

# ENGLISH CIVIL WAR SOCIETY

## Rules of Engagement and Ordinances of Warre for The Roundhead Association and The King's Army

### Introduction

1. The English Civil War Society Ltd (ECWS) is an umbrella organisation providing central organisation for two constituent societies, The Roundhead Association (RA) and The King's Army (KA). The Committee of Safetie (CofS) and Council of Warre (CofW) govern respectively the RA and KA. The Board of Directors of the ECWS is responsible for providing assurance to Sponsors and civil authorities that effective Health and Safety (H&S) management is in place in the ECWS.

2. The ECWS has a Health and Safety Policy Statement (Reference 1), agreed by the CofS and CofW. The Policy Statement sets out the general arrangements for Health and Safety (H&S) within the ECWS and identifies the key hazards. This document is a supporting document to the ECWS safety documentation and sets out the rules for military action during battles, skirmishes and displays controlled by Officers holding commissions in the KA or RA, during events organised by the ECWS. The military commands of the KA and RA are responsible for ensuring that effective control by commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers is exercised in both Armies. These Rules of Engagement are issued for observance by all members of the KA and RA and for the information of relevant civil authorities.

3. The Rules of Engagement apply during all activities by members of the Society involving re-enactment of seventeenth century combat. They are intended to apply specifically to large scale events of the Society (known as "Major Musters") and are also to apply to the smaller "Regimental Invited Events" so far as reasonably practicable.

4. Reference is to be made to the detailed generic risk assessments for activities undertaken during engagements for specific safety procedures and safety justification for combat activities (References 2 to 6) and for other related military activities carried out in re-enactments (References 7 and 8).

### GENERAL RULES FOR SAFETY

1.1 No violent act is permitted that is deliberately intended to cause physical harm to any person.

1.2 All combatants must be over the age of 16. A risk assessment is to be produced by Divisional Officers and provided for the record to the Regimental Commanding Officer, and held by the member, for all members aged between 16 and 18 years intending to take part in combat. The risk assessment is to be reviewed regularly.

1.3 Appropriate training in seventeenth century drill, use of weapons and safety on the field is to be given regularly, normally<sup>1</sup> at each event. Training is to be controlled by Officers and recorded.

1.4 Soldiers may not use any weapon, whether it is their own or which they have been issued with, without the permission of a Field Officer<sup>2</sup>, Commanding Officer or Divisional Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> Training is essential for new recruits and new formations.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioned Officer of the rank of Serjeant-Major or above.

1.5 Officers are responsible for ensuring that weapons carried by their soldiers are appropriate and safe. All edged weapons used in combat are to be blunt and all points rounded (e.g. greater than 10 mm radius).

1.6 No person deemed by their Commanding or General Officer to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs<sup>3</sup> is allowed to take the field.

1.7 All persons involved in the handling of black powder should wear clothes, including undergarments, which are made of natural fibres.

1.8 No dogs or other animals, except horses, are permitted on the battlefield.

## **GENERAL RULES FOR ACHIEVING AUTHENTICITY OF COMBAT**

2.1 All divisional officers must obey orders from more senior officers to conform to the conduct of engagements so as to achieve an effective display (except where safety or these Rules of Engagement may be compromised).

2.2 React to artillery and musketry and take theatrical casualties or injuries.

2.3 Units should react to the tactical situation which they find themselves in.

2.4 Generals and Muster Organisers/Supervisors are to ensure that 'War Cries', Colours, uniforms and 'Field Signs' for armies are appropriate for the period of the Civil Wars or seventeenth century being re-enacted or for a specific event.

2.5 Officers shall be distinguishable by the wearing of a scarf (See also Rule 12.2).

2.6 No member in female attire is to be on the field of battle, unless this forms a specific part of the scenario.

## **GENERAL RULES TO AVOID DAMAGE OR INJURY DURING COMBAT**

3.1 Drums, Colours and Artillery Pieces are to be treated with proper respect and are not to be damaged, torn or mishandled, or captured except by prior agreement.

3.2 During a pike engagement, at the "push of pike" the term "MAN DOWN" means a soldier has fallen and is likely to be injured if the fighting is not terminated, or some other incident has occurred which requires the immediate end of the Push. On hearing this all soldiers are IMMEDIATELY to break off action without further orders.

## **STAFF-WEAPONS & THEIR USE**

4.1 Company Officers<sup>4</sup> should carry a partisan or similar weapon. Sergeants shall carry a halberd or similar weapon.

4.2 Officers and Sergeants are to take care in handling their staff weapon and follow the guidance in Reference 6 Paragraph 8 in combat.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes any member whose physical and/or mental capability is judged to be impaired by a prescribed drug.

<sup>4</sup> Commissioned Officer in charge of a division of foot soldiers (e.g. Captain, Capitaine-Lieutenant, Lieutenant).

## **PIKE MATTERS**

- 5.1 There will be no comport pushes of pike in the vicinity of casualties be they real or theatrical.
- 5.2 When pike blocks have engaged other formed units should not enter the melee.
- 5.3 Bodies of pike should not attack unformed bodies using the comport method of engagement.
- 5.4 All initial contact between pike divisions should be at point.
- 5.5 Individual pikemen shall not enter an ongoing comport press with pike 'Charged'.

## **SWORDS & THEIR USE**

- 6.1 Field Officers, Staff Officers and Cavalrymen are permitted to draw swords. Swords drawn for combat are to have steel blades of an appropriate quality.
- 6.2 Others may only draw swords with the express permission of Field Officers, and as directed for drill.
- 6.3 Members using swords in combat are to take care and follow the guidance in Reference 6 Paragraph 12. They are advised to undertake training in sword combat.
- 6.4 Swords may be worn in camp, or on the Field of Battle by all. They must be carried in a scabbard. It is usually forbidden to take swords into town, or any public place<sup>5</sup>.
- 6.5 Knives or sharp weapons are not to be taken onto the battlefield. .

## **MUSKETS<sup>6</sup> & THEIR USE**

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of all Musket Officers to ensure so far as practicable that all muskets are safe.
- 7.2 Great care should be taken regarding the direction and angle of firing of muskets. Members firing muskets and their officers are to follow the guidance in Reference 3.
- 7.3 No firearms may be discharged directly at a person or horse. Muskets are not to be discharged towards other members at less than 6 m (20 feet), or towards the public at less than 9 m (30 feet).
- 7.4 All firing musketeers shall possess a valid Shotgun Certificate and a Black Powder Certificate.
- 7.5 Pistols<sup>7</sup> that are operable shall not be used on the battlefield without the permission of the appropriate Army Council.
- 7.6 No metal ramrods, or wooden ones with metal tips, should be used. Only loose fitting, untipped wooden ramrods are allowed.
- 7.7 During events all muskets should be locked in vehicles when not in use. It is recommended that security cable secured through trigger guards to cars be used.

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<sup>5</sup> Except when taking part as a formed body in a march, parade or display.

<sup>6</sup> This includes carbines

<sup>7</sup> Pistols as defined as hand held weapons requiring a Firearms Certificate.

7.8 Musketeers should not use short lengths of slowmatch. It is recommended that issued slowmatch should be 450 mm to 610 mm (18" to 24") long at the start of a battle.

7.9 Loaded muskets are not to be taken into a melee.

7.10 Musket Divisions and Artillery crews should not claim to be loaded when they are not. Such deception only encourages disbelief and possible dangerous actions.

## **ARTILLERY**

8.1 No cannon certificated as a firearm may be discharged if a person or horse is in front within a distance of 50 m (55 yards).

8.2 Cannons certificated as shotguns may be discharged if a person or horse is in front beyond a distance of 25 m (27 yards), provided that the black powder charge is half or less of the proof charge.

8.3 Gloves must be worn by Artillery Officers and gun crews at all times when working on the gun using black powder.

8.4 Loading cannon with loose powder should be avoided. Cartridges should be used whenever possible.

8.5 Care should be taken with cannon tools to ensure that material, such as grit, is not accidentally placed down the barrel.

8.6 Great care should be taken regarding the direction and angle of firing of cannon.

8.7 Cannon barrels should be placed at maximum elevation before firing so that any accidentally left material will be fired over the heads of the opposing forces.

8.8 Cannon, in battery, should be positioned at a safe distance from each other. Batteries should be further protected by an artillery guard where appropriate.

8.9 Misfires should be indicated by a tool held horizontally above the head by a crew member standing behind the gun during the waiting period. A loaded gun is indicated by crossed tools over the barrel when a melee develops near the gun.

8.10 Cannon should not be moved when loaded.

## **BLACKPOWDER & EXPLOSIVES**

9.1 All Musket Officers and Gunners are to keep a record of any incidents involving black powder so that evidence can be compiled regarding accidents and their causes.

9.2 All regiments using black powder must drill on the battlefield or other agreed place before taking part in a battle, skirmish or drill display.

## **HORSE**

10.1 Units attacked by cavalry should form an appropriate formation. Under no circumstances should anyone detach themselves from a unit to engage in single combat.

10.2 It is not permitted to attempt to unhorse a rider.

10.3 Pikemen in formation, when being attacked by cavalry, should either remain static and keep their pikes (and standards etc) still in the “Charge for horse” position with the points aimed to just above the riders’ heads, or if advancing or retiring, keep their pikes level (horizontal) in the “Charge” position.

10.4 Casualties should not be left in long grass without standing soldiers or objects very close by (to avoid being trodden on by horses).

10.5 Detached individuals when attacked by Horse should retire to the nearest ‘friendly’ Pike Division or to a natural or man-made terrain feature.

10.6 Combat between cavalymen is to be conducted generally with sword against sword, without using unnecessary force. Striking at the head is not permitted, nor is grabbing/interfering of reins/tack of another rider.

10.7 Pistols are only to be discharged at a safe distance.

## **SPECIAL EFFECTS**

11.1 Only persons approved by the Army Council or the Committee of Safetie may set and operate special effects using explosives.

11.2 Special effects buried in the ground are to be marked with yellow markers or screened (e.g. by brushwood) to prevent cavalry or infantry from approaching them too closely.

11.3 No thunderflashes, effects or smoke canisters are to be thrown around the field. If you find one on the ground, leave it where it is and retire to a safe distance!

11.4 Mobile telephones and radios are not to be brought to within 10 m of any special effect using explosives or its control systems.

## **FIRST AID**

12.1 Cease combat in the vicinity of casualties and persons administering first aid.

12.2 The wearing a white scarf or a white sign denotes that that person is a qualified First Aider and that appropriate notice should be taken of their instructions.

12.3 Cannon crews and musket companies must have supplies of medically usable water in close proximity.

12.4 All pikemen, pike sergeants and officers of pike divisions are to wear appropriate protective headgear.

12.5 Scissors or equivalent items may be carried by First Aiders for emergency removal of equipment.

## **INCIDENTS**

13.1 Serious Incidents<sup>8</sup> are to be reported via the chain of command to the Lord General/Army Commander. If immediate action is required the Army Commanders will confer on the field or after the battle as appropriate. Details are to be passed to the ECWS Safety Officer for statutory reporting.

13.2 Dangerous Incident or Accident Investigation Report Forms are to be completed by anyone party to an incident with a view to rectification action or amendment of practices, if required, and sent, via Commanding Officers, to the appropriate Army Council Secretary for action.

## MISCELLANEOUS

14.1 Officers should ensure that it is not necessary for soldiers to urinate in public.

14.2 There should be no spectators on the battlefield or between the safety barriers<sup>9</sup>. The safety marshals and photographers/media representatives who are wearing the authorised ECWS blue “Press” over vests are permitted between the safety barriers.

14.3 Photographers are only permitted on the battlefield at a spectator event in exceptional circumstances with the permission of the Senior Officer present. They are to be attired in seventeenth century costume and accompanied by a minder in costume who is responsible for their safety.

14.4 ECWS Members should not use mobile phones, cameras or other recording devices on the battlefield.

Agreed by the Lord General of The King’s Army, Andrew J Newton,  
and the Lord General of The Roundhead Association, Scott Bradbury,  
on 1 March 2024.



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Scott Bradbury  
Lord General of the Army of Parliament

## REFERENCES

1. ECWS Health and Safety Statement Issue 1 Amendment 8 dated September 2015.
2. ECWS Pike Safety Case Issue 2 dated August 2012.
3. ECWS Muskets and Musketees Safety Case Issue 1 dated November 2006.
4. ECWS Cavalry Safety Case Issue 1 dated October 2012
5. ECWS Musicians Safety Case Issue 1 dated October 2012
6. ECWS Edged Weapons Safety Case Issue 1 dated August 2012
7. ECWS Children’s Drill Safety Case Issue 1 dated November 2006.
8. ECWS Guidance for Safety when Marching to/from Re-enactment Sites Issue 2 dated September 2016
9. ECWS Accident and Incident Procedure

[Note: Artillery safety case in course of preparation – see draft]

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<sup>8</sup> Serious Incidents include any events where a member has to be carried off the field by stretcher or ambulance and any incidents which, in the opinion of a Field Officer present, merit further investigation to determine the cause and avoid repetition.

<sup>9</sup> This includes members of the ECWS not taking part in the battle whether or not in costume.