

Guidelines for the Use of Horses in Re-enactment
Queensland Living History Federation Inc.
(December 2003)

These Draft Guidelines are in line with international best practice, and have been devised after consulting equine safety regulations in use with:

NARES
2/14th QMI Historical Troop
Olustee Battle Re-enactment Guidelines For Cavalry Re-enactors
Gettysburg Re-enactment Safety Rules
<http://www.mgel.com/medieval/re-enactors/jousting-tournament/cavalry-safety-rules.html>.
NCWC Safety Rules (11/2002)
Texas Parks and Wildlife

All activities must be carried out with the understanding that safety for yourself and your comrades is a **FIRST PRIORITY and ULTIMATELY you are responsible for your own safety and behaviour!**

The owner of a horse is legally responsible for the actions of that horse, even if another person rides that horse, unless other arrangements through liability contracts or rental or lease agreements have been made.

Re-enactors and owners are responsible for the care, safety and actions of their animals and may be held accountable for failure to adhere to these guidelines.

QLHF Animal Safety Officer

QLHF, for public and inter-group events, shall (upon request of an event organiser) appoint an Animal Safety Officer from among its members. All participating horse group representatives shall be subordinate to the ASO for the duration of that event. Each participating group may be required to nominate a representative for central contact. The ASO's rulings on the field are final and are to be followed without question.

Riders will present all horses to the QLHF Animal Safety Officer for inspection. If the ASO is unhappy with the performance or appearance of an Animal, another experienced member may be consulted before a ruling is made on approval.

The ASO or mounted unit safety officer has the right to prevent the participation in an event of any member seen to be mistreating or mishandling a horse, neglecting safety rules or riding in a dangerous or irresponsible manner.

Any altercation or dispute between individuals, on or off the field, will be handled in a gentlemanly manner, or mediated by the ASO.

Individuals, not a member of a mounted troop, wishing to portray a mounted impression will apply to the QLHF ASO who will then determine the qualifications of the rider(s) and will also determine when and where they may ride.

The designated mounted safety officer for each mounted unit shall be a knowledgeable member of that unit on horse safety, training, riding and troop instruction. That person shall report to the QLHF ASO any dangerous practices, equipment, horses or riders, or any other difficult or unresolved problems.

The ASO will coordinate the maintenance and amendment of these guidelines prior to and immediately any QLHF events.

Rider Competency

All owners, riders and handlers must ensure their animals comply with all Commonwealth, State and Local laws concerning animal health and welfare, safety and transport to and from all events.

Riders will not mistreat animals at any time.

Horses should be of good temperament with a basic education and be well shod. It is the responsibility of the individual mounted unit's safety officer to assess all horses and riders within that troop, and to ensure they and their riders are considered competent and safe to take part in any event.

All members' in attendance are to be able to demonstrate to the unit command a sound knowledge of saddlery and horse tack and how it is fitted, together with a sound knowledge of the requirements of a horse's welfare, health and safety.

All riders should be able to exercise judgement and remove themselves from public places without commotion before situations become dangerous.

It is the responsibility of the troop safety officer to determine that any rider wishing to participate in a battle re-enactment event is able to demonstrate that they can adequately control both horse and weapon under battle re-enactment conditions, and (where appropriate) that they know all drill commands to be used, and can execute each one accurately.

They should likewise be able to engage a mounted unit in both close and open order, and maintain good awareness of their proximity to the horse and rider, together with other participants and horses throughout. Furthermore, that they are both able and willing to react quickly to given commands and observations communicated to them.

That they are able to deliver accurately placed and controlled blows in melee to the rider's target area (sternum to thigh) with the minimum amount of force to deliver the touch.

That they are able to trade blows in melee with the rider with sufficient control and awareness of their weapons, as to not cause risk of the blow landing upon the horse at any point (including when their cut or thrust may be turned or parried by the rider).

That in the event of any impromptu hooking of the rider, or his clothing, armour, equipment or horse tack, they are able to effect a quick controlled and safe disengagement.

Safety Issues

Safety will always take precedence over the authentic way of doing things with mounted troops if a conflict of methods arises.

When picketed as part of a display, public should not be allowed to close within reach of the horses without direct supervision of a member. On no account should public be allowed access to the rear of picketed horses, or to mingle with horses so tethered.

Spectators, children, and visitors will absolutely not be allowed to mount any horse.

Riders will maintain control of their horse at all times and remain aware of the safety of themselves, their horse, other riders and the public. Where routes are open to public access, horses should move in column of no more than two abreast and no faster than trot. The progress of horses through public access should be announced loudly to forewarn public in the vicinity of their approach.

In the event of a horse becoming difficult to control, weapons will be disposed of by extending the arm to the right, holding the weapon parallel to the ground, and releasing. The weapon is not to be thrown. Two hands should be used to then control the horse. When calm, the rider should dismount, retrieve the weapon and make the decision whether to continue or to withdraw.

If a horse is to be withdrawn from a display, the rider will dismount and seek assistance from a Safety officer or marshal to clear a path through the crowd and lead the horse back to the assembly area.

In areas of high crowd density (e.g. Anzac Day or other City street parades,) dismounted marshals should be utilised. They should walk at each front corner of the mounted body and at each rear corner of the mounted body, wearing florescent vests to denote their role. The task of the 2 leading marshals is to ensure that no member of the public is within the area required for the horses to proceed. The 2 rear marshals will watch the horses and move forward to assist participants if any difficulties arise.

Age Limitation

A minimum age of sixteen (16) is set for participation as a riding member of a mounted unit at QLHF events. A person under the age of eighteen (18) must provide written parental or guardian consent to the Safety Officer of their organisation before that person will be allowed to participate. Such permission must be shown to the QLHF Animal Safety Officer upon request. It is the responsibility of that unit's safety officer to ensure the underage person also meets the other competencies that are prerequisites (detailed in this document) for participation in the event

Alcohol and other performance effecting substances

No one shall participate whilst under the influence of alcohol or other performance effecting substances.

Any participant found to be under the influence of alcohol or other performance effecting substances will be barred from further participation at the event, suffer disciplinary action or may be expelled from the organisation.

If any member of a troop has a pre-existing medical condition that could effect safety in combat, it must be declared to the QLHF horse coordinator before participation.

Horses

The use of stallions is prohibited unless the unit desiring to employ one agrees to take complete responsibility for its actions and there are no objections from other horsemen who have their mounts at the event.

All horse equipment must be used in a safe, humane and correct manner.

A "quick-release" knot will be used to tie horses by the halter lead. Horses shall never be tied by the reins and link-straps shall be fixed to the halter, not the bit.

Horses must not be left unattended when tied outside of lorries or on picket lines, and must be supervised at all such times.

Horses taking part in events where gunfire or explosives may be used, should be trained to gunfire and battle before the event. Untrained horses should not be brought to an event.

All horses will be dismounted prior to entering any authorised camp area and led to the designated picket area. Horses will not be ridden or led through the infantry camps, artillery camps, and only on designated roadways in spectator areas. With the exception of designated combat areas, absolutely no mounted individual will allow a horse to enter a camp area above the gait of a controlled walk.

Horse picket lines are to be kept taut. Saddled mounts should be tied so as to keep the saddle from catching the picket rope. Picket areas should be roped off from direct public access and contain adequate space to accommodate the horses present. Picket lines should be of adequate construction and robustly erected. All necessary equipment to facilitate safety and welfare of horses must be present, including a comprehensive equine first aid kit. All members in attendance are to be aware of the location of the equine first aid kit.

Picket lines will be used with a strong rope tied between two trees. There will not be any "picket pens" used other than display. Should something frighten the horse and the "picket pen" is pulled out of the ground, then there is a serious safety problem. Horses on picket lines should be tied to prevent the head from being lowered below the horse's chest. They should not be able to step over the picket line. Individual picket pins are discouraged and if used must be away from camp and watched by a guard at all times.

Horses should not be chased if loose. They should be "hazed" in a non-threatening way towards other horses or their camp picket line. Event planners should not site spectator crowds between the battlefield and any cavalry camps.

The public in a controlled situation such as a talk or demonstration may be allowed to touch a gentle horse with the riders consent.

Horses or other animals should will not be left alone at any time the public is in attendance at an event. It will be the owner's responsibility to picket or corral a horse when not in use.

Corrals will have room for horses, water and feed.

Command

For each event where multiple troops will be appearing, the representatives of those troops may elect a parade commander. That person will take command of all mounted units immediately prior to mount up. From that time until the parade is dismissed, the commander will be the only person to give orders (unless by prior arrangement).

Drill for parades shall conform with the appropriate drill manual, or in the case of a combined parade, the standard set by the parade commander. Where working in conjunction with current Defence Force units, mounted troops will conform to the dismounted parade commander's orders.

Horses and Combat

(i) General

A designated horse run out area should be assigned to space at one end (and preferably both ends) of any display area. These areas, and access to these areas, should remain unobstructed. In circumstances where the display area is roped off, double roped barriers MUST be utilised.

A thorough briefing for all co-ordinators and unit commanders should take place prior to the battle re-enactment display.

A substantial padded garment is to be worn as minimum protection to the body. Durable gloves and throat protection are recommended.

All riders should pay close attention to avoiding infantry who stray into their path.

All participants will be subject to a safety inspection prior to any combat. An inspection for the mounted unit shall include all weapons and tack used and all items carried onto the combat arena. The horse's hooves shall be inspected for loose shoes or lodged stones. Inspection will also include: Firearms for tightness, broken parts, and overall condition, and obstructions. Sword hilts for tightness and no heavily nicked blades allowed. Saddles, quarter straps, stirrup straps, etc., for weak leather. All ammunition pouches will be inspected for live rounds or other projectiles. The ASO will make the final decision in the event of a dispute.

When charging infantry formed up in closely ordered line or column, a mounted unit should arrive or pass within melee reach, at a speed no faster than the trot.

Riders may not be unhorsed by any participants, unless as part of a scheduled, pre-arranged and rehearsed element of the display.

In the event of a rider becoming unhorsed, the participants should catch the free horse and lead it to the nearest safe area, away from the public. If able, the dismounted rider should walk to that area to attend to his mount. Such a dismounted rider may only remount after inspecting for injury, and ensuring all saddlery and tack is fitted correctly.

All close contact fighting between mounted cavalry and infantry or artillery will be coordinated and agreed upon between unit commanders prior to the battle. At no time will cavalry engage infantry with fixed bayonets.

For infantry to be accredited to melee with a mounted unit, they must satisfy the mounted unit safety officer that they are known by their own unit commander to be a current member of that unit and that their conduct consistently conforms to the QLHF rules for safety with polearm or melee weapons. The infantry safety officer of the unit concerned is responsible for the validity of this information.

All activity will be restricted to a walk, or trot, in areas where there are "casualties."

Mounted men shall keep a reasonable and prudent distance from their own infantry or artillery troops.

Riders should maintain a 30-foot distance from enemy ground troops and simulated casualties. When riding within areas where men are casualties all action is confined to a walk.

No person may take the reins of another rider's horse while the rider is mounted. If a rider becomes a casualty or prisoner, the person leading the horse shall use the lead strap, and the rider shall keep the reins.

(ii) Edged Weapons

(Reference should be made to the QLHF Edged Weapons and Intergroup Combat Guidelines, in addition to these Guidelines).

Under normal circumstances, when cantering with drawn weapons, riders must ensure that the point of their weapons is kept high and clear of horses and infantry. Riders are not permitted to deliver a thrust to another participant whilst travelling faster than a trot. All participants (mounted or on foot) should not deliver a thrust upon a rider travelling faster than a trot.

In simulated combat, all points of edged weapons are to be kept high and clear of the horse. Particular attention should be paid to avoiding the horse's head. Infantry not accredited as trained to melee with cavalry may not initiate combat with cavalry. During combat those infantry not so accredited as trained to melee with cavalry, may parry and receive blows only, and should stay in a close-ordered formation.

Hand to hand sword combat between mounted participants can occur only if scripted in advance and approved by both sides.

(iii) Firearms

Any firing of weapons from horseback will be done in a safe manner. No wax wadding is allowed in any weapons. Tissue paper wadding is recommended. No powder flasks should be carried on the field. [Refer to Combat Guidelines]

Mounted men will not fire at less than a 60-degree angle from their horses' ears and be aware of other troopers and horses around them.
