

## Guidelines for Mounted Re-enactors

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Horse Commander**

At every event, the overall commander for either side normally designates a person as a battalion commander for all mounted units. In addition to having overall command of horse on the field, anyone accepting the role of Horse Commander shall check the following:

- He will personally examine the battleground to ensure its suitability and safety for horse use or if not practical assign someone to examine the ground in his stead.
- He will poll all registered horse units previous to the event to assist the event commanders and sponsors in planning for the appropriate number of horses to be present
- He will act as a point person before and during the event for any horse related concerns or questions.
- He will stay informed of all guidelines affecting horse use within the site.
- He may appoint a Riding Master for the event.

#### **Riding Master**

The Riding Master shall be designated by the Horse Commander. The person filling this role does not necessarily need to be a person of rank or even in the horse commander's own unit, but it should be noted that a good working relationship should exist between the two prior to the appointment. The Riding Master shall be responsible for the following:

- Checking every horse on site for coggins, and any other state required tests. The Riding Master will be required to match each description on the coggins with each horse, thus ensuring that the document matches to the animal.
- Provide, when possible the name and phone number of a vet on call in the area.

#### **Unit Commanders**

The bulk of the responsibility of adherence to these guidelines shall fall on the individual unit commanders. It is suggested that unit commanders hold drills before and during events and throughout the year with their men and horses equipped as they would be in a battle situation. At no time should a unit commander shy away from having an individual horsemen step out of line if he believes that the action about to be taken is outside of the man or mount's capabilities.

## **Individual Rider**

There are certain expectations and responsibilities of the individual riders on the field. They are as follows:

- At all times a rider must be in control of his horse and alert to the situation and people around them. At no time will they surrender control of their horse except to another rider or designated horse handler.
- Riders must be responsible for the safety and care of their horse. This responsibility is totally theirs.
- A horse must be trained to withstand loud noises, shiny objects (sabers, bayonets, firearms, etc.), and flags before taking the field. Any horse perceived to be consistently uncontrollable may be asked to leave the field by the Unit Commander or Horse Commander in order to ensure the safety of both the rider and other participants.
- When at all possible keep a 20 yard buffer zone from the public
- If a rider falls from his horse, the mount should be recovered by walking slowly towards it and speaking softly at it. Do not carry anything in your hands!
- It is strongly suggested that a rider own his own horse. A strong rapport between a horse and rider is the most important factor to ensure safety on the field. In addition, most regimental insurance policies will not cover rental horses. If a horse is rented, both the rentor and the rentee must provide proof of insurance to the event staff at the event.

## **2. Site and Encampment Selection and Policing**

### **Site Selection**

Site selection to accommodate cavalry must be based on the availability of open space for proper exercise, deployment, and picketing of horses. Dangerous holes and depressions should be identified and filled prior to an event or clearly identified

### **Encampment Selection**

Encampments should be selected based upon space, shade, and water. Picket lines are best set up away from well-traveled roads or areas that will see a large amount of spectator traffic. Space must also be available to pull trailers into the encampment to off-load and on-load horses. There should also be additional space available to park the trailers after unloading. It is preferable that this space be away from the encampment itself. Shade is an essential piece of any cavalry encampment. It should provide a cool, restive and relatively insect free rest area for the horses as well as a place to string picket lines. This is particularly required at events with hot weather.

Clean potable water is also required at the rate of 15 gallons per day per horse. In very hot weather this number may increase to 30 gallons. The camp should not be a long

walk on foot from any water source. A watering trough will not suffice as a water source. Watering troughs can transmit disease and are not sufficient. A good rule of thumb for the definition of “potable water” is water that you would allow your own men to drink.

### **Policing**

All units are responsible for policing their own camps. All picket lines are to be kept away from the public. The public should not be allowed to interact with the horses in camp unless a member of the unit familiar with horses is present to chaperone them.

## **3. Standards for Horses, Training, and Equipment**

### **Standards for Horses**

It is a prerequisite that only horses fit for service will be used at events. Horses that are lame, sore, sick, undernourished, or exhausted can be determined unfit for service by the Riding Master, unit commander or battalion commander. The horse should move naturally at the walk, trot, and canter without signs of lameness, excessive nervousness or irritability.

### **Standards for Training**

It is hoped and assumed that a large amount of training with both units and individual riders will be done off the field before any event. All mounted personnel should consider it their primary goal to continuously sharpen their skills in equitation, as this will lead to both safe behavior and a well-ordered event. It is the unit commander’s responsibility to only permit those men on the field whom he feels meet the proper level of skill in equitation and safety. As always, the individual rider is ultimately responsible and if he ever feels he is not ready or incapable of participating in a particular action on the field (such as a charge, carousel, etc.) he is absolutely within his rights to pull himself out of the line and rejoin the formation after the action has been completed. Safety is the number one priority, and no individual should feel pressured to participate in any way that they feel would compromise the safety of themselves or their mount.

### **Standards for Equipment**

The specific standards for equipment are as follows:

- Tack should be well conditioned and cared for. Any mount or rider with cracked, torn, or moldy tack should not participate on the field, as this can cause a serious safety hazard.
- All saddles are to possess well-fitted stirrups and irons.

- Sabers should have proper fitted scabbards. Their edges should be blunted. In addition to other standards below, all firearms should be well cleaned and maintained.
- Carbines
  - o All carbines should possess a flash guard
  - o Frizzen covers should be removed WHILE ON HORSEBACK (not while on foot). The cover is a safety hazard that could possibly get tangled.
  - o Carbines must have a proper bucket and or strap to be secured.
- Pistols
  - o All pistols are to have accompanying holsters. At no time should a pistol be carried in a belt, haversack, etc.
  - o Flash guards and frizzen covers are not to be used on pistols as they can tangle and cause a safety issue.
- Cartridges
  - o Loose powder or powder horns should never be carried by a person on horseback.

#### **4. Guidelines of Engagement**

##### **Saber-to-Saber Combat**

Only well skilled and trained equestrians and re-enactors should participate in saber-to-saber combat between opposing bodies of horse.

- **If you do not wish to participate in saber combat, do not draw your sword!** This will signify to the opposing force that you are not a participant, and should not be attacked.
- When possible the attacker should punch with his sword arm, keeping the point of his sword elevated as opposed to swinging a cut. The punching method looks just as good to the crowd and gives the rider far more control over his blade.
- Opponents should avoid long melees. Riders should trade one or two strikes with an opponent and then move on and engage another.
- Participants should **ALWAYS** make eye contact with their opponents before and during their strike(s), and it should be noted that while firm hits should be placed, you are not swinging a baseball bat.
- At no time is the horse to be purposely targeted in any way.
- The use of the point is prohibited, and sabers should never be lunged or thrust toward a mounted opponent.
- If an opponent is unhorsed the melee will end until the loose mount is secured and the rider is made safe.
- No firearms will be used during saber melees.

As a final note, good communication between opposing forces while in the midst of combat is necessary to execute well-run and safe saber combat. A healthy amount of respect to one's opponent must be granted.

## Firing from Horseback

The loading and firing of pistols and carbines from horseback should follow the guidelines of any state or federal site the event happens to take place on as well as the guidelines outlined by the sponsor organization. In addition:

- A firearm should never be pointed at a horse's head, and should never be discharged directly over a horse's head.
- No weapon shall be discharged closer than 30 yards from any opposing force and will always be elevated 15 degrees above their heads.
- No weapon will be fired in the direction of the public at a distance less than 100 yards and always elevated above their heads.

## Engaging Infantry

At times cavalry will engage infantry on the battlefield. This not only looks good to the public, but is also extremely accurate. The following guidelines are suggested to keep horses, riders, and infantry safe:

- Two horsemen cannot charge a brigade of infantry with any hope of success. However, twenty horsemen could break the line of over 100 infantry. To keep things accurate and fair, no force of cavalry should charge a force over six times its size and expect a successful outcome.
- Cavalry is not impervious to the fire of infantry and artillery. Cavalry must move or at least shield themselves behind ground troops, natural obstacles etc when in range and engaged by enemy fire.
- If a body of cavalry charges a body of infantry and receives a formed volley between the distance of 80 to 30 yards, the cavalry charge has been dispersed and the cavalry must honor the infantry's fire and retire.
- If a body of cavalry charges a body of infantry and receives no formed volley from the infantry between the distances of 80 to 30 yards, the infantry has been broken by charging cavalry and should honor this result and retreat a short distance from its current position. For safety reasons it is best that the infantry DO NOT take casualties and leave fallen bodies in their wake but instead just fall back or surrender in place. "Dead" bodies just make it harder for cavalry to operate.
- Given the above guidelines, there is no need for cavalry to come closer than within 5 yards of opposing infantry unless they are taking part in a pre-scripted scenario.
- **NEVER CHARGE A LOADED CANNON. ALL UNIT COMMANDERS SHOULD REFERENCE THE CONTINENTAL LINE ARTILLERY SYMBOLS. NEVER GET BETWEEN A CASON AND ITS FIELD PIECE.**

## 5. Procedures for Other Re-enactors in Regards to Horses

While many people in the hobby have contact with horses, not everyone is as knowledgeable or experienced as the riders themselves. The following are a list of guidelines any non-horsemen should follow to ensure the safety of both himself and the horse:

- Always approach a horse from the front where it can see you. Approach the horse at a walk, do not run.
- Be alert to how many horses are on the field and what area they are operating in.
- Never run at a horse making dramatic movements.
- Do not wildly wave or flail objects (flags, banners, etc.) within 20 feet of them.
- Try to gauge the mood of the horse before approaching. Is it nervous, frisky, panicked? If it is, avoid the area. Is the rider in control and paying attention? If not, avoid the area.
- Never fire a musket at a horseman who is closer than 30 feet.
- If a horse panics, clear the area. Do not try to recover the horse unless you have had experience in doing so before. Let the rider take responsibility. In the extremely unlikely event that an uncontrolled horse charges and you have no place to go, stand still and raise your hands above your sides, making yourself as large as possible. The horse will almost always veer off.
- In camp, please do not feed the horses. Don't approach the horse unless the owner or designated handler is present. Please don't ask the owner if you can ride the animal. Strict insurance guidelines forbid this.
- No smoking, candles, fires, open flame, etc. around the horses, feed, or bedding.
- Do not permit unauthorized personnel or the public to handle horses. Do not allow the public to feed the horses.
- Do not allow the public near the horses unless the owner or a designated handler is present.

## 6. Ownership and Insurance

It is strongly suggested that every mounted re-enactor own his own horse. While good equitation can be learned through riding lessons, the proper care of a mount on and off the field is not always covered. Any rentor will be required to provide proof of liability insurance to the Riding Master prior to any event and any rentee will also be required to provide his unit's proof of insurance to the Riding Master prior to any event. All units are recommended to have a minimum of \$1,000,000 in liability insurance and proper insurance to cover mounted re-enactors. Any unit, rentor or rentee found to have an improper insurance policy or complete lack of thereof shall **NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.**

It is understood that being a safe mounted re-enactor is influenced by both a horse and its rider, and that what they do has an element of risk involved. These policies and

procedures reflect the best way to mitigate that risk while still allowing a correct and authentic interpretation of cavalry during the War of Independence. While all mounted re-enactors agree to abide by these guidelines, it should be remembered that the inherent influence of a horse throws countless variables into scenarios on the field. Excellent situational awareness, respect for your fellow riders, understanding, and common sense trump any other rule, and will ensure a safe and fun experience for all.