

Friends of Old Fort Custer

13th Annual Old Fort Custer 21st Century Marksmanship Competition
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Dear Troopers,

This year will be the 13th Annual 21st Century Old Fort Custer Marksmanship Competition. The event will be at the Big Horn County Rod & Gun Club firing range which is on the site of Old Fort Custer just south of Hardin on top of the river's bluff. There are three recent procedural changes this year due to a shooting accident last year at another event. First, antique original firearms be not be allowed. Secondly, participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Third, participants under the age of 18 must be supervised by a parent or legal guardian.

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 on Thursday, June 23, 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 modern 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 might 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. If you have any items you would like to donate for prizes, bring them to the competition.

There will be a Friends of Old Fort Custer business meeting for everyone interested in promoting the preservation and interpretation of the site of Fort Custer after the practice firing session on Wednesday, June 22 at 4:30 pm. 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 Old Fort Custer's future, I encourage you to attend the business meeting, or call me at the above numbers.

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

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13th Annual Old Fort Custer 21st Century Marksmanship Competition

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 1:15 pm

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 closed 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. Open the gate, drive through the open gate, then close the gate and secure it to the post with the chain. **DO NOT LOCK THE GATE** with the padlock! Drive on down the road about 1/4 mile to the Big Horn County Rod and Gun Club firing range. Headquarters will be under the 37 star flag. When you leave be sure to close the gate!

Rules and regulations:

1. Only modern reproduction firearms may be use (no antique originals).
2. Participants must sign a liability waiver, be 18 years of age or older and of sound mind.
3. 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 in Tombstone during a reenactment of the OK Corral shootout. 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.
4. Competitors must use safe practices associated with firearms in a live fire environment, e.g., Only load firearm at shooting station immediately prior to firing, always point firearm down range, keep breech open except when firing, keep pistols in holster except when loading and firing. See NRA rules.
5. Competitors and observers will listen to and obey all commands of the range master.
6. Firearms types: Only modern reproduction pistol or rifle produced or available on the frontier from 1860 to 1894. No modern sights, open iron sights only (no scopes, peep or tang sights).
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 (sitting if over 65 years); 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.
10. 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 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.