

# Texas Mayflower Guard

## Who we are

We are descendants of the Pilgrims who journeyed on the *Mayflower* in 1620. We have chosen to serve as a ceremonial color guard and living history unit to celebrate the rich history of the early defenders of Plymouth Colony in those early formative years of 1620 and 1621. Members of the Texas Mayflower Guard dress in period appropriate apparel and are equipped as were *Mayflower* passengers who formed the militia of the Pilgrims in 1620-1621. The Texas Mayflower Guard visibly promotes the education and understanding of the Pilgrims through their historically correct arms, armor, and apparel.

## What we do

The Texas Mayflower Guard performs color ceremonies at TXSMD annual meetings, as well as other official ceremonies of the TXSMD such as parades and memorial ceremonies such as wreath laying as needed. The Texas Mayflower Guard also serves as an honor guard for the Governor on special occasions to serve as visible ambassadors for the TXSMD. Mayflower Guardsmen provide an easily identifiable and colorful focal point at events. The arms and armor of the Guardsmen invite children and spectators and potential members to come forward and ask questions about the Pilgrims.

## About the Texas Mayflower Guard

The Texas Mayflower Guard was created at the annual meeting Society of Mayflower Descendants the State of Texas in April 2019. This newly formed living history unit recreates the arms and armor that were used by the passengers on the Mayflower who formed the first militia of Plymouth in the years 1620/1621. We know what type of arms and armor were used by the Pilgrims in first years in the new world.

Monday, the 13th of November (1620) sixteen men were set out with every man his musket, sword, and corselet, under the conduct of Captain Miles Standish, unto whom was adjoined, for counsel

and advice, William Bradford, Stephen Hopkins, and Edward Tilley.”<sup>1</sup>

This quote from Mourt's Relation tells us that the Pilgrims wore armor, had swords and carried muskets. The members of the Mayflower Guard are similarly equipped in reproduction arms, armor, and apparel.

The Arms and Armor video describes what the Pilgrims would have used to defend their new plantation in the New World.



## Arms and Armor of the Mayflower Guard

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Dwight B. Heath (ed.) Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1963, p. 19



## Pilgrim Male Clothing

The basic clothing for men would be:

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



## Pilgrim Clothing - Female

The basic clothing for women would be:

- Coif headwear
- Smock or Shift
- Waistcoat
- Apron
- Petticoat also called a skirt
- Latchet shoes

## Recruitment

Membership in the Texas Mayflower Guard is open to all members of the TXSMD both male and female who wish to participate in Guard activities. Consideration is also given to spouses and significant others of TXSMD members who wish to participate

in the living history activities of the Guard. The non-members must have a close relationship to a *Mayflower* passenger and Society member.

## Resources

### Mayflower Guard Handbook

The purpose of the handbook is to provide general information about the Mayflower Guard, its history, purpose and operating procedures. The handbook covers a brief history of the common 17<sup>th</sup> century arms and armor that influenced the choice of arms used by the Pilgrims as well as the origins of the history and roots of the Plymouth Colony Militia that emerged just after the arrival of the Pilgrims in the New World in November 1620. A basic knowledge of history and background of the arms and armor of the Pilgrims is an essential part of being a member of the Texas Mayflower Guard. The handbook also describes the structure of the Guard and details the arms, armor, and apparel to be worn by guardsmen. The handbook also covers basic commands to be used by the Texas Mayflower Guard.

(Download the PDF version of the Handbook)

### Mayflower Guard Arms and Armor Procurement Guide

This guide has been prepared for those individuals who are considering joining the Texas Mayflower Guard and becoming part of a living history program of the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Texas. The information in this guide is based on research and interaction with reenactor group such as the New Plimmoth Gard. We have identified vendors where you can purchase pilgrim appropriate gear at reasonable prices. Each of these vendors have been used to purchase arms and armor. It is important to remember is that the period for the Texas Mayflower Guard is 1620/1621 therefore the arms, armor, and clothing for members of the guard shall be appropriate for that period.

(Download the PDF version of the Procurement Guide)

### Converting Chukka Boots into Latchet Shoes

One of the challenges that we face in dressing like a Pilgrim is finding latchet shoes that fit. There are several vendors that can provide 17<sup>th</sup> century reproduction latchet shoes, but they often do not have the size or color that you desire and can be expensive. Some are very uncomfortable, especially if you are going to be marching in

them. An alternative is to convert desert or chukka boots into lachet style shoes. With a little leather work, you can have an acceptable and often very comfortable set of lachet shoes that will work just fine. We have prepared a video that demonstrates the process of *Converting Chukka Boots into Pilgrim Lachet Shoes*.

(Link to the Video)

## How to Blacken/Blue Armor

The noted historian Herold L Peterson of the National Park Service describes the process of protecting pikeman's armor for field use.

Most modern Americans tend to think of armor in terms of brightly polished steel. Sometimes it was finished bright, but by the 17th century it was more often black, brown, or dark blue. This was especially true of those suits destined for active service in the field. A brightly polished piece of armor needed constant care to guard it from rust and maintain a good appearance. Blackening, russeting or bluing it helped protect it and made it easier to maintain. The black finishes were sometimes obtained using soot and oil, sometimes by paint. The russet and blue finishes were produced by artificial oxidation.<sup>2</sup>



*Before and after blackened pikeman's armor*

When you visit Plimoth Plantation you can see this type of blackened armor in displayed in many houses.

---

<sup>2</sup>Harold L. Peterson. *Arms & Armor of the Pilgrims*. Plymouth: Plimoth Plantation, Inc. and the Pilgrim Society, 1957

There is a video demonstration on how to blacken or blue one's pikeman's armor on YouTube at the Maryland Mayflower Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz0Psb0EPgk>

## Contact Information

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

James B. Battles, Capt. USN (ret)

[battles.mayflowerguard@gmail.com](mailto:battles.mayflowerguard@gmail.com)

Phone 301-346-7694

---