

Company Front at 1 3 5 7 9 Company Front 7 9 beginning of maneuver 2 4 6 8 10 at completion 8 10

5 6

3 4

1 2

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.

The above system, described by Steven Eames in his interpretation of the Manual Exercise of 1764 is the best way to learn advancing by files, however, in the original Manual this maneuver is performed as one fluid motion without halting. Experience has shown this is the best practical method of employing this command. When advancing across the field of battle, considerable time is saved by not having to halt to pass through a narrow opening. 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 continuing.

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.

Company Front at 1 3 5 7 9 Company Front 2 1 beginning of maneuver 2 4 6 8
10 at completion 4 3 6 5

7 9
8 10

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.

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. As the circumstances which would cause an advancing company front to suddenly retreat by files is rare, we will halt before retreating by files (in most instances the companies will be at the halt anyway when given the order to retire).

mus10Ns (or 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 unit 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 when the company is reformed, the right platoon does not wheel into the left platoon. Also, this command can be achieved without halting by using the turning method described earlier.

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 some recreated units and will be encountered in the field. We will, whenever possible, use the methods described on pages 6-11 & 12.

Several other maneuvers are described in the Light Infantry Drill, Tab # 7. Some other movements, like forming a hollow square are not documented to have been used by the British Army in America - or were only employed rarely due to the lack of large formations of cavalry on either side. Forming the hollow square is well described in the Brigade of the American Revolution's Soldier's Manual and Vincent J.R.R. Kehoe's Military Guide together with full battalion and brigade reviews. They are only rarely employed and the execution varies due to the size and composition of the troops involved, terrain constraints and experience level of the people in charge. In such a situation, listen to the commands of the officer's/NCOs in charge and perform to the best of your ability.



Old North Bridge, Concord, Massachussets

STREET FIRING

Although it is rare, we are occasionally asked to fight through the streets of towns or in narrow passages. The battalion or company will be in a column formation, by files, platoons or companies. Care must be taken that space is left on each side "through which those who have fired, may have room to march byfiles toform in the rear. " The officer commanding will give the command:

TAKE CARE TO PERFORM THE STREET FIRING, MARCH - The commander of the first company gives the following sequence of commands. This could be a platoon, a company or even a file, depending on the size and composition of the units involved.

HALT, MAKE READY, PRESENT, FIRE 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). On the command, MARCH 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.

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).

If space is restrictive, or small units with only a single rank are involved, or if a more rapid rate of fire is desired, the firing can be done by rank. The commanding officer of each individual company involved will handle the fire of each of his ranks (this is assuming several amalgamated units are involved), retiring with his last rank to fire. In this case each rank should have experienced NCOs with each rank so the men do not get lost going to the rear. Reforming can also be done differently when a single rank marches to the rear. After the command OUTWARD FACE, FORWARD MARCH the divided rank marches to the rear, the outside files leading, the middle files at the rear. When they reach the rear of the column the first, or outside, file men do a quick ABOUT TURN and take their position on the outside, the others follow by passing behind the man to their front and coming into their place on the line.

COMMANDS AND PROCEDURES FOR POSTING SENTINELS

The Officer or NCO takes charge of his section after inspection by the Officer of the Guard, and marches it to the guard camp. The first guard mount is formed in a single rank. If there are more than six men, the guard should form in two ranks.

The Officer or NCO in command orders: **FIX YOUR - BAYONETS !**

The Officer or NCO then marches the guard (with firelocks supported) to the first post (each post should be numbered and the guards posted in their numerical order) and halts. (The Officer or NCO should carry his firelock at the **ADVANCE .**)

The Officer or NCO then commands the first man on the left: **FUSILÆR SHENKIN, ADVANCE AND RECEIVE YOUR ORDERS.**

The designated soldier advances one pace and brings his musket to **RECOVER**. (An NCO is given the same courtesy as an Officer when in command of a guard). The Officer or NCO then passes on the instructions concerning that post. He then commands: **SENTRY(s) - POST !** The sentinel(s) **SHOULDERS** his firelock and assumes his post.

The Officer or NCO then proceeds to the next post and so on until all sentries are placed. He then returns to camp.



Artwork by John Wright

RELIEVING SENTRIES

The Corporal of the Guard traditionally commands the Relief which he forms in camp in the same manner as the original guard. He orders the Relief to **FIX YOUR - BAYONETS !** and marches the troops to their respective posts - again, in numerical order. The Corporal should be at the **ADVANCE** and the men , according to Cuthbertson, may be at the **SUPPORT** unless passing an Officer, at which time the Corporal will order the detachment to the **SHOULDER**. Once they have passed the Officer, they may return to the **SUPPORT**.

The Relief is marched to within three or four paces of the sentinel(s) and halted. At the approach of the Relief the sentinel(s) should halt and come to the **SHOULDER**. They do **NOT** challenge the Reliefi

The Corporal of the Guard then orders the first man on the right: **FUSILIER ap MORGAN, ADVANCE AND RECEIVE YOUR ORDERS !** The designated soldier(s) advance one pace directly in front of the sentinel(s) and both automatically **REST - FIRELOCKS**.

The sentinel on duty passes the instructions concerning that post on to the relieving sentry as well as reporting anything out of the ordinary that has occurred. The Corporal should listen carefully to insure that he gets it right. He may even ask the relieving sentry to repeat the instructions.

The Corporal then commands: **SENTRY(s) - POST !** Both soldiers **SHOULDER THEIR FIRELOCKS** and pass each other by the **RIGHT** side, the new sentinel taking his post, the relieved sentinel marching to the rear of the Relief, beginning a new rank in the rear. He should automatically **UNFIX HIS BAYONET** at the same time.

The Corporal then proceeds with the Relief to the remaining posts which are relieved in the same manner. When the last post is relieved, the Corporal should command a detachment of troops with bayonets unfixed. He marches them back to camp and dismisses them. (They will remain in camp until their tour of duty is over.)

