



School Of The Soldier

POSITION OF THE SOLDIER

STEVE GIOVANNINI

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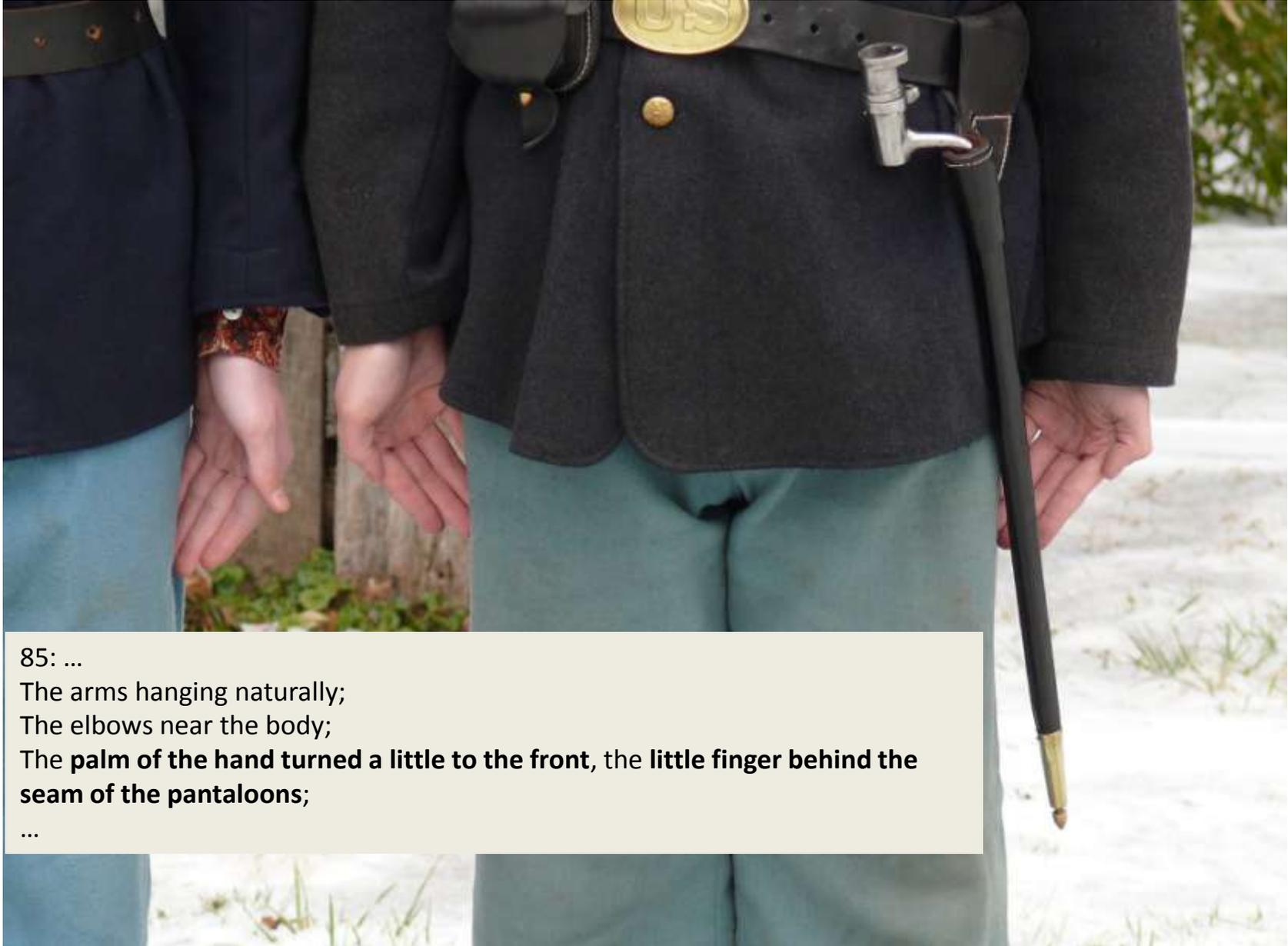
Position of the Soldier

- It all starts here!!!
- 85. Heels on the same line, as near each other as the conformation of the man will permit:
 - The feet turned out equally, and forming with each other something less than a right angle;
 - The knees straight without stiffness;
 - The body erect on the hips, inclining a little forward;
 - The shoulders square and falling equally;
 - The arms hanging naturally;
 - The elbows near the body;
 - The palm of the hand turned a little to the front, the little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons ;
 - The head erect and square to the front, without constraint;
 - The chin near the stock, without covering it;
 - The eyes fixed straight to the front, and striking the ground about the distance of fifteen paces.

Hand Position

- “The palm of the hand turned a little to the front, the little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons”
 - Subtle yet simple part of our impression
 - Makes a huge impact: which century are you in?
- It is fundamental and critical to all subsequent alignments without and with arms
 - This defines a soldier’s “space”
- It anchors the hand in position
 - This in turn orients the arm and defines the proper position of the elbow
 - Helps a soldier to avoid opening his elbows.
 - Proper elbow position enables proper alignment
 - S.S. 321: ...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.

Hand Position



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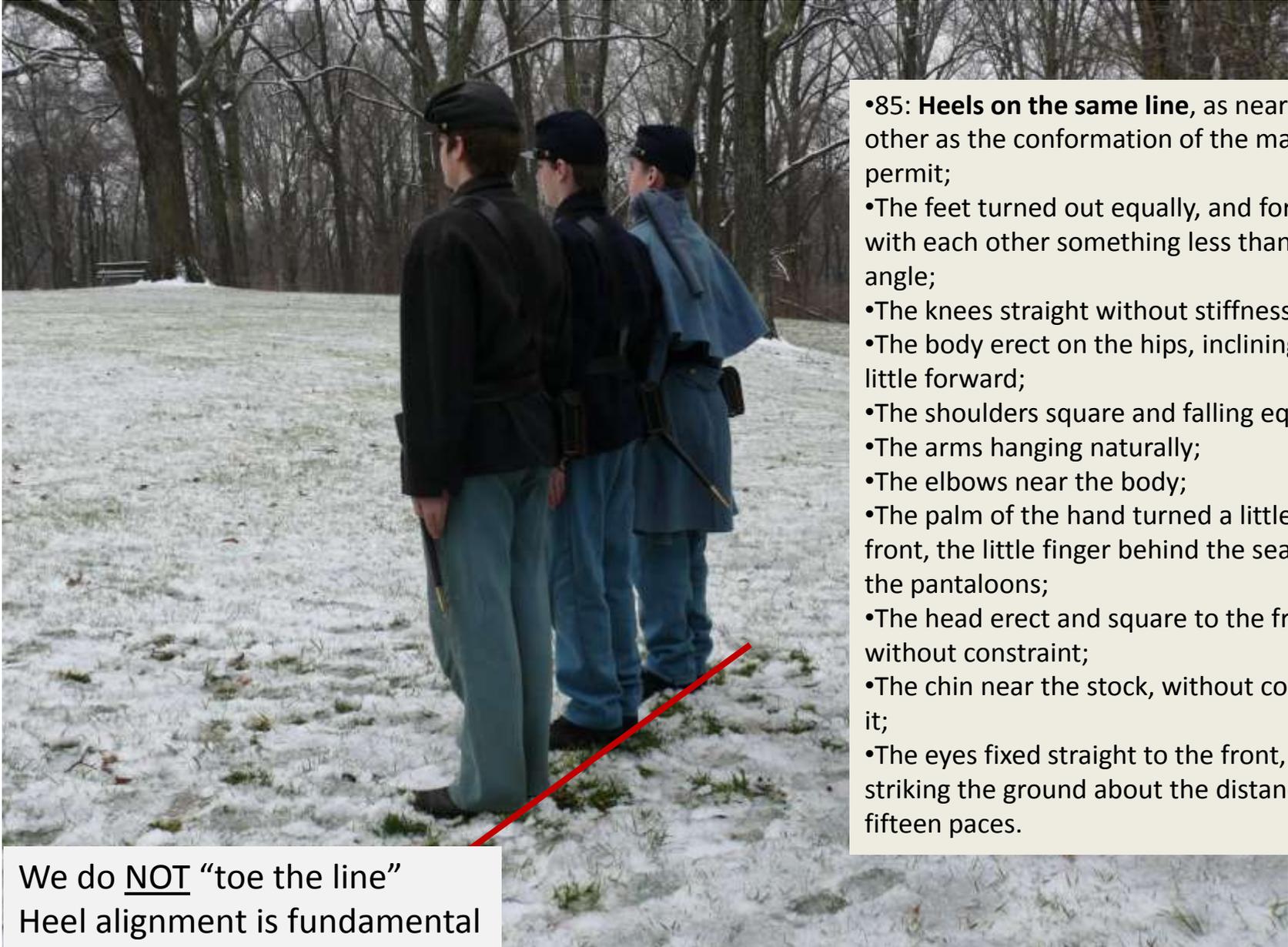
The arms hanging naturally;

The elbows near the body;

The **palm of the hand turned a little to the front**, the **little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons**;

...

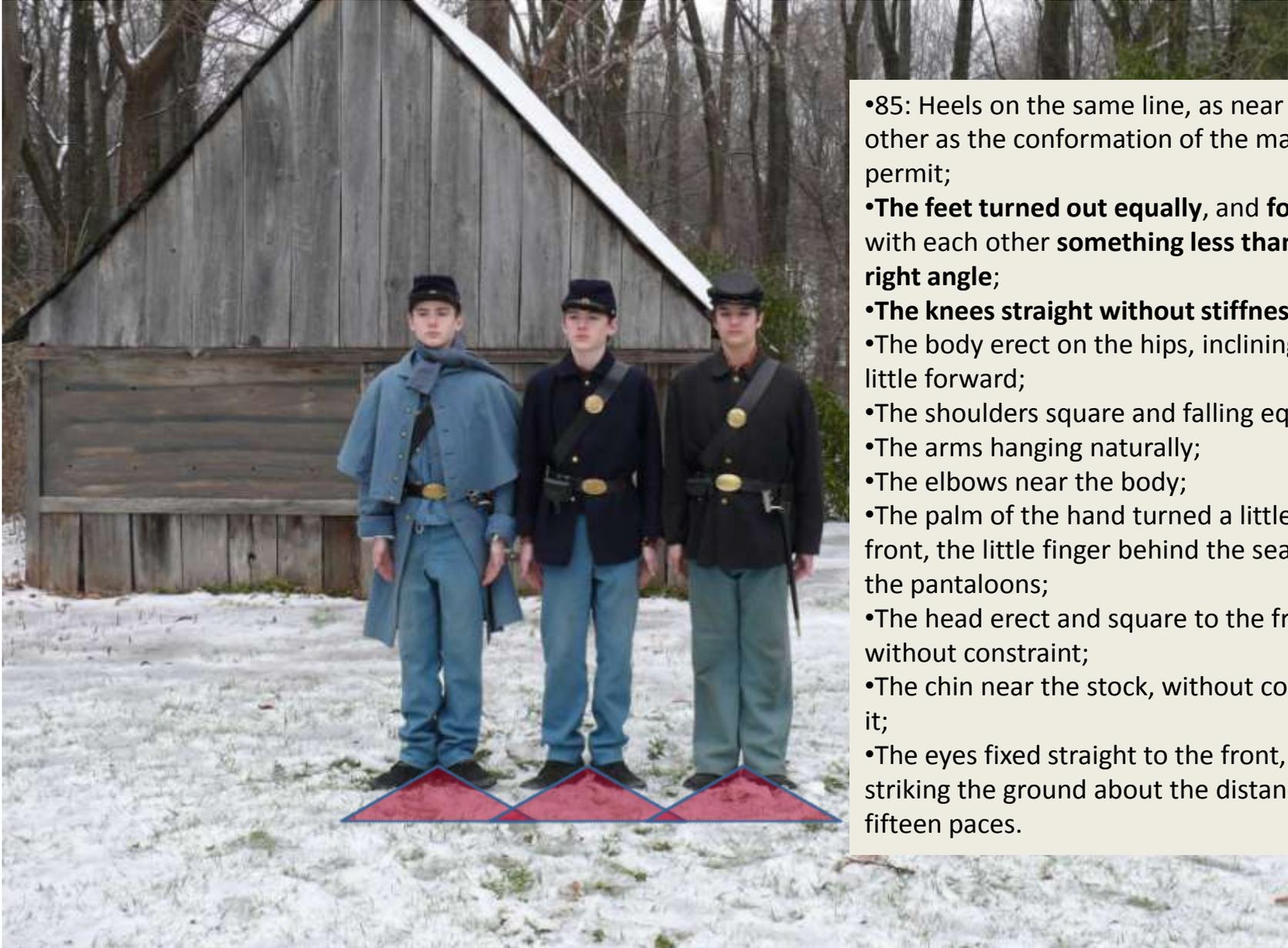
Body Alignment



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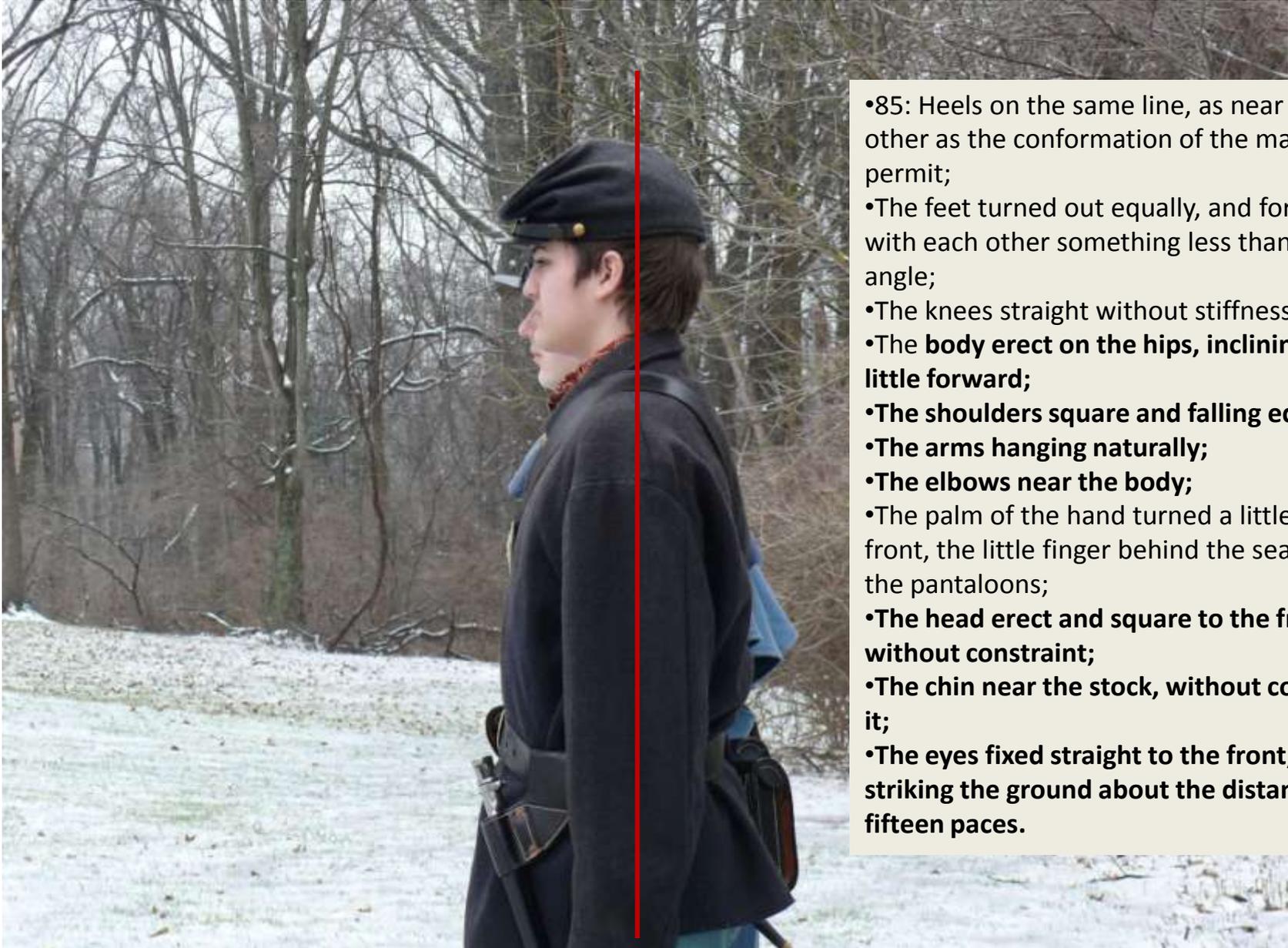
We do NOT “toe the line”
Heel alignment is fundamental

Position of the Soldier



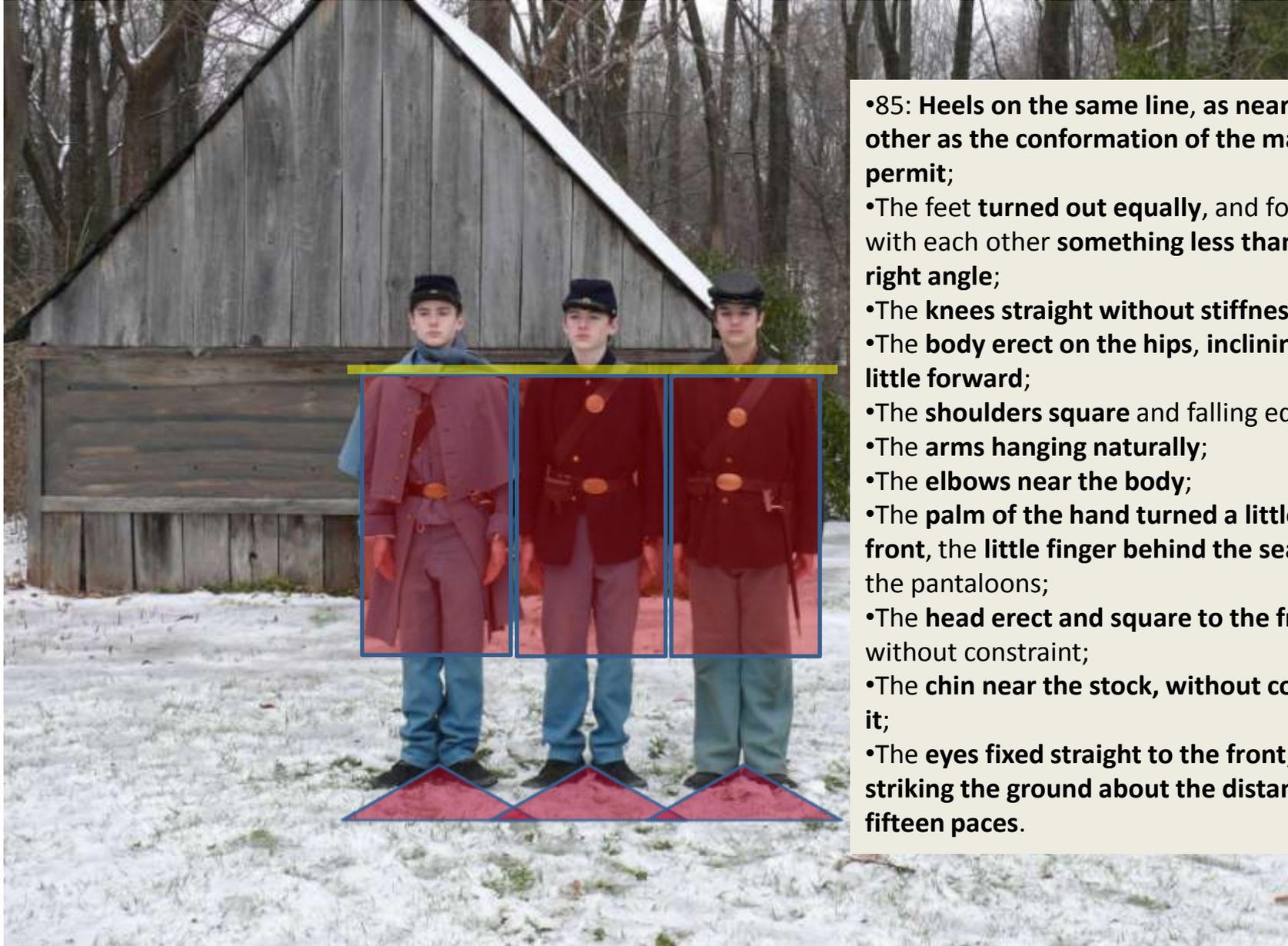
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Why the Position of the Soldier?

Casey explains: S.S. 86: REMARKS ON THE POSITION OF A SOLDIER.

- Heels on the same line;
 - 86. Because, if one were in-rear of the other, the shoulder on that side would be thrown back, or the position of the soldier would be constrained.
- Heels more or less closed;
 - Because men who are knock-kneed, or who have legs with large calves, cannot, without constraint, make their heels touch while standing.
- The feet equally turned out, and not forming too large an angle;
 - Because, if one foot were turned out more than the other, a shoulder would be deranged, and if both feet be too much turned out, it would not be practicable to incline the upper part of the body, forward without rendering the whole position unsteady.
- Knees extended without stiffness;
 - Because, if stiffened, constraint and fatigue would be unavoidable.
- The body erect on the hips;
 - Because it gives equilibrium to the position. The instructor will observe that many recruits have the bad habit of dropping a shoulder or drawing in a side, or of advancing a hip, particularly the right, when under arms. These are defects he will labor to correct.
- The upper part of the body inclining forward;
 - Because commonly, recruits are disposed to do the reverse, to project the belly, and to throw back the shoulders, when they wish to hold themselves erect, from which result great inconveniences in marching. The habit of inclining forward the upper part of the body is so important to contract, that the instructor must enforce it at the beginning, particularly with recruits who have naturally the opposite habit.
- Shoulders square;
 - Because; if the shoulders be advanced beyond the line of the breast, and the back arched (the defect called round-shouldered, not uncommon among recruits), the man cannot align himself, nor use his piece with address. It is important, then, to correct this defect, and necessary to that end that the coat should set easy about the shoulders and arm-pits; but in correcting this defect, the instructor will take care that the shoulders be not thrown too much to the rear, which would cause the belly to project, and the small of the back to be curved.
- The arms hanging naturally, elbows near the body, the palm of the hand a little turned to the front, the little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons;
 - Because these positions are equally important to the shoulder-arms, and to prevent the man from occupying more space in a rank than is necessary to a free use of the piece; they have, moreover, the advantage of keeping in the shoulders.
- The face straight to the front, and without constraint.
 - Because, if there be stiffness in the latter position, it would communicate itself to the whole of the upper part of the body, embarrass its movements, and give pain and fatigue.
- Eyes direct to the front;
 - Because this is the surest means of maintaining the shoulders in line-an essential object, to be insisted on and attained.

Recap

- Proper Alignment of each rank, and hence the company
 - critically dependent on the position of the feet, shoulders, hands, and elbows.
- Alignment of the feet enables alignment of the shoulders
 - Proper alignment of the shoulders depends upon proper alignment of our, hips, ankles, and heels.
 - DO NOT “toe the line”!
- Alignment of the hands enables alignment of the elbows.
 - Hand positioning is one area where modern military alignment sneaks into the hobby.
 - Subtle distinctions help authentic impressions stand out.
 - Any time the soldier stands at attention, with or without arms, the empty hand conforms to this position.
- Upper body strength
 - A certain amount of upper body strength is necessary to maintain balance while carrying a musket
 - Keep your shoulders square to front line. Stand straight, don’t over compensate by leaning too far forward, backward, or to the side.
 - The alignment of the ranks and the safety of your comrades depends on your ability to maintain proper position.
- Practice
 - stand in front of a full length mirror.
 - If you master this position while at home, we won’t have to dwell on it during drill.
- You are the show, not a spectator! 
 - Focus your eyes on a spot on the ground, 35 feet in front of you (fifteen paces, at 28 inches per pace is 35 feet).
 - Don’t look at the officers.
 - Don’t look at your comrades.
 - Don’t look at what is taking place around you.
 - Especially important during Dress Parade !!!! 