

Grand Army of the Frontier Muster Guide

Purpose

This Muster Guide is provided to establish a baseline of equal opportunity and consistency between the Grand Army of the Frontier (GAF) Musters held at the Brigade (national) Department, Division, and local levels.

This Guide is not meant to restrict the Muster Director but to allow him to use his discretion and imagination to designing a Muster that is fun, interesting, safe, yet be able to take advantage of the host range's unique features, while still retaining the Muster principals and policies across the broad geographic scope of the GAF.

General

The GAF shooting competitions will be known as a Muster.

- The national level Muster will be known as The Grand Muster.
- Department and Division level Musters will be known by their geographic name, i.e. The Department of the Missouri Muster, or The Division of Nebraska Muster.

All GAF Musters will encompass both shooting and uniform competitions. Emphasis should be placed on shooting the Muster with military firearms in an appropriate uniform.

- All shooting categories should be offered during registration. Categories with less than three shooters may be rolled into another similar category.
- Uniform competition should include at least the field uniform and dress uniform categories.

The Brigade Champion competition may only be conducted at the Brigade's Grand Muster. However, a Division or Department Champion may be awarded at an annual Musters held at those levels.

- Brigade, Division and Department Champions will only be awarded from among the Battle Rifle competitors, who must place in one of the Battle Rifle categories **and** in either the field or dress uniform categories.

Shooting Competition

The GAF's shooting competitions are based on the cartridge rifle, and specifically the military issued cartridge rifle, rather than the pistol used by other similar historical-oriented shooting organizations.

The GAF shooting competition is designed around a rifle and a single pistol.

- The pistol should be compatible with the rifle, being of the same time period and military service, i.e. an 1873 Colt Single Action Army would be appropriate with the 1873 Springfield carbine.
- The uniform should also be comparable with the rifle. Using the example above, the most appropriate uniform might be that of a US cavalryman.

Stages should be designed so that either the rifle or the pistol is reloaded at least once. Preferably both firearms should be reloaded at least once per stage but this is not required.

- Reloads will be with loose ammunition (ie, no loading aids) from appropriate belts, pouches, pockets or haversacks carried on the shooters person. No reloads may be made from the firearm.
- Spencer shooters are allowed to use a Blakeslee loading box and tubes as this provides little, if any, loading advantage since they must remove and replace the magazine tube within the buttstock while reloading. The loading tube must be replaced in the loading box unless otherwise instructed.
- Mauser C96 pistols are allowed a single stripper clip for reloading due to inherent safety considerations.

Shotguns will normally not be used at a GAF Muster since most the Victorian-era militaries did not issue shotguns until the First World War. If a particular stage is based on a historical event in which a shotgun played a significant role, then the Muster's host will provide the shotgun, as a "guest" gun, and ammunition for that stage.

The Muster may provide a "guest" rifle, along with appropriate ammunition, for a particular stage. If a percussion musket is chosen, it should be loaded by some with muzzleloading experience, not by the competitor.

No external or internal modifications to the firearms are allowed except that springs may be replaced/lightened and existing parts may be polished to improve trigger pull. Parts may be only replaced to repair or return to the firearm to MILSPEC.

GAF CATEGORY GUIDELINES:

The GAF Muster shooting competitions are based on the *rifle*, specifically military cartridge rifles issued to Victorian-era militaries around the world between 1860 and 1900, or roughly equivalent to the black powder cartridge era.

Rifles and carbines for the Battle Rifle Categories must be of military specification (MILSPEC), and pistols must be of MILSPEC or of a *demonstrated* military usage.

- Firearms will be their military configuration, to include no changes to the stock, sights, or mechanical function.
- MILSPEC Firearms must be shot in appropriate MILSPEC calibers or an equivalent unless otherwise pre-approved by the appropriate level Brigade, Department or Division Ordnance for the respective Muster. (Example: .30-06, 7mm or 8mm may be substituted for .30 US caliber).
- The competitor may be required to provide evidence of a firearm having a demonstrated military usage. Approval will be up to the Muster Director or the respective Brigade, Department or Division Ordnance Officer for the Muster. There is no appeal.

The Muster Director has the discretion to design different courses of fire for repeaters and single-shot rifles, as well as determining what the course of fire will be for the single firearm categories since the GAF shooting categories are not in direct competition against each other.

- Only the Battle Rifle categories are in competition for the Brigade, Department or Division Champion, the Muster's highest award.
- The Civilian Rifle categories are not eligible for the Champion Award.

The Quartermaster Employee categories (Militia, Scout, Hunter, and Forager) permit the use of non-military repeating and single-shot rifles in both rifle and pistol calibers, and a GAF approved single-action pistol. This allows those competitors without a MILSPEC rifle to participate.

- Rifles used in the Quartermaster Employee categories may be loaded to the maximum capacity of the magazine prior to starting the stage or during stage reloads unless otherwise directed by the Muster Director.

In the main matches of the Muster, no loading aids such as stripper clips may be used in any category.

The following categories will be offered at GAF Musters unless there are insufficient registrations.

Battle Rifle Categories

- Marksman (black powder):
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC Repeating Rifle or Carbine.
 - Any GAF approved pistol.
 - Both firearms must be shot with black powder or substitute (no duplex black powder and smokeless powder loads).
- Marksman (smokeless):
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC Repeating Rifle or Carbine.

- Any GAF approved pistol.
- Rifleman (black powder)
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC Single-shot Rifle or Carbine.
 - Any GAF approved pistol.
 - Both firearms must be shot with black powder or substitute (no duplex black powder and smokeless powder loads).
- Rifleman (smokeless)
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC Single-shot Rifle or Carbine.
 - Any GAF approved pistol.
- Infantryman:
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC rifle or Carbine.
 - Rifle only. The Infantryman shall engage only designated rifle targets but may be required to engage extra designated targets in lieu of shooting the pistol targets.
- Staff Officer:
 - Any GAF approved MILSPEC pistol.
 - Handgun only; The Staff Officer shall engage all targets, rifle and handgun, with his firearm. (Known as the "Little" rule)

Quartermaster Employee Categories

These categories are designed to easily permit Cowboy Action Shooters to participate in the GAF Musters without having to acquire new firearms.

The Quartermaster Employee categories will receive the same type of awards as the Battle Rifle Categories, but are not eligible for the Brigade, Department or Division Champion Awards.

- Militia:
 - Non-military *rifle caliber* lever action or repeating rifles
 - Any GAF approved pistol.
- Scout:
 - Non-military *pistol caliber* lever action or repeating rifles
 - Any GAF approved *single-action* pistol.
- Hunter:

- Non-military *pistol or rifle caliber* single-shot cartridge rifle without an automatic ejector. Repeating rifles, fired single shot, are not authorized.
- Any GAF approved *single-action* pistol.
- Forager:
 - Any single shot, double-barreled, or lever-action shotgun of a design manufactured prior to 1900. The single shot shotgun may have ejectors. The double-barrel shotgun may not have ejectors.
 - Any GAF approved *single-action* pistol.
 - The Muster Director will direct the target engagement, but it is recommended the Forager Scout engage on handgun targets for the rifle sequence.

The Muster Director has sufficient discretion to combine or divide categories as may be required by the number of registered shooters. The MILSPEC repeating rifle categories may be combined, and the MILSPEC single shot rifle categories may be combined, but the MILSPEC repeating rifle and single shot rifle categories should not be combined into a single class. Any category may be divided by powder type/action/gender should numbers warrant.

GAF RIFLE GUIDELINES

Rifles in the Battle Rifle Categories must be shot in appropriate MILSPEC calibers or an equivalent (Example: .30-06 may be substituted for .30 US caliber).

- Only the Brigade, Department or Division Ordnance Officer for the respective Muster may authorize the substitution of an appropriate caliber. This information will be provided to both the Muster Director and the Muster participant.

All rifle ammunition will be all lead bullets and have a maximum velocity of no more than 1400 FPS.

- Lead bullets of no more 405 grains will be used for .500 caliber and lower.
- Lead bullets of no more than 480 grains will be used for .501 calibers and higher.
- Gas checks may be used on rifle calibers of .32 or less at the Muster Director's discretion and pre-approval of the respective Ordnance Officer.

Excepted rifle designations

- A Spencer rifle or carbine in a rifle caliber or pistol caliber is considered a MILSPEC repeating rifle. The GAF recognizes that the pistol caliber Spencer is an anachronism but since it became widely available commercially prior to the reintroduction of a rifle caliber version, it will be considered a MILSPEC firearm for Muster competition. This ruling may be subject to change at a later date.
- A military configured Winchester 1895 is considered a MILSPEC repeater and may be used in the Marksman categories.

- A civilian configured Winchester 1895 is considered a civilian repeater and may only be used in the Militia category.
- A Henry rifle is considered a civilian pistol-caliber repeating rifle and may only be used in the Scout category. The GAF recognizes that the Henry was used by some military units during the American Civil War but for Muster competition it will not be considered a MILSPEC firearm.

GAF PISTOL GUIDELINES:

Handguns used in the Battle Rifle categories should be of the same type issued when the rifle was in use and in a MILSPEC caliber or caliber with a demonstrated military usage (such as a documented pistol and caliber used by a serviceman) .

- The GAF recognizes that some handgun/rifle combinations may be difficult to impossible to achieve and allows reasonable substitutions. Officers of the period were allowed to purchase their own sidearms, and some enlisted men did so as well.

Pistols in all categories may be held with one or both hands, at the shooter's discretion, but only the strong hand may be used to cock the hammer on a revolver.

- **The weak hand may only be used to support the pistol.** Cocking the revolver with the weak hand will result in a five point penalty being assessed for anachronistic practice. Remember, presentation is an important part of this sport. How the firearms are held and manipulated is just as much a part of this presentation as the uniforms and the firearms themselves.

All handgun ammunition must be all lead and a maximum velocity of 1000 fps. Further requirements for minimum pistol loadings may be implemented should need arise.

- Caliber substitutions/exemptions may be allowed by the Muster Director but must be approved prior to the Muster by the appropriate Brigade, Department or Division Ordnance Officer.
- Any MILSPEC pistols in an appropriate MILSPEC caliber for that pistol is authorized (such as the French 8mm, the Russian Nagant .32s, and the Mauser .30 in the C96). There is no minimum bore diameter.
- Non-MILSPEC pistols will have a minimum bore of .357.

Cap-and-ball revolver shooters may use more than one pre-loaded but uncapped revolver or cylinder for reloads during the stage, but these revolvers or cylinders must be capped on the clock.

GAF STAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Stages should be designed to use a "Skirmish" format when possible and if range conditions safely allow it. The Skirmish format includes:

- Moving forward and/or laterally during the stage.

- Two or more of the four shooting positions (standing, kneeling, sitting, and prone) whenever possible.
 - Shooters may be granted an exemption from engaging targets from these positions for reasons of health, safety or modesty. These exemptions will be granted on a case by case basis.
- Engaging targets from behind cover when possible.
- Shooting on the move is prohibited. Shooting during movement will be considered a major safety violation and assessed a Muster Disqualification.
- Reloading on the move is prohibited; reloading will be done from the new shooting position prior to engaging targets. Reloading on the move will be considered a safety violation and assessed a Stage Disqualification.

Match Directors should design stages that are challenging yet fun, requiring the shooter to engage targets at various ranges and spacing in a single stage, with reloads, and with movement.

- Ideally, stages should be based on a historical military event
- Both rifle and pistol targets should be spread out, at various ranges, and some may be partially concealed.
- Rifle targets should be spread out up to 100 yards, range conditions permitting.
- Pistol targets should be spread out and up to 50 yards, range conditions permitting.
- Typically targets should not be close together unless the scenario calls for engaging two or more closely spaced targets.
- An occasional “no hit” target, representing a friendly, is encouraged.
- An occasional “must hit” target is encouraged (using a knock-down target is recommended).
- Optional targets for bonus points may be used in occasional stages.
- Not all stages should be designed to shoot from right to left or left to right. Some should be shot front to back or back to front, or on alternating sides. However, try to avoid a complicated sequence of fire.

- If the shooter is given an option to start on a target of their choice, the shooter should announce which target will be engaged first so the spotters will be aware of the chosen sequence.
- Dumps and double or triple taps should be avoided.

SIDE MATCH GUIDELINES

The Grand Army of the Frontier recognizes that side matches held the day before the main matches of a Muster gives participants a good "warm up" for the main match.

The continuing popularity of these side matches dictates that some guidelines be established so that Muster participants can expect a degree of uniformity between Musters.

Suggested side matches include but are not limited to; Long Range Rifle, Long Range Pistol, and the Era of Expansion.

Side-match competitions are separate and distinct from the main match and will have their own awards. A suitable certificate or medal will be awarded for those placing in the side matches, to include an award for the best Era of Expansion uniform.

Side-match scores will not be incorporated into main match scores, or scoring for the Brigade, Department or Division Champion.

Long Range Rifle Match

Long Range rifle matches can be conducted in several ways, and there is no restriction on the type of rifle or caliber used subject to the host range rules. Recent Musters in 2008 and 2009 used the following format:

- 5 steel targets set at unknown distances from about 100 yards to about 200 yards.
- Each target is engaged with 3 rounds.
- Open sights only. No scopes.
- No sighting shots or sighting aids.
- Ties will be broken by "sudden death" with the shooters engaging the furthest target until they miss. Most hits wins.

Long Range Pistol Match

Same format as the Long Range Rifle except that targets are set from about 25 yards up to about 75 yards.

The Era of Expansion Match

The Era of Expansion Match (EEM) is designed to commemorate the era of European expansion such as the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902), Second Boer War (1899-1902), the landing at Vera Cruz (1914), and the Pershing Expedition into Mexico (1916).

- The EEM is a variation of what is popularly known in Cowboy Action Shooting as a “Wild Bunch” match, but with significant differences in what firearms are used and the encouragement to wear an appropriate uniform of the era.

The EEM allows, and encourages, the use of MILSPEC firearms issued to the military between 1900 and 1916, with the exceptions noted below.

- Rifle and pistol only. Shotguns were not issued to military forces until WWI. If a shotgun is required, it and the ammunition will be provided by the Muster Director.
- Post-1900 design firearms may only be used in the Era of Expansion Match. They may not be used in the long range pistol or rifle side-matches, or in the main match.
- Post-WWI manufactured and issued MILSPEC firearms will not be used with the **following exceptions only:**
 - Springfield Model 1903A rifle. Must have barrel mounted sights. WWII style receiver sights are not allowed.
 - US Enfield Model 1917 rifle: an accepted version of the British Enfield P14 in caliber .30-06.
 - Colt Model 1917 revolver: a later model of the Model 1909 that permits the .45 ACP to be used.
 - Smith & Wesson 1917 revolver : a later model of the Model 1908 that permits the .45 ACP to be used.
 - Colt 1911A pistol. Must be a basic model. Beavertails, skeletonized hammers & triggers, ect.) are not allowed.

- Mauser rifles must be of pre-WWI design. No WWII Mausers will be allowed.
- The wearing of pre-1916 uniforms is encouraged but WWI specific items are WWI specific are not allowed. Such items include, but are not limited to, steel helmets, gas masks, and other equipment or uniform items that were introduced and associated with the trench warfare in Europe.
- The respective Brigade, Department or Division Ordnance Officer will have the final approval of any firearm used in the EEM. There will be no appeal.

Era of Expansion Categories:

- **Regular:**
 - MILSPEC Springfield 1903A1, Mauser 98, SMLE, etc.
 - MILSPEC semi-automatics or revolvers introduced prior to 1916 (see above for post-WWI firearms permitted).
 - Loading aids (3 round "C" clips for revolvers, clips for rifles, and magazines for pistols) are authorized.
- **Volunteer**
 - MILSPEC Krag, MLEs, early Mausers, etc.
 - Single or double action revolvers. No semi-automatic pistols.
 - Loading aids (magazines, stripper clips, etc) are not authorized.
- **Guardman**
 - Rifle or pistol caliber lever-action rifles
 - GAF approved semi-automatic pistol. [I know SASS specifies the M1911A1 only – but I think as the GAF we can provide a bit more latitude and permit other semi-autos.
 - This category is designed to easily permit Cowboy Action Shooters to participate in the EEM without having to acquire new firearms.

Competitors should be encouraged to wear an appropriate period uniform that compliments the firearms they are shooting in the EEM.

- A separate uniform competition for the EEM will be conducted and one or more awards presented for the best uniforms. First, Second and Third place awards should be provided to encourage competitors to shoot in uniform, and to encourage those who make the effort to match their firearms and uniforms.

UNIFORM COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Military uniforms are as much a part of the GAF Musters as the shooting. Every GAF Muster should have a uniform competition for both field and dress uniforms.

- Field uniforms are those uniforms worn while on campaign or patrols.
 - For GAF purposes, a field uniform is any Victorian-era uniform worn while shooting. The participant may include some civilian items, such as belt, holster, hat, or leather jacket or pants.
 - Because regular and irregular forces on campaign typically wore a non-regulation mix of uniform and civilian items, those who portray a non-regulation soldier must be prepared to provide documentation for their “uniform” to the judges if asked, or be judged solely according to the judge’s knowledge.
 - Judges may challenge any item for suitable documentation or justification if they doubt its validity. It is up to the competitor to satisfy the judges’ concerns.
 - Women competitors who participate in the Battle Rifle categories and wear a man’s uniform or a pseudo-uniform (as described in the GAF Uniform Policies) as their field uniform.
- Dress uniforms are those uniforms worn while in garrison, on parade, when standing inspection, or attending a social occasion, such as a ball or dinner. These will usually be worn by GAF competitors who attend the Muster banquet.
 - For GAF purposes, a dress uniform may be either a full dress or undress uniform. As a general rule, dress uniforms will usually closely follow the established uniform regulations of the period.

- Dress uniforms should be judged on completeness, attention to detail, following the regulations or custom of the period. Only rarely were non-regulation items worn.
- Judges may challenge any item for suitable documentation or justification if they doubt its validity. It is up to the competitor to satisfy the judges' concerns.
- Women competitors who participate in the Battle Rifle categories may wear ball gown with a patriotic or military influence (as described in the GAF Uniform Policies) as their dress uniform.

Uniform judges should be selected from those who won the previous year, or who have demonstrated knowledge of uniform regulations, customs or traditions.

- Judges should be provided with a list of judging criteria.
- Judges should be provided with the GAF Uniform policies, which outlines what is acceptable and not-acceptable in the GAF.

Uniform awards should be the same as given for the shooting competition. With the increased interest in the uniform competition, the Muster Director should consider giving out 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards for both dress and field uniform competition.

Awards should also be given out for the best civilian attire, but no more than one per category to encourage GAF participants to wear a uniform. The GAF Uniform Policy provides more detail, but essentially includes the following civilian categories:

- Women
 - Best “field uniform” awarded for an outfit based on uniforms worn by *Vivandiere*, daughters or wives of the Regiment, or if disguised as a soldier, or for a Victorian sporting outfit, such as worn while hunting or shooting.

- Best “dress uniform” awarded for ball gown or evening dress. Special consideration should be given to those gowns with a military or patriotic flair or appearance.

- Men
 - Best Scout “field uniform.” A scout’s field outfit should readily identify him as a scout and not as a cowboy, townsman, lawmen, outlaw, etc.

 - Best Scout “dress uniform.” This should be a fancy outfit such as worn in a Wild West show. This may include a suit of buckskin, or wearing such items as a beaded or quilled vest, moccasins, or other items that would identify the wearer as a “scout” and not a townsman.

AWARDS

Awards should be presented for both shooting and uniform competitions.

- Awards should be presented for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for all shooting and uniform completion categories, assuming sufficient registration in each. A lesser number of awards may be presented if there are insufficient participants, however a minimum of four competitors should be registered to award a 3rd place in that category.

Awards should be in the form of medals, plaques, certificates, or trophies.

- Awards for the GRAND MUSTER will be in the form of a military style medal, consisting of medallion hung from a blue, red or white ribbon for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place respectively.

Brigade, Department and Divisions Champions

The Brigade Champion may only be awarded at the annual GAF GRAND MUSTER.

A Department or Division Champion may be awarded at that respective level, but must meet the same criteria as that of the Brigade Champion. The Department or Division Commander’s will direct if the Muster will have a Champion competition.

- Champions will only be selected from among the Battle Rifle competitors.

- Those competitors who place in both a shooting and uniform competitions are eligible for being selected as a Champion. If no one places in both a shooting and uniform category, the award will not be given.

- The Champion will be selected from competitors who place in both categories, with tie breakers being determined in the following order:
 - Highest place in a Battle Rifle category
 - Example: If two competitors place in both a Battle Rifle category and in the Uniform competition, the competitor with the highest placement in their shooting category will win

 - Highest placement in Dress Uniform category
 - Example: If two competitors place First in a Battle Rifle category, the competitor with the highest placement in the Dress Uniform competition will win

 - Dress Uniform will trump a Field Uniform Placement
 - Example: If two competitors place First in a Battle Rifle category, and one places First in Dress Uniform and the other is First in Field Uniform, the Dress Uniform placement will supercede the Field Uniform placement.
 - Example: If two competitors place First in a Battle Rifle category, and First in a Dress Uniform category, then the competitor with the highest Field Uniform placement will win.