

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 School of the Renaissance Soldier.

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.
- 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.