Southern Event Artillery Regulations

Introduction

Artillery is extremely dangerous to load and fire. Any artillery whether a gun, howitzer, or mortar may only be demonstrated by trained personnel under the direct supervision of an artillery commander who should at the very least be an NCO. Care must be taken that stringent safety precautions are observed. Therefore, when artillery is involved in a battle scenario or firing demonstration, care must be taken to plan and secure a safe area downrange from the muzzle of the piece. Crews must be well trained for the safety of the opposing forces, other forces on the same side, the crew members themselves, and the visiting public. A serious accident involving the artillery branch would have significant consequences across this hobby and that of other military periods.

To minimize the possibility of an accident, artillery commanders must be present at ALL officer's meetings when artillery will be involved on the field.

1. Event Artillery Command Staff Will Consist of:

- **Overall Artillery Commander (OAC):** His or her job is to oversee all artillery making sure that all inspections are done on ALL artillery pieces, equipment, ammunition, and crews to be taken onto the battlefield. The OAC will decide which artillery will go on the field and which, if any, will not go on the field based largely on the reports from the AAC and CAC. If there is an issue regarding safety, equipment, drill, cartridge size, signals, or anything regarding the artillery at the event, the decision of the OAC is **LAW!** Some might call this the "master gunner", but that is a naval designation.

- **American Artillery Commander (AAC):** His or her job is to carry out inspections of the artillery pieces, equipment, ammunition, and crews of all American forces whether Continental, French, or militia based on the following regulations. The AAC will report to the OAC that all inspections are done and passed by all artillery **PRIOR** to going onto the battlefield. The AAC will also report any issues to the OAC including those that were corrected. The AAC will make all decisions as to which pieces are deployed where and/or supporting which other units in the American forces. This individual can also serve as OAC.

- **Crown Artillery Commander (CAC):** His or her job is to carry out inspections of the artillery pieces, equipment, ammunition, and crews of all Crown Forces whether British, Hessian, Jager, or militia based on the following regulations. The CAC will report to the OAC that all inspections are done and passed by all artillery **PRIOR** to going onto the battlefield. The CAC will also report any issues to the OAC including those that were corrected. The CAC will make all decisions as to which pieces are deployed where and/or supporting which other units in the Crown Forces. This individual can also serve as OAC.

2. Safety Violations on the Battlefield:

Any of the above officers may order an artillery piece and/or crew to "cease fire" or even to be removed from the field (and possibly removed from the event if the violation warrants) if that officer observes an unsafe act. This would be a serious issue and a report should be made to one or more of the following (preferably reported to all to prevent rumors): Site Manager or Director, Event Organizer, OAC, AAC, and CAC. The incriminated piece commander should be allowed to be present during this report. It is important that any accusation be resolved for the education and reputation of the incriminated crew, the event, and the overall hobby.

3. Inspections:

Inspections of Artillery Pieces

- The carriage solid and sturdy. Check wheels, cheeks, trunnions, ironwork condition, and tightness of fit and implements. Any rotting wood or severely rusted ironwork prevents a piece from going onto the battlefield.

- The bore of the piece must be clear of objects, clean and smooth, with no rust.

- The sponge(s) are not worn and will wet the entire surface of the breech to the best of what can be determined through visual inspection.

- The wadhook is sturdy, the points are protruded and will contact the breech. A brass, bronze, or copper wadhook must be used in iron barrels. Any period metal wadhook may be used in a barrel that is brass or bronze.

- The ventpick fits the vent well and is the correct size for any tubes used for ignition (sometimes incorrectly called quill primers).

- The linstock is solid and a minimum of 36 inches long.

- The powder chest lid must be self-closing each time it is opened. The lid of the powder chest must be covered in painted fabric or leather that extends at least 1/2" below where the lid and box join on all 4 sides.

- There MUST be a water bucket that will hold an appropriate amount of water for the engagement for each piece.

- Each piece must have the following to be allowed on the field in case of a misfire: A turkey baster for flooding the vent and a funnel with a long flexible shaft for inserting into the muzzle.

- There should be a logbook kept for each piece. You may be asked for it so keep it handy.

Drill Inspection

It is important to remember that authenticity must be secondary to safety issues. Therefore, in most cases correct and exact period artillery drill cannot be utilized. Many units use variations of drills and may not be the same drill the inspector is used to observing, but that's not necessarily a safety issue. If the drill any unit is using is a safe one, it is not advisable to require them to make changes because that alone might introduce unsafe situations. If they know their drill, it behooves every one for them to keep using it, again, providing it is safe. However, parts of the drill deemed unsafe must be corrected before a unit moves onto the field. The following are considerations when inspecting a crew's drill sequence and are designed to be used in evaluating a crew whatever drill they are using. For the purpose of this inspection, use the drawing at the end of this document for locating the crew positions numbered below.

- Are they wearing appropriate attire? They must be wearing shoes, boots, or moccasins. They must be wearing a coat, frock, or weskit. Both Gunners #3 and #4 MUST be wearing leather gauntlets. Gunner #5 may wear gauntlets but that is not required.

- Gunners #3 and #4 MUST search with wadhook and sponge (wetting the sponge on each shot) each time the piece is loaded. NO EXCEPTIONS!

- Gunner #5 MUST use a gunner's box (leather preferred), some call this a passbox, to transport the cartridge from the powder chest to Gunner #4.

- Gunner # 1 MUST hold the linstock down and over the trail of the piece while the Gunner #5 is passing with the cartridge.

- Gunner #4 MUST be inserting the cartridge into the muzzle keeping his/her hands as much out of harm's way as possible.

- Gunner # 3 MUST be ramming the cartridge solidly to the breech, and making eye to eye contact with Gunner #2 when ramming. Gunner #3 MUST be keeping his/her head & body BESIDE the barrel and against the axletree or side locker during the ramming process, NEVER in front of the muzzle.

- Gunner #2 MUST be keeping the leather thumbstall on the vent and must be maintaining a tight seal throughout the sponging, loading, and ramming process. If air is heard to be escaping from the vent, it must be sealed and re-sponged before continuing. This must be repeated until no escaping air is heard.

- Gunner #2 MUST feel the crunch when he/she inserts the pick into the cartridge, if he/she does not, it must be re-rammed. He/she MUST NEVER place his/her finger through the loop in the pick. Gunner #2 MUST NEVER put his/her head or body over the vent.

- Once primed, Gunner #2 MUST be completely covering the priming with his/her hand or a hat until the order to fire is given. This prevents sparks from other sources from igniting

the priming.

- After the piece is primed, both Gunner #1 and #2 should be looking back at the commander, Gunner #0. The remainder of the crew (including the piece commander) must be looking downrange for safety issues such as infantry or cavalry passing in harm's way in front of the piece. The command "AS YOU WERE!" can be shouted by any member of the crew should a safety issue arise to immediately stop the firing process.

- The verbal command "FIRE" must be accompanied by the visual signal of the sword dropping by the commander. If Gunner #1 doesn't see the sword drop, he/she must assume that another commander's voice on the field is what he/she heard and NOT touch off the gun until he/she sees the sword drop.

- Ideally a crew will consist of 6 Gunners, but shall NEVER consist of fewer than 4 Gunners. In the case of only 4 Gunners, the commander should control the linstock and Gunner # 4 also do the job of Gunner #5.

- All artillery crews must be drilled a minimum of 30 minutes before each battle scenario in which they are to be involved. Cross-training of crew members is highly recommended.

- Any crew members under 12 years of age cannot be allowed to serve in a battlefield scenario. It is recommended that those under 16 years of age only serve as Gunner #5.

Cartridge Inspection

Cartridges for "Guns" should fall within the following formula:

- 1 oz. of Cannon grade black powder per 1/2" of bore diameter or 2 oz. of Cannon grade black powder per 1" of bore diameter. USE ONLY BLACK POWDER!

- Cartridges for "Howitzers & Mortars" can be a little more complicated. A lot depends on whether or not the piece is chambered or has a straight bore. For straight bore pieces, while very loud, the Gun formula can be used. Chambered pieces must be considered on a case by case basis. It is suggested to use the chamber diameter as the bore diameter and use the Gun formula.

- ALL cartridges MUST be made out of a MINIMUM of 2 layers of "heavy duty" aluminum foil, or 3 layers of standard thickness of aluminum foil.

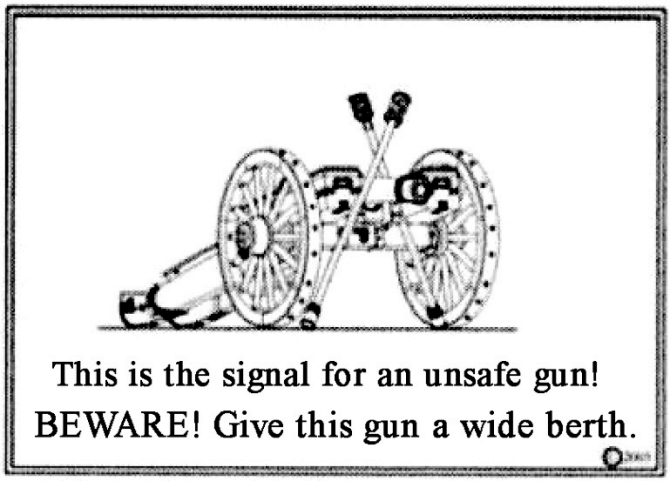
- Larger pieces, such as 6 pounders, may need a larger cartridge just to keep the cartridge from falling over in the bore. These will be considered on a case by case basis.

4. Safety Signals

- The signal for a piece that is ready to fire is the artillery piece commander holding his sword above his head.

- The signal for a piece that is secured, empty, and safe to be charged or approached and captured by the enemy is the rammer in the barrel. The crew can abandon this piece when ordered. NOTE: Whether or not there are cartridges remaining in the powder chest, it must be taken with the crew or a crew member must remain as a casualty to secure the chest. Never take the powder chest when you abandon the gun and place it in an area near the crowd....some visitors smoke!

- The signal for a piece that has misfired and unsafe for approach is the rammer and wadhook placed over the barrel in an X. (SEE DRAWING BELOW) ALL infantry and cavalry MUST avoid this piece at all costs, even if the scenario must change to avoid getting in front of that piece. **NOTE: In this situation the crew MUST remain with the piece as casualties to warn off stray re-enactors and units.**



5. Misfire Procedures

Should a crew experience a misfire, they may, after 5 minutes, attempt to re-prime and fire the piece. (SEE MISFIRE SIGNALS AND INSTRUCTIONS ABOVE) If the piece fires, all is well. Under NO circumstances should a second misfire re-prime be attempted. After a second misfire the crew MUST NOT attempt to clear the piece on the field until the scenario has ended, and preferably, after the visiting crowd has left. Then they should follow the following procedure:

If the piece does not fire on a re-prime, the vent must be flooded using a turkey baster, the muzzle raised to its highest elevation, and using the water bucket and the funnel flood the tube. After a minimum of 30-45 minutes the cartridge may be pulled, preferably using a crooked wadhook (highly recommended) that allows the Gunner to be clear of the muzzle.

NOTE: This IS NOT a fool proof method and must be attempted carefully at your own risk.

ATTENTION! Before any of these procedures are attempted, care must be taken to insure there are no safety issues downrange of the piece. Only if there is a dangerous situation downrange should any attempt to move the piece be considered. If at all possible, the piece should be left in place exactly where it misfired. Care should be taken not to allow any other reenactors, event staff, or visitors near a misfired piece until it is cleared.

6. General Safety

- The powder chest should never be any closer than 15 feet behind the piece when in action.

- Never fire at the enemy when they are closer than 30 yards.

- Never fire over casualties on the ground when they are closer than 30 yards.

- Portfires WILL NOT be used in battlefield scenarios. They may be used in firing demonstrations however, but are not recommended.

- Artillery commanders must work closely with their army's field commander to insure safety and handle issues in a timely fashion.

- It is highly recommended, and militarily correct, that each army should have a separate tent set up for artillery ammunition to be kept away from campfires and visitor high traffic areas, and under guard during visitor hours. The location of this tent should be made well known to all reenactors because of possible cigarette/cigar/pipe smoking. It should also be well away from possible night fireworks areas.

- If there is any question if the enemy is too close to fire, DO NOT FIRE!

7. Notes for Infantry and Cavalry Officers Working With and Around Artillery

- The signal for a piece that has misfired and unsafe for approach is the rammer and wadhook placed over the barrel in an X. When observing a piece that has misfired, remember not only that you not only need to avoid approaching the piece head on, but should the cartridge detonate there is a "blast cone" at about 30-45 degrees in every direction from the muzzle of the piece. Simply not getting you or your people directly front of the piece is not enough.

- NEVER, NEVER, NEVER approach an enemy artillery piece within 30 yards unless you see the "safe" signal, which is the rammer left in the barrel.

- Make sure your men know to stay away from the powder chest (should it be accidentally left behind) when over-running or capturing a piece because there could be live cartridges

in there. One stray spark from a musket or rifle could set them all off with the obvious result.

- Tell your men that if the linstock was accidentally left with the piece, the slowmatch might be very hot and makes a very nasty burn.

- When you see a gun commander's sword raised over his head, the piece is loaded, primed, and ready to fire. Stay away unless it is a prearranged part of the scenario.

- If you want to look really stupid to the crowd, stand toe-to-toe with blazing artillery without taking casualties. You can always drag them off and revive them out of sight of the crowd or something.

- If you are blazing away and hear a big boom on one or both of your flanks, take a look, that's an artillerist's dream shot. In a real battle they would be devastating and rolling up your flank. At least do them the honor of turning to oppose them or withdraw, don't just keep on doing what you're doing. It looks really stupid to the crowd.

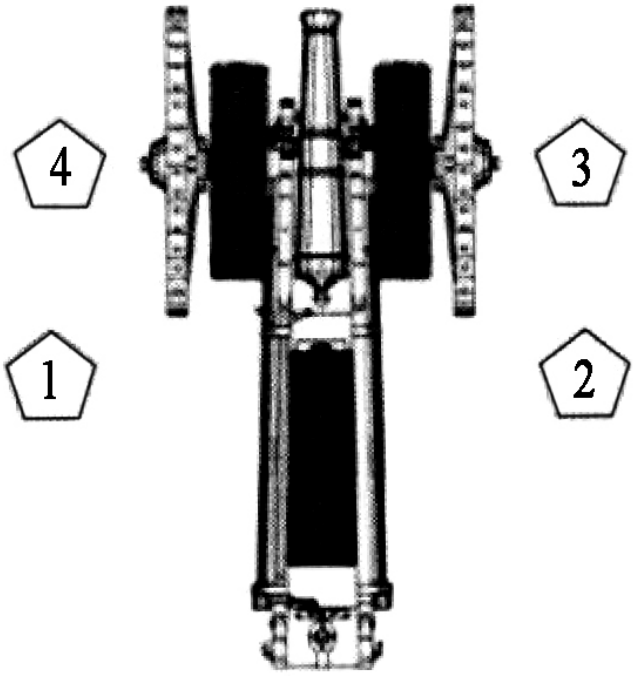
- If there is more than one piece, don't think for a second that just because one gun fired they are both unloaded. If you assume that, you might be in for a surprise.

- If you care about this thing we do looking realistic at all, don't use the safe fire range as an advantage against artillery unless it is prearranged. If it were a real battle, they'd just as soon cut you in half at 10 feet distance as they would at 200 yards. To use the safe fire range against them is a cheap shot. The safe fire range is for YOUR safety, not the safety of the Gunners.

- Once the linstock gets close to the vent on its downward motion it can be extremely hard, if not nearly impossible, to stop the firing process. Don't rely on that to save you from injury. Pay attention when you are around artillery. **Your life and that of your men depends on it.**

- When possible have your men jump in and help move those heavy artillery pieces. The more men there are the easier it is, it looks and is very authentic. Often those pieces protect you from attack so support them.

POSITIONS FOR LOADING & FIRING CANNON



GUNNERS

No 0: GUN COMMANDER_____
No 1: FIRER_____
No 2: PICK & PRIME_____
No 3: SPONGER & RAMMER_____
No 4: WORMER & LOADER_____
No 5: POWDER MONKEY_____