

The Mayflower Guard

Introduction

General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) has created The Mayflower Guard to serve as the ceremonial color guard. We are looking for society members to participate in the Mayflower Guard who are willing to attend GSMD meetings and events appropriately dressed and equipped as were *Mayflower* passengers who formed the militia of the Pilgrims in 1620-1621. The Mayflower Guard will visibly promote the education and understanding of the Pilgrims through their historically correct apparel.

The Mayflower Guard performs color ceremonies at GSMD Congress, Boards of Assistance Meetings, as well as other official ceremonies of the GSMD such as Pilgrims Progress and memorial ceremonies such as wreath laying as needed and required. Since the Mayflower Guard is primarily a ceremonial unit, there will be no firing of muskets and all muskets carried will be non-firing. The Mayflower Guard also serves as an honor guard for the Governor General on special occasions to serve as visible ambassadors for the GSMD. The Mayflower Guard will be a visible public face of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. Mayflower Guardsmen will provide an easily identifiable and colorful focal point at events. The arms and armor of the Guardsmen will invite children and spectators and potential members to come forward and ask questions about the Pilgrims.

What makes the Mayflower Guard different from other units?

The GSMD Mayflower Guard is drawn from direct descendants of the passengers who sailed on the *Mayflower* hence the name Mayflower Guard. The historical time frame for the Mayflower Guard is 1620/21 before the arrival of any other settlers to Plymouth Plantation. The arms, armor and clothing, for the Mayflower Guard is what was carried onboard the *Mayflower*.

Command Structure of the Mayflower Guard

The Mayflower Guard Commander is appointed by the Governor General to head of the GSMD Mayflower Guard. The Mayflower Guard Commander reports to the GSMD Captain General and coordinates all activities of the Mayflower Guard with the Captain General.

Formation of a Guard Unit

The optimal minimum number of individuals that form a Mayflower Guard Unit consists of four (4) or five (5) individuals.

- Two (2) to three (3) Color Bearers who carry the United State National Flag, the Canadian National Flag and the General Society Flag (at events hosted by an individual state society, the flag of that state may be added requiring a fourth color bearer).
- Two (2) Musketeers who escort the Color Bearers
- A unit may consist of only one musketeer and two to three color bears. The unit commander in this situation would be the musketeer.

As the Mayflower Guard grows the Guard Commander will march ahead of the National Colors separate from any other rank and carry a halberd as a symbol of his rank. The addition of a drummer is encouraged.

Financing the Unit

The arms, armor, accessories, and clothing are purchased and maintained by the individual Guardsmen. The expense of the purchase of arms, armor, and clothing can be considered a charitable tax deduction.

Guardsman Arms and Armor

When the Pilgrims landed the records of their early expeditions ashore indicate that all men had armor, swords, and muskets. Given this historical record, the Mayflower Guard will also be so equipped. The standard armor of the day was the Pikeman's armor. The most common helmet used by early English settlers both in Jamestown and Plymouth known as a Cabaset. The swords that were carried were of two types, the thrusting rapier and the two-edged cutting sword. Examples of each are to be found in Pilgrim Hall Museum, Miles Standish's rapier, and Governor John Carver's sword. The most common musket was the matchlock. The ammunition for the matchlock was carried by a bandolier worn over the shoulder with 12 vessels containing powder called apostles attached. The picture shows the appearance of a fully armed and armored individual as they would have appeared in 1620/1621.



Arms & Armor

- Matchlock Musket (non-firing)
- Bandelier & 12 apostles for powder
- Sword or rapier with belt or baldric
- Pikeman's armor
- Cabaset Helmet

Armed and Unarmed Guardsmen

Armor was used during the first decade of Plymouth Colony. Gradually the use of armor declined with musketeers forgoing the plate armor. When armor was not used, the individual was referred to as unarmed, however they still carried a sword and musket. For the Mayflower Guard, color bearers may be unarmed. Musketeers and the Guard Commander should be armed. A drummer if present should be unarmed and not carrying a sword.

Guardsman's Clothing

There were no prescribed uniforms worn by the Pilgrims. They would have worn their ordinary clothing or what could be considered civilian attire rather than a uniform.

Basic Clothing

The basic clothing for men would be:

- Shirt
- Doublet
- Breeches
- Stockings
- Latchet shoes
- Hat either broad brimmed or flat hat

How to Join

Those interested in becoming a member of the Mayflower Guard should contact the Guard Commander:

James B. Battles, Capt. USN (ret)

Jamesbattles66@gmail.com

Phone 301-346-7694

Mayflower Guard Application

I am interested in becoming a member of the Mayflower Guard.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Partner Society: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____