

**C**ombat Archery  
Manual



**K**ingdom of Trimararis

## KINGDOM OF TRIMARIS COMBAT ARCHERY

A **Combat Archer** is a fighter who shoots combat arrows and dies from 'touch kill'. 'Touch kill' means the combat archer dies when touched by a heavy **weapons** fighter. A combat archer dies from combat arrows in the same way heavy weapons fighters die from arrows (see CONVENTIONS OF COMBAT).

A **Yeoman** in the SCA has come to mean a person who is both an archer and a heavy weapons fighter. To switch from an archer to a heavy weapons fighter, you must drop your bow **and** arrows. Yeomen are 'touch kill' when they have a bow or arrow on them. When they switch to heavy weapons, they will then die in the same manner as a heavy weapons fighter from weapon and arrow blows. Your quiver will be considered armor, and not a shield. If you are hit on the quiver, the blow shall be counted. In other words, if you are hit on the quiver that is attached at your hip, then you lose your leg and you must fight from your knees. Use common sense- if you, as a yeoman, are overrun before you have the chance to arm yourself with your heavy weapons, take the 'touch kill' unless you can run clear of your attacker. Conversely, a heavy weapons combatant should not strike an unarmed opponent.

### ARMOR STANDARDS

Armor shall be the same as the minimum armor requirement for heavy weapons combat with the only modification being hand protection.

#### 1. Helms:

Shall be a minimum of 16 gauge steel and Society standards regarding construction shall apply. Light archers (combat archers who never switch to heavy weapons) may mark the sides of their helmets with 6" white diamonds so they are recognized as 'touch kill' or non-contact. **Warning:** This white diamond will not protect you from being hit. It may not be seen by fighters in a melee.

#### 2. Body Armor:

Shall be consistent with the minimum Society standards:  
Gorget, elbows, knees, kidneys, groin, and vambraces.

Make sure your knee and elbow cops wrap around the joint far enough to cover the points and are made of rigid material (metal, Kidex, heavy waxed leather).

Make sure the space between your helmet and gorget is small. If a sword could hit your neck between them, the gap is too big.

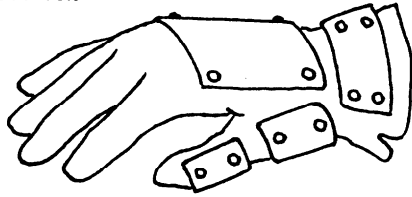
For men, groin protection shall be a minimum of a rigid athletic cup worn in a supporter or garment designed to hold it in place, or equivalent armor.

For women, groin protection of closed cell foam, heavy leather or the equivalent is required. Women shall not wear the male style athletic cup.

(ouch) For women, breast protection in the form of a gambeson shall be worn as a minimum. Separate breast cups are prohibited unless connected by or mounted on an interconnecting rigid piece. Rigid armor is HIGHLY suggested for breast protection. It **really** hurts when you get hit on the breast by an arrow.

Please note that your kidneys are not at your waistline. They are behind the lowest ribs of your back. Protect THAT area with armor. Cover all mundanities with period garb.

### 3. Hand Protection/ Archer Gauntlets



Half gauntlets or a leather glove with rigid plates of Kidex, metal or rigid waxed leather on the back of the hand, wrist and thumb (except thumb tip). Yeomen shall be allowed to wear the same archer gauntlets, but only while shooting. When switching to heavy weapons, the yeoman must wear the minimum legal hand protection for heavy weapons combat. This is either full gauntlets or half gauntlets with a basket or cup hilt. A good procedure for yeomen is to use a full gauntlet on the bow hand and a half gauntlet on the string hand with a cup hilted sword in reserve.

### WEAPONS

All bows must be inspected by the combat archery marshal prior to battle.

If you have any questions regarding a bow, ask the marshallate before use. Do not assume it will be OK.

All combat bows must be traditional recurve or longbows. Modern crossbows and compound bows are not allowed.

All bows must be free of stress cracks, deep gouges, or damage that may affect the stability of the bow while strung and under pressure.

#### 1. Longbows and recurve bows:

**Longbows** and recurve bows for combat will have a maximum draw weight of 30 pounds at a 28 inch draw. Draw length is measured from the side of the bow opposite of the string, to the drawn string.

#### 2. Crossbows

Crossbows will have a maximum draw weight of 600 inch/pounds. This is the measurement of the draw length from the relaxed string to the drawn string, multiplied by the poundage of the crossbow.

1. 50 pound crossbow with a 12 inch draw = 600 inch/pounds.
2. 60 pound crossbow with a 10 inch draw = 600 inch/pounds.
3. 49 pound crossbow with a 12.5 inch draw = 612.5 inch/pounds (unacceptable for combat).

#### 3. Arrows and Bolts:

Arrows and bolts shall meet all construction standards as set forth by the marshallate.

**Longbows** and recurve bows will use an arrow with a maximum draw length of 28 inches. The arrow can be longer than 28 inches, but it cannot be drawn longer than 28 inches.

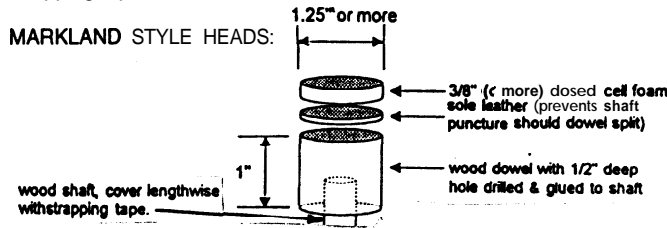
Mark your arrows and heads with your name so they can be returned to you.

Put strapping tape **lengthwise** down the shaft, do not spiral wrap shafts. Bolts and arrows must have vanes or fletches. Do not use paper or duct tape for fletches, only plastic vanes or feather fletches

Arrow head construction shall **be** "Baldar Blunts" or "Thistle Missiles" or shall **be** made as in the diagram below. Any alternative designs must **be** approved individually by the marshallate before use. **DO NOT ASSUME YOUR VERSION OF THE HEAD IS JUST AS GOOD AND WILL PASS.** **BALDAR BLUNTS** are very popular for good reasons. They fly well, are much safer, almost indestructible, reusable... Make sure you install them on your arrows correctly.

You must tape the arrow shaft lengthwise with strapping tape. The strapping tape must extend from the base of the fletches to the **end** of the arrow and **COVER** the end of the arrow. **Place** a mark on the shaft one-half inch from the end of the arrow. Push the Baldar Blunt onto the end until it covers the half inch mark. A little soap or spit will help it slide on more easily. To make sure the Baldar Blunt goes onto the shaft one-half inch, shoot the arrow at a solid wall with your bow half drawn three times. This will make sure the Blunt is well seated on the arrow shaft. (Crossbows: Shoot the wall, stand way back.) Now you must tape the blunt to the shaft. Use one-half inch electrical tape because it sticks and stretches well. Stretch the tape as you wrap. Wrap the tape three times around the shaft **BELOW** the collar of the Baldar Blunt. Then **s-t-r-8-t-c-h** the tape up to the collar of the Blunt and wrap the tape three times around the collar. Now stretch the tape back down to the shaft and make three more wraps around **the shaft** below the Blunt. **TA-DA!** If the shaft breaks at **the** base of the Baldar Blunt, you can remove that little piece of wooden shaft from the Blunt and put the Blunt on a new shaft, or back on the shorter shaft.

If you are using **SOLID** fiberglass arrow shafts with Baldar Blunts, you must use the Baldar Blunts which are specifically made for fiberglass shafts. These **have** a black base instead of white. **Cover** the fiberglass shaft lengthwise with strapping tape and attach the Baldar Blunt as **described** above.



All components must be **glued** together. Cover the **entire** head with strapping tape and tape the head to the shaft, by **extending** the tape over the head and **2-3** inches down **the** length of the **Shaft**. **Cover** the strapping tape with duct or electrical **tape**.

Measure the diameter of the wooden dowel when purchasing. A **1 1/4" dowel** will often actually measure **1 1/8"**. This will make an illegal arrow.

Shafts must be of wood or **SOLID FIBERGLASS** covered lengthwise by strapping tape.

### CONVENTIONS OF COMBAT

1. To kill a fighter or combat archer, the arrow must hit the torso, face, or neck area. A hit to the shoulder to forearm (above the wrist) will constitute the loss of the arm. A hit to the leg from the hip to just above the knee will constitute the loss of the leg.
2. To determine if an arrow shot is good, look to see where the arrow landed. The shot is good if the arrow bounces back towards the archer or drops straight to the ground. If it continues beyond the fighter it was a glancing shot and does not count.
3. An arrow that hits directly on the side or back of the helm **does not** count. If the shot was hard and clean, the fighter **may** call it, but it is his or her option.
4. An archer suffers the same effects from arrows as those of a fighter. If an arrow hits the bow, the bow is considered destroyed for that battle. The archer can give his arrows to someone else, or get another bow. Or run around and be a shield for someone else.
5. An archer is killed when touched by a fighter or a fighter's weapon. When you die, hold your bow high and walk from the field if you are in the clear and not in the middle of the fighting. When you **hold** your bow high, **hold** it vertically so the ends of your bow won't poke anyone. If you are not clear of fighters, fall to the ground, lie on your side in a fetal position. Put your bow on the ground and hold onto it so that when a fighter trips on it, the bow doesn't get flung somewhere.
6. Archers in other kingdoms die in other **ways**. There's everything from the 15 foot rule to full contact. The fifteen foot rule says that a **fighter** merely has to come within 15 feet and say "Archer you are dead." Check with the marshallate for kingdom rules and conventions when outside Trimaris.
7. Learn how to check your arrows for breakage. Check your own arrows each time after they are shot. Between the battles of a war, the combat archery marshal must inspect arrows before they can be reshot. Just to be on the safe side, reinspect your arrows after the archery marshal.
8. Arrows may not be gleaned from the field to be reshot during a battle. Arrows may be shot only once during a battle (except some resurrection battles). If your arrow fell off your bow or out of your quiver, do not shoot it. Any arrow that touches the ground may not be shot until it is inspected after the battle.
9. Resurrection battles. Occasionally resurrection battles are fought during which arrows may be gleaned and reshot. These arrows must be taken to a central inspection area and inspected by the designated marshal before being reshot. Again, reinspect your own arrows and shoot only your own arrows.

10. You may not shoot arrows from a quiver dropped on the ground. Make sure your quiver is firmly attached to you. During long battles, you may reload your quiver from a secondary arrow supply. This supply must be in a container, not lying in a pile on the ground.

11. The minimum distance to shoot a fighter is 10 feet. If you are too close, back up and shoot. This rule may change when outside of Trimaris. Check with the marshallate before the war. This rule is for the protection of the archers as much as the fighters.

### IMPORTANT INFO

It is sometimes difficult in melees to feel good arrow hits. The marshal sometimes must call the hit. Do not argue with the marshal. Marshals should also accept that in many cases the fighter just may not have felt it. Archers should not get upset and lose their temper. Notify the marshal and continue to fire. Should the fighter seek acknowledgment from the archer concerning a hit, let him know by shaking your head yes or no. If he doesn't take it, do not get upset, fire more accurately and continue as a chivalrous fighter should.

Archers are 'touch kill'. A heavy weapons fighter need only touch a combat archer with his weapon or hand. If you are a combat archer in the middle of a melee, you run **the risk of being hit**. Combat archers who do not want to **risk** being struck by a heavy weapon need to keep far away from fighters and fall down "dead" on the ground when a heavy weapons fighter gets near. Yelling "I'm dead! I'm dead!" very loudly may help, but don't count on it. Inside our helms we are mostly deaf.

What happens if an archer shoots a fighter or another archer in the back? The warrior is dead. **Important note to archers:** Most shots to the armored backs of fighters are simply not felt or not recognized as being an arrow. There is much jostling and bumping in melees, and a wimpy arrow shot to someone's heavy kidney belt just as he is about to end some Duke's life is likely to go unnoticed. Just keep shooting and hopefully you will be able to shoot him in the face next time. Screaming "You're dead! You're dead!" is unchivalrous and ineffective.

During the 14th-15th centuries archers commonly carried 12 inch shields. Combat archers may carry a shield to protect themselves from arrows. I suggest a **12 to 18** inch round shield as the most wieldy. The combat archer shield is NOT protection from a heavy weapons fighter. If your shield gets touched by a heavy weapons fighter you are dead. If you are a yeoman, remember you are 'touch kill' until you get rid of all of your arrows and your bow. If you are carrying any arrows or a bow and your shield gets touched, you are dead.

**IMPORTANT:** All shields must have a strap that goes through the hand. If a shield is strapped to the arm without a hand strap it is considered only armor, not a shield. An arrow strike would therefore be a good strike against an armored arm instead of being deflected by the shield. If you strap your shield to your arm without a hand strap, and your shield is struck by an arrow, you lose your arm.

Be aware of spectators and do not shoot them. If there is a spectator standing behind that Duke you are about to shoot, **don't shoot**. Resist the temptation to get the easy kill on Duke **Bigshot** if there is an unarmored person standing behind him. It's disappointing, I understand. However, spectators being shot will mean the death of Combat Archery. This would make Sir Erika very sad.

#### Reloading:

During long battles, you may need to resupply your quiver with arrows. Keep extra arrows on the edge of the battlefield. They must be in a container and may not be lying on the ground. When you go to refill your quiver, you are still part of the battle. Do not leave the battlefield. You may still be killed by an arrow or touch while you are getting more arrows.

### AUTHORIZATION

1. Know the rules in this manual.
2. Get the fighter authorization forms from your local marshal and fill them out. These are the same forms fighters use for authorizations. On the day you wish to authorize, get into your armor and have a marshal and a knight watch you participate in combat archery in a melee.
3. Show your copy of the combat archery rules to the knight and marshal and have them quiz you on the rules. If they feel you are safe and know the rules, they will sign the authorization forms.
4. Send copies of these forms to the Deputy Marshal (listed in Talewinds) to get your authorization card.

### TACTICS

In Trimaris we often fight our battles while running. Combat archers can decide to be either a mobile archer or a stationary archer. Both are necessary for enemy annihilation. Mobile archers run with their unit and get involved more in the middle of the melee. Stationary archers remain on the edges of the battle field and shoot at any target of opportunity. Decide before the battle which you will be.

Volley **fire** into the back ranks of the enemy is highly effective. **Nock** your first arrow before the 'lay on' is called. Be ready with your bow drawn. If you can see an open target, aim for that. If not, aim high and into the rear ranks of the enemy. As soon as the marshal shouts "Lay on", shoot. **Nock** your second arrow quickly and shoot at targets as you see them.

Learn to **nock** an arrow while looking at the enemy. Avoid looking down to **nock** an arrow. Raise your bow while **nocking** so you can see the enemy and the bowstring at the same time.

To avoid being shot, keep moving. Learn to **nock** an arrow while moving.

Shoot over the shoulder of a fighter. Use him as a shield while helping him to defeat his opponent.