
CHAPTER 6

SQUAD DRILL

The [soldiers] must learn to keep their ranks, to obey words of command, and signals by drum and trumpet, and to observe good order, whether they halt, advance, retreat, are upon a march, or engaged with an enemy.

Niccolo Machiavelli: *Arte della Guerra*, 1520

Section I. FORMATIONS AND MOVEMENTS

This section describes the formations and movements of a squad. Individual drill movements and the manual of arms are executed as previously prescribed while performing as a squad member.

6-1. BASIC INFORMATION

The squad has two prescribed formations—line and column. However, the squad may be formed into a column of twos from a column formation. When the squad is in line, squad members are numbered from right to left; when in column, from front to rear. The squad normally marches in column, but for short distances it may march in line.

When the squad drills as a separate unit, the squad leader carries his weapon at *Sling Arms*. When the squad is in a line formation, the squad leader assumes a post three steps in front of and centered on the squad; when in a column or a column of twos, three steps to the left and centered on the squad. When the squad drills as part of a larger unit, the squad leader occupies the number one (base) position of the squad. He carries his weapon in the same manner as prescribed for other riflemen in the squad.

6-2. FORMING THE SQUAD

The squad normally forms in a line formation; however, it may re-form in column when each member can identify his exact position (equipment grounded) in the formation (Figure 6-1, page 6-2).

a. To form at normal interval, the squad leader comes to the *Position of Attention* and commands **FALL IN**. On the command **FALL IN**, the following actions occur simultaneously:

- (1) Each member double-times to his position in the formation.
- (2) The right flank man positions himself so that when the squad is formed it is three steps in front of and centered on the squad leader.
- (3) The right flank man comes to the *Position of Attention* and raises his left arm laterally at shoulder level, elbow locked, fingers and thumb extended and joined, and palm facing down. He ensures that the left arm is in line with the body.
- (4) The man to the immediate left of the right flank man comes to the *Position of Attention*, turns his head and eyes to the right, and raises his left arm in the same manner as the right flank man. He obtains proper alignment by taking short steps forward or backward until he is on line with the right flank man. He then obtains exact interval by taking short steps left or right until his shoulder touches the extended fingertips of the right flank man. As soon as the man to the left has obtained *Normal Interval*, each man

individually lowers his arm to his side, sharply turns his head and eyes to the front, and assumes the *Position of Attention*.

(5) The right flank man then sharply returns to the *Position of Attention*.

(6) All other members of the squad form in the same manner except that the left flank man does not raise his left arm.

NOTE: The right flank man raises his arm and looks straight to the front unless the squad is to align on an element to its right. If he is to align on an element to the right he turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself with that element.

b. To form at *Close Interval*, the formation is completed in the manner prescribed for *Normal Interval*, except that the command is ***At Close Interval, FALL IN.*** Squad members obtain *Close Interval* by placing the heel of the left hand on the left hip even with the waist, fingers and thumb joined and extended downward, and with the elbow in line with the body and touching the arm of the man to the left.

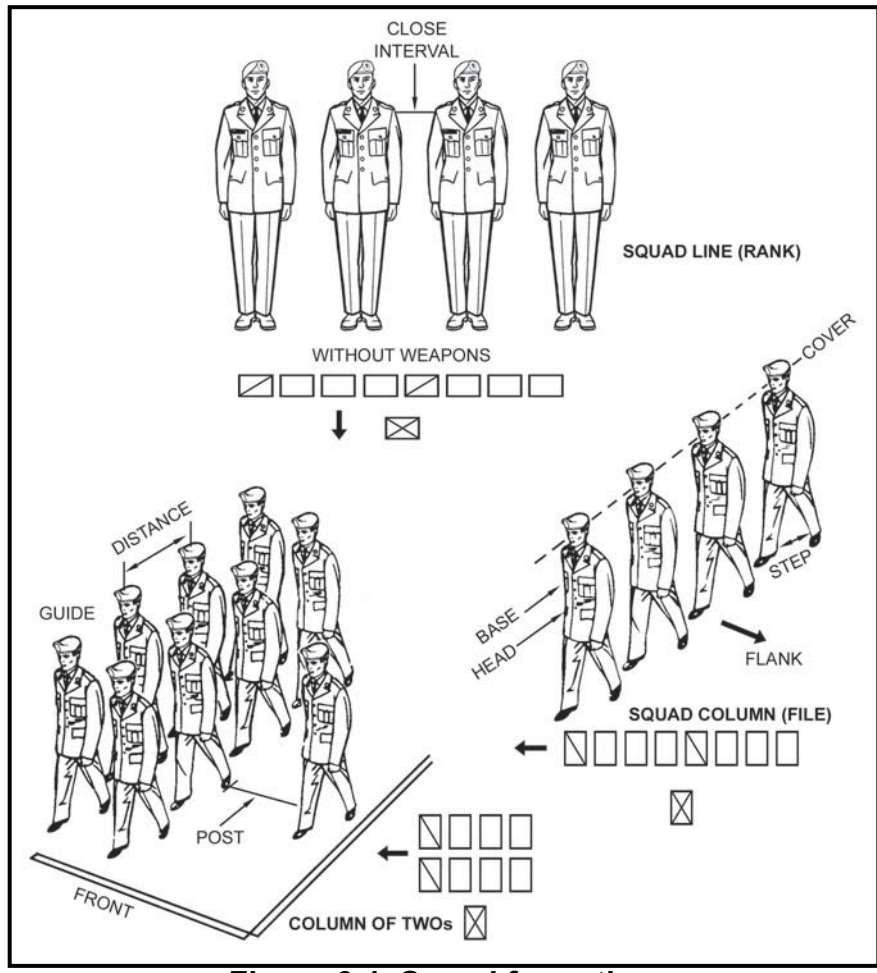


Figure 6-1. Squad formation.

c. To form in column, the squad leader faces the proposed flank of the column and commands ***In Column, FALL IN***. On the command of execution **FALL IN**, squad members double-time to their original positions (grounded equipment) in formation and cover on the man to their front.

NOTE: The correct distance between soldiers in column formation is approximately 36 inches. This distance is one arm's length plus 6 inches

d. When armed, squad members fall in at *Order Arms* or *Sling Arms*. For safety, the commands ***Inspection, ARMS; Ready, Port, ARMS;*** and ***Order (Sling), ARMS*** are commanded at the initial formation of the day or when the last command is **DISMISSED** (Figure 6-1).

6-3. COUNTING OFF

The squad may count off in line or column formation. The command is ***Count, OFF***.

a. When the squad is in a line formation, the counting is executed from right to left. On the command of execution **OFF**, each member, except the right flank man, turns his head and eyes to the right, and the right flank man counts off "**ONE.**" After the man on the right counts off his number, the man to his left counts off with the next higher number and simultaneously turns his head and eyes to the front. All the other members execute count off in the same manner until the entire squad has counted off.

b. When the squad is in column formation, the counting is executed from front to rear. On the command of execution **OFF**, the soldier at the head of the column turns his head and eyes to the right and counts over his shoulder, "**ONE.**" After counting off his number, he immediately comes to the *Position of Attention*. All other members count their numbers in sequence in the same manner as the number one man; the last man in the file does not turn his head and eyes to the right.

6-4. CHANGING INTERVAL WHILE IN LINE

To change interval while in line, use the following procedures:

NOTE: To ensure that each member understands the number of steps to take, the squad leader should command ***Count, OFF*** before giving any commands that cause the squad to change interval. Members do not raise their arms when changing interval.

a. To obtain *Close Interval* from *Normal Interval*, the command is ***Close Interval, MARCH***. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the right flank man (number one man) stands fast. All men to the left of the number one man execute *Right Step March*, take one step less than their number (for example, number five man takes four steps), and *Halt*.

NOTE: The squad leader takes the correct number of steps to maintain his position of three steps in front of and centered on the squad.

b. To obtain *Normal Interval* from *Close Interval*, the command is ***Normal Interval, MARCH***. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the right flank man stands fast. All men to the left of number one man execute *Left Step March*, take one step less than their number (for example, number nine man takes eight steps), and *Halt*.

c. To obtain *Double Interval* from *Normal Interval*, the command is ***Double Interval, MARCH***. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the right flank man stands fast. All men to the left of number one man face to the left as in marching, take one 30-inch step less than their number (for example, number seven man takes six steps), *Halt*, and execute *Right Face*.

d. To obtain *Normal Interval* from *Double Interval*, the command is ***Normal Interval, MARCH***. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the right flank man stands fast. All men to the left of the number one man face to the right as in marching, take one 30-inch step less than their number (for example, number three man takes two steps), *Halt*, and execute *Left Face*.

6-5. ALIGNING THE SQUAD

To align the squad, use the following procedures:

NOTE: The squad leader commands the squad to the appropriate interval before giving the command for alignment.

a. To align the squad at *Normal Interval*, the commands are ***Dress Right, DRESS*** and ***Ready, FRONT***. These commands are given only when armed soldiers are at *Order Arms* or *Sling Arms*. On the command of execution **DRESS**, the right flank man stands fast. Each member, except the right flank man, turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself with the man on his right. Each member, except the left flank man, extends his left arm laterally at shoulder level, elbow locked, fingers and thumb extended and joined, palm facing down. He ensures his left arm is in line with his body and positions himself by short steps right or left until his right shoulder touches the fingertips of the man on his right. On the command of execution **FRONT**, each member returns sharply to the *Position of Attention* (Figure 6-2).



Figure 6-2. Alignment (Normal Interval).

NOTE: If the squad leader wants exact alignment, on the command of execution **DRESS**, he faces to the *Half Left* in marching and marches by the most direct route to a position on line with the squad, halts one step from the right flank man, and faces down the line. From his position, he verifies the alignment of the squad, directing the men to move forward or backward, as necessary, calling them by name or number: **“Private Jones, forward 2 inches;”** **“Number eight, backward 4 inches.”** The squad leader remains at attention, taking short steps to the right or left as necessary to see down the squad. Having aligned the squad, he centers himself on the right flank man by taking short steps left or right. He then faces to the *Half Right* in marching, returns to his position (center of the squad), halts perpendicular to the formation, faces to the left, and commands **Ready, FRONT**. These procedures also apply when aligning the squad at close or *Double Interval*.

b. To align the squad at *Close Interval*, the commands are **At Close Interval, Dress Right, DRESS** and **Ready, FRONT**. The movement is executed in the same manner prescribed for alignment at *Normal Interval* except that the squad members obtain *Close Interval* (Figure 6-3, page 6-6).



Figure 6-3. Alignment (Close Interval).

c. To align the squad at *Double Interval*, the commands are ***At Double Interval, Dress Right, DRESS*** and ***Ready, FRONT***. These commands are given only when the troops are unarmed or at *Sling Arms*. On the command of execution **DRESS**, each member (except the right flank man) turns his head and eyes to the right and aligns himself on the man on his right. At the same time, each member (except the right and left flank men) extends both arms and positions himself by short steps right or left until his fingertips are touching the fingertips of the members on his right and left. (The right flank man raises his left arm; the left flank man raises his right arm.)

d. To align the squad in column, the commands are **COVER** and **RECOVER**. On the command **COVER**, each member (except the number one man) raises his left arm to a horizontal position, elbow locked, fingers and thumb extended and joined, palm facing down, and obtains an arm's length plus about 6 inches (from the fingertips) to the back of the man to his front. At the same time, each man aligns himself directly behind the man to his front. To resume the *Position of Attention*, the command **RECOVER** is given. On this command, each member sharply returns to the *Position of Attention*.

6-6. MARCHING THE SQUAD

To march the squad, use the following procedures:

a. For short distances only, the squad may be marched forward while in a line formation.

b. When marching long distances, the squad is marched in column.

c. To form a column formation from a line formation, the command is ***Right, FACE***.

d. When a column formation is originated from a line formation at *Close Interval*, the squad may be marched for short distances at the *Half Step* with less than correct distance. To obtain correct distance while marching with less than correct distance, the

command is *Extend*, **MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the number one man takes one more 15-inch step and then steps off with a 30-inch step. Each squad member begins marching with a 30-inch step at the approximate point where the number one man stepped off, or as soon as correct distance has been obtained.

NOTE: See Chapter 4 for more information on marching movements.

6-7. CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF A COLUMN

To change the direction of a column, use the following procedures:

a. From the *Halt*, the command to start the squad in motion and simultaneously change the direction of march 90 or 45 degrees is *Column Right (Left)*, **MARCH** or *Column Half Right (Left)*, **MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the lead man faces to the right (left) as in marching by pivoting to the right (left) on the ball of the right foot and steps off in the indicated direction taking a 30-inch step with the left foot and continues to march. The number two man adjusts his step by lengthening or shortening as necessary to reach the approximate pivot point of the lead man. When he reaches the approximate pivot point of the lead man, he pivots to the right (left) on the ball of the lead foot taking a 30-inch step with the trail foot in the new direction. All other members step off with the left foot and continue to march forward taking 30-inch steps and execute in the same manner as the number two man in approximately the same place until the entire squad has executed the column movement.

b. To change the direction of march 90 or 45 degrees when marching, the preparatory command *Column Right (Left)* or *Column Half Right (Half Left)* is given as the foot (in the desired direction) strikes the marching surface. The command of execution **MARCH** is given the next time the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the lead man takes one additional step, pivots in the commanded direction as the pivot foot strikes the marching surface, and continues to march in the new direction. Other members continue to march forward and execute the pivot as prescribed from the *Halt*.

c. To avoid an obstacle in the line of march, the squad leader directs, **INCLINE LEFT(RIGHT)**. The lead man inclines left(right) around the obstacle and resumes the original direction. All other members follow the lead man.

6-8. MARCHING TO THE FLANK

The squad may be marched to the flank (for short distances only) when marching in column. The command for this movement is *Right (Left) Flank*, **MARCH**. The preparatory command is given as the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface, and the command of execution is given the next time the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution **MARCH**, all members take one more step, pivot 90 degrees in the commanded direction on the ball of the lead foot, and step off in the new direction with the trailing foot. As the members begin to march in the new direction, they glance out of the corner of the right eye and dress to the right.

6-9. FORMING A COLUMN OF TWOS AND RE-FORMING

To form a column of twos and re-form, use the following procedures:

a. Forming a column of twos from a file is executed only from the *Halt*. The command is ***Column of Twos to the Right (Left), MARCH***. On the preparatory command, the lead team leader commands **STAND FAST**. The trailing team leader commands ***Column Half Right (Left)***. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the trailing team leader executes a *Column Half Right (Left)*, inclines to the left or right when the correct interval is obtained, and commands ***Mark time, MARCH*** and ***Team, HALT*** to *Halt* abreast of the lead team leader.

b. Forming a file from a column of twos is executed only from the *Halt*. The command is ***File from the Left (Right), MARCH***. On the preparatory command, the lead team leader commands **FORWARD**. The trailing team leader commands **STAND FAST**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the lead team marches forward. The trailing team leader commands ***Column Half Left (Right)*** when the second man from the rear of the lead team is abreast. He gives the command **MARCH** when the last man of the lead team is abreast of him and his right foot strikes the marching surface. He then inclines right or left to follow the lead team at the correct distance.

NOTE: Commands are given over the team leader's right shoulder if the direction of movement is to the right or if the team is following an element to its right. Commands are given over the left shoulder if the direction of movement is to the left or if the team is following an element to its left.

6-10. DISMISSING THE SQUAD

The squad is dismissed with the members at *Attention*. With armed troops, the commands are ***Inspection, ARMS; Ready, Port, ARMS; Order (Sling), ARMS; and DISMISSED***. With unarmed troops, the command is **DISMISSED**.

NOTE: Unless otherwise stated (by the person in charge in his instructions before the command **DISMISSED**), the command **DISMISSED** terminates only the formation, not the duty day (AR 310-25).

Section II. STACK AND TAKE ARMS (M16-SERIES RIFLE)

The squad members execute *Stack Arms* from their positions in line formation (at *Normal Interval*) from *Order Arms*. When in line formation, the squad leader commands ***Count, OFF*** and then designates the stack men by numbers (2-5-8).

- NOTES:**
1. M4-series carbines are not compatible with the M16-series rifles when stacking arms. The two types of weapons must be stacked separately or grounded in a manner that will not damage the sights. (See Appendix D for a detailed explanation of stack arms and take arms for the M4-series carbine.)
 2. When the squad is part of a larger unit, stack arms may be executed in a column formation (when the formation consists of three or more files and the squads are at normal interval). Second or third squad is designated as the stack squad.

6-11. PREPARE SLINGS

After the stack men are designated, the squad leader commands *Prepare, SLINGS*. On the command of execution **SLINGS**, each stack man (or stack squad) grasps the barrel of his rifle with the right hand and raises the rifle vertically. With his left hand, he places the rifle butt on his right hip and cradles the rifle in the crook of his right arm. Using both hands, he adjusts the sling keeper so that a 2-inch loop is formed from the sling keeper to the upper sling swivel. As soon as the loop is prepared, he returns to *Order Arms*.

6-12. STACK ARMS

When all stack men have returned to *Order Arms*, the squad leader commands *Stack, ARMS*.

a. On the command of execution **ARMS**, each stack man grasps the barrel of his rifle with his right hand and places the rifle directly in front of and centered on his body with the sights to the rear. The rifle butt is placed on the marching surface so that the heel of the rifle butt is on line with the toes of his footgear. The stack man bends slightly forward at the waist and grasps his rifle with his left hand at the upper portion of the handguard (keeping the rifle vertical at all times). The first two fingers of the left hand hold the inner part of the loop against the rifle. The stack man reaches across the front of the rifle with his right hand, grasps the outer part of the loop, and holds it open for insertion of other rifles.

b. On the command of execution **ARMS**, the men to the right and left of the stack man perform the following movements simultaneously:

(1) The man on the stack man's right grasps the barrel of his rifle with his right hand and raises and centers his rifle with the magazine well facing to the front, wrist held shoulder high, elbow locked. With his left hand, he then grasps the handguard (midway), releases his right hand, and regrasps the rifle at the small of the stock. He lowers both arms, with elbows locked (holding the rifle in a horizontal position with the muzzle to the left and the magazine well to the front).

(2) The man on the stack man's left grasps the barrel of the rifle with his right hand and raises and centers his rifle with magazine well facing to the front, wrist held shoulder high, elbow locked. Using his left hand, he then grasps the rifle at the small of the stock, releases the right hand, and regrasps the handguard midway. He then lowers both arms, with elbows locked holding the rifle in a horizontal position with the muzzle to the right and magazine well to the front.

c. As soon as the stack man has placed his rifle in position, both men move the foot nearest the stack man half way (*Half Right* or *Half Left*) toward the stack man. The man on the stack man's left inserts the muzzle of his rifle into the loop to a point about halfway between the flash suppressor and the front sight assembly. He holds his rifle in this position until the man on the stack man's right inserts the muzzle of his rifle in a similar manner and above the other rifle muzzle.

d. Without moving the feet, both riflemen swing the butt of their rifles out and then down to the marching surface, making the stack tight with the rifle butts on line and about 2 feet from the base line. When the stack has been completed, all three men resume the *Position of Attention*.

e. Additional rifles are passed to the nearest stack on the right (right or left if stacked in column). The men with additional rifles grasp the rifle barrel with the right

hand and raise the rifle vertically with the magazine well to the front, wrist held shoulder high, elbow locked, and right arm extended to the right front. Throughout the pass, the rifle is held vertical with the magazine well to the front.

(1) The man to the left of the stack man then grasps the rifle midway at the handguard with his left hand. The man passing the additional rifle then releases the rifle and sharply returns to the *Position of Attention*. The man to the left of the stack man then moves the rifle to the right until it is centered on his body, and he grasps the rifle barrel with his right hand, wrist held shoulder high and elbow locked. He then releases the left hand and sharply returns his left hand to the left side as in the *Position of Attention*. He then moves the rifle to his right front.

(2) The stack man receives the rifle and centers it in the same manner as previously described. The man to the left of the stack man sharply returns to the *Position of Attention* after he releases the rifle. Once the stack man has centered the rifle and grasped the barrel with the right hand, he bends forward at the waist and places the rifle in the stack so that it is secure (without damaging the front sight assembly). If there are two additional rifles, the second rifle is passed in the same manner as the first.

NOTE: See Appendix B for a figure showing *Stack Arms* using the M4-series carbine.

6-13. TAKE ARMS

To *Take Arms*, the command is **Take, ARMS**. On the command of execution **ARMS**, the men return the additional rifles in the same manner as the rifles were received. The stack man secures the stack and holds the loop in the same manner as for stacking rifles. The men on the left and right step toward the stack man in the same manner as when stacking arms. Each man reaches down and regrasps his rifle (one hand at the small of the stock and one hand midway of the handguard) and brings it to the horizontal position. The man on the right frees his rifle first and resumes *Order Arms*. The man on the left frees his rifle and resumes *Order Arms*. The stack man cradles his rifle and adjusts the sling and sling keeper to its original position and then resumes *Order Arms*.