

MATCHLOCK SCHOOL



The Matchlock School at Mission San Luis is designed as a program to recruit and train interested individuals as living history volunteers. Living history is an innovative way of interpreting and presenting history by recreating the clothing, technology, and life ways of the past and presenting them in today's context.

Purpose

The purpose of the Matchlock School course is three-fold:

1. To train new militia volunteers to assist professional MSL staff in the safe demonstration of 17th-century Spanish musketry to museum visitors and others;
2. To learn techniques for the safe handling of black powder;
3. To engage MSL visitors and the general public in recreating daily military life in the Mission San Luis village and its relation to the larger currents of world history and cultural heritage.

Content

We will teach participants how to safely load and fire a 17th-century matchlock. We will be using a modified form of the 1607 Jacob de Gheyn drill.

Benefits

Participants in the MSL historic weapons program will have the opportunity to work with site interpreters, education and museum staff, and veteran reenactors. They will be able to participate in special events in a unique way, having the satisfaction of knowing they have helped create exciting experiences for site visitors.

Requirements

Age: Regulations require that volunteers handling black powder must be at least 16 years old. If under 18, the training participant and his/her parent or guardian must attend a pre-training conference with MSL staff and sign an agreement form.

Sex: Volunteers portraying soldiers at the MSL are both men and women, *but* for historical integrity

female participants in the black powder program dress in military uniforms as men and interpret male personas. However, there are other opportunities in the living history program to portray female roles.

Physical Requirements: Program participants are required to march over uneven terrain in historical attire while carrying up to 12 pounds of weaponry. Participants will be moderately active in weather conditions ranging from hot and humid to cold. Good physical health is essential.

Time: Program participants are required to participate in at least four black powder demonstrations per year to remain current and qualified in the Historic Weapons Program.

Class Size

Due to available equipment, safety, and time constraints, class participation is limited to a maximum of 4 students.

