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GENERAL ORDERS

AND

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MOVEMENTS

AND

FIELD EXERCISE

OF THE

INFANTRY.

London:

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HIS Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, in consequence of his late Inspection, having thought it necessary, for the future Guidance of the Generals, Officers, and Soldiers, to give out the following Orders—Is pleased to direct that the same be communicated to all the Corps of Cavalry and Infantry in the Service; and that they shall be entered, observed, and considered as Standing Orders, in further Explanation of His Majesty's Regulations for the Field Exercise and Movements of the Troops.

By Command of His Royal Highness,

The Commander in Chief,

HARRY CALVERT

Adjutant General.

House Guards,
Sept. 1, 1804.

GENERAL ORDERS,

&c.

Augustine Pitt-Rivers

1. HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF, having perceived in the exercises of the infantry several deviations from His Majesty's Regulations—directs the strictest conformity thereto to be observed in every particular of execution; and again requires from all Officers, as the only method of obtaining and preserving this essential object, a constant reference to the Book of Regulations in the Instruction of their men, and enjoins the perfecting of them critically in one evolution before they proceed upon another, and that in the order there laid down.—So fully are the modes explained, and so few are the leading principles on which the whole are founded, that nothing but an absolute inattention to the reading, practice, and principles of the rules prescribed, and the want of knowing and feeling the necessity of uniformity of proceeding in all movements of the battalion or line, can account for the differences that have arisen, so much to the detriment of the service; which may however be soon remedied by a proper exertion of that intelligence and energy which every Officer and Soldier should possess.

2. The directions for the position of the soldier, the perfect squareness to the front of each man's figure, whether with arms or without, marching or halted, and the low, unconstrained carriage of the firelock, must be rigorously observed as fundamental principles. (Sec. 1. 23.)

Position,
Firelock,
&c.

3. The established rules for wheeling, filing, marching, &c. to be more punctually practised, and every possible method to be taken to imprint the necessity and confirm the practice of true wheeling distances being preserved in open column. The ordered times of march and length of step to be scrupulously observed, and no others to be taught or

Wheeling.
Filing.
Marching.

prac-

practised. On a perfect uniformity in these the combined movements of infantry, in great or small bodies, entirely depend. In instruction and in correction of the march, the aid of the use of plummets, as is prescribed, is most essential. (Sec. 17. &c.)

Music.
Drum.
Plummet.

4. The use of music or the drum in instruction, or to regulate the time of march of troops in movement, is positively forbid; and in marches of parade, where the music is allowed to play, it must scrupulously observe the ordered times of march, whether *ordinary* or quick, and use no tunes but such as are particularly adapted to such times of march. The bands and fifes are to be trained to such habit, and the leader is not to be allowed to trust to his own ear or apprehension, but at all times to have a plummet, and to make frequent use of it, in order to preserve the correct time. When the battalion is not in movement, as on the parade, or on other occasions, when the music is ordered or allowed to play, there is no necessity for its being confined by the before rule.

Instruction
of Officers.

5. Unless the training and instruction of Officers and Non-commissioned Officers individually and collectively keeps pace with that of the men, all attempts at improvement must be ineffectual. His Royal Highness therefore orders, that Field Officers of regiments shall, in the first instance, comply with, enforce, and pursue, the course directed by the 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th Sections of His Majesty's Regulations: they will soon reap the benefit of their exertions, and will find that intelligent and active Officers speedily form, and preserve in a state of discipline, willing, obedient, and well trained soldiers. His Royal Highness will hold Field Officers strictly responsible for any want of knowledge or exertion that may be apparent among the Officers under their command, as it can only arise from a neglect of acting up to the rules and duties which the service demands from them. For this purpose the Abstract Regulations of June 24th, 1801, of which each Serjeant and Officer was ordered to provide a copy, are particularly applicable and essential.

6. In instruction, and in the exercise of a battalion, five or six strong strokes on the drum, given in the exact times of the swing of the plummet, and just before the word march is pronounced, cannot fail of confirming the measure of time on every mind, and transferring it to the step.

Commands

7. The words of command, as marked in the Regulations, are

are strictly to be made use of, and no other substituted in their room; they must be rapidly given but may be abridged by the omission of expletives, and of battalion, platoon, division, company, on most occasions, where it is obvious that battalion, division, company, platoon, &c. is the body from which the operation is required.

8. Words of execution, such as *march*, *halt*, &c. are to be pronounced short, loud, and sharp, and by no means to be lengthened out, or given in a drawing tone of voice; they may be repeated more than once, if not instantly acted upon. Commands

9. Precision of movement depends altogether on the instant circulation and repetition of commands of *execution*, which can only be effected by the constant attention of Officers to the point from which they may be expected to be given; unless the whole of a body that is truly formed is put in *motion* or halted at the same instant: if a column, it will be extended or contracted; if a line, it will be ill dressed, and with false intervals. Commands

10. The necessity of the quick observance of commands, and the repetition of all words of execution, in a line or column, are obvious and indispensable; as is consequently the constant attention which Commanders of every part of a line must give to the point where the Chief Commander himself is (who can never be stationary); from which point every operation must generally be expected to begin, or to be ordered. Commands

11. It is impossible to ascertain the words of command to be given in all cases; where such are not pointed out, they must depend upon the circumstances of the situation, and be short and expressive of what is to be done. Where they are not comprehended, they must be repeated, and no operation must be begun till its intention is understood, or the nature of its execution such as cannot well be mistaken; otherwise, that disorder, which may be originally prevented, is not easily remedied, if once it has taken place.

12. When a line halted is to be put in motion, and before the word *march*, a drum may beat a march, or give a roll from whatever battalion is to direct: such signal will be considered as announcing the directing battalion, and such battalion, during the march, will occasionally repeat. If necessary, during the march, from obstacles of ground, to change the directing battalion, the drum from the new battalion will announce such change. Every battalion in line will always March of
Line.

ways have a drum in readiness behind its colours, for the purpose of giving such signal when so ordered.

Signals.

13. In the exercise of a brigade or line of infantry or cavalry, no signal of the drum, or bugle, or trumpet, are to be given or repeated by individual corps. They alone come from the battalion or squadron of direction, where the Commander himself is, as warnings to the Commandants of corps. The only exceptions are signals to cease firing, which can never, when given, produce inconvenience, as it can immediately be ordered to proceed if necessary.

Commanding Officers

14. Commanding Officers of regiments, brigades, or larger bodies, are moveable according to circumstances, and should by no means consider the centre of such bodies as their general post in exercise or movements or expect by the exertion of one voice, from one fixed situation, to command and direct the whole; their presence is more frequently required near one or the other flank; in general, they should be at the *beginning* and *conducting point* of movement or formation, and to that address their orders by voice or message; for if that point is led or placed in the direction it should take, there is little danger of the other parts of the body not properly and successively conforming to it.

Commanding Officers

15. If several regiments exercise or manœuvre together the Commanding Officer of the line or column gives, when necessary, his *short* orders of caution or execution to the Commander of the regulating battalion of the line, or of the head of the *column*, where he himself generally is, and sometimes to the Commander of the battalion, to which he is then nearest; and each battalion Commander repeats them loud without delay. When any complicated or combined movement is to be made which requires previous explanation, it must be communicated clearly to the Commander of corps by detached Officers, before its execution can be ordered to commence. The several Chiefs of Brigades, &c. watch over and direct the interior movements of their respective bodies; they repeat the general orders of execution given, if they see that it is necessary, and announce such preparatory ones as are verbally sent to them.

Commander.

16. The Commander of a line or column will always himself loudly announce his commands of execution, as *march* or *halt*, and be assisted in so doing by those that surround him; and the motion of the hat or sword will at the same time greatly aid. Commanders of battalions will, without waiting

ing for each other, endeavour in the same moment to repeat them as in a volley. If Officers are quick, observant, firm, and decided, in their commands, such repetition will be instantaneous.

17. The Commander of a brigade, by being generally in front of his brigade, and towards its directing flank, and by frequently himself stopping in the true direction of the line, will, with a glance of the eye, see if his regiments are before or behind it, and prevent any considerable deviation taking place, by checking it in its beginning. The same directions apply to the Commander of each battalion. Commander.

18. When the general order is not heard or understood by part of a line, each battalion Commander (where the intention is obvious) will conform, as quickly as possible, to the movements which he sees executed to his right or left, according to the point from whence the movement begins. But platoon Officers execute only on the orders of their battalion Commander. Commander.

19. The Field Officers and Adjutants of the battalion must at all times be mounted, in order the more readily to give ground in movements; speedily to correct mistakes; to circulate orders; to dress and preserve pivots when they ought to cover in column in a straight line, or when entered on an alignment, on which they are to form; and especially to take care when the column halts, that they are most speedily adjusted before wheeling into line. These operations in the movements of the battalion, when connected with others in line or column, no dismounted Officer can effectually perform; nor in that situation can he see the faults, or give aids which his duty requires. The direction of lines of formation and movement must be taken and given by the mounted Field Officers and Adjutants of the infantry. Where a brigade or a considerable body is acting, camp colours are improper and insufficient for this purpose; and the horse's head is the object which the pivot flank leaders in column pass close to on their outward hand. For the accurate performance of this important point of duty, it is necessary that the horses should be steady, active, and well trained, as their riders must be alert, intelligent, and well grounded in the true principles on which the different manœuvres are executed. Mounted Officers.

20. Whenever a battalion, or several, are moving in column, and particularly so when they are entering, Mounted Officers.
 B have

have entered, on a direction in which they are afterwards to wheel into line; all mounted Officers are on the pivot flank of the column, each of his own battalion watching that the pivots move truly, and do not partake of any false direction that may be given by those before them. For this purpose, whenever a straight line is pursuing, they occasionally, individually, and separately, halt (with the horse's head in that line), allow four or five, or more, divisions to pass them correctly, then move on, and continue repeating this operation during the march: this being performed in each battalion, and the General Officers attending to the whole, will preserve a column of any extent in such perfect order as instantly to form in line whenever it is ordered to halt.

Mounted
Officers.

21. The soldierlike operations of great bodies so entirely depend on the necessary aids, and lines of movement being quickly and correctly given by mounted Officers of all descriptions, that their attention should be peculiarly given to the principles and practice necessary to this end, which, though simple, demand great readiness and exactness. The Sections 82, 83, 84, 85, 179, 180, 181, of His Majesty's Regulations, are more minutely descriptive of the particulars, and should, be studied and well understood. In prolonging a line general reference is to be made not only from battalion to battalion, but also to more distant objects that are known to be truly placed in it, and thereby partial deviations are not followed but corrected. Regimental Officers and Non-commissioned Officers should be much exercised in prolonging lines, covering in file at column distances, and quickly dressing up, or back, on new given lines.

Mounted
Officers.

22. The mounted Officers of infantry, and Markers of cavalry, will, at all times, that their corps, or its parts, enter and halt in *succession* on a new line, place themselves on that very line (which is determined and made evident to them by the several known objects already in it), and thereby become useful fixed points to halt by; and they will more particularly endeavour to ascertain the centre and flanks of every considerable halting body, whereby the intermediate parts will easily be regulated.

Mounted
Officers.

23. Mounted Officers that are behind the flanks of battalions marching in line, will frequently come through the intervals a little before the line when in movement, to see and correct such flanks if necessary, and prevent them from pushing forward; and when the battalion or line halts, and
firing

fring is not immediately to follow, the mounted Officers come quickly through the front, and immediately adjust their battalions as ordered. When the march is to be resumed, or firing is ordered, they return behind the line.

24. When a new line to be marked or formed upon is taken up by Markers, Commanding Officers of Regiments, and all other persons whatever, will take care that during such operation they do not stand upon, or interfere with; the direction of that line. In general, too many Markers are thrown out: the Regulations are full and explicit on that subject, and must be strictly observed. The horse's head of a mounted Marker, and the man's breast of a foot Marker, give the line on which the troops move or form. Markers.

25. When the line advances, it is necessary that a mounted Officer, especially named for that duty, should at all times be stationed in the rear of the colours of each battalion. His office is to attend to the squareness and precision of the march of the Serjeants, who are advanced for the purpose of leading the battalion, and to assure their constant attention to the advanced Serjeants of the Battalion of direction. The duty here enjoined becomes, in the instance of the mounted Officer stationed in the rear of the battalion of direction, of the highest importance, involving in it the regularity of the advance of the whole line, and assuring the success of the movement, which will depend on the advance being made with accuracy on the given point. It is therefore essential that the Officer, to whom it is intrusted, should bestow his whole attention exclusively on this one object; and in the movement of large bodies, it may frequently be to some Officer of the General Staff that the Commander may intrust the execution of this duty. March in
Line.

26. The strictest attention to the rules laid down for the march in line is to be given. It solely depends on the eye, and quickness of Commanding Officers, to prevent at any time a departure of their regiments from the general line, although the neighbouring ones to them may not be correctly in it. Any corps moving on a height commands so advantageously the general direction, that it can have no difficulty in preserving it, or lining with any correct part, thereby assisting others in less favourable situations: for the same reason can a line be formed or conducted across undulating ground, with as much facility and exactness as on a perfect plain.

27. Battalions are to a line what companies are to a bat- March—
Halt of line

talion. Not only the whole divisions of a battalion, but the whole battalions of a line, should *march* off, and *halt* at the same instant. To insure this in the exercise of very considerable bodies, signals of a cannon are often given for such purpose. In most situations, the quick circulation of verbal commands must be sufficient.

Halt of line 28. Although every corps of a line ought to be in its own true situation, and halt at the general word; yet if any one is behind the battalion of direction when that word is given, the leader must bring it up before he halts it. The quick circulation of the words *march* and *halt* is what alone can produce precision in a line, and the catching up of these with promptitude depends as much on the eye as the ear.

Mounted Officers. 29. Whenever a dressing is to be made or corrected, it will be effected with promptitude and precision by the mounted Officers placing themselves in the true line before each flank and before the centre; when the dressing is accomplished they will immediately return behind the battalion.

Halt in line or Column. 30. When troops are halted, explanatory short cautions are sometimes proper before they are put in march; but when they are in motion, and in situations where perfect correctness is expected, as in the march in line, and in the prolonging of an alignment, no caution should precede the word *halt*, but the whole body should at once firmly halt. This is to be understood of a column of manœuvre; but where a column of march is unavoidably, from impediments of the route, opened out, and its head stops in order to remedy such extension, or to form in line, the several rear battalions will be halted successively at their just distances.

Nature of Command 31. There are many situations in the movements of great bodies, where *commands* that are not immediately to influence the whole are not given loud, but low and quietly, to the directing body alone, to whose situation the rest by the eye conform: as when the head division of an open column is ordered to halt, that the rest of the divisions may move on, and successively stop in close column; and on all occasions where parts only of a large body are to march or halt successively, Generals and Commanding Officers of regiments should have an attention to give their commands in such manner as not to produce an alteration in those points that are not meant to be influenced by them at that instant.

Assembly from Co- 32. Where a large body in marching in column or columns through narrow ground, and when it is to assemble beyond the defile

defile in several lines or bodies behind each other, such parts column of are not to begin to form at the time when the leading one March. does; but the head of each line or body is successively come up to the ground on which it is to stand, and when it there halts, its proper followers (and not before) move into line with it, and thereby do not impede such other bodies as are behind them, and which are still in the defile, and have to perform the same operation.

33. The position of regiments and squadrons in brigade, is frequently to be changed at exercise, in order that they may be accustomed to move with equal precision either on a flank, or in the centre of a line.

34. It is ever to be remembered that the established order of formation for the infantry is in three ranks, which is not to be departed from except in light infantry battalions, or in small or detached corps acting as such, without the especial permission of the Commanding or Reviewing General.

35. Officers do not sufficiently attend to the difference Difference of wheel & shoulder forward. between the change of direction of a column in march made by a *fixed* and regular wheel; and that by a moveable one, or *shoulder forward*.

In the first case, one flank remains *fixed*, while the other completes the wheel at an increased pace (Section 51); by such wheels should a column always enter on an alignment on which it is to form, and indispensably so, if the necessary wheel exceeds one sixth of the circle; for the acquired pause after the wheel allows time for each division to step off from the point of entry with exact precision of pace and distance.—In this case the pivot flank enters at or very near the point of intersection.

In the second case, both flanks continue in motion.—*Shoulder forward* applies to a small front, and to a column of march where the change of direction is not abrupt, or very considerable, and can be made gradually without altering the time, step, or distances of the *pivot* flanks. In proportion to the front of the column so changing, and the degree of change to be made, must be the sweep made by both flanks, and in all cases the reverse flank conforms to the pace and guidance of the *pivot* flank, so as to be steadied and dressed by it as soon as possible after entering the new direction. (Section 21, 52, 80.) In this manner the head of the column can never enter at the point of intersection, but must begin circling at some distance from it, and enter in
pro-

proportion at an advanced point of the new line, leaving that of intersection behind it.

In sharp transitions made in straight lines from one direction to another, the *fixed wheels* of divisions must take place. In winding situations of march, the column is conducted by *shoulder forward*; but can never enter on an alignment of formation, with the steadiness and precision that attends wheeling into it.

Marching
part a Re-
viewing
General.

36. If a body, battalion, or *parade*, composed of unequal guards, and divisions is to *pass*—The right in front.

After wheeling backward on the parade—moving in column—and column wheeling to the left, the pivot flanks are directed on a point of intersection in the passing line sufficiently distant from the person to be passed.

When the leading division is at a distance equal to its own front from the point of intersection, it is wheeled to the left, and its right flank is halted near to that point, but leaving space for the pivot Officer, who shifts to the right and is upon the line. The division moves along the line, followed by the other divisions in the same manner, who successively wheel to the left, and according to their strength, nearer or further from the point of intersection, so as to finish with their right in the line of passing. The ranks are opened and closed as prescribed, and the column continues to be directed by its right flanks, till it arrives at the point where it is to change direction to the left.

The leading division wheels to the left, prolongs the line, and the other divisions successively wheel, and follow when the left pivot of each comes into the line; and the column thus resumes its original dressing by the left, or proper pivot flanks, and is in a situation to wheel to the left into line.

37. In exercising or commanding a brigade or line, there must be quick perception and prompt determination, but no great exertion of voice is necessary, except in the executive words of *halt* and *march*, and in this assistance may be given by those that are around. All movements and changes of position are effected by the quietly but quickly placing of directing parts, and their corresponding aids, in certain situations to which successively, and in a great measure by the eye, the rest of the body quickly conform. The Commander himself is always at or near the point which determines the movement of the rest of the body. He is with the battalion of di-

direction of the line: with the head of the column, with the leading echelon.

38. If any division of either is to be placed, in order to effect a general or partial change of position, he himself places such division; notifies his intention to those that are near him, and orders the corresponding movement to commence. He leads the column in such directions as he chooses, halts it, corrects pivots on such points as he determines, and wheels it into line, without the necessity of any general, loud, or previous cautions. He wheels a division of the line: half wheels the other divisions towards it: and at the word *march*, by the echelon march, a new situation of the line is taken. In the same manner he changes a division of the column, and the remainder immediately conform to it. He moves on quietly from a flank or centre of the line by battalion or greater echellons, and again halts and forms when he pleases. The formations and deployments of the close columns are personally directed by him.

In this manner, by gradually leading the body through each of the stages of the operation, and being in a situation to correct great inaccuracies should they occur, the intended result is obtained by the quick conformity of all to what evidently appears to be the proposed end, and this without previous general explanation, or the necessity of detaching messengers, except in cases where particular intricacy arises. By the same means are brigades managed, and also battalions, the Commanders of which soon know or perceive the general intention, and conduct their bodies through the several stages that lead to its attainment.

39. The battalions of columns *passing* in review order, are on no account to increase the distance between their divisions, or between each other, or occupy more ground than they stood on in line; rather then increase the intervals, whatever ought therein to pass, must if necessary be compressed or doubled up, or partly removed to the outward flank. An open column of march is at all times to be in such situation, that at any instant, on the word *halt*, *wheel into line*, *march*, being given, the line may be correctly formed.

40. At the general salute on receiving His Majesty, the music of the line play *God save the King*. When His Majesty passes along the line, each Regiment or Battalion successively play its own march, or such other as it shall be ordered; and the same is done by each regiment successively when

Commanding General.

Columns in passing.

Review, or Inspection.

when it passes His Majesty. This also takes place at every review or inspection.—Immediately after the band has passed, it may be permitted to wheel out to the left till the regiment has passed: it then ceases (that of the succeeding one commencing), follows its regiment, and regains the front, and resumes its place in column.

41. When a battalion or line is formed to receive His Majesty, Commanding Officers of Battalions are at the head of the colours; every other individual at the post assigned him regimentally, and ranks at open order.

General
Officers.

42. The Major-General of a brigade is advanced before the line of Officers, and before the right of his brigade. His Staff are in line immediately behind him a horse's length from each other.

43. The Lieutenant-General is before the right of his division, wing, or command, and his Staff immediately behind him in line, a horse's length from each other.

44. Although His Majesty generally arrives opposite the centre of a single regiment, yet in an extensive line he may be often expected at or near the right or left, and in that situation to receive the general salute.—Wherever His Majesty does arrive, he will be there received, and from thence attended by the General commanding the whole.

45. When His Majesty passes along the line from right to left, he will be accompanied by the Lieutenant Generals, and Major-Generals, each for the extent of his command. And should His Majesty pass from left to right, the General Officers will be ready at their several lefts for the above purposes.

46. Major-Generals pass at the head of their brigade; Lieutenant-Generals at the head of their commands; taking care that neither themselves, their Staff, or the Artillery, occasion a lengthening out of the column in march.

Order.

47. There are few situations for which the Regulations have not provided. On the whole, His Royal Highness directs the strictest conformity to them.—He trusts that every Officer, according to orders, is provided with a copy, that by a constant reference thereto, and a study of the principles on which they are founded, their just application and prompt execution may become habitual. The movements and operations of cavalry and infantry are so analagous, and so combined, that a knowledge of both is essential to every Officer of each service, and should be studied in elucidation of one another.