

# School of the Renaissance Soldier

## Rules of Engagement (ROE)

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### 1 Rules for Battle Reenactments

The safety of all participants is paramount. Common sense is to be applied by everyone on all occasions and situations with attention to safety. These rules should be used in combination with the black powder rules, site regulations, and other overall safety requirements, and agreed upon by all unit commanders. They should be published and/or announced in advance to all battle participants. Anyone not conducting himself/herself in a safe and courteous manner may be immediately dismissed from the field or even from the event. Battle plans will be worked out beforehand by the officers, and announced to all prior to the reenactment.

#### **1.1 General Rules:**

- 1.1.1 All participants must attend some of the reenactment training and drill on the day of the reenactment or they will not be allowed to participate in the reenactment in an active role, although they may participate in a supportive role (e.g. wounded, prisoner, etc.).
- 1.1.2 Minimum distances for safe discharge of black powder weapons:
  - **Artillery:** 50 yards, no persons within 20 yards to the side of muzzle
  - **Musket & Pistol:** 20 yards, aiming high
- 1.1.3 Any activity will stop immediately when “HOLD!” is cried. This should be used only when safety issues are perceived or an injury has occurred, and any other uses of the word should be avoided (try using the words “Stay” or “Keep”).
- 1.1.4 All participants must follow the battle plan, for both historical and safety considerations. Repeated failure to follow a clear plan is grounds for removal.
- 1.1.5 No weapon is to be used to actually strike an opponent. All weapons are only to strike other weapons. Only approved weapons can be used, no artillery rammers or sticks, no “natural” weapons such as tree limbs or rocks.
- 1.1.6 Pikes can fence other pikes at the command of the officer, but should not cross more than 3 feet from the point. Pikes should be held steady at the approach of cavalry, and points raised to be above the heads of the riders. There is to be no hand-to-hand

combat between pike or between pike and musket. (See Rules for Pike and other Polearms.)

- 1.1.7 Unsecured daggers/knives are not to be worn on the field. Avoid carrying additional items from your belt such as pouches, eating knives and tankards (such necessities are best carried securely in a snapsack). Sharp swords are never to be drawn on the field, and only those meeting reenactment blunting standards can be drawn or used to strike other weapons. (tip round as a dime, edge thick as a quarter).
- 1.1.8 Soldiers may be armed only with a sword, a dagger and their principle weapon (pike or musket). Other weapons such as axes, maces, flails or large swords (Zweihänders, claymores or other two-handed swords) are not to be worn during drills or battle reenactments, unless otherwise approved by an officer. In all cases, any decision regarding of the appropriateness of your weapons, and your ability to safely handle them, will made by the commanding officer.
- 1.1.9 On the drill field, you will be active and at times moving quickly. Having to stop to retrieve or look for a dropped item impinges upon the activities of all. Instead, think minimal: carry only what is necessary and secure those items well.
- 1.1.10 Any “casualties” caused will be according to the battle plan or commanding officer’s discretion. However, any exhausted participants may choose to become a casualty to quit the battle and rest if they are about to become exhausted, fatigued or over-heated.
- 1.1.11 Musketeers and Artillery cannot become casualties until their guns have been safely discharged or soaked, and lit match or linstocks carefully discarded away from powder or bandoliers.
- 1.1.12 When you are “killed” or “wounded” on the battlefield, lie there “dead” in a protected position (fetal position) with your weapons close at hand so that they are not damaged and do not cause injury to someone else. If you are “dead”, stay unmoving until the reenactment is over, do not prop yourself up on one elbow to watch the rest of the reenactment, as this will not be believable to the spectators. If you are “wounded” act the part and either get to the rear or back to your own unit to be alive again, but make sure that you take your weapons with you.
- 1.1.13 Standard bearers were the most sought after opponent on the field since the colors were a prize any army would like to capture. For reenactments, colors may only be taken from an ensign by prearranged plan. Remember that colors are very costly and thus should be treated properly, whether belonging to your unit or one on the opposing side.
- 1.1.14 No mounted horse troops are to charge into any dismounted opponents. Likewise, only prearranged and rehearsed combats between mounted horse troops and dismounted foot or artillery crews is are allowed, and approved by the commanding officers of both units involved. Otherwise, mounted horse troops are never to engage in combat with dismounted opponents.

- 1.1.15 Mounted horse troops are to only ride to within a maximum distance of twenty yards of any opposing foot or artillery and discharge their firearms. The horse troops are to then wheel away, reload and return to discharge their firearms again, etc., according to the battle plan.
- 1.1.16 No one is to strike or make a simulated strike or shot at any unarmed campfollowers. Combat with predetermined armed campfollowers will follow the same rules of only prearranged and rehearsed combats with the campfollowers using whatever weapons they have to defend themselves (ladles, brooms, discarded swords, etc.).

## 2 Rules for Pike and other Polearms

Barry Siler

### 2.1 Definition:

- 2.1.1 **Pike:** 12 feet or longer, properly 16-18 feet, with a single small point.  
**Polearm:** 7-10 feet, some designed to be used as a short pike, a.k.a. "halfpike", others swung like halberds, some primarily for designation of rank like partizans and leading staffs.
- 2.1.2 Reenactment pikes with non-metal heads should be treated as if they have metal heads. If any polearm has a metal head, then its edge(s) should be dulled, and the point blunted. No person should be able to cut himself on the edge or be pierced by the point even when pressing into the metal. One standard for dulling and blunting is: "edge as thick as a quarter and tip rounded like a dime."
- 2.1.3 A pike or any other polearm is never to be thrown. This was not done historically and is dangerous. These are not throwing spears!

### 2.2 Handling:

- 2.2.1 A pike or any other polearm is not to be dropped. They are to be placed with due care in a rack, against a structure or tree, or laid onto the ground. If set against a building or tree the stability must be checked to ensure the weapon will not fall.
- 2.2.2 When carrying any polearm, especially something as long as a pike, remain aware where both ends are at all times. While either end can poke (not only the front end), the polearm can also become a club if swung around.
- 2.2.3 While in the *Advance* posture and moving, one may hold the polearm with only the right hand and the shaft against the right shoulder. But should one feel in any way or to any degree unsure of maintaining control of the polearm, then secure its stability with the left hand crossing the chest to grip the shaft at around shoulder height, thereby holding the polearm with both hands. This caution is especially applicable when traversing uneven ground, or going up or down a slope.

2.2.4 When holding the pike or polearm at *Cheek* (this includes *Trailing*) and there are people in the immediate vicinity, cup the free hand over the point/end of the polearm to help prevent anyone from walking or falling into the point/end.

### **2.3 Use in battle reenactments:**

2.3.1 When at the posture *Charge for Pike* and one is requested to charge against other reenactors or an audience, stop at least six feet/ two yards/ two meters from the nearest person. No point of a polearm is to reach as far as another person.

2.3.2 If charging against another unit of pike with intent to spar with pike tips, one can continue to advance but at a walk or slower and with the tip of the pike pointed at knee level or below.

2.3.3 When engaging an opposing division of pike by tapping and fencing with pikes, do not extend one's pike point farther than three feet/ one yard/ one meter past the opponent's pike tip. In addition, keep the tip as close to the ground as possible, never allowing it to get above waist height. The intent in sparring is to deflect the opponent's pike, not knock it out of his hands.

2.3.4 No jabbing or pushing the polearm at anyone's head or torso.

2.3.5 No swinging a pike like a club. Although historically billhooks, halberds and other similar polearms were meant to be swung, if one does so for demonstration, do so only in slow motion without anyone within reach of either end.

2.3.6 If in a mock battle situation, one is called upon to "drop" the polearm, set it down quickly instead or, if released, from knee level or lower. If pikes laid on the ground get crossed or somehow propped up, pikemen should take the time to lay them flat against the ground to avoid a tripping hazard for human and horse.

2.3.7 When at the posture *Charge for Horse* and there are cavalry reenactors riding real horses, raise the point of the pike (or any polearm) to be above the head of a rider. Historically and for demonstration without horse, the point was held at chest level of the horse, but in those past times the intent was to kill the horse.

2.3.8 Any polearm placed outside the designated storage area (e.g., left on the field) must be recovered by the bearer or his officers. This is especially important if a pike is laid down in grass, particularly if horse is involved!

## **3 Rules for Black Powder use in Battle Reenactments**

David "Thorne" Luckhardt

These guidelines have been adapted from ECWSA "Arms and Equipment" rules and from Jeff Vincent and the Sealed Knot Society.

These Black Powder Rules and other overall safety requirements will be agreed upon by all unit commanders, announced in advance to all battle participants, and applied in a common-sense way by field marshals and safety officers.

It is the responsibility of each individual to follow these rules. It is the responsibility of the Commanding Officers and their inferior officers to provide training and guidance and also to enforce these rules.

### **3.1 Minimum distances for safe discharge of Musket & Pistol:**

- 20 yards, aiming high

### **3.2 The Basics:**

- 3.2.1 Guns are loaded with measured amounts of powder, either from paper cartridges, a bandolier of flasks (wooden/tin charges), or a flask with a measure spout poured into the hand or a separate measure. Recommended amount = 1 grain per caliber.
- 3.2.2 All gun users are approved by the Black Powder Safety Officer or an authorized subordinate before going onto the field.
- 3.2.3 All parts of the gun must function and be in safe condition.
- 3.2.4 Guns are loaded and fired on the field, no loaded guns off the field except for drill and demonstrations. Keep your gunpowder safe, away from the public and fire.

### **3.3 Specific Rules:**

- 3.3.1 Musketeers and cavalry must have fully functioning weapons and all required safety equipment, and have been passed by the Black Powder Safety Officer or an authorized subordinate before firing a weapon at a battle or display. The law, common sense about firearms safety and these rules will be adhered to at all times.
- 3.3.2 It is important that all musketeers have a thorough knowledge of:
1. The correct loading procedure
  2. What should be done in the event of a misfire
  3. How to carry a loaded musket
  4. Period musket drill
- 3.3.3 Powder for the main charge must be carried in either:
- Measured paper cartridges, which are to be carried in a leather or canvas bag. The bag should be closable and protected from stray sparks.
  - Flasks on a bandolier, being made from wood with tight fitting wood or pewter tops, must be flash proof.
  - A main-charge flask with measured pour spout, with a flash proof closure - measured powder then being poured into a measure or the hand, then into the barrel, NOT directly from powder flask. Powder for priming must have a flash proof closure.

It is important that all these items are checked before every battle for damage and are kept clean and in good working order.

- 3.3.4 All guns must be provided with a working lock, serpentine screw or sparking flint, and pan cover.
- 3.3.5 Muskets must be cleaned at the end of each day, or after two consecutive misfires caused by fouling.
- 3.3.6 Muskets must be kept in good repair i.e. make sure that the pan cover is tight fitting, the stock is in good repair, barrel firmly seated in the stock, etc.
- 3.3.7 If ramrods are used: Musketeers and their officers are reminded that before giving fire a check must be made and an order given to "Secure your Scouring Stick (Ramrod)".
- 3.3.8 A musket must never be aimed at a person or animal and the recommended safe firing distance of twenty yards should be adhered to.
- 3.3.9 All stocked weapons must be fired from the shoulder, care should be taken to know where the musket is aiming and that the face is protected from any flashback.
- 3.3.10 If wadding is used: Only soft toilet paper or green florists foam (NOT Styrofoam) is to be used for wadding and the thickness of this should not exceed the bore of the gun. If paper cartridges are used, the paper should not be used as wadding due to danger from powder grains becoming entrapped in the folds.
- 3.3.11 No weapon shall be loaded off the battlefield except under the direct order of a responsible officer, during organized training or drills. Weapons will be unloaded before units march off of the battlefield, and all match extinguished. Unloading consists of successfully firing a blank charge, completely emptying the main charge and pan onto the ground, or pouring water down the barrel and emptying the slurry onto the ground.
- 3.3.12 Musketeers will not engage in hand to hand combat whilst carrying lit slow match or with a loaded musket, and should not "take fatalities" while loaded -- fire first, control your match and musket as you fall, then "die".
- 3.3.13 Musketeers must be organized to fire by command only, unless specific orders are given for skirmishing or sniping. Musketeers should attempt to stay in groups of at least two musketeers, even when the unit is scattered during battle reenactment, and check each other and nearby soldiers for safety problems.
- 3.3.14 Musketeers must only use muskets with barrels that are in current proof, or that have been tested by firing ball or a double charge off the field.
- 3.3.15 Recommended amount = 1 grain per caliber. The minimum pistol or musket bore permitted is .45 caliber, and larger caliber muskets must not exceed a charge of 80 grains.
- 3.3.16 Everyone using guns on the battlefield must be approved by the Black Powder Safety Officer. Each unit that contains musketeers or artillery is to have a Unit Powder Box that is for storage of all gunpowder when in camp, unless a centralized magazine is set up by

event organizers. Said powder box is to be kept secured away from public view (and fire!) as a common sense precaution. The individual to whom powder is issued is solely responsible for its safekeeping and must not transfer possession to others not approved by the Black Powder Safety Officer. Musketeers should make certain that all powder is returned to safe storage after battles or drill, and that flasks, bandoliers and other containers of powder are secure from public access and any potential spark or flame.

3.3.17 No propellant other than commercial black powder will be used in any weapon - no Pyrodex or smokeless powder. Projectiles must not be fired.

3.3.18 The use of pistols will be permitted only on the specific authority of the Black Powder Safety Officer. Wadding should be used to hold down the pistol charge, and an extra-length commercial-style loading ramrod may be required if the provided ramrod is too short or narrow. Loaded pistols should be carried with the barrel up and pointed away from all people. Reenactors will not engage in hand to hand combat whilst carrying a loaded pistol.

3.3.19 When pistols are carried and used on horseback they will be kept in holsters secured to the saddle. A loaded pistol will not be returned to its holster except in the case of a misfire, when care will be taken to ensure that the pan is empty and the source of ignition removed. Pistols will not be left in the holsters of an unattended horse.

3.3.20 Treat all guns as potentially loaded and THINK SAFETY.