

Manual of Arms

Order --- Firelock

Right side, the butt on the ground, even with the toes of the right foot, the thumb of the hand lying along the barrel, and the muzzle being kept at a little distance from the body.

Shoulder --- Firelock

Throw musket up to left shoulder with right hand

Seize butt with left hand

Bring right hand back to side

Advance --- Arms

With your left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front, at the same instant seize it with the right hand just below the lock, keeping the piece perpendicular.

Bring the firelock down to the right side, with the right hand as low as it will admit without constraint, slipping up the left hand at the same time to the swell, and instantly shifting the position of the right hand, take the guard between the thumb and fore-finger, and bring the three last fingers under the cock, with the barrel to the rear.

Quit the firelock with the left hand, bringing it down by your side.

Shoulder --- Firelock

Bring up the left hand, and seize the firelock with the left hand just above the lock, Come to up to a poise-- that is to bring the musket up so the left hand is at eye level

Lower musket to left shoulder and left hand to butt

Return right hand to side.

Present --- Arms

Come to poise; With your left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front, at the same instant seize it with the right hand just below the lock, keeping the piece perpendicular.

With a quick motion bring up the firelock from the shoulder directly before the face, and seize it with the left hand just above the lock, so that the little finger may rest upon the feather spring, and the thumb lie on the stock; the left hand must be of an equal height with the eyes.

Step briskly back with your right foot, placing it a hand's breadth distant from your left heel, at the same time bring down the firelock as quick as possible to the rest, sinking it as far down before your left knee as your right hand will permit without constraint, holding the right hand under the guard, with the fingers extended, and drawing in the piece with the left hand till the barrel is perpendicular; during this motion you quit the piece with the left hand, and instantly seize it again just below the tail-pipe.

Shoulder --- Firelock

Lift up your right foot and place it by your left, at the same time bring the firelock to your left shoulder, and seize the butt-end with the left hand, coming to the position of the first motion of the secure.

Bring the right hand down by your side.

Order --- Firelock

Sink the firelock with the left hand as low as possible, without constraint, and at the same time bringing up the right hand, seize the firelock at the left shoulder.

Quit the firelock with the left hand, and with the right bring it down the right side, the butt on the ground, even with the toes of the right foot, the thumb of the right hand lying along the barrel, and the muzzle being kept at a little distance from the body.

(The common step is two feet, and about seventy-five in a minute.)

Assabet Village Minutemen
Maynard, Massachusetts

From REGULATIONS FOR THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF THE TROOPS OF
THE UNITED STATES, Part 1.

THE MANUAL EXERCISE

I.

Poise---Firelock! Two motions.

- 1st. With your left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front, at the same instant seize it with the right hand just below the lock, keeping the piece perpendicular.
- 2nd. With a quick motion bring up the firelock from the shoulder directly before the face, and seize it with the left hand just above the lock, so that the little finger may rest upon the feather spring, and the thumb lie on the stock; the left hand must be of an equal height with the eyes.

II.

Cock---Firelock! Two motions.

- 1st. Turn the barrel opposite to your face, and place your thumb upon the cock, raising the elbow square at this motion.
- 2nd. Cock the firelock by drawing down your elbow, immediately placing your thumb upon the breech-pin, and the fingers under the guard.

III.

Take Aim! One Motion.

Step back about six inches with the right foot, bringing the left toe to the front; at the same time drop the muzzle, and bring up the butt-end of the firelock against your right shoulder; place the left hand forward on the swell of the stock, and the forefinger of the right hand before the trigger; sinking the muzzle a little below a level, and with the right eye looking along the barrel.

IV.

Fire! One Motion.

Pull the trigger briskly, and immediately after bringing up the right foot, come to the priming position, placing the heels even, with the right toe pointing to the right, the lock opposite the right breast, the muzzle directly to the front and as high as the hat, the left hand just forward of the feather-spring, holding the piece firm and steady; and

at the same time seize the cock with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, the back of the hand turned up.

V.

Half-cock---Firelock! One motion.

Half bend the cock, briskly bringing down the elbow to the butt of the firelock.

VI.

Handle---Cartridge! One motion.

Bring your right hand short round to your pouch, slapping it hard, seize the cartridge, and bring it with a quick motion to your mouth, bite the top off down to the powder, covering it instantly with your thumb, and bring the hand as low as the chin, with the elbow down.

VII.

Prime! One motion.

Shake the powder into the pan, and covering the cartridge again, place the three last fingers behind the hammer, with the elbow up.

VIII.

Shut---Pan! Two motions.

- 1st. Shut your pan briskly, bringing down the elbow to the butt of the firelock, holding the cartridge fast in your hand.
- 2nd. Turn the piece nimbly round before you, to the loading position, with the lock to the front, and the muzzle at the height of the chin, bringing the right hand up under the muzzle; both feet being kept fast in this motion.

IX.

Charge with Cartridge! Two motions.

- 1st. Turn up your hand and put the cartridge into the muzzle, shaking the powder into the barrel.
- 2nd. Turning the stock a little towards you, place your right hand closed, with a quick and strong motion, upon the butt of the rammer, the thumb upwards, and elbow down.

X.

Draw---Rammer! Two motions.

- 1st. Draw your rammer with a quick motion half out, seizing it instantly at the muzzle back-handed.
- 2nd. Draw it quite out, turn it, and enter it into the muzzle.

XI.

Ram down---Cartridge! One motion.

Ram the cartridge well down the barrel, and instantly recovering and seizing the rammer back-handed by the middle, draw it quite out, turn it, and enter it as far as the lower pipe, placing at the same time the edge of the hand on the butt-end of the rammer, with the fingers extended.

XII.

Return---Rammer! One motion.

Thrust the rammer home, and instantly bring up the piece with the left hand to the shoulder, seizing it at the same time with the right hand under the cock, keeping the left hand at the swell, and turning the body square to the front.

XIII.

Shoulder---Firelock! Two motions.

- 1st. Bring down the left hand, placing it strong upon the butt.
- 2nd. With a quick motion bring the right hand down by your side.

XIV.

Order---Firelock! Two motions.

- 1st. Sink the firelock with the left hand as low as possible, without constraint, and at the same time bringing up the right hand, seize the firelock at the left shoulder.
- 2nd. Quit the firelock with the left hand, and with the right bring it down the right side, the butt on the ground, even with the toes of the right foot, the thumb of the right hand lying along the barrel, and the muzzle being kept at a little distance from the body.

PRE FIRING CHECK LIST

Before firing a flintlock the following steps should be taken for safety and effectiveness.

Step 1 should be taken whenever the flintlock is carried even if it will not be fired.

1. Drop the ram rod down the barrel of the musket. If there is no metallic click, assume there is a charge in the weapon. Handle it with care and do not charge with powder until it has been cleared by firing or cleaning.
2. Look behind the lock for accumulated powder.
3. See that the musket will not fire from half cock safety.
4. Clear the touch hole with a pick.
5. See that the frism sits firmly on the pan with the hammer at half cock and that the flint is properly seated.
6. See that the pan is dry. Oil will prevent the priming from igniting as well as water.
7. Wipe the flint and frism clean with a dry rag.
8. When planning to fire, always carry, besides musket and powder:
 - a. Pick and brush
 - b. Screwdriver
 - c. Spare flint
 - d. Dry rag
9. Remember, every weapon is always loaded.

PROCEDURE FOR MISFIRE

Misfire: The flint of a loaded and primed musket strikes the frism and nothing happens.

1. Bring the musket to the priming position.
2. Bring the hammer to half cock.
3. Check the flint. Replace or reseal it if necessary. Be sure to clear the priming from the pan first.
4. Wipe the flint and frism clean with a dry rag.
5. Check the priming. If there is none, reprime. If the priming is damp, brush it out, wipe the pan dry and reprime.
6. Shut the pan.
7. Bring the hammer to full cock.
8. Aim and fire.
9. If, after several tries, the musket persists in misfiring, remove it from the firing line. Handle it with care and clean it at the earliest possible moment. Remember it is a loaded weapon until cleared.

PROCEDURE FOR HANGFIRE

Hangfire: The flint of a loaded and primed musket strikes the frism and the priming ignites but the musket does not discharge.

1. Hold the musket at the firing position for 30 seconds. Keep hands, face and other people away from the lock and muzzle during the entire operation.
2. Carefully, bring the musket to the priming position and hold it there for 30 seconds.
3. Carefully, bring the hammer to half cock.
4. Visually check the pan area for hot ashes. Do not bring face close to the lock. Wait for any hot ashes to cool before proceeding.
5. Carefully, brush the pan clear. Brush from touchhole out.
6. Carefully, pick the touchhole clear.
7. Reprime.
8. Shut pan.
9. Aim and fire.
10. If, after several tries, the musket persists in hangfiring, remove it from the firing line. Handle it with care and clean it at the earliest possible moment. Remember, it is a loaded weapon until cleared.

The Halberd Exercise

It must first be premised, that the non-commission'd Officers with their halberds shouldered, are to carry the butts as low down, as the men do the butts of their firelocks; the spear part must not be held near the head, nor the butt at too great a distance from the body, keeping the flat always towards the front, and the right hand hanging motionless down the right side.

Shoulder your halberds! 2 motions.

1. Advance the halberd with your right hand, seize it briskly with your left under the butt, and slipping your right down to your left, hold the halberd at a moderate distance from your body and as low down as your left hand will admit without constraint.

2. Bring the halberd down upon your shoulder, and throw your right hand briskly back.

Order your halberds! 3 motions.

1. Seize the halberd with your right hand, over the left, bringing it at the same time from your shoulder before you.

2. Let the halberd slide down through both your hands, till the butt comes near the ground, your right hand in a line with your eyes, and your left as low down as you can reach.

3. Order the halberd with a quick motion with your right hand, and at the same time throw back your left; in which position the halberd must be held with an out-stretched arm right up and down, in a line with your shoulder, and flat always to the front.

Club your halberds! 3 motions.

1. Bring the halberd before you to the position explained in the foregoing word of command, excepting that your right hand must not be above two hands breadth over your left.

2. Cast the butt of the halberd about, with a very quick motion, with your right hand, seize it near the fluke with your left, and slipping your right down to your left, hold it with out-stretched arms, right up and down, opposite to your left shoulder.

3. Bring the halberd briskly down upon your shoulder, with your left arm almost stretched out, and throw back your right hand down to your right side.

Shoulder your Halberds! 5 motions.

1. Seize the halberd near the fluke, with your right hand, bring it with a very quick motion from your shoulder, and hold it as is explained in the foregoing word of command.

2. Cast the halberd nimbly about, and, putting your left hand, place it beneath your right, holding the halberd right up and down, from your body.

3. Plant the halberd with an out-stretched arm upon the ground, and throw your left hand briskly back.

4. Bring the halberd before you with your right hand, seize it under the butt with your left, and slipping your right down to your left, hold the halberd at a moderate distance from your body, and as low down as your left hand will admit without constraint.

5. Bring the halberd down upon your shoulder, and throw your right hand nimbly back.

N.B. When halberds, from being shouldered, must be clubbed, they are to be first ordered and from the position clubbed, in the manner explained in the two foregoing words of command.

N.B. In performing the facings with the halberd, bring it before you, and, seizing it with your left hand, hold it from your body with both hands right up and down; in this position face to the right or left, and, at the same time that you plant your foot, order the halberd again, and throw back your left hand.