

School of the Renaissance Soldier, Actions of the Lowe Countries

2007 Event Rules and Policies

Please review these event rules and share the information with others in your party. These rules are current as of 3/8/2007, and may change as the event draws nearer. Please check back a week before the event to make sure that you have the most current copy.

Weather

No event held out-of-doors is impervious to the weather. In conducting an open field event, with woolen clad participants shooting matchlock weapons and cooking over open fires, we definitely sought a cooler time of the year, that would give us green fields, mild temperatures and minimum rainfall. On the Average, Gibson Ranch in April delivers all of these things. The average daytime high is 74 degrees; the average nighttime low is 50 degrees (although the record high is 98, and the record low is 34). In Sacramento, the rainiest months are November through March. June through September are dry and warm (often hot). The best months for this sort of an event are October, April and May. For many of us in Northern California, most of October is taken up by Renaissance Faires. May is attractive, but begins to conflict with other events (most notably a very large Civil War reenactment occurring at Gibson Ranch). Since we do want a springtime event, and venues similar to Gibson Ranch are difficult to find (other suitable locations charge exorbitant fees or only allow events in the summer), we are pleased to conduct the Actions of the Lowe Countries in April, and take the weather as it presents itself.

Arriving at Gibson Ranch

- If there is a ranger on duty at the gatehouse when you arrive at Gibson Ranch, stop and pay the parking fee (see the next section for the fee details). Tell them that you are attending the “Renaissance Military” event, and they will direct you to the site. If no ranger is present, you may pay at the self-serve kiosk. Once past the gatehouse, continue on the main road (straight through all intersections) all the way around the park to where it ends at the horse trailer parking lot.
- The front gate near the main road is locked at sundown. If you arrive after sundown on Thursday or Friday, the combination to the lock will be announced two weeks before the event. **Please close and lock the gate after you pass through.**
- Friday night, event staff will be at the gate to let you in and direct you to our camp.

Sacramento County Parking Fees

All vehicles entering the park are required to pay the admission/parking fee. The fee for vehicles of 22 feet or less is \$4.00 per day. The fee for vehicles over 22 feet, or vehicles with trailers, is \$8.00 per day. This daily fee applies to all vehicles that enter Gibson Ranch, regardless of the time of day. For example, if you arrive at Gibson Ranch in a regular sized car or truck, at 6:00 PM Friday night, and depart at 6:00 PM Sunday night, your admission/parking fees will be \$12.00 for the weekend. Note that this fee is per vehicle, and not per person, so, save money and carpool to the event. Park Rangers will cite vehicles without a parking pass (the price of a parking ticket is \$35.00). Those persons staying over on Sunday night to depart on Monday are technically liable for an additional admission/parking fee. Although it is not stated, the self-serve envelopes may be used to make one payment for the entire weekend, just enter the dates of your stay and insert the proper payment. Checks are accepted.

Parking

- Park your vehicle in the large parking lot at the very end of the road, just to the south of camp. Please leave the western most row for horse trailers, or be prepared to move your car if instructed to do so by an SRS officer.
- Absolutely no horse trailer parking is allowed on the turf. Towing vehicles and trailers must remain on the paved parking lot.

Camp Layout

To the extent practical, the Actions of the Lowe Countries camp will be laid out in accordance with the rules of castrametation, “the measuring out of the quarters for the encamping of an army”. These rules can be quite detailed, but boil down to only a few important principles:

- The camp will be laid out in a rectangular manner, featuring rows of tents separated by streets.
- Each company (or in our case, each attending unit) will place their tents in one or two rows, as required.
- The commander of that unit shall be at the beginning of the row.
- Perpendicular to the rows of soldiers’ tents will be a row of officers’ tents, the officer’s tents form a barrier, of sorts, between the soldiers’ quarters, and the sutlers’ area
- Between the officers’ tents and the sutlers’ area will be an open assembly area.
- Fires are not allowed in the soldiers’ area, and are only permitted in the sutlers’ area.

Based on this arrangement the most likely layout of camp will be (from south to north):

1. The horse corrals (this is because the horse trailers will be parked in the horse trailer parking lot, immediately to the south).
2. Cavalry camp
3. The sutlers’ area, tavern, cook fires
4. Open assembly area
5. Single row of infantry officers’ tents (east-west trending) facing the assembly area, captain in the center, other officers to each side
6. Rows of soldiers’ tents, perpendicular to the officers’ tents (north-south trending) separated by "streets".

Please check with an SRS officer or event organizer before pitching your tent.

Fire Regulations

There are three sets of rules to which we will adhere regarding the use of ground and cooking fires.

1. The rules of castrametation clearly state that fires are not allowed in or near the soldiers’ area.
2. Sacramento County has given us permission to build ground fires and to have above ground fires only in specific areas.
3. The Fire Marshall has imposed specific regulations regarding the distance from fires to flammable structures or materials, and proximity to a source of running water. These requirements can only be met by locating the fires in a controlled area. This will be the sutlers’ area of camp. Any source of open flame other than candles or candle lanterns (preferred), including ground fires, BBQ grills, braziers, camp stoves, backpacking stoves and “tiki” torches outside the sutler’s area is strictly forbidden. Furthermore, these fires must be over 25 feet from the nearest flammable item, and within reach of the water hose. Fires built under a tarp or other covering are not allowed.

Units accustomed to building a fire or cooking as a group near their lodgings are advised to designate one of their tents as a cook's or sutler's tent and set it up in the sutlers’ area. That way they can build their own cook fire there and use it as a center for their activities.

Cooking

Since this is a period camp, cooking must take place over an open fire in a properly constructed fire pit, and in accordance with the above mentioned fire regulations. Firewood will be provided. Participants should use period appropriate cooking techniques and equipment. See the [Dining at the ALC](#) document for short list of suitable cooking equipment.

Only period cooking will be allowed on-site proper. If, however, you or your unit wishes to cook, but you do not have appropriate period equipment, you have several options:

1. Set up a cook station using a camp stove out of the back of your vehicle in the parking lot (hey, a tailgate party!). Similarly, if your group has a trailer or camper, you could prepare your meals there.
2. There are covered picnic tables and BBQ grills at other locations throughout the park. These are available for your use. It would also be possible to set up a camp stove at these tables.

These alternate cooking methods and locations may also prove useful in foul weather.

Wherever you prepare your food, it is suggested that you return with you food in a period appropriate bowl or plate to the group area, and take your meal with your fellows in camp.

Food

Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings will be provided by the School of the Renaissance Soldier. Other than these two meals, you are responsible for all of your own food and drink. Weather permitting; SRS sutlers will be providing hot meals for a modest price, for dinner (lunch) on Saturday and Sunday, and supper on Saturday night.

If you do not plan on purchasing from the sutlers, you are quite welcome to construct your own cook fire in the sutlers' area, in accordance with the fire regulations already mentioned (the SRS sutlers will have their own fire, and this will not be available for communal cooking).

Because Gibson Ranch is only minutes away from several restaurants and fast food establishments, it is quite possible to take any, or all, of your meals in sit-down modern comfort. Local restaurateurs and shop owners are accustomed to seeing costumed reenactors, so don't feel the need to change your clothes when heading out for lunch!

The local restaurants also become an attractive option in inclement weather. A full grocery store is also nearby.

Shelter

Tents are designed to protect their inhabitants from wind and rain. For us, the true test of our equipment and our skill in selecting and using it, is to subject it, and us, to a little wet weather. A properly pitched canvas tent (in good condition) can be a very satisfactory shelter. It is possible that we will get rain during this event. If you are prepared for rain, this should present no great difficulty. If you are not, you may be in for trouble.

We have heard from some parties, that they are not willing to pitch their canvas tents at an event if rain is eminent. To most, this sounds a bit absurd. Isn't that the primary justification for even owning a tent? There is, however, some justification for this concern. A wet canvas tent needs to be dried out quite thoroughly to avoid subjecting it to mildew and rot before it can be folded and put away. The best method of drying a tent is to pitch it again in the back yard and let it air dry. Barring that, the canvas must be hung out in an open dry area, such as a garage or covered patio, until it is completely dry. This poses no great difficulty to some home owners, but apartment dwellers or folks without garages or adequate open space to spread out a tent may find this operation an impossibility. So, does this mean that if it looks like rain you should stay home from the event? No way! What else can you do?

- Day trip – come out for the day, and then return home to your place at night
- Get a room – many hotels are within minutes of the event site
- Bunk with a friend – find someone else with room in their tent
- Sleep in you vehicle – there will be a tavern tent where you can get dressed

Watch and Ward

The requirement to perform watch and ward is one of the most basic responsibilities of any soldier mustered to an infantry company. “Watch and ward” implies that the soldier will keep “*watch*” (stay on the lookout for the enemy or other intruders) and “*ward*” off interlopers or unauthorized persons attempting to enter, or cause mischief to, the camp.

Because of its central significance to a soldier’s duties, and our desire to give all participants a rich reenactment experience, soldiers will be assigned watch and ward duties for Friday and Saturday nights during the Actions of the Lowe Countries.

There is also a present day necessity to perform watch and ward. Although the front gates are locked each night at dusk, and Gibson Ranch is not open to the public, persons have been known to enter the park illegally. A posted guard may help us prevent theft and vandalism. Please note that if a soldier on watch and ward encounters a threatening uninvited guest, they should not attempt to engage them, but rather should notify the provost. In urgent situations, he should give alarm to his fellows and summon reinforcements.

Basic rules for watch and ward will be these:

- There will be six, one hour watch duties each night: 11PM, Midnight, 1AM, 2AM, 3AM and 4AM.
- Two men will be assigned to each watch. There will also be one Horse Guard on each watch.
- Each man must be told the name and lodging place of the man who will relieve him and the name and lodging place of the provost and the “officer of the day”.
- 10 minutes before the conclusion of his watch, each man will roust his replacement.
- At the conclusion of his watch each soldier may retire to his quarters.

Method of assigning watch and ward duty:

- Since, for both nights, a total of only 24 soldiers will be needed for watch duty. There is about a 50/50 chance that you may not be required (have the opportunity) to serve.
- The provost will solicit volunteers for duty, prior to any assignments being made.
- Remaining posts will be filled by random selection made from the official muster roles.
- Soldiers may select their preferred duty time based on the order in which they volunteer or are assigned.
- Tent mates may wish to volunteer for the same watch to avoid disturbing each other as they rise to report to separate duty.
- No soldier will be assigned to more than one hour of service for the event.

Watch and ward duties:

- Stay awake. Stay vigilant.
- Keep the watch fires burning. The last watch should stoke the kitchen fires, and put on a kettle of water. Check with the sutlers for detailed instruction.
- Patrol the camp and its perimeter.
- Ask all persons attempting to enter the camp for the “watch word”.
- If the enemy (or a threatening intruder) shows himself, or if some other incident arises, notify the provost, who will, if necessary, notify the officer of the day. If a true emergency arises (a fire breaks out, or an intruder threatens violence) dispense with formalities and roust as much of the camp as possible.

Exceptions:

- Soldiers with a legitimate reason why they should not be assigned to watch and ward duties will be excused from serving (doctor’s note not required).
- In the 16th century, the penalty for failing to report to your assigned watch was to suffer the “paine of death”. Fortunately for you this is not the 16th century. If a soldier fails to perform his watch duty, the only recourse we have is to subject him to extreme laughter and ridicule the next day. For this reason it is recommended that soldiers set an alarm for themselves to insure that they arise in time for their duty, even if, perhaps, their predecessor has shirked his.

Event Cancellation

Any outdoor event can be negatively affected by the weather. This is an inescapable reality, and all participants must accept the fact that harsh weather may force the restructuring or even cancellation of this event. During April the most likely weather factor to be concerned with is rain. Modest rain or wind may affect the nature or duration of our activities, but will not force cancellation of the event. However, the event could be canceled if:

- Heavy prolonged rain saturates the ground, and Gibson Ranch Rangers close the park prior to the beginning of the event (according the Park Rangers, this has never happened, but it remains a possibility).
- Event organizers determine that the integrity of the grounds after a prolonged rainy period is unsuitable, even if Gibson Ranch has not told us to cancel. Since many participants travel a considerable distance (and often with horses in tow), the decision to cancel the event prior to its opening will be done by **Tuesday, April 17th**.

If sustained heavy rain occurs after the event has begun, and is severe enough to curtail our activities, the event may have to be concluded early.

If the event is canceled prior to opening, any persons who have prepaid will receive a full refund. If the event must be shortened once it has begun, refunds will be limited to only that portion of the fee which covered unused Gibson Ranch admission/parking.