



School Of The Soldier

ALIGNMENT

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Alignment lesson – why so soon?

- In Casey's, the lesson on Alignments is not taught until the first lesson of the third part of School of the Soldier.
 - S.S. 78. Each movement should be understood before passing to another. After they have been properly executed in the order laid down in each lesson the instructor no longer confines himself to that order; on the contrary, he should change it, that he may judge of the intelligence of the men.
 - S.S. 319. When the recruits are well established in the principles and mechanism of the step, the position of the body, and the manual of arms, the instructor will unite eight men, at least, and twelve men at most, in order to teach them the principles of alignment, the principles of the touch of elbows in marching to the front, the principles of the march by the flank, wheeling from a halt, wheeling in marching, and the change of direction to the side of the guide. He will place the squad in one rank, elbow to elbow, and number the men from right to left.
- Some challenges faced as reenactors:
 - We don't have (make?) enough time to drill fundamentals before taking the field.
 - We don't have consistent attendance at the few drill sessions we do have.
- A Solution = Combine complimentary sets of instruction
 - E.g., Position of the Soldier + Alignment + Facings + Mechanism of the Step
 - Provide group instruction to "experienced" soldiers arranged in a single rank
 - Provide individual instruction to fresh fish and any "veterans" that need a refresher or "reprogramming".

Eyes RIGHT (LEFT)

- Key to proper alignment is proper movement of the head and eyes.
- Teaching the recruit how to turn the head and the eyes:
 - Eyes-RIGHT. 2. FRONT.
 - **S.S. 88.** At the word right, the recruit will turn the head gently, so as to bring the inner corner of the left eye in a line with the buttons of the coat, the eyes fixed on the line of the eyes of the men in, or supposed to be in, the same rank.
 - **S.S. 89.** At the second command, the head will resume the direct or habitual position.
- This is a subtle movement.
 - It is not sudden, it is not big.
 - Peripheral vision is used to make the alignment, not direct vision.
 - The head turns only slightly in order to “bring the inner corner of the left eye in a line with the buttons of the coat”.
 - The reference point is the “inner corner of the left eye”, not the outer corner of the left eye, and certainly not the left ear.
 - Note that the recruit is to “turn the head gently” and the instructor is to make sure that the movement is not “too sudden.”
 - It is the head, and only the head that moves, don’t twist the shoulders to get a better view.

Alignments

- According to the last sentence of instruction S.S. 319, the instructor will “place the squad in one rank, elbow to elbow, and number the men from right to left.”
- Start one man at a time, using the eye and head movement taught in instruction S.S. 88 (referenced in S.S. 321 “as prescribed in the first lesson of the first part”)
 - S.S. 321. Each recruit, as designated by his number will turn the head and eyes to the right, as prescribed in the first lesson of the first part, and will march in quick time two paces forward, shortening the last, so as to find himself about six inches behind the new alignment, which he ought never to pass: he will next move up steadily by steps of two or three inches, the hams extended, to the side of the man next to him on the alignment, so that, without deranging the head, the line of the eyes, or that of the shoulders, he may find himself in the exact line of his neighbor, whose elbow he will lightly touch without opening his own.

Right (or Left) DRESS

- Once individuals are competent, dress as a rank.
 - Think of the image of dominos falling in sequence
- S.S. 325. When the recruits shall have thus learned to align themselves, man by man, correctly, and without groping or jostling, the instructor will cause the entire rank to align itself at once by the command:
 - *Right (or left) - DRESS.*
- S.S. 326. At this the rank, except the two men placed in advance as a basis of alignment will move up in quick time and place themselves on the new line, according to the Principles prescribed No. 321.

Right (or Left) backward-DRESS

- S.S. 330. Alignments to the rear will be executed on the same principles, the recruits stepping back a little beyond the line, and then dressing up according to the principles prescribed No. 321 the instructor commanding:
 - *Right (or left) backward-DRESS.*
- Note that the soldier first steps backward until they are short distance behind the new line and then shuffles forward to the new line.

Alignment in Open Ranks

To open Ranks. As described in School of the Company

- **8.** The company being at ordered arms, the ranks and file closers well aligned, when the instructor shall wish to cause the ranks to be opened, he will direct the left guide to place himself on the left of the front-rank, which being executed, he will command:
 - 1. *Attention.* 2. *Company.* 3. *Shoulder—ARMS.* 4. *To the rear open order.*
- **9.** At the fourth command, the covering sergeant and the left guide will step off smartly to the rear, four paces from the front-rank, in order to mark the alignment of the rear-rank. They will judge this distance by the eye, without counting the steps.
- **10.** The instructor will place himself at the same, time on the right flank, in order to observe if these two non-commissioned officers are on a line parallel to the front-rank, and, if necessary, to correct their positions, which being executed, he will command:
 - 5. *MARCH.*
- **11.** At this command, the front-rank will stand fast.
- **12.** The rear-rank will step to the rear, without counting the steps, and will place themselves on the alignment marked for this rank, conforming to what is prescribed in the S. S., No. 330.
 - S.S. 330. “Alignments to the rear will be executed on the same principles, the recruits stepping back a little beyond the line, and then dressing up according to the principles prescribed No. 321 ...”
 - S.S. 321. “Each recruit, as designated by his number will turn the head and eyes to the right, as prescribed in the first lesson of the first part, ... : he will next move up steadily by steps of two or three inches, the hams extended, to the side of the man next to him on the alignment, so that, without deranging the head, the line of the eyes, or that of the shoulders, he may find himself in the exact line of his neighbor, whose elbow he will lightly touch without opening his own.”
- **13.** The covering sergeant will align the rear-rank on the left guide placed to mark the left of this rank.
- **14.** The file closers will march to the rear at the same time with the rear-rank, and will place themselves two paces from this rank when it is aligned.
- **15.** The instructor seeing the rear-rank aligned, will command:
 - 6. *FRONT.*
- **16.** At this command, the sergeant on the left of the rear-rank will return to his place as a file closer.
- **17.** The rear-rank being aligned, the instructor will direct the captain and the covering sergeant to observe the men in their respective ranks, and to correct, if necessary, the positions of persons and pieces.

Alignment Notes

- Dress Forward
 - The new line should be at least two paces forward of the existing line.
 - The soldier takes regular steps forward up to the point at which he is 6 inches away from the new line.
 - From that point forward the soldier takes baby steps forward “move up steadily by steps of two or three inches”
 - Never step in front of the new line.
 - Remember, the heels mark the line, not the toes
- Dress backward
 - Step back a little behind the new line, and then dress forward
- Do not take giant steps forward or stretch the last step to arrive on line
 - Rather: “... move up steadily by steps of two or three inches,”
- Do not derange the head, line of eyes, or the shoulders
- Touch lightly the elbow of your comrade without opening your own