

Friends of Old Fort Custer

1759 Linda Way
McKinleyville, CA 95519
(707) 839-4244, cell (646) 812- 1727

Dear Troopers,

The snows of spring on the northern plains have finally abated, and the grass is starting to grow. Headquarters thoughts are turning to a summer campaign in Montana. To prepare for the coming campaign troopers are encouraged to hone their marksmanship skills with a competition at Old Fort Custer. This year will be the Eighth Annual 21st Century Old Fort Custer Marksmanship Competition. The event will be at the Hardin Rod and Gun Club firing range which is on the site of Old Fort Custer just south of Hardin on top of the bluff.

The competition will take place on Thursday, June 23. There will be two practice firing sessions. One will be on Wednesday afternoon, June 22 from 2:00-4:30 pm, and the other will be on Thursday, morning June 23 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The competition will begin at 1:15 pm on Thursday. Targets will be provided. Be sure to bring eye and ear protection, and your safety awareness around firearms. There are no toilets at the fort, but there will be cold drinking water. You may want to bring a chair.

Acceptable firearms are any original or reproduction firearm available on the frontier from 1860 to 1894. Open iron sights only (no scopes, peep or tang sights). Do not let the event name, "marksmanship competition," deter you from participating. Most of the "competitors" only fire their arms once a year, at this event. If you do not have a period firearm, some of the other participants will loan you one. The award for the top marksman prize will be in honor of Sergeant Horace Bivins. Sergeant Bivins served at Old Fort Custer during the early 1890s and was a national shooting champion. In 1894 he won five gold medals with pistol and carbine.

Period dress is encouraged, but is not essential. A small monetary donation is suggested to help the Hardin Rod and Gun Club maintain the range and purchase targets. The competition rules and regulations are enclosed along with directions to the firing range at Old Fort Custer. These will also be available in Hardin during Little Bighorn Days book fair held at the Ford dealership at 5th and Center Ave. in Hardin, at John Spomer's Reflections of Custer table and on the CBHMA web site. If you have any items you would like to donate for prizes, bring them to the competition. If you need ammo for the shoot, you may purchase .45 long Colt with cowboy loads at Lammer's Trading Post in downtown Hardin. You may also order black powder .45-70 and .45 long Colt cartridges from Ten-X Ammunition in Ontario, California, telephone (909) 605-1617 or Buffalo Arms in Ponderay, ID, telephone (208) 263-6953.

There will be a Friends of Old Fort Custer business meeting for everyone interested in developing the future direction of the organization after the firing practice session on Wednesday, June 22 at 4:30pm. The meeting will be held at the Old Fort Custer firing range. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in these activities. If you have any ideas and suggestions about the marksmanship competition or Old Fort Custer's future, I encourage you to attend the business meeting, or call me at the above numbers.

Garryowen & Glory,

Mark Wilson
AKA California Joe
Real Bird Reenactment: June 24, 25 & 26

Friends of Old Fort Custer
Eighth Annual 21st Century Marksmanship Competition
Thursday, June 23, 2011, 1:15pm

Site of Old Fort Custer, Confluence of the Bighorn and Little Bighorn Rivers, Montana.

Practice: Wednesday, June 22, 2:00 to 4:30 and Thursday, June 23, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Rules and regulations:

1. Due to the fact that many participants will use these same firearms in the reenactment, extraordinary precautions must be taken to ensure that no firearms leave the firing range with live rounds in them. We do not want a repeat of a fatal accident such as took place at the Gettysburg reenactment a few years back. Each person firing at the range must sign-in with the range master or his designee and list all firearms to be used. Each firearm will be inspected for safe operation. Upon leaving the firing range each person must sign-out and have each firearm inspected to make sure there are no live rounds in any chamber.
2. Competitors and observers will listen to and obey all commands of the range master.
3. Firearms types: Any original or reproduction pistol or rifle produced or available on the frontier from 1860 to 1894. Open iron sights only (no scopes, peep or tang sights).
4. Ammunition: Safe loads for the type of firearm. Black powder or its equivalent (Pyrodex) is preferred, but smokeless "cowboy loads" may be used. Bullets should be typical of the kind used by the military or available on the frontier e.g. lead round nose or flat nose. Specialty target bullets such as postel or spitzer are NOT allowed.
5. Targets:
 - pistol — 16.5 inch diameter circular at 25 yards
 - rifle - 16.5 inch diameter circular at 50 yards. The target will be the same one used for pistol.
 - The pistol holes will be marked to avoid confusion with rifle holes.
6. Firing:
 - pistol - six shots, three in the standing position and three in the kneeling position; one handed grip; no external structural support, only the competitor's body. One minute (60 seconds) allowed for the six shots.
 - rifle - six shots, three in the standing position, and three in the kneeling position; no external structural support, only the competitor's body; the shooter may use an observer or optical magnification to determine the position of target strikes. Two minutes allowed for the six shots. Muzzle loading rifles have four minutes.
7. Scoring: The numbers on the targets will be summed and the scores will be ranked from highest (best shot) to the lowest (needs more practice). Both the pistol and rifle scores of each competitor will be summed to determine the top three combined ranked competitors. The person with the top combined score shall receive the Sergeant Horace Bivins award. In case of a tie with the numerical calculations in each category, the competitors will have a one shot shoot off. The person with the highest score will be ranked above the other competitor. In the case of the combined scores being the same, the competitors will have a one shot shoot off with rifles.

Eighth Annual Old Fort Custer Marksmanship Competition
Wednesday & Thursday, June 22 & 23, 2011
Directions to Old Fort Custer, Montana

Take exit 497 off Interstate Highway 90 on the east side of Hardin. If you are coming north from the battlefield, turn left and drive west over the overpass. Just west of the Interstate entrance for southbound traffic turn south onto the frontage road, 384, that goes south paralleling Interstate 90. Cross the iron bridge that goes over the Bighorn River and continue south for about 100 yards. At this point you will see a gravel road to the right that goes west up the bluff. Drive up the bluff. At the top the road forks. Stay on the right fork, due west. After about 300 yards you will come to a gate. On the left just before the gate is the stone monument placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) that commemorates Fort Custer. Go through the open gate and drive on down the road about 1/4 mile to the Hardin Rod and Gun Club firing range. Headquarters will be under the 37 star flag.