

## **Welcome and Congratulations!**

Combat Archery is a completely period form of war art that has the potential to add significantly to our concept of re-creating a medieval battle. But it also has the potential to make things miserable for a very large group of people. Common chivalry will go a long way to changing the negative perception of all Combat Archers.

The following quotes are from Sir Bartholomew Hightower of Canterbury. We have nothing but encouragement to give you on your road to becoming a Combat Archer.

### **Combat Archery Words to Live By:**

#### **1. “Be Thee Certain of Thy Overshoot”**

ALWAYS look beyond your target and ask yourself where your arrow might go in the event you miss. If there is even the remotest chance your arrow could hit a marshal, water bearer or spectator—even if they are in the wrong place—turn and walk away, or reposition yourself for safety.

#### **2. “Let He Whom Has Been Struck Judge The Soundness Of The Blow.”**

NEVER call your shots—only your target can do that. If someone ignores or refuses what you felt was a good shot, preserve your honor and walk away. If a well-intentioned third party calls your shots on your behalf, politely ask them not to.

#### **3. “Go Thee Not A-Hunting Hats”**

Let commanders do their commanding for a while. Avoid shooting the same people again and again when possible. If you see a knot of knights in the far back socializing, resist the urge to loft a bolt in there. But when they take up arms and head into the fray, treat them as any other fighter.

#### **4. “Target Not The Acts Of Chivalry”**

When single combat is granted to your foe, spoil it not with an unkindly arrow. As the battle ends, it is usually best to simply lay aside your bow and allow the few remaining survivors die at the close hands of their foes. Accept your own death with quiet grace.

Remember that other fighters, even those wearing white belts, are your friends. Take care of them and they will take care of you.

Remember, we play the game **AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN.**

This class is a basic introduction to heavy combat archery in the Kingdom of Gleann Abhann. Class information originally written by House Strongbow of the Kingdom of Caid. Updated for Gleann Abhann by Baroness Sara de la Val.

## **Becoming a Heavy Combat Archer:**

### **The Authorization Process**

#### **There is no reason to be afraid of this part!**

To be authorized as a Combat Archery fighter, locate the nearest Authorization Marshal by joining the Gleann Abhann Combat Archers page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GleannAbhannCombatArchers/> .

Authorization is two parts, a verbal and a practical test. The Gleann Abhann Marshalls Handbook as accessible via the Gleann Abhann Marshal website.

<http://www.kingdomofgleannabhann.org/library/marshalate.html>. The combat archery section is directly from the Society handbook:

[http://sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/marshal\\_handbook.pdf](http://sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/marshal_handbook.pdf) .

Your combat archery practical test will consist of firing your bow/crossbow on fighters in a melee scenario and successfully hitting your target, while remaining safe on the field. You should also take a legal shot from your own weapon for calibration as well as a legal shot from a sword in your head on body for calibration. You may have to prove proficiency by repeating the process a number of times.

#### **Combat Archery Armor Requirements:**

You have to meet the same requirements as all heavy weapons fighters, with the exception of hand protection. Longbows may wear a demi-gauntlet on their string hand. Crossbows may wear demi-gauntlets on both hands. This means in addition to hand protection, you must have an SCA legal helmet, neck, elbow, knee, groin, and kidney protection at a minimum. Chest and leg armor are recommended, as this is the largest target area to an opposing archer. As an archer, the opposing archers will be one of your primary targets.

Pavises (an unmanned shield propped up by a javelin or beveled rattan or dowel) are permitted. The maximum size of a pavise is 3 feet wide by 5 feet tall. You can hide quivers of arrows behind or hang quivers of arrows from a pavise.

#### **Combat Archery Weapons: Bows in General**

Recurves, longbows, takedowns are allowed. No compound bows, rifle stocks, cutouts etc.

Metal cable strings, bungee strings or other elastic strings are not allowed.

No modern triggers or releases are allowed, and equipment must be powered by the flex of limbs. Your bow must be in good condition and safe to operate.

The most prevalent equipment in Gleann Abhann is classified "Light" (see page 3).

## **Combat Archery Handbows:**

Light handbows have a maximum draw weight of 35 lbs. at 28 inches of draw. Light handbows may shoot Siloflex arrows (golf tubes), or fiberglass arrows with a Society approved UHMW plastic head and Society approved nocking system. Currently the only approved nocking systems are the Asgard APD and the Routed Channel Siloflex APD.

Heavy handbows have a maximum draw weight of 50 lbs. at 28 inches of draw. Heavy handbows must have the top 6 inches of the upper limb marked in red. These may only shoot Siloflex arrows (golf tubes). Approved blunt: tennis ball or rubber stopper (Omarad).

## **Combat Archery Crossbows:**

All crossbows have a minimum draw weight is limited of 400 inch pounds, which is defined as the measurement obtained by multiplying the length of the draw from the string at rest to the string at the release point, by the weight of the draw at the release point.

Light Crossbows have a maximum draw weight of 600"#, and may shoot fiberglass shafted bolts, or Siloflex arrows (golf tubes).

Heavy Crossbows have a maximum draw weight of 1000"#, and may only shoot Siloflex bolts.

Crossbow prods must be constructed of a minimum of 3/16 7075 T6 aluminum and ¼" 7075 T651 or better is recommended. Other prod material may be allowed at the discretion of the marshal. You may have a foot stirrup on the nose of a crossbow for pull assistance. Goat's feet and other mechanisms that use a lever to nock the crossbow are not allowed

## **Combat Archery Equipment: Projectiles**

No part of any projectile may be able to pass more than ½" past the bars of any legal helm. Your projectiles must be labeled in English with your Society name and Kingdom of residence.

Unmarked projectiles will be confiscated.

When you build your arrows or bolts, it is a good idea to batch code them. This means to tape them similarly, so that you can identify them as yours when gleaning after battles.

No metal or PVC components are allowed in any projectile.

No wooden arrow shafts are allowed.

If you fletch, only soft materials such as cardboard, feathers, foam or duct tape should be used. Round off the edges. Be sure the fletch does not protrude more than ½ inch from the missile.

Ammo tips and apds must not move horizontally along the shaft. Tips must be secured with a continuous line of tape, and then secured with tape to the shaft.

## So, which bow for you?

Choose a type that you prefer, or that fits your persona.

Be aware of your limitations. Bows can be purchased from swap meets, online sources such as eBay, archery shops, or combat archery bowyers (see listings at end).

A note about “roller nut” trigger mechanisms in crossbows: the roller nut does make your shot more accurate, at the cost of time while loading. Roller nut bolts require a length of APD to lock inside the roller nut to ensure their accuracy. If you plan to use the kingdom cache at larger wars, be aware that the nocks of the back of the APDs are generally cut off to maximize use in home built crossbows. Therefore, roller nut crossbows will require you to have your own cache.

## So, which projectiles for you?

Make sure you match your arrow/bolt type to your bow. Generally speaking, fiberglass projectiles are faster and fly further and surer than tubes, but tubes are sturdier and gleanable, and hit just as solidly. The Gleann Abhann kingdom cache is primarily fiberglass bolts (only a few fiberglass arrows), and does not contain any tube ammo.

Be VERY WARY of substituting types of materials when building projectiles. If in doubt, ASK!!

Use approved materials and high quality tapes and foams, and FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!

### **Gleann Abhann Rules of Convention:**

Combat archery generally occurs at wars only. Tournaments and games occur periodically that are combat archery specific. Society rules prohibit projectiles or projectile weapons in the Lists. In Gleann Abhann, all archers are full contact and must meet Gleann Abhann armor standards. The archer is responsible for their equipment.

If a “HOLD” is called, STOP. Secure your bow from accidental discharge. Do not glean during a hold. Always display the same courtesy, chivalry and respect as all fighters on the field. Keep your temper and respect your opponents.

Your projectile must hit point first to be good. Remember, combat archery tackle was originally calibrated to minimum armor. Your shot does not have to (nor should it) hit as hard as a “single sword thrust” to be considered good (force equivalency is illegal and dangerous). This is an area with no hard and fast rules. It is a good practice to attempt to make eye contact with your opponent and wave once you make your shot. Many times in the heat of battle, a fighter isn’t aware of exactly what happened until they see an archer across the field.

**Killing zones:** face, torso, abdomen, groin, back.

**Non-killing zones:** side of the helmet.

**Wounding zones:** arms, legs, shoulders, hips.

**No-hit zones:** hands, legs below the knee.

Arrows and bolts can be blocked. You may **not** block with your bow, arrows, or quiver. Other fighters are not allowed to grab at or strike at your bow.

**Yielding:** Fighters cannot strike you once you have yielded. To yield: Place your bow on top of your head (or preferably a piece of armor) and yell loudly "I YIELD!" repeatedly if necessary. Leave the field as quickly as possible once you are dead. You may also kneel or fall to the ground, but be careful while doing so, as the melee scrum is dangerous.

You may carry a secondary rattan weapon but it must be secured while you are using your bow. If you want to switch to your secondary, your bow must be OUT OF YOUR POSSESSION before doing so. Longbows may be dropped. Crossbows may be handed to another fighter leaving the field, a marshal, water bearer or spectator, or \*carefully\* dropped. Please dispose of your longbow or crossbow safely. You must have proper hand protection for your secondary weapon.

Tube arrows and bolts, such as golf tubes and Siloflex, can be gleaned, field inspected and re-used during a battle. Fiberglass shafted arrows and bolts cannot be reused. Once shot they have to be brought to Marshal's Point and re-inspected by a Marshal. Do not glean arrows during a hold.

At war, after a battle, all of the projectiles are taken to one location to be re-inspected. (You can generally find it by looking for the pile of projectiles.) Once done, they will be laid out in lines for you to glean for use in the next battle. Bolts/arrows that fail inspection will be placed in a separate pile. Please feel free to ask how you can help with the process, as everyone taking inspected bolts/arrows to be lined up speeds the amount of time we have to be on the field. The final battle of a war will not have an inspection, so you must inspect your bolts/arrows on your own once you return home.

### Recommended Links:

SCA Combat Archery mailing list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCA-MissileCombat/>

SCA Combat Archery Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/95468199155/>

Practice and tactics: [http://scamelee.freesevers.com/scarlet\\_archery.html#target#4](http://scamelee.freesevers.com/scarlet_archery.html#target#4)

### Crossbow Vendors:

Slobows Crossbows: <http://www.slobowcrossbows.com/>

### Bow Vendors:

3 Rivers Archery: <http://search.3riversarchery.com/nav/cat1/bows/0>

Elk Ridge Archery: <http://www.elkridgearchery.com/>

### Projectile Vendors:

North Star Archery: [http://www.northstararchery.com/SCA\\_combat\\_archery.html](http://www.northstararchery.com/SCA_combat_archery.html)

### Build Your Own Crossbow:

The \$20 Combat Crossbow: <http://www.soylent-green.com/SCA/crossbow-20.pdf>

Combat Archery Crossbow design: [http://scamelee.freesevers.com/combat\\_crossbows.html](http://scamelee.freesevers.com/combat_crossbows.html)

Alchem Crossbow Plan: <http://www.alcheminc.com/plan.gif>

Darkwood Armory prods:

[http://www.darkwoodarmory.com/index.php?main\\_page=index&cPath=11\\_31](http://www.darkwoodarmory.com/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=11_31)

### Armor:

Armour Archive: <http://forums.armourarchive.org/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=3>

Ice Falcon: <http://store.fastcommerce.com/icefalcon/home.html>

Windrose Armoury: <http://www.windrosearmoury.com/zc/>

Bokalo's Armoury: <http://bokalosarmoury.com/index.htm>