

THE 1764 BRITISH MANUAL EXERCISE AND MARCHING MANEUVERS,

AN INTERPRETION AND EXPLANATION

by

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FORWARD

I have long had an interest in early American military history, particularly the focus on how war impacted human beings. Therefore, my professional training and inclinations naturally took me to the military manuals of the 18th century. Currently I am a Professor of History at Mount Ida College and I continue to research the impact of the early French wars on New England. However, in my other life, I am a living history reenactor. I have been in reenacting since 1972, when I was introduced to the hobby as a member of the York (Maine) Militia Company. I joined the 64th Regiment of Foot, Grenadier Company, in 1973, then for three years researched and began to organize my own Loyalist unit, during which time I joined the Brigade of the American Revolution. I joined the 71st (Highland) Regiment of Foot (New England) in 1977 and became that unit's drill master. My reenacting eventually went in new directions. My particular 71st Regiment of Foot folded its tents for the last time in 1991, while the Civil War unit I helped found in 1984, the 28th Massachusetts, took off eventually reaching 120 soldiers and 50 civilian members at one point. As commander of the 28th Mass, and drill instructor for a larger organization called the Irish Volunteers, I explored in-depth Silas Casey's 1862 manual. Putting some of my research on the early French wars to some practical use, a few of us put together John Harmon's Company of Snowshoemen for French and Indian War reenacting. The unit also recreates Benjamin Church's Company for the 17th century, and Jeremiah Eames' Rangers representing the American side of the War for Independence.

While I am not active in British Revolutionary War reenacting, the many years I spent in a red coat have left fond memories, and I still keep up with the hobby, and continue to have close friends who accepted the King's shilling. I am also extremely gratified to learn that my manual is still actively used. It was always my hope that it would help reenactors, and apparently it continues to do so. Written in 1985 and revised in 1988, the manual was adopted and used by several units. In 1998 Wade Gradia privately printed a wonderful copy of the manual in a form that looked 18th century (and thus could be hauled out of a haversack with little embarrassment). Others continue to mention the manual which seems to refuse to fade away. Others have explored the drill and battlefield performance of British soldiers in the American Revolution, and their conclusions have added to or even contradicted my conclusions. In addition, I have had the opportunity to observe and learn more about reenactors in the last twenty-two years since hammering this manual out. I offer those observations throughout this revision. In history we almost never arrive at definitive answers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would be remiss if I did not tip my hat to those who aided in the preparation of this manual. I am not the first to produce a work aimed at presenting and clarifying the British discipline of the eighteenth century (nor will I be the last), and I acknowledge a great debt to those who went before. Their names, familiar to any student of Anglo-military history, are Bland, Grant, Cuthbertson, Pickering, Simes, Williamson, Reide, Howe, and Cooper to name

a few. More recently, Vincent J-R Kehoe collected and made available in his *A Military Guide: The British Infantry of 1775* information on all aspects of organizing, clothing, administering, and drilling a recreated British unit. The fact that I find his drill section flawed does not mean I cannot recommend his work; it does provide a firm foundation of knowledge concerning the British army of the American Revolution in all areas not covered by this manual.

Privately published in 1974, Kehoe wrote his massive work principally for his own regiment, the Tenth Regiment of Foot, but it has been used by many other recreated British units as a reference for their portrayal as well. He was able to gain access to all the major military treatises of the period, and his *Guide* is filled with relevant quotes from these works. Because of this, the *Military Guide* is invaluable for those who do not have access to all these important manuals. However, Kehoe made several classic errors in putting together his *Guide*, the most serious one being what I mentioned in my preface, presenting the descriptions of commands and maneuvers just as they were in the original manuals. In addition, he compounded the error by including the figures from a 1790 manual, after first admitting the figures and the 1764 descriptions do not always correspond! I often wonder if these blasted sketches have been the cause of the most common inaccuracies in modern reenacting. For example, the figure showing the priming position (part 4, p.10) certainly *appears* to be facing to the front with his musket *across* his chest, and this is how the majority of recreated units do prime, even though the *Manual of 1764* describes a very different position.

In addition to previous manual writers, there are a few individuals who deserve special recognition for their part in this project. The members of the Seventy-first (Highland) Regiment of Foot (New England) deserve praise for their enthusiasm and their cheerful willingness to endure the changes and experimentation inflicted on them by their sergeant. Their eagerness to be as authentic as possible is one of the main reasons for beginning this work. I wish to thank Thomas Nesbitt for his proofreading and astute observations, and Jon Mack and Michael Meyerderks for their suggestions and encouragements. Charles T. Kamps, Jr. did a great deal of research on file spacing, and I am grateful for his work. I am also grateful to Wade Gradia for reviving this manual when I thought it long forgotten. And I would like to acknowledge my wife, Kathleen, who has endured many sacrifices for the sake of our hobby. I believe she endures it because she knows the real secret of reenacting and living history -- it is therapy for the modern man.

PREFACE

In the world of recreated British regiments, the *British Manual of 1764* is often reproduced as it was originally printed and handed to a recruit for study, usually leaving that recruit in utter confusion. Even among experienced reenactors the exact method of performing these commands has led to a wide range of interpretation. The reason for this is that, while the language of the original is in many ways explicit, the phraseology is archaic and the organization confusing. The following manual is written for the modern reenactor with each motion explained in modern terms, the final position of each command described where it is helpful, and notes inserted concerning its application to modern reenacting. It is also meant to be instructive to the non-reenactor who wishes to know exactly how the British army drilled and fought in the War for Independence.

When I joined the 71st Foot and became the drill instructor, I knew that I wanted to start from scratch, to clear my mind of all interference. Having belonged to several recreated companies, and observing many others, I realized that new units often learned the drill by copying other regiments, usually by absorbing members from those regiments. Thus, rather than tackle the archaic language of the original manual, they learned the "64th Foot" method, or the "10th Foot" method or the "23rd Foot" method, or whatever unit the drill instructor originally came from, and so any initial misinterpretation of the drill was passed on without question. I decided to avoid that problem by throwing out all I had learned and then sat down with the manual, studied it, did exactly what it said, and practiced. As I have said, I found the language quite explicit as to what to do, but a quick understanding was difficult due to the archaic nature of the phraseology and organization.

A few words of explanation are in order before you plunge in. All words of command are in capital letters, those that are spoken at any given time are in bold letters (there are obvious exceptions such as the POSITION OF A SOLDIER, which is not a command but nonetheless an important concept). Each motion is explained separately and unless otherwise noted, should take one second to perform (or on the left foot when marching). For practice, the drill should be done by the numbers, the drill instructor counting each number and the men not moving until the next number is given. This allows the drill instructor the opportunity to examine the position of every man during each separate motion of the command. Where it is helpful, I have also described how the soldier should look when the command is completed (the "Final Position"), and I have also inserted my own comments and observations concerning the application of this manual to modern reenacting. I sincerely hope these remarks do not offend anyone, they are meant only to amuse and educate.

A FEW WORDS OF WISDOM

Attitude

One difficulty British reenactors have had to deal with is attitude. Somewhere, somehow, British reenactors have decided that they must behave and act like emotionless machines. I'm not sure where it came from. Was it the description of the Plains of Abraham or later battles where the British were described as standing silently until unleashing those devastating volleys? Did it come from historians describing 18th century drill attempting to turn men into automatons? Did it come from modern British traditions, like the sentry at Buckingham palace who will not smile, talk, blink, and breathe? Thus, British reenactors are comfortable with the silent, close order, juggernaut look. It distinguishes them as professional soldiers from the American riffraff they oppose. A couple of examples will suffice. In the early 90's I commanded the British at a tactical. During the course of the engagement an opportunity appeared for a strike at the American flank. I sent a light company to quickly take advantage, but instead of running to strike the American flank, they marched very deliberately forward online and started firing. By the time I could get them to advance the American had reinforced the flank. The light company about faced and began to withdraw, when suddenly the Queen's Rangers came out of the woods and attacked the American rear. The unit opposite the withdrawing light company turned around and faced the Rangers, presenting their backs to the light company! Did the lights swing around and charge into their rear? No. So intent were they on *correctly marching* back that it took several seconds, and my frantic waving, for the commander to realize what had happened. Then he halted, about faced, and began to move forward at the common step. By this time the moment had been lost. Seeing American lights running around my other flank, I ordered that light company to cross over to oppose them. They did this in a very orderly pace. The battle was lost. After the action concluded I went to the commander of that light company and asked him why he was so slow. He looked somewhat indignant and said that "the manual says you are never to run." You know, when people are trying to kill you, DAMN THE MANUAL!

A second incident happened in the late 90s. I served as a historical consultant for the Old State House in Boston for a new exhibit on the Boston Massacre. As part of the exhibit they did a reenactment for filming and still pictures. The curator was a little disappointed that the British reenactors were so stiff, and I just knowingly shook my head. On the night of the Boston Massacre those eight soldiers were very agitated and very nervous. Dozens of angry people were shouting, waving heavy sticks and throwing chunks of ice. Any human being would be agitated. When one soldier was knocked down, he fired his musket and shouted to his comrades to fire to save their lives. They did, individually and against the orders of their officer. Yet here were these reenactors standing impassively, not an emotion flickered across their face, not a muscle twitched. They were automatons, they looked all the world like those Buckingham Palace guards, but they were *not* recreating those British soldiers of 1770.

In trying to recreate British soldiers of the American Revolution always remember that they were men. British officers constantly complained that the British soldiers were not as disciplined as their German counterparts, that they were all too human. The American war

forced changes in their approach to combat. They did use a more fluid and open formation, I also suspect that after the first fire, firing at will rather than volley fire happened much more than we care to admit, and their light infantry ran when necessary to accomplish the job. In his book about the Saratoga campaign, author Richard M. Ketchum describes the British soldiers attacking up the long hill at Hubbardton after their forced march from Ticonderoga. "Now, instead of putting long hours on the parade ground into practice," wrote Ketchum, "the troops were improvising." British officer Thomas Anburey thought as he climbed that hill that all the endless drill was "but an ornament."¹ Learn to be British soldiers, learn the manual as they did, but also learn to be the men and the soldiers they became in America.

Thomas Pickering

As I did the research for this manual I was struck by how similar the ideas and motivation of Timothy Pickering (*An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia*) coincided with my own, so much so that I have decided to include some of his observations in this introductory section. Many of these comments can be applied directly to reenactors because those practices which compelled Pickering to speak out, I have seen over and over again at reenactments. The task that Pickering attempted to accomplish is also remarkably similar to mine. He sought to translate and simplify the military practice of the day for use by militia in the colonies, I have sought to discover those British military practices and translate them for modern times. For both of us, then, the object was to allow part-time soldiers to understand the professional military jargon of the eighteenth century.

The student of British military practices should exercise care in using Pickering's manual as a guide, however, because his purpose was also to simplify and adapt the British manual of arms and marching maneuvers for use by militia, therefore, what Pickering describes was not necessarily what the British army was doing at the time. Nonetheless, by careful reading (and comparison to the British manuals of the day) Pickering's work can actually provide a great deal of useful information on the British army because he usually indicated where he was changing a command or process by referring, and generally ridiculing, the current British method. His footnotes are a wealth of information on eighteenth century professional usage.

I offer the following incisive comments from Pickering's manual for the reader's amusement and edification.²

"...custom and prejudice are the foundation of many practices among the military; and ... maxims have been blindly adopted, without any examination of the principles on which they are founded"

¹ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga: Turning Point of Americas Revolutionary War* (New York, NY, 1997), 202.

²The following quotes are from Timothy Pickering, Jr., *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia* (Salem, Mass., 1775). The individual page citations are not given but are available for anyone who is truly interested.

"I have also endeavored to explain every part of the exercise minutely, and with the utmost clearness and certainty of expression. Some indeed may think me in many cases too triflingly particular: but I have inserted nothing but what, when the military art was entirely new to me, would have been very acceptable, and have saved me much time and study."

"[concerning the holding of the position of REST or PRESENT at reviews and ceremonies] ... for this insignificant business a battalion is kept standing under arms till the men are weary, and their hands, stretched downwards to their utmost extent in holding the firelock at rest, merely tremble with the long continued strain."

"If the men are to stand in their places for any length of time, as at calling the roll, or on other occasions as when they are to remain without exercise, they may be directed to ORDER their firelocks; and if needful, to EASE THEIR ARMS: or if the men have been so long exercised as to need an entire respite from action, let them GROUND their firelocks, retire, and repose themselves as they please."

"Tis of importance that the words of command be given in a proper manner. I have sometimes heard them given with such a confused, inarticulate, mere animal sound, that the men might as well perform the exercise by the braying of an ass; and this proceeded from a foolish opinion that it was more soldier-like."

"Care should be taken not to overstrain the voice, which will render it soon hoarse; nor to get above its pitch, which will give it a disagreeable tone."

"Proper pauses should be made between the different words of command; that the men may have time to think, and keep their minds calm and sedate: if they are greatly hurried, they will be confused, and commit blunders."

"At first the motions must be shewn them very distinctly; and if a motion be at all difficult, or compound, the firelock and the hands of the teacher must move extremely slow, so that the men may easily follow the motions with their eyes; and when they once obtain a clear idea of the manner of doing it, they will presently learn to imitate it."

"No motion must be begun till the word of command is fully pronounced; and after the first motion is finished, the word two should be given as a signal when to begin the second, and three when to begin the third; and so on according to the number of motions contained in the action: but the men must stop between each motion till every false attitude is remarked and corrected."

"The greatest possible uniformity in the motions is to be aimed at; not merely to render the exercise more graceful; but because the want of uniformity, (especially in that most essential part, the priming, loading and firing) is attended with inconvenience."

"...they ought to aim at doing everything with great life, as though the firelock were moved by a spring: this will animate and fix their attention."

"In performing the manual exercise, the men should wait about a second of time (but

not more) between the motions; ... and the exercising officer should wait about two seconds between the end of one action, and his giving the word of command for another."

"Great care must be taken that the men carry their arms well, keeping them steady against their shoulders, precisely as directed in the first part of the explanation of the manual exercise. The most common faults are the carrying the firelock too high and holding the butt too far forward."

MANUAL OF ARMS

POSITION OF A SOLDIER UNDER ARMS³: Shoulders square to the front, heels close together (but not touching) and toes pointing out slightly, the right hand straight down the side with the palm toward the thigh. The musket is carried on the left shoulder as low down as is comfortable³, the butt supported against the thigh and the barrel almost perpendicular, the three last fingers under the butt and the thumb and fore finger before the heel (or top of the butt). The musket should be at half-cock and the frizzen closed over the pan.

Note: This is the position assumed when a soldier is commanded to assemble or fall-in. It is also the position of **SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS**. The manual also says the men should turn their heads to the right. This was done to keep the line dressed and prevent the men from gawking around. In fact, the head would be turned to the right during almost all the positions that follow. But I have found it is unrealistic to expect reenactors to do this, and that a certain amount of "gawking" is part of the enjoyment of the weekend. However, for ceremonial functions and demonstrations for the public, NCOs may want to enforce the turned head rule.

POISE YOUR FIRELOCKS --(Two motions) First: Grab the musket at the wrist (the thin part of the stock behind the lock) with your right hand as you turn the musket so the lock is to the front, making sure the barrel remains perpendicular. Second: With your right hand bring the musket up before your face, the lock at the height of the face (still faced to the front) and the barrel still perpendicular, at the same time bring up your left hand and seize the musket just above the lock. Final Position: The body is still square to the front, the musket is close to the body (you should be able to just brush your nose with your left thumb), the barrel perpendicular and the left hand level with the eyes (A handy reference point is to look at the forward lock bolt). The little finger of the left hand should be resting on the frizzen spring. Be sure your elbows are not sticking out! Note: This position is generally only used for the safety inspection of the lock before a battle, otherwise it is an important intermediate step for other

³ Unless otherwise noted, the commands and positions described under this section come from *The Manual Exercise As Ordered by His Majesty, In 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practis'd at Reviews and Field-days, &c.* (New York, 1775, a facsimile copy printed in 1975 from a copy in the United States Military Academy) This edition of the *Manual of 1764* was aimed at those British regiments serving in America, and although not complete, it should be considered the principal source for the British manual of arms and marching maneuvers for the American Revolution period.

³ "so low down that the guard will be just under the left breast" -- Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.14.

positions.

COCK YOUR FIRELOCKS--(two motions)First: Turn the barrel opposite your face, keeping the barrel perpendicular, and raise your right elbow. Hook your thumb over the cock.

Second: Cock the musket by bringing down your thumb and elbow. Place your thumb across the barrel tang.

Final Position: Barrel is to the rear and perpendicular. Your finger should not be on the trigger.

Note: This command is almost never used under normal circumstances; in fact it is only used when demonstrating the long loading procedure for spectators.

PRESENT--(One motion) Step back with the right foot about six inches (pointing to the right), and turn the left foot so the toe points to the front. Bring the butt of the musket into the right shoulder and place your right fore finger in front of the trigger.

Final Position: This is the same as "Take Aim". Your body will no longer be square to the front but turned slightly to the right. Care should be taken that all the muskets are at the same level.

FIRE--(one motion) Pull the trigger and immediately bring the right foot up behind the left and bring the musket down to the priming position, the lock next to the right breast, the muzzle pointing to the front and at the height of your hat. Grasp the top of the cock between your right forefinger and thumb.

Final Position: Your body should still be turned slightly to the right (a quarter turn) with your left toe pointing to the front and your right toe pointing to the right, the heels next to each other but not touching. The lock is at the right side of your chest and the barrel is pointed to the front (Therefore, the musket does not lie across your chest.). The reason for this will become apparent when performing multi-rank firing.⁴

HALF-COCK YOUR FIRELOCKS-- (One motion) Draw back your right arm until you pull the cock into the half-cock position.

Note: In addition to being used in the long loading sequence, this command is given when unloaded muskets are shouldered after firing. Therefore, it is best to wait when coming to to priming position to see if you will be ordered to reload or shoulder, rather than immediately cocking and reaching for that next cartridge.

HANDLE YOUR CARTRIDGE--(One motion) Grab a cartridge with your right hand and

⁴ Pickering described the priming position as "the firelock to the right side, pulling the butt up under the right arm-pit, thereby bringing down the piece briskly ... the firelock pointing straight to the front, and its muzzle so high as to clear the man's head in the rank before you." -- *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.17.

tear it open with your teeth. Hold the cartridge above the musket at the height of the chin, elbow down.

Note: Be sure to bite low enough to fully open the cartridge, otherwise the powder will come out in a trickle and slow the loading time considerably. Put more succinctly, *eat powder!*⁵

PRIME--(One motion) Shake some powder into the pan (about half-full) and place the three last fingers of your right hand behind the frizzen, elbow up. Your thumb and forefinger will still be holding the cartridge (hopefully!).

SHUT YOUR PANS--(Two motions)First: Shut the pan by sharply pulling your right arm back.

Second: Turn the musket with the left hand so the barrel is pointing up and to the right, the lock toward the front. At the same time, lower the left arm so the muzzle is at the height of the chin. The right hand (with the cartridge) should be held next to the muzzle.

Final Position: The body should not move in this motion but remain turned to the right a quarter turn. The left hand should be just below the swell and the arm extended so the muzzle is at the chin but taking care that the butt does not touch the ground. The musket will not be perpendicular but slanted toward the right, the barrel on the right side and the lock toward the front.

CHARGE WITH CARTRIDGE--(Two Motions)First: Pour the powder down the barrel. If you have torn your cartridge properly this will take an instant, if not, the powder will emerge one grain at a time and take an eternity.

Second: Grab on to the ramrod with the back of the hand up but do not pull it out yet.

DRAW YOUR RAMMERS--(Two motions)First: Pull the rammer half way out then grab it at the middle. Your right hand should be back where it started at the muzzle.

Second: Pull the rammer the rest of the way out, turn it with a flick of the wrist and insert the button end in the muzzle.

RAM DOWN CARTRIDGE--(One motion) Ram the cartridge down the barrel (two strong strokes should be sufficient). Draw out the rammer halfway, grab it at the middle, draw it out the rest of the way, twist it and insert back in the ramrod pipes. Push the rammer in until there is four or five inches remaining. Place the outside edge of the right hand on the button of the rammer taking care to keep the hand clear of the muzzle. The fingers should be extended and together.

Note: Although the rammer should be withdrawn from the barrel briskly, be careful that it does not sail through the air before you can grab it at the middle.

⁵ Even Pickering said to HANDLE CARTRIDGE "by biting off the top of the paper so as to feel the powder in your mouth" -- *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.17.

RETURN YOUR RAMMERS--(One motion) Push the rammer the rest of the way in and bring the musket up into the shoulder with the left hand, grabbing it at the wrist with the right hand. At the same time turn your body to the front.
Final Position: Body faced to the front, left hand holding the musket just below the swell, the left forearm along the stock, and the right hand holding the musket at the wrist just below the cock. The musket should be almost perpendicular with the barrel to the front.
Note: Throughout the whole loading procedure the body should be faced a quarter turn to the right and not faced to the front until the rammers are returned.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(Two motions)
First: Bring the left hand down and grab the butt, the fingers placed as described in the POSITION OF A SOLDIER.
Second: Release the right hand and drop it to your right side.
Note: It is a good idea to get into the habit of sliding on your frizzen cover whenever you SHOULDER with a loaded musket.

RAPID LOADING AND FIRING

The next section of this manual will cover the fast loading procedure. Before proceeding you should be confident that you know all the motions from the long loading sequence just presented. Although rarely used except to demonstrate for spectators, the long loading sequence provides the basis for fast loading and its motions should be used whenever loading the musket. We will assume the muskets are now unloaded and the soldiers are at the position of SHOULDER.

PRIME AND LOAD--(Rather than individual motions, it is easier to think of PRIME AND LOAD as a series of steps or parts, the number of steps dependent on whether wadding will be used or not.)
First: Come immediately to the RECOVER; The position of RECOVER is one of the more difficult to master properly (not to mention describe!). Spring or throw the musket straight up with the left hand, twisting it as you do so the barrel is to the rear. Once the musket is moving, release your left hand from the butt and grab the musket just forward of the lock, your little finger should rest on the frizzen spring. At the same time bring your right hand across and grab the musket at the wrist. Properly done, both hands and musket should be moving at once, and when completed the musket will be positioned over the left shoulder, the barrel to the rear and perpendicular, the left hand at eye level, and the cock just touching the shoulder.
Second: Bring the musket down into the priming position (body faced a quarter turn to the right. left foot pointing to the front, right foot to the right, lock at right breast, muzzle pointing to the front and at the level of the hat, as

described in the command FIRE above.)

Third: With the right thumb, open the pan by pushing the frizzen forward.

Fourth: Grab and tear open a cartridge as described in the command HANDLE YOUR CARTRIDGE.

Fifth: Prime the pan, as in PRIME.

Sixth: Close the frizzen as in the first motion of SHUT YOUR PANS, then pause until the next command. Everything to this point should be done as quickly as possible.

Note: This point can get confusing but during the long loading you cast about automatically when you shut the pan, during the fast loading procedure you wait for an order before casting about.

Seventh: At the command '**BOUT**, cast about as in the second motion of SHUT YOUR PANS. In other words, you will all cast about at the same time on a given command (To quote the manual, "when the Pans are shut, a small Pause is to be made, and cast about together." There is no actual command ABOUT in the manual, but some sort of signal is necessary if the men are to do it together.).

Eighth: Charge cartridge

Ninth: Draw rammers.

Tenth: Ram down the cartridge, finishing in the same position as the command RAM DOWN CARTRIDGE, pausing until the next command. Everything from casting about to this point should be done as quickly as possible.

Eleventh: At the command, **RETURN YOUR RAMMERS**, come to the position described for that motion.

Twelfth: **SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS**, as described.

MAKE READY--(One motion) Spring the musket to the RECOVER, hook your right thumb over the cock and pull it to the full-cock position. Keep your finger off the trigger.

PRESENT-- As described above.

FIRE-- As described, pull the trigger and come to the priming position.

Listed below are the commands as they would normally be presented, each followed by what should be done after the command is given. If you have just fired and the command is given to PRIME AND LOAD, there is no need to go to the RECOVER as you will already be in the priming position. Only go to RECOVER when you start at SHOULDER. In the following example, it is assumed the soldiers have fired and are already at the priming position.

PRIME AND LOAD-- Open pan, handle cartridge, prime, shut pan

BOUT-- Cast about, charge with cartridge, draw rammers, ram down cartridge

RETURN YOUR RAMMERS-- Push in rammer, bring musket up into shoulder

MAKE READY-- This time we did not go to SHOULDER first. Go to the RECOVER by pushing the musket up with the right hand, turning the barrel to the rear as you do so. The left hand will already be in position, just release the musket and allow it to slide through the hand until the frizzen spring reaches the little finger. Full-cock as before.

PRESENT--

FIRE--

RAPID FIRE WITHOUT RAMMING

You have now learned the fast loading procedure using the rammer to ram home a charge. This would be used when firing live ammunition at a shooting match or when using wadding in a blank for a bigger bang (usually for demonstration purposes), but for safety reasons the ramrod is *not* used during battle reenactments so the PRIME AND LOAD sequence must be learned without using the ramrod. This is also an authentic procedure as British soldiers sometimes hit the butts of their muskets sharply on the ground to seat the ball rather than use their rammers. This practice is definitely not recommended for live firing as the ball may not seat properly resulting in an exploding musket. For a little variety we will assume the soldiers are at the SHOULDER with unloaded muskets.

PRIME AND LOAD-- Spring to the recover, come to the priming position, open the pan, handle cartridge, prime, shut pan.

BOUT-- Cast about, pour the powder down the barrel, drop the empty cartridge paper on the ground, press the musket into the left shoulder with the right hand (the arm straight across the body, the fingers extended and against the barrel at the height of the large ramrod thimble)

Note: This will approximate the position taken at the end of RAM DOWN CARTRIDGE when the hand is extended across the rammer ready to push it in.

UP-- Bring the musket up to the shoulder as you would if RETURN YOUR RAMMERS were given. That is actually the proper command at this point, but people get nervous when they hear rammers being mentioned during reenactments.

MAKE READY--

PRESENT--

FIRE--

FIRING IN RANKS

You have now learned the long loading procedure and the fast loading procedure, both with wadding and without. This has been described with the assumption that a single recruit is being taught or all the soldiers are in a single rank, situations that obviously occur and so these methods should be practiced and remembered. However, most reenactment groups fight in a two rank formation whenever they have sufficient numbers, and rank firing involves slightly different body positions during firing and loading. Be sure you are comfortable with the commands and motions already presented before proceeding. It will be assumed the soldiers are loaded and at the SHOULDER.

FRONT RANK KNEELING

MAKE READY-- Spring the musket to the RECOVER and as soon as you are there, without hesitation, bring the musket down to your right front while at the same time you sink down on your right knee, the lower left leg straight up and down.⁶ The musket butt should be on the ground about four inches to the right of your left foot. Your right hand will still be on the wrist behind the cock, but your left hand should slide up to a point half-way between the lock and the swell, the musket should be straight up and down. As soon as you are in this position, reach up with your right thumb and bring the musket to full cock.

PRESENT-- While still in this kneeling position, bring the musket butt up into the right shoulder, or take aim.

FIRE-- Pull the trigger, then immediately spring up on your left leg to the priming position, left foot to the front, right to the right, and body turned to the right.

PRIME AND LOAD--

'BOUT--

UP--

⁶ The right leg will have to be thrust back (the knee placed about two or three inches to the rear of the left heel) to accomplish this, even though it may create problems for the rear rank. Most recreated units do not thrust the right leg back which means the left leg is not straight up and down, probably because of the inconvenience to the rear rank. At least one British officer suggested the front rank step *forward* with the left, "remember you are to put your left foot forward, and not your right foot back, as usual; for that always discommodes the Rear Ranks, and has always been a complaint amongst the Men, by keeping them a Muttering one at another, which ought not to be." -- George Grant, *The New Highland Military Discipline or a Short Manual Exercise Explained with the Words of Command* (London, 1757, facsimile reprint, Ottawa, 1967), but this was never accepted.

MAKE READY-- Although there is a tendency to immediately bring the musket down to the right when in this intermediate position and not at the SHOULDER, the musket should properly be thrust up into the RECOVER before being dropped to the right. Not only will this help you to remember to go to RECOVER when you are at SHOULDER, it will enhance the look of the unit because the rear rank will be going to RECOVER at the same time.

PRESENT--

FIRE--

PRIME AND LOAD--

'BOUT--

UP--

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

FRONT RANK STANDING

The British manuals of the eighteenth century provide only a standard method of drill. By that I mean the authors did not provide information for all contingencies. For example, the manuals only provide instruction for three ranks firing, however, it is also known that the British generally used two ranks in the American war, and certainly modern reenactors use two ranks. How did two ranks fire? Did the front rank kneel or stand? In 1768 Bennett Cuthbertson recommended that "the firing of the three ranks standing should be very much attended to, it being extremely useful in many situations, when the front rank cannot conveniently kneel."⁴ Certainly when firing from behind a wall or other defensive structure the front rank cannot kneel. The kneeling of the front rank was also intended to clear the way for the muskets of the third rank, a precaution unnecessary with only two ranks. Pictorial evidence does not provide an answer because I have seen both methods portrayed in contemporary paintings.

It is interesting to note that reenactors are split as well. The British units in the northeast tend to have the front rank kneel while southern units have them stand. I guess the only answer at this point is that there is no definitive answer. On the one hand having the front rank kneel adds a certain flare and style to the unit's performance, and also increases safety as the heads of the front rank are removed from the vicinity of the pan flash of the rear rank. But on the other hand, having the front rank remain standing is quicker in certain tactical situations such as street firing, and an absolute necessity when firing from behind a wall. I recommend units have the flexibility to employ either method.

⁴ Bennett Cuthbertson, *A System for the Complete Interior Management and Economy of a Battalion of Infantry* (Bristol edition, 1775), 170.

MAKE READY-- Spring the musket to the RECOVER. Reach up with the right thumb and full cock.

PRESENT--(One motion) Step back with the right foot about six inches (pointing to the right), and turn the left foot so the toe points to the front. Bring the butt of the musket into the right shoulder and place your right fore finger in front of the trigger.

Note: This is the same position as described in the long loading sequence.

FIRE--(one motion) Pull the trigger and immediately bring the right foot up behind the left and bring the musket down to the priming position, the lock next to the right breast, the muzzle pointing to the front and at the height of your hat. Grasp the top of the cock between your right forefinger and thumb.

Final Position: Your body should still be turned slightly to the right (a quarter turn) with your left toe pointing to the front and your right toe pointing to the right, the heels next to each other but not touching. The lock is at the right side of your chest and the barrel is pointed to the front.

PRIME AND LOAD--

BOUT--

UP--

SECOND RANK

MAKE READY-- Spring to the RECOVER, then immediately step to the right about two feet, using only the right foot and point that foot to the right, the left stays where it is. As you step to the right, reach up with the thumb and bring the musket to full-cock.

Note: To visualize this when the front rank kneels, both ranks will spring to the RECOVER and then both will move into position, the front rank dropping and the rear rank stepping to the right, although it should be one fluid motion with no noticeable hesitation between the RECOVER and the subsequent movement.

PRESENT-- Bring the musket to PRESENT (take aim) by dropping the barrel between the files in front. By stepping to the right, you have brought your right shoulder in a line between these files. It may be a good practice to lean forward slightly to be sure your muzzle is beyond the front rank, but not so much that you are off balance. However, if the front rank is standing, care should be taken that the lock is not too close to the heads of the front rank.

FIRE-- Pull the trigger, then immediately come to the priming position by lowering the butt of the musket and bringing the *left* foot over next to the right. You now see the method to the madness of the priming position. When at PRESENT in the second rank, your right shoulder, side and musket are in the imaginary line that divides the two files to your front. When you go to the priming position, your shoulder, side and musket are maintained on that line by bringing over your left foot. The musket does not need to be moved to the side, just the butt dropped so the lock is by the right breast and the muzzle elevated to the height of the hat. With the barrel pointing directly to the front, the muzzle is properly (and safely) between the front files.

PRIME AND LOAD--

'BOUT--

UP-- When bringing the musket into the left shoulder after the command UP or RETURN YOUR RAMMERS, the second rank steps to the left to cover their files and faces to the front, and thus arrive back at their original positions.

MAKE READY-- Come to the RECOVER, step to the right and full cock.

PRESENT--

FIRE-- Pull the trigger, come to the priming position by lowering the musket and bringing the left foot over.

PRIME AND LOAD--

'BOUT--

UP-- Bring up the musket, step to the left and face to the front.

OBLIQUE FIRE

MAKE READY--

PRESENT--

RIGHT OBLIQUE-- Turn on the heels so the body is facing more to the right (this includes the front rank men who will have to shift their right legs), All muskets should be pointed to the right front.

Note: This command is used to simulate fire on a target which is not directly in front of the company but to its right. The command LEFT OBLIQUE will

accomplish the same task to the other side.⁷

FIRE--

PRIME AND LOAD--

'BOUT--

UP--

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

RECOVER

Before leaving the firing commands, there is one order that is not generally listed in manuals and not practiced by most reenactment units, yet, considering the concern with safety that we all have, this is very surprising. The command I am referring to is **RECOVER**. For the following instruction we will assume the soldiers are in two ranks with loaded muskets at the **SHOULDER**.

MAKE READY--

PRESENT--

RECOVER-- The men in the front rank drop the butt of the musket to the ground and remain kneeling, the men in the second rank bring the musket to the **RECOVER** and remain stepped to the right. Basically, the men return to the positions assumed when the command **MAKE READY** was given.

Note: Obviously this command is important to stop the firing sequence when some spectator (or more commonly some officer) wanders in front of your leveled and loaded muskets. The men should know this command as well as any of the others and should be taught to wait until they hear either **RECOVER** or **FIRE** before they pull the trigger.⁸

PRESENT-- With the obstruction removed, you may proceed.

FIRE--

CEASE FIRE

⁷ Thomas Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, vol. I, (Philadelphia, 1776), p.224.

⁸ For a reference to this see Hiller B. Zobel, *The Boston Massacre* (New York, 1970), p.198.

HALF-COCK YOUR FIRELOCKS-- As I mentioned before, it is not a good practice to teach the men to begin loading without waiting for the command to **PRIME AND LOAD**, as there may be no need to reload (for example, the end of a reenactment) and they will have wasted a cartridge. The basic rule is: *Never anticipate an order!*

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(Two motions) First: With the right hand (which should be holding the cock after bringing it to **HALF COCK**), grab the musket at the wrist and bring it over to the left shoulder, the barrel to the front and the musket almost perpendicular. At the same time, release your left hand, drop it to your left side and grab the butt of the musket as your right hand brings it into position. The second rank steps to the left to cover their files.
Second: Drop your right hand to your right side and assume the **POSITION OF A SOLDIER**.

SHUT YOUR PANS--(One motion) Bring the right arm straight across the body with the palm down and the fingers extended, and with a sweeping motion bring the fingers down on the frizzen (and thus closing the pan) and continue until the hand is down by the right side again.

Note: Obviously, there are two completely different motions connected with the command **SHUT YOUR PANS**, and it is just as obvious that common sense will show which is appropriate at any given moment.⁹

Having learned the firing drill, you may proceed with the rest of the manual. The following will teach you the facings, marching positions, commands for the bayonet and safety inspection of the muskets. The commands are set up with a continuous flow of orders so you will be able to run through the commands without stopping if you so desire. But first, the muskets must be cleared of unfired rounds.

SECURE YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Bring the right hand across the body and grab the musket at the wrist, but do not turn it.
Second: Release the left hand and grab the forestock just below the swell, your left forearm should be lying along the stock. In fact, you should simply bend your left arm, swinging the forearm upward.
Third: Release your right hand and swing the barrel downward by dropping

⁹ *Manual of 1764*, p.33. The Manual lists this command under "A Charge and Volley by Battalion", but gives no actual description, but this seems to be the only logical way it could be done.

your left forearm so that your left hand is at your waist. This motion should bring the butt behind your left shoulder and point the muzzle toward the ground (ideally, the ranks should be opened before doing this).

Final Position: Right arm at the right side, left arm slightly bent with the hand waist high supporting the musket which should be so positioned that the butt is elevated behind the left shoulder, the barrel is below the stock and the muzzle angled toward the ground.

Note: This command is mainly used to empty unfired charges from the barrel after a battle reenactment. If your musket did not discharge on the final volley, the unused powder will pour from the barrel. You should also reach across with your right hand and open the pan. Some people feel that if the individual paid for the powder, he should be able to blow it off, and so proceed to let those who have misfired keep trying until they succeed. However, this looks (and is) stupid and only detracts from the supposed discipline of the unit. A cease-fire is just that, a cease-fire, and unused charges should be dumped in an authentic manner (it looks just as ragged to have individuals dumping their powder, therefore the unit as a whole should go to the SECURE), leave the indiscriminate firing of unused charges to the militia. One final note, going to the SECURE to dump charges after a reenactment should wait until the barrels have cooled, otherwise the smell of burning flesh will waft above the ranks.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Swing the musket around into the SHOULDER by bringing the left hand above the shoulder, at the same time bring the right hand across and grab the musket at the wrist.

Second: Release the left hand and grab the butt.

Third: Release the right and drop it to your side

POSITIONS OF REST

REST YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: As in POISE, bring your right hand across and grab the musket at the wrist, turning the lock to the front.

Second: Bring the musket to POISE.

Third: Step back with the right foot slightly, so that the left heel is pointing toward the right instep. As you step back, quickly lower the musket over the left knee as far as your right hand will permit, turning the musket so the barrel is to the rear and perpendicular, the hands stay where they are.

Final Position: The right foot is to the rear about four inches (There is a tendency among reenactors to step back much too far in this motion. It is only a balance step, nothing more.), the musket is over the left leg (you should be able to see straight ahead with both eyes without the musket blocking the view) and the barrel is to the rear and perpendicular. The left hand is holding the forestock with the little finger resting on the frizzen spring and the right

hand is on the wrist with the thumb behind and the fingers together and extended (the angle here precludes any attempt at actually grasping the wrist). Note: It is one of the great mysteries of the eighteenth century why they ever called this position "rest" because it is surely one of the most uncomfortable positions in the whole manual. This position is also PRESENT YOUR ARMS and can be a real killer when some officer or dignitary decides to make a speech and the commander forgets to release the troops from saluting.

ORDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Bring the musket across the body and into the right shoulder. Everything else should remain as is, hand positions, barrel, feet, and height of the musket.

Second: Release the right hand and grab the barrel so the thumb is extended along the barrel and laying on the bayonet lug. The right arm should not be raised, only bent at the elbow (which will bring the hand about level with the lower face), so in order to grab the area below the bayonet lug, the musket will have to be *lowered* with the left hand as you bring up the right.

Third: Simultaneously, release your left hand and drop it to your side, bring the right foot forward into position and lower the musket with the right hand so the butt is next to the right toe.

Final Position: The body is faced to the front, feet back in position, left hand hanging down the left side, the heel of the musket butt on the ground next to the right toe, the barrel to the rear, the right hand grasping the barrel with the thumb extended upward and the ball of the thumb resting on the bayonet lug (this provides a reference point so everyone's hand is at the same level), and the muzzle pointed slightly away from the body.

Note: One of the great controversies among recreated units is whether the soldiers had to go through the actual command of REST before going to order. Unfortunately, there is no firm evidence to give a conclusive answer. In an edition of the *Manual of 1764* printed in Philadelphia in 1776 they give this series of commands: UNFIX YOUR BAYONETS, SHOULDER, ORDER YOUR FIRELOCKS, EASE YOUR ARMS, CLAP HANDS. It should be noted that YOUR FIRELOCK was left off SHOULDER, and the command to REST was not given. *However*, the description of the movement for going to order simply says "As given in the manual," and in the manual the men are brought to REST before going to ORDER. This would seem to leave two possibilities: the command to REST was given by the sergeants or subalterns, or the men went through the position of REST automatically without a distinct order. Either method is acceptable so I will leave it to individual units to decide which method to employ, at least until more information is uncovered.

EASE YOUR ARMS¹⁰--(one motion) Allow the musket barrel to fall back into your right shoulder as you release and drop your right hand. Your right arm should be fully extended with the right hand in front of the musket (fingers extended and together, back of the hand to the front).

¹⁰ *Manual of 1764*, an edition printed in Philadelphia in 1776, p.33.

CLAP HANDS¹¹--(one motion) Bring both hands to your front, the right grasping the left so the right palm is over the back of the left. The musket will be cradled in the right shoulder. Some units perform this with some violence, producing a clapping noise as the right palm strikes the back of the left hand, thus justifying the term "clap". I have found no evidence to confirm or deny this practice.

Note: This is the position of rest and relaxation. You are allowed to bend your knees, talk, take a drink from your canteen, smoke 'em if you got 'em, etc. You are *not* allowed to leave your position in the line unless granted permission by an officer or NCO.

HANDLE YOUR ARMS¹²--(one motion) Bring your body to attention as you drop your left hand to your side and grab the musket with your right (the thumb on the bayonet lug) and assume the position of ORDER

GROUND YOUR FIRELOCKS--(four motions) First: Turn to the right a quarter turn by pointing your left toe to the front and the right toe to the right. As you do this, turn the musket so the lock is to the rear and slide your right foot up to the musket so your instep lies along the butt and your heel is pointing toward the toe of the left foot.

Second: Step forward with your left foot about as far as the swell of the musket will be when you finish laying it down. As you step forward, slide your right hand down the musket as far as the swell as you lower it to the ground, the muzzle pointing directly to the front (an alternate method described in Bland's manual of 1762 is to let go of the muzzle with the right hand and grab the musket at the middle just before you descend). Your left hand should be hanging down by your left foot. When you step forward bend the right knee and keep the lower leg in contact with the musket, so that when you finish the motion you are actually kneeling on the musket with your right leg.⁵

Third: Stand back up to your former position, bringing your left foot back and dropping both hands to their sides. Be sure your body remains slightly turned

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

⁵ Some units keep the right leg straight and stiff as they bend over to lower the musket. The *Manual of 1764* is not explicit on this point, but the Bland manual of 1762 specifically says "bring down your right knee upon the firelock." (Humphrey Bland, *A Treatise of Military Discipline* (London, 1762), p. 21) In addition, the figures in the manual of 1790 show the right leg bent and laying on the musket. Although assumptions must be accepted with a great deal of trepidation, I would suspect that if the bent knee method was used before and after the Revolution, then it probably was used during the period as well. The only reference to a stiff knee I have seen is for the French manual of 1760, in which the soldier not only kept his right knee straight, but reached behind his back with his left hand to hold his cartridge box strap.

to the right.

Fourth: Face to the front, bringing your feet back into their normal position.

Final Position: The body will be faced to the front and the musket will lie on the ground with the lock upwards, the butt to the right and forward of the right foot and the barrel pointing straight to the front.

Note: This is another one of those positions that is rarely, if ever, used in actual reenactments, but is usually performed only for demonstrations.

FACINGS

TO THE RIGHT, FACE--(two motions) First: Step back with the right foot slightly so the heel of the left is pointing into the instep of the right. The heel of the right should be two inches directly behind the left.

Second: Lift up your toes slightly and pivot on your heels 90° to the right. When you complete the turn you should find your feet already in the correct position (If they are not, then you placed your right foot wrong in the first motion!).

Note: In the Manual of 1764 the facing movements are described with the soldiers holding the musket. First brought to the position of PRESENT (REST with the bayonet on), the musket is pushed up into the position of POISE, the facing movement completed, and the musket and feet returned to the position of PRESENT or REST. This was obviously a formal manner of FACING for use in reviews, but it has caused no end of confusion among reenactors. Some have believed that this was the only method and so bring their men to the POISE before FACING (although, technically, they should be bringing them to REST first), and others who agree with Timothy Pickering's comments on the matter, "the FACINGS," he wrote, "... are accompanied by useless motions of the firelock; and being taught only when the firelock is RESTED, it begets an opinion in the men that they are to be practiced regularly, only when they are in that position; and tell them to face on any other occasion, they will be totally at a loss how to do it, until repeated informations have enlarged and corrected their notions about it."⁶ I have given the FACINGS without arms believing the feet positions are most important. I would recommend that troops ordered to face while under arms should not move their firelocks, *unless* they are to perform the more formal facing of the manual, in which case they should be ordered to PRESENT or REST before being ordered to FACE.

TO THE RIGHT, FACE--

TO THE RIGHT ABOUT, FACE--(three motions) First: Step back with your right foot just

⁶ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.12.

as you did for a RIGHT FACE, but you must step back a little more (right heel four inches behind the left instead of two) so your feet won't tangle.

Second: Lift up your toes and turn your body 180° to the right. You should end by facing to the rear with your right foot slightly advanced to the front (actually, by this time you will be facing your original front), the right heel pointing to the instep of the left. If you have not stepped back far enough your feet and legs will now be pressed together, if not tangled, and you will be in mortal danger of falling. If you initially stepped back too far, your right leg and foot will be stuck way out in front, and you will look and feel like an awkward clown.

Third: Bring your right foot back into its normal position.

TO THE LEFT, FACE--(two motions) First: Step forward with the right foot so the heel is pointing into the instep of the left foot and is about an inch away (If this looks familiar, it should. It is approximately how you ended the second motion of RIGHT ABOUT FACE.).

Second: Lift your toes and turn your body 90° to the left. Again, your feet should already be in position when you end.

TO THE LEFT, FACE--

TO THE LEFT ABOUT, FACE--(three motions) First: Step forward with your right, but this time point the heel toward the base of the left toes, or a little more to the front and left (The manual does not differ in foot placement for a LEFT FACE or a LEFT ABOUT FACE, but experience has shown that these subtle placement differences prevent a great deal of awkwardness.)

Second: Lift the toes and turn your body 180°. You should end with your right foot slightly behind you.

Third: Bring the right foot forward into position.

Note: You may have observed that the left heel does not move during the facings. This keeps your place in the line and the ranks and files even (and also serves to drill a hole in the ground under your left heel). Those who have seen service in the modern army find these facings somewhat difficult because the modern soldier turns on his toes, not his heels.

TAKE UP YOUR FIRELOCKS--(four motions) First: Turn the body a quarter turn to the right, the left foot pointing to the front and the right foot to the right with the instep pushed up against the butt of the musket.

Second: Step forward with the left foot as far as the swell and grab the musket with the right hand at the swell. The left hand should be hanging down by the left foot.

Third: Stand back up, bringing the musket up with you and keeping the body turned. The lock should still be toward the rear and the right hand at the swell.

Fourth: Face to the front, bringing your right foot back into position. At the same time quickly bring your right hand up to the muzzle and turn the barrel to the rear. You should now be in the position of ORDER.

REST YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Release your right hand and lower it to the swell, cradling the barrel between your thumb and forefinger, the other fingers together and extended.

Second: Raise the musket straight up with your right hand while you bring your left across to grab it just forward of the lock, the little finger of the left touching the frizzen spring. Ideally, the musket should be raised just high enough so the left forearm lays straight across the body.

Third: As you step back with your right foot slightly, release your right hand and place it below the trigger guard in the proper position of REST (the left hand will have brought the musket across the body into position over the left leg)

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(two motions) First: As you bring your right foot forward into position, grab the wrist section with your right hand (having raised the musket with the left ever so slightly to enable you to do this) and swing the musket around, barrel to the front, and over into the left shoulder. At the same time, you will also release your left hand and place it under the butt in the proper position of SHOULDER.

Second: Release your right hand and drop it to your side.

ADVANCE YOUR FIRELOCKS--(four motions) First: As in POISE, grab the wrist with your right hand and turn the musket so the lock is to the front.

Second: Come to the POISE.

Third: Bring the musket down into your right side, turning it so the barrel is to the rear. As you do this, slip the thumb of the right hand above the bow on the trigger guard, the forefinger below, and the three other fingers under the cock on the other side. The left hand will only be used to guide the musket into place. It should not be actually gripping the musket during the final descent, only pressing the musket into the right shoulder with the fingers extended and together. In addition, when this motion is complete, the left forearm should be straight across the body, the hand approximately at the swell, and no lower. The musket will be held as low as the right arm will permit without forcing the situation.

Fourth: Drop your left hand to your side.

Note: This is one of the marching positions often employed, and the position assumed when you are under arms and walk near an officer. Also, corporals carry their muskets at ADVANCE when posting their men on sentry duty. If you have hands like a pro-basketball player, with nice long fingers, this position can be quite comfortable, but if you have short stubby fingers (like myself) then this position rapidly becomes a real pain in the digits as you strain to keep your fingers wrapped around that trigger guard.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(four motions) First: Bring your left forearm straight across your body and grab the musket just forward of the lock, the little finger touching the frizzen spring. In order to accomplish this you will have to raise the musket with your right hand as you bring the left across.

Second: Bring the musket up into the POISE.

Third: Turn and drop the musket into the left shoulder, barrel to the front, while you release your left hand and position it under the butt.

Fourth: Drop your right hand to your side.

Note: There is a tendency in this movement to reach *down* to the frizzen spring on the first motion, but properly done, the musket should be raised so the left arm can be placed straight across the body at approximately the waist. Another point concerning this and other similar movements is the movement of muskets when the free hand is dropped to the side. Usually the musket is placed too high when brought into the shoulder and has to be dropped into position as the free arm is released. The musket should not move once it is in its final position, you should take care that your left arm is fully extended when it receives the butt on the third motion, and NCOs should take the name of the man whose musket moves when his right hand is dropped to his side.

SUPPORT YOUR FIRELOCKS¹³--(three motions) First: Grab the musket on the lower part of the wrist with the right hand, leaving enough room for the left arm to fit between the cock and your right hand.

Second: Release your left hand and bring your arm under the cock and across your chest so your left hand is on your right breast, the fingers together and extended.

Third: Release your right hand and drop it to your side.

Final Position: The musket should not have moved from the position of SHOULDER, it should still be almost perpendicular and at the same height, only instead of being supported at the butt it is supported by the cock (if you have neglected to have your musket at half cock you are now in a lot of trouble). The left hand is lying on the right breast with the palm down and fingers extended.

Note: This position and SHOULDER are the only ways that sentries may carry their muskets. When you are marching and go to SUPPORT, the right hand is kept on the wrist for further support. As soon as you halt, release the right hand, when you move again, bring it up to the wrist. There is no command for this, the soldiers should perform it automatically.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Bring the right hand over and grab the musket at the wrist below the left arm.

Second: Bring your left hand under the butt.

Third: Drop your right hand to your side (again, no extra movement of the musket at this point).

Note: The command given in the manual to go back to SHOULDER from support is actually CARRY YOUR ARMS, either will do but reenactors seem to prefer SHOULDER.

¹³ *Manual of 1764*, an edition printed in Philadelphia in 1776, p.32.

SLOPE YOUR FIRELOCKS¹⁴--(one motion) Slide the musket butt up and to the left until the weight is balanced on the shoulder, the musket will be pointing to the right, the muzzle in line with the right shoulder. Be sure the muzzle is elevated enough to keep it out of the faces of the rear rank.

ERECT YOUR FIRELOCKS¹⁵--(two motions) First: Slide the musket back down into the position of SHOULDER, bringing the right hand over to keep it pressed into the left shoulder.

Second: Drop your right hand to your side.

Note: An alternative command would be SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS, but reenactors seem to enjoy the command given.

TRAIL YOUR FIRELOCKS¹⁶--(two motions) First: Bring your right hand across and grab the musket just below the swell.

Second: Bring the musket down to your right side, slanted so the butt is a few inches off the ground and the muzzle is about a foot and a half from your right shoulder. Be sure the muzzle is elevated enough to be away from the front rank man.

Note: Also called CARRY YOUR FIRELOCK IN YOUR RIGHT HAND (which is a real mouthful), this position is most frequently used when going under trees or over rough ground. If you are going over rough or slippery ground, it is best to remove bayonets before going to trail, or open the ranks more, so a stumble won't create an accident. I would like to lay another issue to rest once and for all. Some reenactors have decided to invent commands to give them an easy way out of situations and one of these is "short trail". This is used when units have to dress with other units, but the men are at order. Rather than bring them to shoulder, some commanders have given the command "short trail" meaning, as I take it, to just lift the musket as is off the ground a little so you can move. However, there is *no* such command, and I would suggest unit commanders either wait until the line is fully dressed before having the men EASE their arms or bring them to shoulder.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(two motions) First: Bring the musket over into the left shoulder, grabbing the butt with the left hand as you do so.

Second: Drop your right hand to your side.

FIX YOUR BAYONETS--(three motions) First: Bring the right hand across and grab the wrist without turning the musket.

Second: Release your left hand and grab the musket at the swell, the forearm lying along the stock.

Third: Release your right hand and briskly lower the musket with the left, making sure your arm is fully extended but the musket butt is not touching the

¹⁴ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.27

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

ground. The barrel should still be towards the front as well as your body. When you release your right hand, take hold of your bayonet, draw it and slide it on the muzzle. When it is fully on, use your right hand to press the musket into your left shoulder, the fingers together, extended and at the height of the upper (or longest) ramrod pipe.

Note: Although the first two motions should be done together (taking one second each), it is obvious that there is too much to do in the last motion to be so precise. Each soldier should just fix his bayonet as quickly as possible, the right hand pressing the musket into the shoulder being the signal that he is finished.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(three motions) First: Lift the musket into your left shoulder and grab the wrist with the right hand, the left forearm should be lying along the stock in exactly the same position as the second motion of **FIX YOUR BAYONETS** (You may notice the logic of all these hand positions as the final position of the right hand for **FIX YOUR BAYONETS** places it almost in the correct spot for seizing the wrist when the musket is brought up). Second: Release the left hand and grab the butt. Third: Drop the right hand to your side.

CHARGE YOUR BAYONETS--(two motions) First: Bring your right hand over and grab the wrist, turning the musket so the lock is to the front, as in the first motion of poise. Second: With your right hand, swing the musket out from the shoulder and over to your right side slapping it down on your left hand which should be about halfway between the swell and lock and waist high. As you do this, turn on your heels a quarter turn to the right, the left foot now pointing to the front and the right foot to the right. Final Position: Your body will be slightly turned to the right, the musket level on a line with your waist, along your right side, barrel up, with your right hand on the wrist and your left on the forestock. Note: This method of going to **CHARGE BAYONETS** is only used for demonstration purposes, in reenactments you are generally marching forward when you go to **CHARGE**, and therefore do not turn on your heels to the right (which is just a balance move to offset the weight of the musket sticking out in front of you). The more useful method of **CHARGE BAYONETS** is as follows.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(two motions) First: With your right hand, swing the musket over to your left shoulder, facing back to the front as you do, and grab the butt with your left hand. Second: Drop your right hand to your side.

PREPARE TO CHARGE--(one motion) Spring the musket up to the **RECOVER**. Note: This movement accomplishes a couple of things. It puts both hands in the proper position (right hand on the wrist, left hand on the forestock), and

puts the second rank where they will remain during the assault, unless the man in front of them becomes a casualty, because only the front rank actually drops their muskets during CHARGE BAYONETS, the second rank remains at RECOVER. By the way, this command is an excellent way to practice going to RECOVER from the SHOULDER.

CHARGE YOUR BAYONETS--(one motion) With both hands, swing the musket down to your right side level with your waist. It is not necessary to turn as you will more than likely (although not always) be marching forward when you do this. When a unit advancing at CHARGE BAYONETS is ordered to HALT, the men should bring their muskets to the RECOVER automatically (of course, in a two rank formation, the rear rank is already at the RECOVER).¹⁷

Note: It is usually appropriate to shout something when the bayonet is brought to the level, although it is not mentioned in the manual. Most English units seem to shout "huzza."

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--(two motions) First: Swing the musket into the left shoulder with the right hand, grabbing the butt with the left.
Second: Drop your right hand to your side.

PRESENT YOUR ARMS-- Bring your musket to the position of REST YOUR FIRELOCKS. Yes, PRESENT YOUR ARMS is the same as REST the only difference being that there is someone or something that needs to be saluted, and you have your bayonet fixed.¹⁸

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

¹⁷ This information is contained in the section "A Charge and Volley by Battalion" in the *Manual of 1764*.

¹⁸ Over the years many reenactors have had the impression that when the bayonet is fixed, all orders should end with the word ARMS instead of FIRELOCK because PRESENT YOUR ARMS is the same as REST YOUR FIRELOCK, the bayonet apparently being the reason for the difference. I would like to put an end to this misconception by again quoting Pickering. "There is ... another word of command for the action of RESTING the firelock, to wit, PRESENT YOUR ARMS: But the reason and origin of the phrase I take to be this. Whenever the musketeers were exercised alone, they always came to the position of REST YOUR MUSKETS! But as the musketeers and pikemen were frequently exercised together, it became necessary to use some word which should apply to both; and ARMS was chosen for that purpose ... that this is the true account of the matter, is evident from the Exercise of Foot ordered by King William III in which is this direction -- `When ARMS is mentioned, it signifies both musketeers and pikemen.'" Pickering felt that the existence of two commands for one motion was a bad practice, "puzzling the soldier and burdening his memory with different commands to compass the same end." The use of the word ARMS with PRESENT instead of FIRELOCK, although the same motion, is a tradition focusing on that command alone and has nothing to do with any others.

UNFIX YOUR BAYONETS--(three motions) First: As in FIX, grab the wrist with the right hand.

Second: Grab the swell with your left hand.

Third: Lower the musket just as you did in FIX YOUR BAYONETS, only this time remove your bayonet with your right hand, slip it in the scabbard, and then press the musket into the left shoulder with the fingers extended and together.

Note: In the *Manual of 1764* printed in New York in 1775, this command is called RETURN YOUR BAYONETS (it is in the section "A Charge and Volley by Battalion"), Pickering as well uses the word RETURN instead of UNFIX. The version presented here was used in the edition of the 1764 manual printed in 1776, and it gives both RETURN and UNFIX. UNFIX is the form universally used by reenactors, so much so that I would be tilting at windmills if I were to attempt to change it.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS-- This is the same as when you fixed bayonets.

[Note: The following sequence illustrates a typical safety inspection of the muskets. If there is more than one rank present, they should be in open order.]

POISE YOUR FIRELOCKS-- The inspecting officer can now walk down the ranks and the musket locks will be to the front and eye level. He will check for the presence of flash guards, frizzen covers, and pull on the trigger to make sure the musket will not fire on half-cock.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

SEARCH YOUR ARMS¹⁹--(three motions) First: As in FIX YOUR BAYONETS, grab the wrist without turning the musket.

Second: As in FIX YOUR BAYONETS, grab the swell with the left hand.

Third: Again, as in FIX, lower the musket straight down with the left hand, draw the ramrod with the right, turn it and insert it in the barrel, holding on to the ramrod about three inches from the threaded end. At this point the inspecting officer will walk down the ranks. As he gets opposite to you, throw the ramrod down the barrel with a strong flick of the wrist. Hopefully, there will be a sharp ring which will show that your barrel is free from obstruction. As the officer moves on, remove your rammer and insert it in the ramrod pipes all except the last four inches or so, and place the outside edge of your hand on the rammer with fingers extended (just as you finished RAM DOWN CARTRIDGE).

Note: Ideally, you throw the rammer down the barrel hard enough to make it bounce out so you can easily grab and remove it.

RETURN YOUR RAMMERS-- This is the same as the loading sequence, only you are

¹⁹ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.77 (note).

already faced to the front.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

[Note: That is all there is to the musket exercise, all there is left to do is be dismissed.]

TAKE CARE TO DISPERSE, MARCH²⁰-- The men do a RIGHT ABOUT FACE and walk off.

Note: Over the years, reenactment groups have devised very elaborate methods of dismissing because the original manuals were strangely silent about this most important maneuver. The most elaborate probably being the one we ourselves employed for awhile, namely, going to REST, POISE, RIGHT ABOUT FACE, REST, SHOULDER, step off three paces. This was very pretty but very complicated and not backed up with a shred of evidence, although some would argue that the men having just PRESENTED to the colors as they are marched off, the men could do a formal ABOUT FACE which involves the above mentioned commands. In presenting this DISPERSE command Simes was offering a method of drilling the men to reorganize in a hurry if they were disrupted on the battlefield. Pickering described the same drill in his manual, where he wrote "Send the colors and color reserve, with some drummers and fifers, and order them to halt at a certain place at some distance, fronting the same way they were at first. Then order the men to go to the right about and disperse [then have the drums beat to arms to draw them together again]".²¹

The method of assembling a battalion usually involved individual companies being formed at the head of their streets, marched to the place of assembly, and then the colors were "sent for" in an elaborate ceremony. When the battalion finished its business, there was an equally elaborate ceremony called LODGING THE COLORS, in which the colors were escorted back to their place of storage by the grenadier company while the battalion PRESENTED their arms. Simes describes this ceremony, saying that after the grenadier company finished, they could be marched back to the battalion unless they were to be dismissed where they were. He gives no information on what the rest of the battalion was doing at that moment.²² Nevertheless, I feel that it is safe to speculate that the battalion was not dismissed from the position of PRESENT on the parade ground (which would have, in effect, created a mob of men wandering around with fixed bayonets on their muskets), but that they were ordered to UNFIX their bayonets, then the individual companies were marched back to the heads of their streets and dismissed in the simplest way possible, either with the above command or the equally effective LODGE YOUR ARMS, which instructed them to put their

²⁰ Simes, *Guide for Young Officers*, p.187. "The officers, with the colours, march six paces forward. A long roll by the orderly drummers, disperses the regiment."

²¹ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.158.

²² Simes, *Guide For Young Officers*, vol I, p.225.

muskets in the company bell of arms.

RESPECT AND COMPLIMENTS PAID TO RANK

"As in common life we shew some token of respect to our fellow men, especially to our superiors, as by pulling off the hat, a motion with the right hand, & c., so it has been the practice among military men to compliment Their superiors by some motions with their arms" -- Pickering

"These marks of respect, which are so becoming, from Non-commissioned officers, drummers and soldiers, to their Officers, should be taught, with as much attention, as any other part of their duty, and must be one of the first things, in which a Recruit should be well instructed, on his joining the Regiment, as being the principal step, toward his acquiring a Soldier-like air, and laying aside the carriage of a clown" -- Cuthbertson

Although Cuthbertson recommended that the salutes to officers be one of the first things learned by a soldier, I decided to insert this instruction at this point in the manual for two reasons. First, it did not make any sense to give the salutes under arms until the descriptions of the positions themselves had been given, and secondly, about the only time recreated units assemble without arms is for marching drill (and most units still lug their muskets around for that as well), and so this is the best opportunity to practice these salutes. The use of the proper salutes is something that is neglected too often by recreated units, but without it the overall impression is spoiled.

SALUTING WITHOUT ARMS²³

A battalion company soldier ("hatmen") wearing a bicorne should, when approaching an officer or when the officer is approaching him, take off his hat with his left hand and drop that arm to his side, the crown of the hat toward the thigh. The soldier should look directly at the officer as they pass, and the officer should acknowledge the compliment by touching his hat.

A soldier in a flank company, wearing a cap or helmet, should bring the back of the hand *farthest* from the officer to the front of the hat and hold it there until the officer passes.

Non-commissioned officers should be saluted by bringing the back of the left hand to the hat (bicorne or cap) when the soldier approaches and when he leaves the presence of the NCO. This motion is quick and is not sustained as it is for officers.

SALUTES WHILE UNDER ARMS

²³ This section, and the previous quote, were taken from Bennett Cuthbertson, chapter XXII. It is contained in Vincent J-R Kehoe, *A Military Guide: The British Infantry of 1775* (1974), part 2, pp.7-9. Kehoe does not specify the work or volume of Cuthbertson this comes from.

Soldiers and NCOs should ADVANCE their firelocks and fuseses (or halberds) when they approach an officer, or he approaches them.

NCOs should be acknowledged by lowering the musket across the chest, the right hand on the wrist, the left hand between the trigger guard and lower thimble, the barrel slightly elevated, pointing to the left and the lock under the right breast.

Privates should be discouraged from talking to officers, but if spoken to, they should RECOVER their firelocks until they are dismissed. NCOs should RECOVER their arms as well when talking to officers.

WHEN POSTED ON GUARD DUTY

The guard should REST their firelocks to those above the rank of Major, and they should be at SHOULDER for all others. The exception to this is when a soldier is posted on a particular officer, then he goes to REST only to him and those of superior rank.

When an officer or NCO speaks to a soldier while on guard duty, the soldier is to remain at SHOULDER.

HIGHLANDERS

Highland soldiers came from a society that had a different social structure than its English counterpart, and so a slightly different interpretation of the relation between the ranks is possible. In Highland society, men were used to talking directly to their chiefs and superiors, even to argue with them, but the bonnet was still removed as a sign of respect. Therefore, Highlanders should be allowed to address their officers more freely, *if* that particular person is portraying the sort of Highland officer who encouraged the old clan-style relationship, and when speaking the soldier should remove his bonnet as a sign of respect. It should be understood that not all Highland officers encouraged this sort of thing, and under no circumstances should this be done to non-Highland officers. When not actually speaking with officers, Highlanders should salute as the flank companies, the Highland bonnet being treated as the light infantry or grenadier helmet.²⁴

²⁴ This information on Highlanders is culled from many sources, the principal source being John Prebble's *Mutiny* (London, 1975). However, this system of acknowledgement by Highlanders, even treating the Highland bonnet as a helmet, is pure speculation. It is known that previous to the American Revolution, when Highlanders wore the traditional flat bonnet, they removed it when saluting their officers (Regimental Orders for the 78th Regiment, *Nairne Papers*, vol. 4), but the style of bonnet had changed by the 1770's into a stiffened, formal affair which was the forerunner of the 19th century feathered bonnet, and this hat is not as easy to remove. For this reason, Highland reenactors have used the hand salute of the flank companies, basing it on nothing but convenience.

MARCHING MANEUVERS

A few words of explanation are required before I begin this section of the manual. The information included under marching maneuvers concerns those movements which involve a single company, particularly a recreated company which can run from six to twenty-five including all ranks. The manuals of the eighteenth century (1764, Bland, Pickering, Simes, etc.) are filled with numerous and very often complicated marching maneuvers involving battalion size formations, but rarely do they discuss what is happening to the individual companies while the battalion is moving around the field. Reenactors have long made the mistake of trying to perform the many different maneuvers in these manuals as if their ten-man unit was a 500 man battalion. They also often make the mistake of trying to learn every marching maneuver in every manual believing that they will be prepared for anything and will also be more authentic to boot. The result is that rarely do two different units know the same maneuvers, or if they do, perform them in very different ways.

However, when the battalion formations described in the old manuals are examined closely, it is quite evident that the individual companies that made up the battalion performed relatively few and usually quite simple maneuvers to accomplish the grand designs ordered for the whole. Experience has shown that modern recreated units usually perform only three or four different types of maneuvers during the course of a battle, and these few maneuvers are the very ones used on a company level in the eighteenth century.

Therefore, this manual will concentrate on the company. The posting of officers, NCOs and privates described herein will be for a single company (and will thus ignore majors, lieutenant-colonels, colonels, generals, and kings), and the marching maneuvers described will be those basic maneuvers every company should know, and know well (the oblique march, the wheel, the turn, and marching by files). It is not my intention to discourage the use of the battalion maneuvers by reenactors, only the use of those grand maneuvers by small, individual units. It is only necessary for company commanders and those portraying the greater roles of brigade commanders to know those grand maneuvers, they are accomplished by giving the privates the proper marching command at the proper moment. It is much better to concentrate on the basics on the company level rather than confuse the men with a lot of commands they need not know. As the old adage goes, it is better to know a few things well, than a lot of things half-assed.

I think a few definitions and explanations of terms would be in order before you plunge in, just so we all have our bearings and are discussing the same things. A British regiment in the American Revolution had ten companies (per battalion for those larger regiments like the 60th or 71st) of which one was a grenadier company, one a light infantry company and the rest battalion companies. The grenadier and light infantry companies were posted on the flanks (before the advent of the light companies regiments had nine companies and the grenadier company was usually divided and the resulting platoons posted on the flanks), while the battalion companies formed the main tactical unit, or the "battalion." For

tactical purposes British officers recognized five different units, namely, the "battalion" (eight companies), the "wing" (four companies), the "grand division" (two companies), the "sub-division" (one company), and the "platoon" (half-company). Thus, a British battalion had two wings, four grand divisions, eight sub-divisions and sixteen platoons. Where did the grenadier and light infantry companies fit into all this? Well, they didn't. The flank companies only served to screw up the arithmetic, which is why they were amalgamated into their own battalions where the math worked out okay.

I will be mainly referring to companies and platoons in the following section, but there will be reference to the others, not to mention the fact that any understanding of eighteenth century tactics requires a thorough knowledge of these terms. Officers will also need to keep these in mind when studying the battalion level maneuvers not provided here.

The terms "rank" and "file" should also be fully understood. By "rank" I mean "a number of men side by side in a straight line" and by "file" I mean "a number of men in a line behind one another or from front to rear."²⁵ The British army used a three rank formation until the late 1760s and 70s when they began switching to two ranks (not without some opposition, a few British officers apparently blaming the loss of the war on the two rank, open file methods used). Recreated units almost universally use two ranks, with smaller units (less than 8 men) employing a single rank. Therefore, when I use the term "file", the number of men involved will depend on the number of ranks (in a single rank a file contains one man, with two ranks the file has two men, etc.). The distance between the files was also a controversial subject at the time as the British army had been experimenting with a more open system just before the war. By open I mean six inches instead of the more common four.²⁶ Even the *Manual of 1764* was confused, calling for files four inches apart on page 13 and six inches apart on page 35! Recreated companies seem to prefer the closer formation, the control and dress being easier to maintain, especially during wheels, and I would certainly recommend the closer, four-inch distance be retained.

A unit drawn up in ranks (for battle, drill, assembly, etc.) is considered to be in a "company front" formation (or "battalion front" depending on the number of men and units present). The other formation used was the "column". These terms can become confusing in certain situations, especially when involving small recreated units, because the British army recognized two kinds of columns, by rank (i.e. a column of grand divisions, companies or platoons) and by file.²⁷ Although most recreated companies form a column by files,

²⁵ These quotes are from Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.38.

²⁶ "The files, moreover, according to the direction in the exercises of the army, are to be six inches asunder. This method of drawing up the men, with open files, is, I believe, a novelty of the present age, introduced since the conclusion of the last war; and its propriety or usefulness has not been proved in actual service. Indeed, 'tis so manifestly wrong, that I suppose it was ordered merely for the time of peace, to make the manual show better, and to lengthen the front of the reduced regiments, that they might appear to have more men than they really contain." -- Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.13.

²⁷ *Manual of 1776* (Philadelphia, 1776), p.34.

occasionally they form a column by platoons or companies. Then the question becomes, when is an eight-man company (in two ranks) in column by platoons, company or in company front formation? This can be a problem when performing wheels or trying to understand the more complicated battalion size maneuvers. The best way to differentiate between these terms is to think about what purpose the formation is trying to accomplish. If the unit is drawn up for assembly, drill, or battle (firings) then it is in "company front", if it is trying to march from one point to another with other units ahead and behind then it is in column. If the overall commander called for a column of platoons, and your company is the size of other companies' platoons, then you should think of yourself as a platoon in that column.

A Note on Open Files

As I note in the text, the 1764 manual marks the adoption of the Prussian system of close order formations, as opposed to the open files of the first half of the century. Military historians have noted the influence Frederick the Great had on his British allies in the Seven Years War. References and use of doubling and undoubling files, and the opening of ranks to load disappear. The new method called for men to stand at four to six inches (the '64 mentions both). However, after the war British officers complained about the use of open files, some even suggesting that the war was lost due to its use! I make mention of the controversy, and followed a comment by Thomas Pickering in which he says the six inches space was the open file system, and he thought it absurd and thought that the British used it to make their undersized regiments look bigger (the exact quote is contained in a footnote). However, back in the early 1990's, Charles T. Kamps, Jr. did some excellent research and discovered solid information that the open files the British officers complained of were actually *18 inches or more*. Indeed, it seems that despite the 1764 manual, the British either returned to or retained the older open file system of Bland and other earlier systems. This occurred when Howe took command. Kamps discovered explanations that indicated that the British adopted a looser formation to increase firing efficiency and because the Americans had no cavalry to speak of, and therefore they didn't need to worry about compacting into squares. The emphasis was on firepower and maneuverability. The very close order, Prussian look adopted by most British reenactors is not historically correct for many of their actions (an exception would be the early engagements of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill).

However, it is also evident from certain records that different commanders adopted formations to fit situations. John Graves Simcoe recorded in his journal the orders of Major-General William Phillips in Virginia in 1781 in Virginia. "It is the Major General's wish, that the troops under his command may practice forming from two to three and to four deep; and that they should be accustomed to charge in all those orders. In the latter orders, of the three and four deep, the files will, in course, be closer, so as to render the charge of the greatest force. The Major General also recommends the practice of dividing the battalions, by wings, or otherwise, so that one line may support the other when an attack is supposed; and, when a retreat is supposed, that the first line may retreat through the intervals of the second, the second doubling up its divisions for the purpose, and forming up again in order to check the enemy who may be supposed to have pressed the first line. The Major General would approve also of one division of a battalion attacking in the common open order of two deep,

to be supported by the other compact division as a second line, in a charging order of three or four deep. The gaining the flanks also of a supposed enemy, by the quick movements of a division in common open order, while the compact division advances to a charge; and other such evolutions, as may lead the regiments to a custom of depending on and mutually supporting each other; so that should one part be pressed or broken, it may be accustomed to form again without confusion, under the protection of a second line, or any regular formed division.”⁷

Phillips later gave more specific instructions, ordering that “When the troops form it is to be done in the following manner: The infantry and huzzars of the Queen’s Rangers, with a detachment of Yagers and Althause’s rifle company, form the advanced guard, under Lt. Col. Simcoe. The first line to be composed of the 80th and 76th regiments, who will form three deep, and in compact order. The grenadiers and light infantry of the 80th, with the American Legion, to form the reserve under Major Gordon. The cavalry of the Queen’s Rangers, to form with the reserve, til such time as they may be called upon the wing, of the first or second line. As the present movements will be made in a difficult country, it becomes necessary that officers leading columns and commanding corps, should use and exert the intelligence of their own minds, joined to their knowledge of the service, in time of attack, when they cannot immediately receive the orders of the Brigadier General, or Major General. Should the particular difficulty of the country, occasion the first line to take up new ground towards the rear, it may not be improper, perhaps, to do so by becoming a second line in the rear of the 76th and 80th, who will form openings, if necessary, for the purpose.”⁸

Two things should be noted about the above quotes. First, it is obvious that Phillips wanted to use his light troops, the Queen’s Rangers and light infantry, in two rank open order, while his regulars were to be in close order at three, even four ranks deep. Second, Phillips expected that his units could perform passage of lines, but not through open files, rather, by divisions “doubling up,” in other words, grand divisions (two companies) marching behind each other to create division gaps. The retreating battalions would retreat in grand divisions through these gaps.

For most of the war the British line actually adopted a fairly loose, open (18 to 20 inches between files) two rank system, but not exclusively. It is recommended that recreated British units adopt the flexibility of their 18th century counterparts and learn maneuvers in both closed and open files. The following assumes closed files as instructed in the *Manual of 1764*.

POSTING OF ALL RANKS AT ASSEMBLY²⁸

In the eighteenth century when a company assembled, the men were sized by the

⁷ John Graves Simcoe, *A History of the Operations of a Partisan Corps, called the Queen’s Rangers*, New York, 1844 (Facsimile copy, Arno Press, New York, 1968), 187-88.

⁸ Simcoe, *The Queen’s Rangers*, 194-95.

²⁸ The following section is either taken directly or adapted from the *Manual of 1764*, pp.13,15,16-17,19.

sergeants so that the tallest men were in the front rank, the shortest in the center rank etc., and they were also sized in the separate ranks using certain formulas to give the appearance of uniformity. However, this method is unnecessary in recreated units where friendship and personality clashes come into play. It is much better to assign a new man a place between two veterans (thus always keeping senior men on the flanks), and keep rank and file assignments semi-permanent so everyone knows who is on either side of him at all times and can thus fall in quickly. The actual positions of officers, NCOs and private men are as follows:

Captain: The captain is posted four paces in front of the company and to the right

Lieutenant: The lieutenant is posted four paces in front of the company and to the left.

Ensign: Although this position is rare in recreated units, ensigns were posted four paces in front and in the center. This will be the only reference to ensigns as they normally were posted with the colors for most formations which is a battalion rather than company position.

Sergeant: Sergeants were posted four paces to the rear of the company. Most recreated units have only one sergeant and he should be in the center, those with more than one sergeant should have them evenly distributed in the rear.

Corporals: A unit's growth is usually accompanied by an increase in the number of corporals (extremely useful individuals who make a sergeant's life bearable) and these men should be posted where they will be used to full advantage. Pickering suggested that a corporal be posted on each flank in each rank, which is an excellent idea except only the largest recreated companies (20+ at least) can realistically support such an establishment. The following formula seems to work reasonably well: The 1st corporal a unit has should be posted on the extreme right file in the front rank. In this position the men can get used to falling in on his position and looking to him when they dress. He also anchors that corner for wheels; The 2nd corporal should be posted in the second rank on the extreme left file. While some may think he should be posted in the front rank, experience has shown that the second rank benefits from having a corporal's authority and knowledge; 3rd corporal in the front rank, extreme left file; 4th corporal in the rear rank, extreme right file.

Privates: While the posting of privates has already been discussed and should be fairly obvious, it is important for units to post only experienced and reliable privates on the extreme flanks in the front rank (if the unit does not have corporals to cover this) because these positions are the pivots for almost all wheels and require someone who knows what he is doing.

Drummer: Usually drummers will be massed together at assembly, in the eighteenth century they were divided and placed on each flank of the battalion. If a company's drummers are with them at assembly they should be posted on the right of the company, next to and in line with the front rank.

Due to space limitations, it is usually the practice for recreated companies to form with closed ranks, however, the ranks need to be opened for inspections (safety or otherwise). This is accomplished by the following method:

REAR RANK TAKE YOUR DISTANCE, MARCH-- After the first part of the command, REAR RANK TAKE YOUR DISTANCE, is given, the rear rank and the sergeant do a right about face (Until the men are used to facing automatically, the sergeant should give the command REAR RANK RIGHT ABOUT FACE). At the command of execution, MARCH, the rear rank and the sergeant march five paces to the rear.

TO THE FRONT, FACE-- The rear rank and sergeant do a RIGHT ABOUT FACE which should bring them facing to the front once again.

[Note: After the inspection is complete, the ranks are closed again in the following manner.]

REAR RANK CLOSE TO THE FRONT, MARCH-- Rear rank and sergeant march five paces to the front.

Note: It is assumed that the men are in a position to do this, i.e. that they have been brought to the SHOULDER. In the 1764 manual this command is also followed by the command TO THE FRONT, FACE, but this refers only to the officers who are facing and moving around as well, but as the opening of ranks in reenacting is generally only performed for safety inspections, the officers are usually still in position (or resume them automatically) and so this facing order is not necessary.

POSTING OF ALL RANKS FOR THE MANUAL OF ARMS

For purposes of battalion drill, the officers marched through the intervals of the companies while the sergeants marched around the flanks of the battalion and took their posts in the front. In recreated units drill is normally carried out by the individual companies on their own (the full formal review being rarely done). In that case it is only necessary for the company officers to march to the rear of their companies nine paces and the sergeant to march to the front (by the right flank) and take up position five paces to the front and facing the company. The drummer should also advance to the front and position himself just behind and to the right of the sergeant.

POSTING OF ALL RANKS ON THE MARCH

In the eighteenth century, most marching was done by sub-divisions, grand divisions or by files. In modern reenacting the most common method of marching from the assembly point to the battlefield is by files by the flank (the company ordered to face to the right or left, thus forming a column of twos, and then marched to the front). The positions presented

below are adapted from the original manuals.

MARCHING IN RANKS

The 1764 manual describes a battalion marching in grand divisions with the captains in front of one division, the lieutenants in front of another, the ensigns in front of another, etc. But in modern reenacting individual units usually remain autonomous, so the best way to emulate the original is for the company officers to march in front of their own companies (about four paces), the sergeant to post himself on the right flank of the front rank (if there are more sergeants they will fall in on the other flanks), and the drummer in the rear of the company (centered).

MARCHING BY FILES

When the order to face to the right (or left) is given, the officers should place themselves to the front of their companies. The sergeant will step forward three paces and face to the right (or left), always keeping on the side which is the rear rank, The drummer will be posted in the rear if he is with the company, however it is the normal practice to mass the drums for the march to and from the battlefield.

POSTING OF ALL RANKS FOR FIRINGS AND BATTLE

When the battalion was going to fire, whether for show or battle, the colors were positioned in the center with the battalion commander (colonel or lieutenant-colonel) just in front, dressed with or slightly in advance of the front rank. Two orderly drummers were posted with him (lest you think they were lonely, the four sergeants around the ensigns carrying the colors, the lieutenant-colonel and the reserve [the extra men from each company] were there as well). Each company was divided into two platoons (the British feeling that the most effective fire was continuous platoon fire) and the four senior captains commanded grand divisions (two companies or four platoons). The captain was posted in the front rank, those to the right of the colors (and colonel) on the right flank of their grand division and those to the left of the colors on the left flank of their grand divisions. This enabled them to see the colonel and watch over their divisions at the same time. The next senior officers was posted in the front rank between the companies in each grand division, and the junior subalterns were posted in the rear and commanded the individual platoon (or half-company) to their front. The sergeants were posted in the rear rank behind the captains and lieutenants ("to compleat the Files of Officers"). Those drummers not assigned as orderly drummers were divided and posted behind each grand division.

Having described how it was originally done, it is now time to adapt this to recreated units, who vary greatly in type and number, especially in types of officers. The order of battle is so different from reenactment to reenactment depending on unit attendance that it is impossible to cover all situations, but a few guidelines can be offered. Basically, the company commander (be he corporal, sergeant, lieutenant or captain) should be posted in the front rank

on the flank away from the colors (if the company is to the right of the colors, then the commander is on the right flank, if to the left of the colors then on the left flank). If the company commander is an officer and the company has a sergeant, then the sergeant should place himself in the rear rank behind the officer. If the company has another officer or sergeant, he should be posted in the rear of the company. If the drummer is not needed elsewhere, he too should be posted behind the company.

Obviously, this describes an ideal situation, but as I have indicated, the ideal is often not achieved. Many times there are no colors to dress on, either the company is putting on a solo show or operating away from the main battle line. In this case it is most common for the commanding officer to be posted on the right flank (front rank). Sometimes two companies are amalgamated and placed under the command of a single officer. These units act as two platoons of a company, fighting together as a single unit most of the time but occasionally breaking apart for tactical effect. In this case, the overall commander should assume his post in the front rank, but an officer or sergeant from each individual unit should be posted behind their respective "platoons" to be able to control them better, even if this means the commanding officer's file is not "completed".

COMPANY MANEUVERS

I would recommend that recreated units practice these marching maneuvers without their muskets, which was how it was done in the eighteenth century, because the men will learn them much faster if they can concentrate on marching, direction and dress instead of how they are carrying their muskets or how tired their arms are. If time allows, the company should be drilled in the manual of arms and firings in the morning, marching maneuvers without arms in the early afternoon, and a combination of both in a more formal parade drill at the end of the day.

MARCHING TO THE FRONT

The British army of the eighteenth century had three speeds for marching, the regular step which was used for drill and reviews, the quick step for just about everything else, and the charging step which was rarely used and only when battle situations absolutely demanded it. The speed involved with each of these steps depends a great deal on which manual you read, but for modern reenactment groups the regular, or slow, step is 60 steps per minute (this step is almost never used by recreated units as it takes considerable practice to do it well and there are few opportunities to employ it), the quick step is 120 steps per minute and the charging speed is usually a signal for running, or the more modern double-quick march (In the eighteenth century the charging speed was actually a brisk walk at 140 steps per minute.).

The commands for these different marches also varied in the eighteenth century, but usually the parade step was indicated by the command, MARCH, the quick step by, QUICK MARCH, and the charging step by, MARCH MARCH. Modern reenactors tend to use both MARCH and QUICK MARCH when they want the quick step because the parade step is never used. This is not a problem as long as everyone understands the situation. If the parade step is ever used the command should be, SLOW MARCH, a variation that apparently was used in the eighteenth century.²⁹

Recreated units tend to use the command, MARCH MARCH, as a signal for an all-out stampede, but it should be remembered that eighteenth century tactics demanded constant control and so even running was carried out in an orderly fashion. Units should use a jogging step so that the dress of the company is maintained at all times, as T.H. Cooper put it in his light infantry manual, a unit may be ordered to run "but in doing so, the utmost care must be taken that confusion [does] not ensue; for which the velocity must never exceed that at which the divisions can keep together and dressed", and Cooper was writing during the Napoleonic years, not during the definitely more formal eighteenth century! Most reenactors will find that a controlled and dressed charge at MARCH MARCH creates an impressive juggernaut rather than the confused rabble which this command now produces.³⁰

²⁹ John Williamson, *Elements of Military Arrangements, and the Discipline of War, adapted to the Practice of British Infantry*, pp.24-25, in Kehoe, Military Guide, part 5, p.10. See also Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, pp.49-51.

³⁰ T. H. Cooper, *A Practical Guide for the Light Infantry Officer* (1806, facsimile reprint london, 1970), p.43. Pickering had this comment to make concerning the bayonet

The commands for marching forward, then, are as follows:

TO THE FRONT, MARCH-- The company steps off to the front, the men beginning on the left foot.

TO THE FRONT, QUICK, MARCH-- In modern reenacting, this is the same as the above command and indicates the quicker step, although it is actually more authentic.

TO THE FRONT, SLOW, MARCH-- This indicates the slower, 60 steps per minute, parade march which is rarely used in reenactments. To bring the men back to the quick march, simply say **QUICK, MARCH**.

MARCH, MARCH-- In modern reenacting, this indicates the running or double-quick step and is usually only given when the company is already marching forward, thus the preparative **TO THE FRONT** is not needed. However, there is no reason why the men cannot be sent directly into the running step in emergency situations, the command then being, **TO THE FRONT, MARCH, MARCH**.

THE OBLIQUE MARCH

[Note: This should not be confused with the commands **RIGHT OBLIQUE** and **LEFT OBLIQUE** which are used in firing to alter the aim of the muskets. The purpose of the oblique march is move a body of men to one side or another while still advancing to the front, in other words to march at a forty-five degree angle to the right or left. This maneuver is performed to accomplish a change of formation, adjust the company's position in the line, or to avoid an obstacle in the field.]

INCLINE TO THE RIGHT, MARCH³¹-- This order assumes that the soldiers are at **HALT** and will march off obliquely to the right. The left foot is brought over in a line with the big toe on the right foot, the left foot pointing directly to the front. Care should be taken that the left foot is not placed too far to the right which will only serve to twist the hips and body in that direction. The right foot is brought to the right of the left but pointing in the direction you are traveling. The left is now placed in front of the right toe and pointed to the front and so on until the commanding officer orders differently. Care should

charge, "...the officer and men in the front rank charge their bayonets, and continue advancing briskly; *taking great care not to run, nor break* [emphasis mine], either by closing too much or opening their files, but preserving their front even, and in exact order." -- *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.123.

³¹ While several manuals mention the oblique march, few give actual commands for it. The following commands and descriptions are from Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.64.

be taken that the body remains square to the front as there is a tendency for units to slowly turn so the company front faces the direction they are obliquing to. It was the custom to turn the head opposite to the direction of the oblique, in this case look toward the left flank, in order to keep dress and cut down on this tendency to turn the body to the right (the head turned to the left counteracts the turning of the hips to the right). While this can be very effective, I must warn you that it can be quite disconcerting to be looking in the opposite direction from where your walking.

HALT, DRESS--

INCLINE TO THE LEFT, MARCH-- This is just the opposite to the above. Starting from the halt, the left foot is placed slightly forward and to the left, the toe pointing in the direction of travel (remember, you always begin with the left foot when marching from the halt). The right foot is next placed ahead of the left in a line with the left toe and pointing directly to the front. Again, care must taken that the company remains square to the front and turning the head to the right can help.

HALT, DRESS, TO THE FRONT, MARCH-- Although I have shown how to do the oblique march from the halt, there is no reason why the company cannot go into the oblique march while already moving (in fact, this is the most common method). Simply, the following command is given when the officer wishes the company to move to the right:

INCLINE TO THE RIGHT-- at which the men begin the oblique step to the right. The word march is not used because the men are already marching. To return to a forward direction the command would be:

FRONT-- It is this order which will indicate how well the men have performed the oblique march because if they have not kept square to the front during the oblique, they will now be heading off in a slightly different direction then before they performed the oblique.

INCLINE TO THE LEFT--

FRONT--

HALT, DRESS--

WHEELING

There is perhaps no other maneuver that epitomizes eighteenth century military exercises than the wheel. The wheel was used to change the direction of formed units without bringing them into disorder. It was used by itself and incorporated in grander maneuvers. The

manuals of the day went into great length (sometimes several pages) to describe the proper method of wheeling, and certainly, the soldiers of the day spent many hours on the drill field learning to wheel. I, however, promise to be succinct.

Before beginning, I would like to make a few observations and present some basic wheeling principles which should make things a little clearer. The key to a proper wheel is dress, dress and order determines whether at the completion of the wheel you have a fighting unit or a mob. Five things are involved in preserving dress when wheeling in a company front or rank: **1.** The man on the wheeling flank (the individual doing the most walking as opposed to the man on the pivot flank who basically turns in place) should maintain a good, and consistent pace that the rest can regulate themselves to. If it is too slow the rank will bow out in the front, if it is too fast the rank will bow to the rear (although a *slight* bow to the rear allows the flanks to see each other), and if it is inconsistent the rank will become wavy and even disorganized; **2.** Every man's head, except the wheeling flank, should be turned opposite to the direction of the wheel (in other words, on a right wheel look left, on a left wheel look right), and each man should be able to see the chest of the third man down the rank. The man on the wheeling flank looks inward and should be observing the wheel and possibly looking for a signal from the pivot flank that the wheel is completed; **3.** Contact between the files should be established and maintained throughout the wheel, usually this simply means raising the elbow to touch the man next to you. This is only necessary on the side corresponding to the wheel, in other words, on a right wheel touch the man to your right (you will be looking at the man to your left so you know where he is) and during a left wheel touch the man to your left. Many the times I have seen a wheeling rank slowly break into fragments because there is no contact to keep them together; **4.** When a company formed in two ranks performs a wheel, the rear rank men must cover their files at all times which means they actually do an oblique step as they wheel around, watching that they both keep their dress in their rank and stay behind the man to their immediate front; **5.** When a unit formed in ranks completes a wheel it should halt and dress before moving on. Few things are so consistent in the old manuals then halting and dressing after a wheel, and few things are so constantly ignored by reenactors. Eighteenth century armies operated on one principle, that of discipline and order. Movements were accomplished as quickly as they could while dress and order were maintained, and if it came to a choice between speed and order, speed was sacrificed. But reenactors tend to be in a hurry (perhaps an outgrowth of our society) and so units are never halted at the completion of a wheel, instead they are given the old standby command FRONT and blissfully marched off without a pause. I believe this has come about because the size of reenactment companies is smaller then their eighteenth century counterparts and so it seems silly to dress a unit that could not possibly get that much out of order, plus the fact that units in the smaller column formation were not required to halt and dress after a wheel and so this seemed tailor-made to speed up the proceedings. But if the almighty god "Authenticity" is trying to be evoked at reenactments wouldn't it be better to halt and dress briefly after a wheel by ranks?³²

COMPANY, TO THE RIGHT WHEEL, MARCH³³ -- When the preparative TO THE

³² *His Majesty's Regulations of 1792*, part XX, in Kehoe, *Military Guide*, part5, pp.16-17.

³³ The following wheeling commands are contained in the *Manual of 1764*, p.23.

RIGHT WHEEL is given the men should turn their heads to the left (except the last file on the left, or the wheeling flank, who looks right), and touch the man to their right with the right elbow. At the command MARCH the rank will commence the wheel. The man in the extreme right file in the front rank is the pivot, he will step with the others, but the right foot will be lifted in place, the ball of the foot never changing position. The rest of the men keep in step but vary the length of step, small steps toward the pivot, large steps toward the wheeling flank. Each man should be able to see the chest of the third man down the line to his left and feel the man to his right. The rear rank men will be obliquing to keep in position behind the files to their front.

HALT, DRESS-- The wheel covers one quarter of a circle or 90° (as opposed to the "about wheel" which covers one half of a circle or 180°) and the completion of the wheel is done in one of two ways, a signal from the pivot man to the wheeling flank with the hand (thus the importance of having corporals or very reliable privates on the flanks), or an order from an officer or sergeant to halt, the latter being the most common in reenactment groups. The halt at the end of the wheel is only very slight, and the command to dress is, or should be, superfluous. The men should be taught to dress automatically and *immediately* at the halt.

COMPANY, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT WHEEL, MARCH-- This is the same as above only the company will wheel 180°.

HALT-- The men quickly dress the ranks.

COMPANY, TO THE LEFT WHEEL, MARCH-- This is just the reverse of the right wheel, the men look to the right on the preparative TO THE LEFT WHEEL and touch the man to their left with the left elbow. The pivot is now the man on the extreme left flank in the front rank and he does not allow the ball of his left foot to change position, just lifts it up and down in place.

HALT--

COMPANY, TO THE LEFT-ABOUT WHEEL, MARCH-- A 180° turn to the left.

HALT--

[Note: The above commands describe the wheel starting from the halt, but it is also possible to perform the wheel while moving, in fact, this is far more common as columns change direction by wheeling on the march, and units in company front change direction in battle while moving. If the column is by companies or grand divisions then the unit should be halted and dressed before marching on (if done correctly, the units will have maintained their correct spacing which will allow time for this), but if the column is by files or even platoons, then it is not necessary, or advisable, to halt when completing the wheel (the

spacing in this formation will not allow it). If in company front in battle the company should still be halted and dressed, disorder on the battlefield being an invitation for disaster. When wheeling on the march the command MARCH is dropped and the word WHEEL becomes the command of execution.]

COMPANY, TO THE FRONT, QUICK MARCH--

TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL-- The men should look left and touch elbows, etc. Everything is done as the wheel described above.

HALT-- The men dress immediately.

Note: This halt is also beneficial if the wheel is to be stopped before completing the 90° turn.

TO THE FRONT, QUICK MARCH--

COMPANY, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL-- Men look right, touch left.

HALT--

[Note: The following illustrates a company forming a column of platoons by wheeling and marching around a corner.]

BY PLATOONS, TO THE RIGHT WHEEL, MARCH-- In this case, the right file, front rank, of each platoon becomes a pivot for a wheel. When completed the company will have divided in half with each turned a quarter turn to the right and lined up behind each other.

HALT--

TO THE FRONT, QUICK MARCH--

TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL-- At this point, only the leading platoon wheels, head turning and elbow touching should be performed as usual. As the wheel is completed, the commander of the lead platoon says **FRONT** and the platoon heads off without pause, the men turning their heads to the front. When the second platoon reaches the same ground, its commander says **TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL** and then **FRONT** as the wheel is completed.

Note: If a column of files wheels around a corner, the command FRONT is given only to the lead file, the others following automatically.

TURNING³⁴

³⁴ The best description of turning is given in Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, pp.44-46.

Buried in the explanations of commands in the 1764 manual is a maneuver which was used to form the oblong square, form a column and reform the battalion and yet this maneuver is rarely used by modern reenactors, that maneuver being **TO THE FRONT, TURN**. This command was used in forming a column of companies by facing the men to the right, except the company on the right flank who when commanded marched straight to the front. The other companies would march by the flank until they reached the ground formerly occupied by the right flank company at which point they would, in succession, be given the command **TO THE FRONT, TURN**. The soldiers in that particular company would then all turn at once and proceed in the new direction in company front, all without missing a beat. Obviously, this maneuver can have many applications and is very impressive when done correctly. For example, if a company is sent to flank the enemy line it could march by the flank until in position then immediately turn toward the enemy and charge bayonets without any hesitation or pause.

This maneuver should not be confused with a turning order sometimes employed by reenactors when trying to turn a single file of soldiers on the march, officers feeling awkward ordering a wheel when only one man will be involved. However, as writers of eighteenth century manuals never thought about units so small as many modern recreated companies and so never discussed how to maneuver them, we are left to extrapolate as best we can. But the command **TURN** did mean that the whole company turned as one, therefore it is wrong to use it to alter the direction of a column of one if that change is meant to be in succession and retaining the column formation. The proper command in that situation, no matter how awkward it may sound or look, is to order a **WHEEL**.

COMPANY, TO THE RIGHT FACE-- The company is now in a column of twos faced to the right.

TO THE FRONT, QUICK MARCH-- The company is now marching by the right flank.

TO THE LEFT, TURN-- At the command **TURN**, the men bring their right foot forward as usual, but place it ahead of the left foot pointing to the left. As they bring the right foot down, the men will pivot to the left on the ball of the left foot, and end that step with the body facing to the left and the feet side by side. They will then immediately move the left foot forward in the new direction. Ideally, the command **TURN** should be given just as the men bring down their left feet so they can pivot immediately, however, as this is not always possible, the men must delay the pivot until they step on the left foot. The company should immediately dress to the right as they advance because the officer usually keys on the front of the column to time the turn (although there is no reason why he cannot key on the rear of the column). Properly done, the company which was marching by the right flank in a column of twos instantly transforms into two ranks marching to the front, all without missing a step.

HALT--

TO THE LEFT, FACE--

TO THE FRONT, MARCH-- The company is now marching by the left flank in a column of twos.

TO THE RIGHT, TURN-- At the command TURN, the men bring their left foot forward as usual but place it ahead of the right foot pointing to the right. At the same time they turn their bodies to right, pivoting on the ball of the right foot. When they finish this step they will be facing to the right with both feet side by side, then immediately move the right foot forward in the new direction. Again, the command TURN should, if at all possible, be given on the right foot.

[Note: The Manual of 1764 and Simes use only TO THE FRONT, TURN for the above situations. This may sound confusing and hard to remember but it really is not. As you march by the flank one side of you will be close to the front and one side will be close to the rear, at the command TURN you simply pivot on that side which is close to the front. When marching by the left flank the company should dress to the left as soon as they complete the turn. Although, TO THE FRONT, TURN is completely authentic, recreated units may find giving the RIGHT or LEFT commands easier to master because it does indicate which foot to pivot on.]

TO THE RIGHT ABOUT, TURN-- allow a couple of steps to be taken after the preparative TO THE RIGHT ABOUT, to allow the men to become prepared, then the command TURN should be given just as their right feet touch the ground. This step is started just as TO THE RIGHT, TURN (see above), except instead of stepping off to the right with the right foot, that foot is pivoted further and the right heel is dropped so it is pointing to the middle of the left foot. The shoulders should be turned toward the rear. The left foot can now be advanced, the line of march being exactly to the rear.

Note: This maneuver should take three steps to accomplish after TURN is given, the left foot being brought down on the first beat, the right heel dropped on the second and the left advanced to the rear on the third, so the company should not have to alter its marching speed at all. But God help the company that is out of step when they attempt this!

MARCHING BY FILES

The time comes to all recreated companies when they will be marching along in a company front formation and will come up against a narrow opening which will force them to change formation in order to fit through. This narrow place can range from the authentic, such as a ford, bridge or fence to the completely unauthentic, like two cars parked close together. One solution is to follow Abraham Lincoln's lead and dismiss the company, instructing them first that they are to fall in again on the other side of the obstacle. But a more serious alternative is to form a column of twos by marching by files. In the following instructions I have chosen to describe advancing and retreating by files only from the right,

because as I have said, it is better to know a few things well than a lot of things half-assed and in ninety percent of these situations a recreated unit is small enough to be able to march by the right files without causing problems. Larger units (twenty + men) may wish to practice these maneuvers by the left and they can do this by simply substituting "left" for "right" in the following instructions. I do not recommend units learn to advance by files from the center as the maneuver is needlessly complicated (A unit in two ranks advancing by files from the right forms a column of twos, when advancing by files from the center it forms a column of fours) and will only serve to confuse the men. A recreated unit that consistently advances and retreats by files from the right will perform the maneuver quicker and with more precision than a unit that tries to learn marching by files from the right, left and center.

COMPANY, TO THE FRONT, QUICK MARCH-- The company is in two ranks, in company front, marching forward when it approaches a narrow opening, which could be some trees, a fence or even two other units.

HALT--

COMPANY, BY THE RIGHT, ADVANCE BY FILES, MARCH³⁵-- When the preparative BY THE RIGHT, ADVANCE BY FILES is given, all the men do a right face except the *two* files on the extreme right of the line. This means that the four men on the right are facing to the front and the rest of the company is facing to the right. When this happens (which should be instantaneous), the command of execution, MARCH, is given. The four men on the right march straight to the front and the rest of the company marches to the right and *wheels* in behind them. The company will now be marching to the front in a column of twos.

HALT--

FORM THE COMPANY, MARCH-- When the preparative FORM THE COMPANY is given, the four leading men stand fast while the rest of the company faces to the left. At the command MARCH, those men faced to the left wheel to the right and form the company front.

[Note: The above system is the best way to learn advancing by files and will serve recreated companies for almost all occasions, however, in the *Manual of 1764* this maneuver is performed as one fluid motion without halting. As the company is marching forward, and the command COMPANY, BY THE RIGHT, ADVANCE BY FILES, MARCH is given, the two files on the right continue marching to the front while the rest of the company *turns* to the right and wheels in behind the lead files. When the obstruction is passed (or whatever), and the command FORM THE COMPANY, MARCH is given, the four lead men halt and the rest of the company *turns* left and immediately wheels to the right to form the company front, at which time they halt and dress before

³⁵ This first method of advancing by files is taken from the *Manual of 1764*, pp.24-25.

continuing. Obviously, this type of maneuver takes a great deal of practice and discipline to perform correctly and is prone to all kinds of disasters (for example, having the third file in the column run into the backs of the second file when they halt to FORM THE COMPANY). Quite frankly, most recreated units just do not do enough drill to be able to pull this off. I would recommend that advancing by files be accomplished by halting and facing at first. Eventually, the men will understand exactly what is supposed to happen and when they perform the required movements automatically, the more fluid method can be attempted.]

COMPANY, BY THE RIGHT, RETREAT BY FILES, MARCH-- When the preparative BY THE RIGHT, RETREAT BY FILES is given, the two right hand files do an about face and the rest of the company faces to the right. When the command MARCH is given, the right-hand files march to the rear while the rest of the company wheels to the right, in succession, behind them.

HALT--

FORM THE COMPANY, MARCH-- When the preparative is given, the four men in the front stay as they are, the rest of the company faces to the right. On the command MARCH, they do a left wheel to form two ranks faced to the rear.

TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE-- The company is now faced to its proper front.

[Note: Retreating by files can also be accomplished as one fluid motion, but the right-hand files will have to turn about on the march, something that is even more complicated than the simple turn. I would recommend that recreated companies halt before retreating by files unless they have the experience and the discipline to attempt the right-about turn. But for those who want to add a little flair to their performance, the more fluid method can be quite impressive.]

PLATOONS, BY THE RIGHT, ADVANCE BY FILES, MARCH-- If two companies are amalgamated for an event, or a larger one organized in two platoons, they can advance separately by files with this order. In this case the two right hand files of *each* platoon stands fast while everyone else faces to the right. On the command MARCH, the company will be advancing in two columns. Obviously, the spacing of these two columns should be maintained so when the company is reformed, the right platoon does not wheel into the left platoon.

[Note: An alternative, and older, method of advancing and retreating by files was to have all the men face and then wheel by files to the front or rear. This method is contained in the manuals and works of Pickering and Simes, to name a couple. It should be noted that with this method it is always necessary to halt and face (the more fluid turning method does not work), and advancing (or retreating)

by files with platoons is awkward because the right file of the left platoon has to wait until the right platoon is out of the way before it wheels. However, this method is authentic and popular among recreated units.

Warning-- units need to decide which method of advancing and retreating by files they will use and stick to it. There is no way to distinguish which method is meant when giving the orders, so any attempt to learn both will result in utter confusion.]

COMPANY, BY THE RIGHT, ADVANCE BY FILES, MARCH³⁶-- When the preparative is given, all the men face to the right. At the command MARCH, the right-hand file wheels to the left and marches to the front, the rest of the company following behind.

HALT--

FORM THE COMPANY, MARCH-- When the preparative is given, the men face to the left and at the command MARCH they wheel to the right, halt and dress.

COMPANY, BY THE RIGHT, RETREAT BY FILES, MARCH-- Men face to the right and at the command of execution, MARCH, the right-hand file wheels to the right and marches to the rear, the rest of the company following.

HALT--

FORM THE COMPANY, MARCH-- The men face to the right and on the command MARCH they wheel to the left.

TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE-- The company is now faced to its proper front.

PLATOON MANEUVERS

I have decided to include platoon maneuvers for two reasons. First, as I have said several times already, many smaller units are put together or amalgamated at events, and these platoon exercises allow them to retain some autonomy while performing some fascinating and quite useful maneuvers. Secondly, it enables me to illustrate the proper chain of command when performing the higher level maneuvers involving battalion and brigade size units, and in so doing prove that it is only necessary for the privates and corporals to know those basic commands I have just given-- let the sergeants and officers learn the rest, that is what they are paid for. "Let it be remembered, that as the commanding officer is to give the general words for the whole; so each particular officer commanding a division is always to give the proper words of command, to FACE, TURN, ADVANCE, WHEEL,

³⁶ The second method can be found in Simes, *Guide for Young Officers*, p.215; Pickering, An Easy Plan of Discipline, p.140; and Williamson, *Elements of Military Arrangement*, vol I, pp.119-24, in Kehoe, *Military Guide*, part 5, p.37.

INCLINE, or HALT, at the proper times when they shall be necessary for his own particular division." -- thus wrote Timothy Pickering in 1775.

In the following commands, it is assumed the company is divided into two platoons, the platoon on the right being the First platoon and the one on the left the Second platoon. The company commander's words of command are given in bold capital letters, the individual platoon commanders' are labeled "1st" and "2nd" and are in regular capital letters. The proper order of the commands are indicated.³⁷

COMPANY, FROM THE RIGHT ADVANCE BY PLATOONS,

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, FACE--

MARCH-- The First, or right, platoon marches to the front, the Second platoon marches by the flank to the right. When the Second platoon has reached the ground previously occupied by the First, its commander orders:

2nd: TO THE FRONT, TURN--

TO THE FRONT FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, HALT--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, INCLINE TO THE LEFT-- This is given at the same time as the above, the Second platoon inclines over to the left of the First platoon (The commander may have to give the command FRONT if the situation demands it).

HALT, DRESS--

[Note: Again, this maneuver can also be performed by advancing from the left, but I would recommend that units stick to advancing from the right only. If the Second platoon has crowded the First platoon too much it may not be possible to oblique over, in which case the Second platoon may TURN to the left and then to the front when in position. There are several different ways to reform the company after advancing by platoons and they all involve the same sort of maneuvering performed by battalions and brigades when, for example, forming squares. These formations also allow the company to meet a variety of threats on the battlefield. I will not bore the reader (and myself) by repeating the orders to ADVANCE BY PLATOONS, but will only list the different methods of reforming the company.]

TO THE RIGHT FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL--

³⁷ These platoon maneuvers can be found in Williamson, *Elements of Military Arrangement*, vol I, pp.119-24, in Kehoe, *Military Guide*, part 5, pp.35-37.

HALT, DRESS--

2nd: (The second platoon continues to march forward, behind the First platoon, until its front rank is even with the left file of the First platoon, then:) SECOND PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL-- They wheel in to the left of the First platoon.
HALT, DRESS--

TO THE FRONT AND RIGHT FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL--
HALT, DRESS--

2nd: (The Second Platoon continues to march to the front until its front rank is even with the left file of the First Platoon as before, then:)
HALT, DRESS-- The company is now formed at right angles covering the front and the right flank.

TO THE LEFT WHEEL AND FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
HALT, DRESS--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
HALT, DRESS--

TO THE FRONT AND LEFT FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, HALT, DRESS--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
HALT, DRESS-- The company should now be formed at a right angle covering the front and the left flank.

Note: In this maneuver, as well as the previous one (TO THE LEFT WHEEL AND FORM COMPANY), it is very important that the platoons maintain their proper distances when marching to the front for if the Second Platoon crowds the First, they will have no room to perform the left wheel.

[Note: The company may also retreat by platoons and reform in the above formations, and the proper procedures follow, however, some of these maneuvers involve the RIGHT-ABOUT TURN step described above. As I stated at the time, this maneuver should only be performed by the most experienced units and so whenever that command is used, I have offered a completely acceptable alternative. I will also only give the command to RETREAT BY PLATOONS once, and then all the different methods of reforming the company.]

COMPANY, FROM THE RIGHT RETREAT BY PLATOONS,

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, FACE--

MARCH-- The First Platoon marches to the rear while the Second Platoon marches by the flank to the right. When the Second Platoon has reached the ground where the First Platoon had been, its commander orders:

2nd: TO THE RIGHT, TURN--

TO THE REAR FORM COMPANY--

1st: HALT, DRESS--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, INCLINE TO THE LEFT-- The Second platoon inclines over to the left of the First platoon (The commander may have to give the command FRONT if the situation demands it).
HALT, DRESS--

TO THE FRONT FORM COMPANY--

2nd: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--

1st: TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, TURN--
INCLINE TO THE RIGHT-- The platoon inclines over to the right of the Second Platoon.
HALT, DRESS-- They dress on the Second Platoon.

or

1st: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--
INCLINE TO THE RIGHT, MARCH--
HALT, DRESS—

TO THE FRONT AND RIGHT FORM COMPANY--

2nd: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--

1st: TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, TURN--
TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL--
HALT, DRESS-- The company is now at a right angle just as before.

or

1st: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--
TO THE RIGHT WHEEL, MARCH--
HALT, DRESS--

TO THE FRONT AND LEFT FORM COMPANY--

2nd: TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, TURN--
 TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
 HALT, DRESS--

1st: TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, TURN-- The platoon then marches to the front, behind the Second Platoon, until its front rank is even with the right file of the Second Platoon, then:
 HALT, DRESS--

or

2nd: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--
 TO THE LEFT WHEEL, MARCH--
 HALT, DRESS--

1st: HALT, TO THE RIGHT-ABOUT, FACE--
 TO THE FRONT, MARCH-- And when in position:
 HALT, DRESS--

TO THE RIGHT FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL--
 HALT, DRESS--

2nd: (The second platoon continues to march forward, behind the First platoon, until its front rank is even with the left file of the First platoon, then:) SECOND PLATOON, TO THE RIGHT, WHEEL-- They wheel in to the left of the First platoon.
 HALT, DRESS--

Note: A reminder, although the command is to form to the right, because the company is now retreating, this command will form the company facing the left flank of the army.

TO THE LEFT WHEEL AND FORM COMPANY--

1st: FIRST PLATOON, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
 HALT, DRESS--

2nd: SECOND PLATOON, TO THE LEFT, WHEEL--
 HALT, DRESS--

Note: Again, although the command here is to form to the left, because the company is retreating, this will form the company facing the *right* flank of the army.

DEFILE (Street) FIRING

[Note: Defile firing was something *all* companies had to know (as well as parapet firing). Although it is rare, recreated companies are occasionally asked to fight through the streets of towns, and this method of firing is tailor-made for that (in fact, Simes calls it "street firing"). This description is taken from Cooper (*A Practical Guide for the Light Infantry Officer*, P. 19), although it is also found in Simes and Pickering]

MAKE READY, PRESENT, FIRE-- The battalion or company will be in a column formation, by files, platoons or companies, and these commands will be directed at the foremost unit (the front file, platoon or company). when they have fired, and should be at the priming position, they are given--

RECOVER ARMS-- The men bring their muskets to the RECOVER.

OUTWARD FACE, QUICK MARCH-- With the preparative, OUTWARD FACE, the right side of the line faces right and the left side faces left (if there is an uneven number, the middle file should turn right). They then march to the outside, wheeling by file to the rear. and march down either side of the column. When they have cleared the column, they halt, face to the inside, wheel around to reform, and face to the front. At this point they reload.

[Note: The process then continues with the next unit in the column. This unit can be marched forward to where the first unit was (to maintain position), marched forward even more (to advance), or remain where they are (which will cause a gradual retreat as each unit fires and moves to the rear).]

LIGHT INFANTRY MANEUVERS

"This work is already swelled far beyond the size within which I at first proposed to confine it, arising partly from my enlarging the plan, and in part from the multitude of words necessary in describing the various actions and movements with such a degree of perspicuity as should prevent doubts and mistakes. Nevertheless, I cannot forbear adding a little to its bulk..."³⁸

Once again, my soul brother Timothy Pickering has taken the words right out of my mouth. Pickering went on to include Wolfe's orders, but for my part I have decided to add a section on light infantry exercises. The following information comes from the manual written by Cooper (*A Practical Guide for the Light Infantry Officer*) during the first decade of the nineteenth century, and while some may raise their eyebrows at the date of this work, let me assure you that Cooper relied heavily on earlier works (including Howe's light infantry exercises), the difference being his presentation is clear and concise (and available). I have also observed recreated light infantry companies and asked those involved (some of my best friends are light infantrymen, although I am undecided if I would let one marry my sister), and they have agreed that these maneuvers are the basic ones used in reenactments today.

Light Infantry: In the section on Light Infantry tactics I described the prevalent system used by recreated light infantry companies. In it I point out that reenactors actually use a method developed during the French Revolution/Napoleonic wars where the front of the infantry battalions were covered by light infantry acting as skirmishers. Most reenactors continue to think in terms of open order, skirmishing activity. But as I pointed out, Howe's light infantry manual actually focuses on *rapidly moving infantry, not open order*. The smallest, most agile men were assigned to the light companies because *they could move quicker*. If you think that the British line is operating in fairly open order itself, why do they need skirmishers in front? What they wanted was a body of men who could sweep around on the flank. If they were to be used as skirmishers, why were the light companies taken from the battalions and formed into light battalions? Certainly not to provide a massive line of skirmishers, it was to provide an agile strike force, who fought in the same way as the line companies, they just got there quicker.

Before beginning, I should point out that all light infantry companies were instructed in the battalion drill and maneuvers that make up the bulk of this manual, and there is no excuse for any light company not to know these. Therefore, the information that follows is presented with the understanding that these maneuvers are in *addition* to those already presented. For example, I will give the position of light infantry officers when their companies are in extended order, but if the company is in any other formation, then they should position themselves according to the information already provided.

³⁸ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, p.160.

EXTENDING THE COMPANY

TO THE RIGHT EXTEND [3] PACES, QUICK MARCH-- The number of paces may vary according to the area of ground to cover, the size of the company, the whim of the officer, etc., but the usual distance given at reenactments is 3-5 paces. When the preparative command, **TO THE RIGHT EXTEND [3] PACES**, is given, all the men except the extreme left file face to the right. In addition, all should automatically go to the TRAIL. When the command of execution, **QUICK MARCH**, is given, the men march forward being sure to look back over their shoulder to judge whether they have taken enough paces (in this case, three paces from the man to their left). When in position, the men halt, front and dress. At this point, the men in the rear rank step to the right of the front file to give themselves a clear field of fire.

TO THE LEFT CLOSE, QUICK MARCH-- When the preparative command, **TO THE LEFT, CLOSE**, is given, all face to the left except the extreme left file. When the command **QUICK MARCH** is given the men quickly march by files to the left, facing to the front and bringing their muskets to **SHOULDER** automatically when they are in position (in other words, at close order).

TO THE LEFT EXTEND [3] PACES, QUICK MARCH-- This is accomplished the same as extending to the right except the men face left and the extreme right file stands fast. The men should all go to the TRAIL automatically.

TO THE RIGHT CLOSE, QUICK MARCH-- Again, this is the same as above only the facing direction is different.

FROM THE CENTER EXTEND [3] PACES, QUICK MARCH-- In this case, the center file stands fast while those to the right of center face right and those to the left face left (this gets tricky when there is an even number of files, in which case the two center files face outward and take *half* the stated number of paces).
Note: Because extending from the center is more complicated, depending as it does on the number of files, most recreated light companies extend from the right or left in battle reenactments, saving extending from the center for drill and demonstrations.

TO THE CENTER CLOSE, QUICK MARCH-- The men face inward and march to the center, facing to the front, going to **SHOULDER** and dressing.

POSITIONS OF OFFICERS IN EXTENDED ORDER

"In extended order, the post of officers and sergeants is always in the rear, equally divided [along the line]"³⁹

³⁹ Cooper, *A Practical Guide*, p.8.

HOW ARMS ARE CARRIED IN EXTENDED ORDER

In extended order, the arms are always carried at the TRAIL.

LOADING PROCEDURE IN EXTENDED ORDER

With the files separated like they are in extended order, it is impractical to follow the battalion loading procedure where the men CAST ABOUT and RETURN RAMMERS together, so the light troops should just load as quickly as possible, replace their frizzen covers, and go to the TRAIL to indicate they have finished.

MOVEMENTS IN QUICK TIME

"All movements of the light companies except when firing, advancing, or retreating are to be in quick time. They are never to run unless particularly directed and, in that case, they are only to run at that pace in which they can preserve their order."⁴⁰

FIRING ON THE SPOT

In extended order, the front rank man fires then steps a few paces to the rear, the rear rank man steps a few paces to the front (the front rank man will now be behind the rear rank man). As the front rank man pours in his powder, he says "ready!", at which the rear rank man can PRESENT and FIRE. They then switch positions again. A variation on this is called "Covering each other". The men step directly in front of each other, the one in the rear passing to the right of the one in the front.

FIRING ADVANCING

COMMENCE FIRING, MARCH-- At the command MARCH, the rear rank marches six paces to the front of the front rank, PRESENT and FIRE. They then reload and go to the TRAIL. When the sergeant in charge of the front rank sees the rear rank fire, he blows his whistle and the front rank advances six paces in front of the rear rank, PRESENTS and FIRES. The sergeant in charge of the rear rank then whistles and the process continues until the officer orders something different.

FIRING RETREATING

COMMENCE FIRING, RETREAT-- The rank in front when this order is given fires, retreats twelve paces and then reloads. When the sergeant of the other rank sees that the first has reloaded, he blows his whistle, upon which his rank fires and retreats twelve paces. And so it continues until the officer indicates otherwise.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

THE FEU DE JOYE OR "FIRE OF JOY"

I have saved this command for the last because the FEU DE JOYE, or RUNNING FIRE as it was sometimes called, was usually fired as a form of celebration or salute for victory on the battlefield, or the king's birthday, or whatever, and so I thought it would be appropriate to put it at the end to celebrate the completion of this manual. It certainly has been an unusual experience putting it together-- a learning, eye opening, exhilarating, difficult, frustrating, and humbling, experience. I am glad I undertook the project, because even if no one else uses this manual, it has given me the knowledge that for many years proved to be so elusive, and the confidence that such knowledge brings. But I would be a bald-faced liar if I said I wished it wasn't finished. It is indeed time to celebrate.

PREPARE TO FIRE THE FEU DE JOYE,

MAKE READY-- All troops MAKE READY.

PRESENT-- If only one company is performing this, then they present, usually with the muzzles of their guns pointed quite high in the air. If several companies are involved, then only the two companies (or grand division) on the right actually PRESENTS at this time.

FIRE-- At the command fire the file on the extreme right fires, then each file in turn from right to left, the front and rear men in the file firing together. When the fire reaches the left flank of the first company (we are assuming there are more than one company involved), the officer in command of the second company immediately says FIRE to keep the firing continuous. At this time, the commander of the third company should order his men to PRESENT. This continues down the line, each company coming to PRESENT as the company to its right begins to fire. Each company reloads when it finishes firing.⁴²

MAKE READY-- The whole MAKE READY.

PRESENT-- The two companies (or grand division) on the left PRESENT.

FIRE-- The firing begins this time with the extreme left flank of the battalion. When the fire

⁴² This method of firing comes from Simes, *Guide for Young Officers*, p.222. However, an alternate method is to have the front rank fire from right to left and the rear rank fire from left to right, creating a continuous loop of fire. This is contained in Humphrey Bland, *Treatise of Military Discipline*, pp.98-100, in Kehoe, *Military Guide*, part 4, p.43. The method presented in the main text is the more common one used by reenactors.

reaches the right flank of the first company, the commander of the second says FIRE to the left file of his own company, while the third company in line goes to PRESENT, and so on down the line. Each company should reload as they finish firing in anticipation of a battalion volley.

Note: The files should fire immediately after each other so the noise resembles a kid running along a picket fence with a stick. However, not all muskets are reliable, especially after a battle, and if the soldiers wait for the sound of the musket going off next to them before pulling their trigger, they may have a long wait. This causes needless interruptions in the flow of firing. The best method to perform this fire is to instruct the men to watch the cock of the musket beside them and when they see it fly forward, then pull their own trigger. When the firing comes from the left, this will mean the men will have to turn their heads and look out the corner of their eyes at the musket next to them, but this will insure a continuous fire, and the fire from the left is even more dependent on sound and so more prone to interruption.

MAKE READY-- The battalion as a whole MAKES READY.

PRESENT-- The last fire is a battalion volley, so all troops PRESENT.

FIRE--

HALF-COCK YOUR FIRELOCKS--

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

SHUT YOUR PANS--

Note: At this point, the men remove their hats (except the flank companies) and give three huzzas. This should need no prompting. The men then replace their hats and the individual companies are marched back to their company streets.)

REAR RANK, TAKE YOUR DISTANCE, MARCH--

SECURE YOUR FIRELOCKS-- To dump the powder from those muskets which did not fire.

SHOULDER YOUR FIRELOCKS--

TAKE CARE TO DISPERSE, MARCH--

FINIS