

### **For the commander:**

Know your men. Call them by name when correcting them. It give the appearance that you are watching each individual, rather than just casting your eyes over the group.

1. Never, ever, use the following phrase by itself: "Get in Step". Who is out of step? Call him by name and tell \*him\* to get in step.
2. By the same token, never EVER, yell "Dress" . Who is out of line? How is he out of line? Tell him.
3. The stupidest correction known is this phrase: "Do it together!"
4. Always allow at least three beats (steps if you're marching) between the preparatory command and the command of execution. If your commands will be echoed, you must give your preparatory commands far enough in advance to allow three beats between the last preparatory command and your command of execution. For those of you who aren't sure what a preparatory command and a command of execution are, "Forward" is a preparatory command, and "March!" is a command of execution.
5. Don't echo the command if your unit isn't doing the command. It sounds simple, but I can't tell you how many times I have heard officers in column screaming commands that their units are not supposed to execute until they reach the point of the command.
6. There should be no difference in the timing of commands when in place or on the march. Since in place commands (facings, manual of arms) are done at the same speed as marching commands, there should be no difference in the timing of the commands.
7. Teach your men to drill with a drummer. Have the drummer beat the marching beat as you do the facings and manual of arms. That is the speed at which the commands are supposed to be done anyway, so use the musician. As in "Right", "Face!", one, two. "Shoulder", "Arms", one two, three.
8. Note that in every manual of arms, every command says "Two motions", or "Three motions", etc. They never say "One long motion with no stops and starts". Emphasize the individual motions. You will be surprised how much "crisper" your drill will be, even when not emphasizing the motions.
9. Every once in a while, take a musket in YOUR hands and drill with it. Note how uncomfortable it becomes when held in one position for any length of time. Note how difficult it is to execute the next command promptly and crisply when you have held it in one position for any length of time. Remember that.
10. If you are going to be performing a series of commands, practice that series, not the individual maneuvers. If it isn't done right, start from the beginning and do it again. Keep doing the entire routine until it is done right. This not only teaches your men what's expected of them, but helps them memorize what they are going to do. That way, if they can't hear your command because a cannon went off, it doesn't matter, because they know that they are supposed to turn right here anyway. We won our drill competition year after year, because we practiced the routine (not the individual commands in it) we were going to use so often every person in the 200 man company knew what command was coming next.
11. If your unit isn't going to move for one minute, rest them. If your unit isn't going to move in five minutes, stack arms and dismiss them. They'll come on line that much quicker when the command to "Fall In" is given.
12. In hot weather, never force your men to stand in the sun when there is shade nearby. See rule nine.
13. When beginning a drill on the manual of arms, run through the manual of arms. Dismiss those who don't make mistakes. Civil War troops had an "awkward squad" for a reason. Don't penalize your men

who attend all the events and know the drill, by making them drill with those who don't.

14. Practice doesn't make perfect. Mediocre practice just reinforces bad habits. Good practice makes for good drill. If someone is doing it wrong, tell them. They can't do it right unless you do. The length of time you practice doesn't necessarily make your troops drill better. If you really want to drill them for two hours, do it in two one hour segments. Remember, even Stonewall Jackson marched his men only fifty minutes in an hour.

#### **For the soldier:**

Take pride in what you are doing. You are representing a soldier. Do it. Listen to your officer. He is responsible for the well being of his men. He will take care of you. If he doesn't, elect another one next year. Or find a new unit. But don't impede the flow of the drill if you have a *personal* problem with the commander. Take it offline.

1. Never, NEVER, EVER, move your head. From a distance, it is impossible to see fingers moving, it is difficult to see feet move slightly, but you might as well send up a flare when you move your head. Everyone's hat reflects the light, and as soon as you move your head, the light reflection is different. You might just as well hold up a big sign that says "I'm moving!"
2. Read rule 1 again.
3. Look with your eyes, not your head. God gave you the ability to turn your eyes to see to the side. Use this ability. If you want to check your alignment, turn your eyes, not your head. The worst offenders are those who lean out and look to check their alignment. What are these people thinking about?
4. You are responsible for maintaining a certain distance between yourself and the man in front of you. Never change that distance. When 20 men are marching in column, if each man is three inches farther from the man in front than he is supposed to be, then the last man is FIVE FEET out of position.
5. When your officer says, "March", go. If you step on the heel of the man in front of you, it is HIS fault for not moving.
6. When your officer says, "Halt", stop. If you have followed rule 4, you will be in the right place. If you have to close up, it's YOUR fault because you didn't maintain your distance.
7. When marching in line, stay even with the man next to you. That's all. Not the colors, not the sergeant, not anybody but the man next to you. Never mind what the officer says. If everybody does this, then everybody's in line. Besides, your peripheral vision doesn't allow you to see more than one or two men down the line anyway. And, rule one is NEVER move your head. If your judgment or alignment is off, the sergeant or corporal will tell you to move up or back. He won't just yell "Dress!", because he has read rule 2 in his section.
8. Work on every motion in the manual of arms. Not command, motion. Make them separate motions. A slight pause between each. You really do have the time to do this.
9. When placing the rifle on or off your shoulder, NEVER MOVE YOUR HEAD (Rule 1 again). What's the matter, don't you trust yourself?
10. When you are performing the manual of arms and have finished the last motion of a command, FREEZE. If the rifle is in the wrong place, or if your hand is not quite in the right place, or your foot is slightly out of line, DON'T MOVE. The next command will be coming along shortly. If you don't move, people have to look very carefully at all of the men to find your error. If you move after everyone else has stopped, you just pointed out your mistake to anyone who is watching. Again, you might just as well hold up that big sign that says "I'm moving!"