

First New Hampshire Regiment Drill A Short Manual

By Karen Hayden

A few days ago I was telling a friend about the monthly drills we, as a unit do at the YMCA in Nashua over the winter. His response was surprise that we "wasted our time to look pretty." Well, that's not why we do it, although it does look better in parades when we are all doing the same moves at the same time. The biggest reason for our drills is that of SAFETY. We always start each drill by going through a safety inspection on all the muskets. This is to insure that they are safe to handle and to check for any problems with springs, locks and other pieces of hardware.

Next we go through the manual of arms - usually the Von Steuben Manual to insure that we are all doing the same movements, and that each soldier knows how to handle his musket, bayonet and even his cartridge box. These are crucial elements in assuring safety on the field and in parades, as someone handling their gun incorrectly can cause serious injury to himself and others. It is why we have a RULE stating that anyone not being able to perform the manual of arms may not fire with the regiment and also may not carry cartridges in his box. This is a rule that we have and will enforce as needed!

The following list was compiled originally by Steve Rogers when he was Captain of the unit. It has been slightly modified over the years but should be of help as you go through the drill on your own.

A. Facing Movements

- 1. Rest**
- 2. Attention**
- 3. Left Face (to the left face)**
- 4. Right Face (to the right face)**
- 5. Right About Face (to the right about face)**

B. Manual of Exercise with Musket

- 1. Fall In (Stand at attention with musket at the shoulder.)**
- 2. Order Firelock(s)**
- 3. Shoulder Firelock(s) (After each movement you must return to shoulder firelock(s).)**
- 4. Advance Firelock(s)**

- 5. Poise Firelock(s)**
- 6. Present Arms**
- 7. Secure Firelock(s)**
- 8. Support Firelock(s)**
- 9. Mourn Firelock(s)**
- 10. Fix Bayonet(s)**
- 11. Charge Bayonet(s)**
- 12. Unfix Bayonet(s)**
- 13. Slope Arms**
- 14. Trail Arms**
- 15. Ground Firelock(s) (In Von Steuben this must be done from Order)**
- 16. Take up Firelock(s)**

C. Commands for loading and firing

- 1. Come to the Priming Position (Musket should be at the half cock position)**
- 2. Open Pan**
- 3. Handle Cartridge**
- 4. Prime**
- 5. Shut Pan**
- 6. Cast About**
- 7. Charge with Cartridge**
- 8. Draw Rammer**
- 9. Ram Down Cartridge**
- 10. Return Rammer (following this you automatically come to the recover)**
- 11. Shoulder Firelock**
- 12. Make Ready (Do not touch trigger until Fire is given)**
- 13. Take Aim**
- 14. Fire**

NOTE: the ramming of cartridges is done only for demonstrations and not during our normal drill, parades or reenactments. The above manual is also shortened to the command "Prime and Load", at which time steps 1-5 are done, then you wait for the command "Bout" and continue through step 10 at which time either the command "Shoulder" or "Make Ready" are given. Again, usually we will skip steps 8 - 10, going to the recover following step 7. Also make sure to stay at the firing position after discharging for a count of two for safety, then return to the priming position and half cock the piece.

D. Safety Inspection

Before each time the musket is handled in ranks, an officer or NCO should conduct a safety inspection. The inspection usually begins with the interval between the ranks being lengthened (if in two ranks).

Troops should all be at the shoulder, with guns at half cock.

- 1. Rear Rank, Take Distance - March!**
- 2. Open Pans**
- 3. Secure Firelocks**
- 4. Shoulder Firelocks**
- 5. Shut Pans**
- 6. Poise Firelocks (inspector will check halfcock by pulling on trigger)**
- 7. Shoulder Firelocks**
- 8. Take Care to Spring Rammers - Cast About!**
- 9. Draw Rammers**
- 10. Spring Rammers**
- 11. Return Rammers (Go to the Recover when finished)**
- 12. Shoulder Firelocks.**

NOTE: Following any firing of weapons we will again go through a safety inspection. That inspection will consist of #s 1 through 5 as above.

E. Cleaning of Weapons Before Dismissal

Every soldier should have a rag with them, either tied to their haversack strap or in a pocket.

- 1. Take Care to Wipe Arms (Come to the priming position) - Wipe Arms. (Wipe down the lock and around the touch hole).**
- 2. Cast About (Wipe down the bayonet)**
- 3. Unfix Bayonet.**
- 4. Shoulder Firelocks.**

If you are not comfortable with all of the drill movements, ask the

Captain or the Sergeant for extra help.