

**THE DUTIES OF COVERING
SERJEANTS IN COMPANY
AND BATTALION DRILL**

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The duties of covering serjeants in company and battalion drill by William D. Malton

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WILLIAM D. MALTON

**THE DUTIES OF COVERING
SERJEANTS IN COMPANY
AND BATTALION DRILL**

THE
DUTIES OF COVERING-SERJEANTS

IN
Company and Battalion
DRILL.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED FIELD EXERCISE.

BY
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(Author of "Company and Battalion Drill Illustrated," &c. &c.)

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following directions for Covering-Serjeants have been compiled from *Company and Battalion Drill Illustrated*, in compliance with numerous suggestions made to the Author by Officers in possession of that work.

June 1859.

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† The marginal words of command (printed in CAPITALS) are those given by the Drill Instructor in PART I., and by the Battalion Commander in PART II.

In PART II. the Majors' words are distinguished by smaller capitals: thus—STEADY.

The reference 'F. E.' is to the last corrected Edition of the *Field Exercise and Evolutions of Infantry*.

INTRODUCTION.

(1) *Degrees of March.*

In *Slow* or *Quick* time the length of a pace is 30 inches: except in 'stepping out,' when it is 33 inches, and in 'stepping short,' when it is 10 inches.

In *Double* time, in which there is neither 'stepping out' nor 'stepping short', the length of a pace is 36 inches.

[In *Wheeling* (forward or backward): the outer man, only, of the Company takes a full pace; each of the other men shortening his pace in proportion to his distance from the standing flank.]

The length of the *Side-step*, which is always taken in quick time, is 10 inches: except when taken to clear or cover another man (as in forming four-deep), in which case it will be 21 inches.

In Slow time	75 steps (= 62 yds. 18 in.)	} are taken in a minute.
In Quick time	108 ,, (= 90 yds.)	
In Double time	150 ,, (= 150 yds.)	

The command for 'marking time' from the Halt is *Mark-time: Quick* (or *Slow*). (F. E., pp. 12, 13.)

(2) *To calculate paces for Files.*

Multiply the number of files by 7: and the result, with the right-hand figure cut off, will be the required number of paces.

N.B.—If a Company wheels the same number of paces that it contains files, it will wheel the Quarter circle: if it wheels half that number of paces, it will complete the eighth of a circle: if a quarter of the number, it will complete the sixteenth of a circle. (See FIG. I., p. 54.)

(3) *Meaning of the terms "Pivot," "Inner," and "Outer," flank.*

The *pivot* flank in all single Columns is that flank which when wheeled up to, preserves the several parts of a Company or Line in their natural order, and to their proper front. Thus: in a Column of Companies *Right in front* (i.e. with that Company leading which, when in Line, stands on the right) the front-rank *left-hand* men of Companies are the pivots on which if a wheel into Line were made, the Line would stand in its proper order. Similarly: in a Column *Left in front* (i.e. with that Company leading which, when in Line, stands on the left) the front-rank *right-hand* men of Companies are the pivots.

Hence the expression, "Right in front : Left the pivot," and *vice versâ*.

The flank opposite to the pivot is called the *Reverse* flank.

[The above explanation equally applies to a single Column of Subdivisions or Sections.]

Companies (or their parts) in single Column, at whatever distance formed, cover and dress to the pivot flank.

The 'Inner' flank of a Company:—In Line, that flank which is nearest to the point of *appui* (see p. 22): in Oblique Echellon, the flank on which the wheel into echellon is made: in Direct Echellon, the flank next to the preceding Company. The opposite is called the 'Outer' flank.

(4) *Sizing &c. of a Company.*

A Company is sized from flanks to centre, as follows—

The men are first formed in a single rank; the tallest on the flanks, the shortest in the centre. They are then numbered off, and each Subdivision is formed two-deep; the left files of the Right Subdivision forming in rear, those of the Left Subdivision in front, of the right files. [The left-hand man of the Company, a right file, will also take a pace to the front.] The whole then closed and dressed on the right flank file.

Telling off.—Odd numbers are 'right' files, even numbers 'left' files. Should the file on the left of the Company, however, be an odd number, it will act as a 'left' file: and the left-but-one file—although an even number—will act as a 'right' file. If there is a *blank* file (i.e. a file without a rear-rank man), it must be the 3rd file from the left of the Company.

Should there be an uneven number of files in the Company, one Sub-division must, of course, be stronger than the other. When this is the case in a *Right* Company (i.e. one whose number, as it stands in the Battalion, is odd), the odd file will be included in the Right Sub-division: in a *Left* Company (i.e. one whose number in the Battalion is even), the odd file will be in the Left Sub-division. When the 2 Sections of *either* Sub-division are unequal, the stronger of the two will be that on the outer flank.

(F. E., pp. 48, 49.)

(5) *Wheeling on 'fixed' and 'moveable' pivots.*

A wheel is said to be made on a 'fixed (or halted) pivot' when—the Company being at the Halt—the pivot-man, on the Caution, *faces* into the named direction: on a 'moveable pivot,' when—the Company being on the move—the pivot-man brings his inner shoulder gradually round with the rest of the Company, at the same time circling round the wheeling point with very short paces.

A wheel may also be made on a 'moveable pivot from the Halt.' In this case the *Caution* will commence with the words ON THE MOVE: and the pivot-man, instead of facing at the cautionary word WHEEL, will stand fast till the word MARCH, and will then commence circling round (as when on the march) into the new direction; the Company getting the word FORWARD or HALT when the required degree of wheel is completed.

N.B.—The cautionary word WHEEL given to men at the Halt will always imply a *quarter-circle* wheel; unless preceded by the words '— FACES' or 'ON THE MOVE'.

The following *General Rules* are equally applicable to a Company formed singly, or with the Battalion:—