteer companies at Williamson, Mount Hope, Welch, Logan, and elsewhere in southern West Virginia. Some companies were authorized by order of the adjutant general in late August, but the process of mustering men into the National Guard was not completed. Hence, they were described as volunteers rather than National Guard companies. At least one unit was sworn in as “deputy state policemen.”

While the volunteer companies were not technically part of the West Virginia National Guard, Colonel Eubank took command of them during the Battle of Blair Mountain. When it became apparent that the miners would not accept Eubank’s offers of a negotiated settlement, the governor and legislature ordered the state militia to begin arming at once. In a speech to the miners, Eubank declared his forces “are armed and ready for the first blow that may strike.”

In response to Hログian’s pleas for help, Brigadier General Henry H. Bandholtz, district commander and former army officer, was dispatched to southern West Virginia.

When he arrived, Bandholtz conducted numerous surveys and interviews before recommending that federal troops be sent to the state. On September 1, 1921, U.S. troops were deployed from Fort Knox and Fort Thomas in Kentucky, and Camp Dix, New Jersey. Infantry regiments began to arrive in full battle gear the next day, and by noon on September 3 the forces had established positions with the miners’ army. The miners had greater respect for the regular army than they did for the locally organized operators’ force, and they marched out to surrender their arms. The miners’ march ended by September 4, 1921, and participants returned to their homes.

Even though not formally organized for service, activities in 1921 placed the West Virginia National Guard squarely in the coal operators’ camp. Officers who raised volunteer companies to defend Logan County were automatically announcing that the service was in opposition to the miners’ efforts to unionize. Although the federal forces initially proved more effective in building a second armory. Hence, it is little wonder that the reputation of the National Guard suffered damage over the following years. Its involvement in evictions, by the presence of members of its organizations over to the U.S. president if requested. In essence, it created the situation the fact was that many early National Guard officers were themselves prominent businessmen or operators. (Continued on other side)
A political cartoon criticizing the predominance of armed police and vigilante groups in West Virginia in the years leading up to the Battle of Blair Mountain. Originally circulated in Montana's Butte Daily Bulletin, a pro-labor publication. Library of Congress.

One of many upcoming Blair Centennial events:
- Museums, Labor, and Social Activism: a public symposium about the challenges institutions face when teaching industrial and workers' history. Funded in part by a Council mini-grant.

Beginning with a kick-off event in Charleston on Friday, September 3rd, this Labor Day Weekend will see an unprecedented amount of public commemoration to honor the Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial. From film screenings, lectures, and exhibits to reenactments, concerts, and marches, the slew of activities spans from Morgantown to Matewan. See the Events section below for a selection of those funded by Council grants, and visit www.Blair100.com for the full slate.

**Events August - September 2021**

Always check with the venue or hosting organization of an event before attending; as schedules may change without the knowledge of the Council. For more information, you can also visit the calendar on our website, www.wvhumanities.org.

**Aug 2-6** Artist in Residence with Heather Schneider - Pocket's Fort State Park, Fairmont.
**Aug 5** Delbert Bailey: “Working in the Coal Mine” - Living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm
**Aug 7** Otsenaco and Gabriel Arthur - “History Alive!” Presentied by Case Science RR State Park, Case. 11:00am and 3:30pm
**Aug 6** Sterling Spencer: Hunter, Soldier, Carver, Philosopher - Living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm
**Aug 21** The Amazing Mr. Pratt, Our Master Richwood - Living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm
**Aug 24** Scotts Run Street Fair - book signing and presentation. Scotts Run Museum and Trail. 10am

**Sept 1-30** Appalachian Writer-in-Residence Marie Manilla - www.shepherd.edu/ahwirweb/manilla/schedule

**Sept 4** Huntington Sesquicentennial Exhibit - Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington.
**Sept 5** Blair Mountain Centennial Kick-Off - Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. For tickets and full schedule, visit www.blair100.com. 4pm-9pm
**Sept 4** Museums, Labor, and Social Activism: a public symposium presented by the West Virginia Association of Museums. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Charleston. 9am
**Sept 11** Marian McQuade and the McQuade Family - Help Celebrate Grandparents Day - Living history presentation. Richwood Heritage Center, Richwood. 1pm
**Sept 18-22** WV Folklore Apprenticeship Showcase: Old-time banjo and fiddle, by Kim Johnson, Megan Costello, and Amy Dawson. For more information on the film below, visit https://tinyurl.com/WVFooodways. Virtual premieres will occur at noon on the date listed.
**Sept 25** Heritag Weekedn Open House - Robert Higgins House, Mouthart.
**Sept 25** Gabriel Arthur and Otsenaco - History Alive! Presented by Big Coal River Heritage, John Smock Press, Racine. 11:00am and 2:00pm
**Sept 25** Abigail Adams - History Alive! Presented by Hardy Co. Tour and Crafts Assn., Hardy County, venue TBA. 11:00am

- The Council’s Folklife Program is producing a new film series in partnership with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and filmmakers Mike Costello & Amy Dawson. For more information on the films below, visit https://tinyurl.com/WVFooodways. Virtual premieres will occur at noon on the date listed.

**Aug 18** Punging and Relations with Jonathan Hall
**Sept 1** Kinichi Peremiation with Marlyn McClendon
**Sept 15** Roundtable with Amy Lsuha & Turkska
**Sept 30** Blackjack Hopewell in West Virginia with State Historian Emily Hillden and Filmmakers Mike Costello and Amy Dawson.