

BASIC ARMY DRILL

***A REFERENCE FOR SOLDIERS OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE GUARD***



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SECTION 1: BASIC ARMY DRILL

Introduction

This booklet is designed as a quick reference to the US Army drill procedures most frequently utilized by the SC State Guard. The source reference for Sections 1-6 is US Army Training Circular 3-21.5 (May 2021). The ceremony described in Section 7 follows US Army drill protocols but is specific to the SC State Guard.

Drill Commands

Most drill movements use a two-part command. The first part of the command is called the *preparatory command*. It alerts the troops to what is coming. The second part of the command is the *command of execution*. There is a one-count pause between the two parts of the command. Upon hearing the command of execution, the soldier will perform the movement. Soldiers do not move until the command of execution is complete.

Some drill movements use a combined command, where the preparatory command and command of execution are combined. At Ease, Fall In, and Rest are examples of combined commands.

Types of Formations

Most Army drill is executed from one of two types of formations: the line formation or the column formation. The line formation consists of one or more ranks of soldiers standing abreast and facing the commander. The column formation consists of one or more files of soldiers standing one behind the other.

The discussion of Fall In (later in this booklet) explains how troops are assembled into a line formation. A line formation may be changed into a column formation by giving the command Right Face.

Line formations are used for accountability, instruction, inspection, and ceremonial purposes. Column formations are used when troops must be marched for distances longer than a few steps.

Terminology

Cadence: the rhythm of marching, measured in steps per minute.

Cover: aligning oneself directly behind the person in front of you.

Dress: aligning oneself laterally with the person or persons to your right.

File: a line of soldiers standing one behind the other. Soldiers in file are in a column formation.

Flank: the right or left side of a formation, as observed by someone standing in the formation.

Formation: an orderly assemblage of military personnel.

Rank: a line of soldiers standing side by side. Soldiers in ranks are in a line formation.

SECTION 2: STATIONARY DRILL MOVEMENTS

Position of Attention

This is the basic position of all Army drill. There are two commands that call troops to this position: one is *Fall In* (more on this later), and the other is *Attention*. On the command of *Attention*, the soldier will:

- a. Stand with heels together, feet spread at a 45-degree angle.
- b. Legs are straight, but knees not locked.
- c. The belly is pulled in, the chest is out, and the shoulders are square.
- d. The arms hang naturally by the side.
- e. The hands are cupped, thumb is aligned alongside the first joint of the index finger.
- f. The chin is pulled in, the head and eyes are to the front.
- g. Remain silent and motionless. The eyes do not move.

Parade Rest

Parade Rest is a modified position of Attention. It is more formal than restful. Parade Rest is a two-part command: *Parade* is the preparatory command and *Rest* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *Rest*, the soldier will:

- a. Move the left foot approximately 10 inches to the left of the right foot.
- b. Stack the hands in the small of the back, with back of the left hand centered on the belt.
- c. The right palm faces out, fingers are extended and joined, and thumbs are interlocked.

At Parade Rest, the head and eyes are at the position of Attention and the soldier is silent and motionless.

Stand At Ease

Stand At Ease is a position that helps facilitate communications when the commander wishes to impart brief instructions. Stand At Ease is a two-part command: *Stand At* is the preparatory command, and *Ease* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *Ease*, the soldier will execute Parade Rest, except the soldier will move head and eyes to follow the person who gave the command.

At Ease

At Ease the most commonly used rest position. The command is a combined command, with the preparatory command and command of execution given together: *At Ease*. On the command *At Ease*, the soldier will:

- a. Move the left foot about 10 inches to the left of the right foot;
- b. Stack the hands behind the back in a relaxed position, right hand on top, palm facing out;
- c. Interlock the thumbs, remain standing and silent.
- d. Limited movement is allowed, but the right foot remains planted in place.

Rest

Rest is the most relaxed drill position. The command is simply *Rest*. On the command of *Rest*, the soldier must keep his right foot in place, but he may eat, drink, smoke, or speak quietly unless otherwise directed.

When commander wishes to end the Rest session, he will command *At Ease*. That is the signal to put up food, drinks, etc. and prepare for formal activity. The commander will give the troops adequate time to prepare before giving the command *Attention*.

Right Face/Left Face

These commands are used to change the direction of a soldier or group of soldiers 90 degrees to the right or left. Right Face is a two-part command, with *Right* being the preparatory command and *Face* being the command of execution. *Note: Left Face works exactly the same way, except the directions are reversed.*

On the preparatory command of *Right*, the soldier will shift his weight onto the heel of the right foot and the ball of the left foot. On the command of execution *Face*, the soldier will:

- a. Pivot 90 degrees to the Right without lifting either foot from the ground. (The left heel will naturally lift off the marching surface, but the toe will remain on the ground.)
- b. Once the pivot is complete, bring the trailing foot forward and assume the position of Attention.

This is a two-count movement. Count one is the pivot; count two is bringing the trailing foot alongside the lead foot, returning to the position of Attention.

About Face

About Face is a command used to turn stationary troops 180 degrees. About Face is a two-part command, with *About* being the preparatory command and *Face* being the command of execution. On the command of execution *Face*, soldiers will:

- a. Place the right toe behind and slightly to the left of the left heel;
- b. Pivot 180 degrees to the right, keeping the arms close to the sides.

This is a two-count movement. Count one is placement of the right toe behind the left heel; count two is the pivot. When done correctly, the soldier will finish at the position of Attention.

Note: Correct placement of the right toe is the key to this movement. If you do not end up at the position of Attention when the movement is complete, experiment with toe placement. Once you find the correct placement, practice to develop muscle memory.

Hand Salute

The command for a hand salute is *Present Arms*. *Present* is the preparatory command and *Arms* is the command of execution. Present Arms is a one-count movement. On the command of execution *Arms*, a soldier wearing headgear with a visor will:

- a. Raise the right hand sharply, fingers extended and joined, palm down, placing the tip of forefinger on the visor slightly to the right of the right eye.
- b. The hand, wrist, and forearm will be straight from the tip of the fingers to the point of the elbow.
- c. The elbow is inclined slightly forward, and the upper arm will be horizontal to the ground.
- d. The outer edge of the palm is canted slightly down.

When the soldier is wearing no headgear, or headgear without a visor, the forefinger of the right hand will be placed slightly to the right of the right eyebrow. When a soldier is wearing eyeglasses and no headgear, the right index finger is placed at the joint of the temple piece.

The command to lower the salute is Order Arms. *Order* is the preparatory command and *Arms* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *Arms*, the soldier will lower the right hand directly, returning to the position of Attention.

Note: A sharp salute speaks to a soldier's professionalism. Practice in front of a mirror.

SECTION 3: BASIC MARCHING MOVEMENTS

All marching movements executed from the halt begin at the position of Attention. The first step is always with the left foot, except when the command is Right Step March. Normal marching is executed at quick time, a cadence of 120 steps per minute; double-time marching is done at 180 steps per minute.

The length of a normal forward marching step is 30 inches, although the commander may order a 15-inch half-step. A backward marching step is 15 inches. Fifteen-inch steps are only used for short distances.

If troops must move for more than a few steps, the march is done in a *column formation*. The commander will first order *Fall In* (see Basic Formations below) to assemble the troops into a line formation, then give the command *Right Face*. This puts the troops in a column formation, ready to march.

Forward March

The command to begin marching is Forward March. *Forward* is the preparatory command and *March* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *March*, all personnel will step off with a full 30-inch step and continue to march until ordered otherwise.

During the march, the arms will swing naturally 9 inches to the front and 6 inches to the rear, with the elbows flexing slightly. The upper body will otherwise remain at the position of Attention.

While marching, each soldier will walk directly behind the person in front of him. This is called “covering.” The correct distance between soldiers in a column formation is approximately 36 inches (one arm length plus 6 inches).

Halt

To cease marching, the command is *Halt*. It is usually prefaced by a preparatory command identifying the unit *ie* squad, platoon, group, etc. The preparatory command (*Squad*) is given as either foot hits the ground; the command of execution *Halt* is given the next time that foot hits the ground.

Halt is executed in two counts. On the command of execution *Halt*, the soldier will:

- a. Take one more 30-inch step.
- b. Bring the trailing foot alongside the lead foot, coming to the position of Attention.

Marching in Place

Marching in place is a way of maintaining the marching cadence but stopping the forward movement of the column. The command is Mark Time March; *Mark Time* is the preparatory command and *March* is the command of execution.

The preparatory command *Mark Time* is given as either foot strikes the ground; the command of execution *March* is given the next time that foot strikes the ground. On the command of execution *March*, troops will take one more step, bring the trailing foot alongside the lead foot and begin to march in place.

When marching in place, troops will alternately lift each foot approximately 2 inches off the ground. Arms will continue to swing naturally 9 inches to the front and 6 inches to the rear.

Facing in Marching

Facing in Marching is a movement used in maneuvers like breaking ranks and inspections. In these applications, there is no command; the movement is simply used as a means of changing direction at the initiation of a march from the halt.

To Face to the Right in Marching, the soldier will:

- a. Shift his weight to the right foot.
- b. Simultaneously make a right pivot while stepping off to the right using a cross-over step with the left foot.
- c. When the cross-over step is complete, continue to march.

To Face to the Left in Marching, the soldier will:

- a. Shift his weight to the right foot.
- b. Simultaneously make a left pivot while stepping off to the left with the left foot.
- c. When the pivot step is complete, continue to march.

SECTION 4: MANUAL OF THE GUIDON

The guidon is a swallowtail flag used as a unit identification symbol. It is mounted on an eight-foot tall staff and carried by a soldier called the guidon bearer. When the unit is in formation, the guidon bearer always faces in the same direction the unit is facing. When the unit is inside a building, the guidon is displayed outside.

The guidon bearer is a position of honor. The bearer should be an exemplary soldier, both in appearance and proficiency in guidon procedures.

Order Guidon (Position of Attention)

The guidon bearer will be at the position of Attention, except the right thumb will be aligned along the outside of the right leg and the fingers of the right hand will be extended and joined, pointing downward. The guidon staff will rest in the “U” formed between the thumb and fingers. The staff will be vertical with the ferrule resting on the marching surface, just touching the outside of the ball of the bearer’s right foot.

Facing Movements

On the preparatory command for any facing movement, the guidon bearer will lift the ferrule approximately 1” off the marching surface by bending the right arm slightly

On the command of execution, the bearer will execute the facing movement as in individual drill, lowering the ferrule to the marching surface as soon as the movement is complete

The guidon bearer will keep the staff vertical throughout the movement

Parade Rest, Stand At Ease

On the preparatory command of *Parade* or *Stand At*, the guidon bearer will slide the right hand up the staff until the forearm is horizontal, grasping the staff firmly. The upper arm should remain tight to the bearer’s right side and the staff should remain vertical.

On the command of execution, the bearer will:

- a. thrust the staff forward until the right arm is fully extended, keeping the ferrule in place on the marching surface
- b. simultaneously execute the other elements of the movement as in individual drill.

At Ease

Since At Ease is a combined command, there is no preparatory command. On hearing the command *At Ease*, the guidon bearer will thrust the staff forward as described for Parade Rest and execute At Ease as in individual drill.

Carry Guidon

This position prepares the guidon bearer to execute marching commands from the Halt. It gets the guidon off the ground and into a marching position.

Upon hearing the preparatory marching commands *Forward*, *Open Ranks*, or *Close Ranks*, the guidon bearer will:

- a. Reach across his body with his left hand, forearm horizontal, and grasp the staff firmly
- b. Raise the staff 6" off the marching surface, allowing the staff to slide through the right fingers
- c. Regrasp the staff with the right hand, with the thumb in front of the staff and pointed downward. The thumb should be aligned along the center of the outside of the right leg.
- d. Upon hearing the command of execution *March*, the guidon bearer will bring his left arm smartly back to the left side and simultaneously step off in accordance with the marching order

Upon hearing the command Halt, the guidon bearer will come to a halt, reach across the body with the left arm, grasping the staff and lowering it to marching surface. He will then return to the position of Order Guidon.

Present Arms

Upon hearing the preparatory command *Present*, the guidon bearer will:

- a. Grasp the staff with the right hand and begin lifting vertically, bending the right arm until the right hand is level with the shoulder
- b. Simultaneously reach across the body with the left hand, grasping the staff with palm to rear, guiding the staff vertically.
- c. When complete, the left hand will be grasping the staff above the bearer's head. This position is called Raised Guidon.

Upon hearing the command of execution *Arms*, the guidon bearer will:

- a. Lower the guidon to the front, maintaining the grasp of both right and left hands, until the staff is horizontal and the ferrule end of the staff is under the bearer's right arm
- b. Release the grasp of the left hand and return the left arm smartly to the left side

Order Arms

Upon hearing the preparatory command *Order*, the guidon bearer will return to the position of Raised Guidon by reversing the steps outlined above.

Upon hearing the command of execution *Arms*, the guidon bearer will gently lower the ferrule to the marching surface, returning to the position of Order Guidon.

SECTION 5: BASIC FORMATIONS

Fall In/Fall Out

Troops usually assemble in a *line formation* where soldiers are arranged in one or more ranks (lines) facing the commander. A rank consists of up 8-12 soldiers standing abreast of each other.

To assemble a group of soldiers into a formation, the command is Fall In. It is given as a combined command. Upon hearing the command *Fall In*, soldiers will double-time to their position in the formation.

The first rank (first squad) Falls In as follows:

- a. The right flank person on the first rank is the base man. He positions himself so that the unit, when assembled, will be three steps in front of and centered on the commander.
- b. The base man comes to the position of Attention and raises his left arm horizontally to shoulder level, palm down, fingers extended and joined. His head and eyes are to the front.
- c. The second person positions himself so that his right shoulder touches the base man's outstretched fingertip, turning his head to the right and aligning himself with the base man. At the same time, he raises his left arm to shoulder level, palm down, fingers extended and joined.
- d. As soon as the second person positions himself with the correct lateral distance, he turns head and eyes to the front and assumes the position of Attention. The base man drops his left arm.
- e. All members of the first rank will establish their positions in a similar fashion, dropping their arms and assuming the position of Attention as soon as alignment is established.

The second squad executes in essentially the same manner, except:

- a. The right flank person (squad leader) of the second rank positions himself directly behind the first squad leader at an approximate distance of 36 inches. This distance is determined by visual estimation. The squad leader DOES NOT lift his arm to estimate distance.
- b. All squad members position themselves directly behind the corresponding member of the first squad. This is called "covering." They DO NOT lift their left arms.
- c. They glance to the right to insure lateral alignment, then assume the position of Attention.

Additional squads execute in the same manner as the second squad.

To dismiss the formation, the command is *Dismissed*. Upon hearing the command *Dismissed*, those in formation are immediately dismissed to go about their assigned duties.

Note: Under certain circumstances, the unit may form in a column formation. For more information, see TC 3-21.5, Section 8-3 (a).

Positions of Key Personnel in a Line Formation

In most SC State Guard formations, the formation is initially convened (“called”) by a senior enlisted person, usually the First Sergeant or Sergeant Major. When formed, the unit will be positioned three steps in front of, and centered on, the NCO who gave the command to Fall In.

If a guidon bearer is present, he/she will be positioned one step in front of and two 15” left steps from the person convening the formation. The guidon bearer, like the unit, will be facing the NCO.

Once the unit is formed, the NCO will about face and await the commanding officer. The officer will approach from the *left flank* and position himself three steps in front of the NCO. The NCO will salute and report “Sir, the command is formed.” The commander will return the salute and instruct the NCO to “Post.”

The NCO will drop his salute, face to the right as in marching, and *incline around the right flank* of the formation. He will assume his post one step to the rear of the formation and centered.

When the NCO is ordered to “Post”, the guidon bearer will step forward three steps.

When the commander has finished addressing the troops, he may dismiss the formation or he may return control to the senior NCO. If turning the formation over to the NCO, the commander will call “First Sergeant (or Sergeant Major).” The NCO will come to attention, face to the right as in marching, *incline around the right side* of the formation, and present himself three steps in front of the commander.

Salutes are exchanged. The commander will face to the right as in marching and depart in the direction of the *left flank* of the formation. Once the commander has cleared the area, the NCO will face about and dismiss the formation.

Note: Officers approach and depart the formation from the left side, and NCOs travel around the right flank. When the officer is in charge, his position is six steps in front of, and centered on, the formation; the NCO’s position is one step to the rear of the formation and centered. When the officer is not present and the NCO is in charge, his position is three steps in front of the formation and centered.

Breaking Ranks

Breaking Ranks is a procedure followed when a soldier is called out of the formation to report to the commander in front of the formation. This is frequently done when the commander wishes to commend or decorate a soldier. The commander will direct, "Private _____, front and center." The soldier will:

- a. Come to the position of Attention and respond "Here, Sir (or Here, First Sergeant)."
- b. Take one 15-inch backward step
- c. Face to the Right (Left) as in Marching and exit the formation in the most direct manner.
- d. Once clear of the formation, march in the most direct manner to a position two steps in front of and centered on the commander.
- e. When the commander dismisses the soldier, the soldier will Face to the Right (Left) as in Marching and move back to his place in formation. He will follow the same route as he used to exit the formation.

Count Off

The command Count Off may be used in preparation for an in-ranks inspection. It is a two-part command. On the command of execution *Off*, everyone except the right flank person in each rank will turn head and eyes to the right. The right flank person will count "ONE", the second person will then turn head and eyes to the front and say "TWO", and so on down the line.

Open Ranks March

Open Ranks March is a procedure used to increase the distance between ranks for purposes of an in-ranks inspection when troops are in a line formation. This is a two-part command: *Open Ranks* is the preparatory command and *March* is the command of execution. On the command of execution, the following will happen simultaneously:

- a. The first rank will take two 30-inch steps forward.
- b. The second rank will take one 30-inch step forward.
- c. The third rank will stand fast.
- d. The fourth rank will take two 15-inch steps to the rear.

To return troops to a normal line formation, the command is *Close Ranks March*. *Close Ranks* is the preparatory command; *March* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *March*, the following will happen simultaneously:

- a. The first rank will take four 15-inch backward steps.
- b. The second rank will take two 15-inch backward steps.
- c. The third rank will stand fast.
- d. The fourth rank will take one 30-inch forward step.

After every movement, troops should make necessary adjustments to ensure that they are covered on the person in front of them.

Dress Right Dress

Dress Right Dress allows the commander to perfect the alignment of the troops in a line formation. It is frequently ordered immediately after Open Ranks March to finalize preparation for inspection. Dress Right Dress is a two-part command: *Dress Right* is the preparatory command and *Dress* is the command of execution. On the command of execution, soldiers will:

- a. Except for the right flank person in each rank, all will turn their head and eyes to the right, correcting their lateral alignment as needed.
- b. Except for the left flank person in each rank, all will lift their left arms laterally to shoulder level, palms down, fingers and thumb extended and joined.

Note: The first rank will establish the lateral distance between soldiers just as is done in Fall In. Those in the second, third, and fourth ranks will raise their arms for uniformity of appearance, but they will cover the person in front of them.

The commander may further check each rank for exact alignment. On issuing the command of execution *Dress*, he faces to the half left as in marching and moves to a position one step to the right of the first squad leader and faces down the line of the first rank. He may correct alignment by saying "Number three, two inches forward" or "Number five, one inch to the rear." (See the discussion of Count Off above.) When the first squad is aligned, he will move on to the second squad, etc.

When satisfied that the unit is aligned, he will return to his position in front of the formation, face the formation, and command *Ready, Front*. *Ready* is the preparatory command and *Front* is the command of execution. On the command of execution *Front*, troops will drop their arms, face to the front, and return to the position of Attention.

SECTION 6: IN RANKS INSPECTION PROCEDURES

There are several ways to conduct an in-ranks inspection. The following is a simple approach, handled by one inspector, and suited for a platoon-sized unit of up to 40 troops in a line formation. Depending on the number of personnel, they may be arranged in up to four ranks.

The inspector (either officer or NCO) will order the unit to Open Ranks March and Dress Right Dress. Once he is satisfied with alignment, the inspector:

- a. Faces to the Half-Left As in Marching, and marches to a point 15 inches in front of, and centered on, the first squad leader. Orders "Second, third, and fourth squads, At Ease."
- b. Inspects the front of the first squad leader, moving only head and eyes.
- c. Takes a short step to the half-left to inspect the soldier's right side, then steps back to center.
- d. Takes a short step to the half-right to inspect the soldier's left side, the steps back to center.
- e. Faces to the right as in marching, takes two short steps, halts in front of the second soldier, and executes a Left Face, and inspects the second soldier, etc. and so on down the first rank.

When the last soldier in the first squad has been inspected, the inspector will:

- a. Face to the Right As in Marching and walk around the last man to inspect the squad from the rear.
- b. The second squad leader will order "Second Squad, Attention" as the inspector continues to inspect the first squad from the rear.

When the entire first squad has been inspected from the rear, the inspector will:

- a. Position himself 15 inches in front of, and centered on, the second squad leader and order "First Squad, At Ease."
- b. Inspect the second squad in the same manner as the first squad, and so on until all squads have been inspected.

When all personnel have been inspected, the inspector marches back to his original post in the most direct manner. He will halt, face to the left, and call the unit to Attention. He will then order Close Ranks March.

During the inspection, the inspector should check the obvious uniform and grooming items for every soldier. This includes:

- a. Length and style of hair, mustaches, and sideburns.
- b. Placement of all patches, tapes, and insignia.
- c. Boots and boot lacing.
- d. Buttons and fasteners.
- e. Visible tattoos and jewelry

The inspector should randomly check:

- a. Medication Forms and ID cards.
- b. Belts, to ensure that the tongue of the belt is no longer than two inches.
- c. Fingernails for cleanliness and proper length

The inspector may also ask pertinent questions to determine the soldier's knowledge and readiness.

Note: For detailed information on grooming standards, inspectors should consult Army Regulation 670-1, Chapter 3. For detailed information on wear of the uniform, inspectors should consult SCSG Regulation 670-1 and Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1.

SECTION 7: AWARD CEREMONY PROCEDURES

The SC State Guard recognizes that awards and promotions are essential to esprit de corps. These procedures will be standard for SCSG recognition ceremonies including promotions in rank, awards of medals and ribbons, and awards of challenge coins or other commemoratives.

Recognition of up to two personnel will be handled as follows:

1. Adjutant or NCOIC will call "CPL _____ Front and Center" or "The following personnel, Front and Center: CPL _____, SSG _____."
2. Upon hearing his/her name, soldier will come to the position of Attention and answer "Here, sir."
3. Soldier will then take one 15-inch step to the rear, face to the right or left as in marching, and exit the formation by marching to the nearest flank.
4. Once clear of the formation, soldier will march across the front of the formation and stop two steps in front of the officer in charge. If two soldiers are involved, the first soldier will position himself/herself two steps in front of the officer and a half step to the officer's left. The second soldier will position himself/herself as previously described, but a half step to the officer's right. No salutes are exchanged.
5. Officer in charge will present the award or publish orders of promotion, then dismiss the soldier(s). No salutes are exchanged.
6. Soldier(s) will face to the right or left as in marching and move back to his/her place in formation. Each soldier will follow the same route taken when breaking ranks.

Recognition of more than two personnel will be handled as follows:

1. Honorees will form the last squad in the formation and will be arranged according to rank. The highest ranking soldier will be in the squad leader's position on the right flank; the lowest ranking soldier will be on the left flank of the rank.
2. On cue, the NCOIC will call the honorees to Attention, then give the commands Left Face and Forward March. Soldiers will step off with a full 30-inch step.
3. The left flank person will lead the honorees around the left flank of the formation and across the front. The NCOIC may call cadence, but maneuver will be done without directional marching commands.
4. When the squad reaches a point where it is centered on the officer in charge, the NCOIC will command Mark Time March, then Halt. NCOIC will command Left Face, followed by At Ease. No salutes are exchanged.
5. The officer in charge will begin awards with the person on the left flank (the officer's right). As each honoree is approached, he/she will come to the position of Attention. No salutes are exchanged. When the officer in charge moves on, the soldier will return to the position of At Ease.

6. When all awards have been presented, the officer in charge will return to his/her position two steps in front of and centered on the line of honorees. NCOIC will call honorees to Attention, command Left Face and Forward March. No salutes are exchanged.
7. The left flank person will lead the honorees back around the formation to their original position in the last rank. As the lead person reaches the squad leader's position, he/she will begin to Mark Time. All other persons will Mark Time as they reach their position.
8. NCOIC will command Halt, then Left Face, and At Ease.

The commander may prescribe special procedures for significant events, including promotion of general officers, changes in responsibility, and changes of command.