



A SEMINAR ON CASEY'S SCHOOLS OF INSTRUCTION

SCHOOLS OF THE SOLDIER AND COMPANY

FIRING

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Firing Fundamentals

- Musket position
 - Ready
 - Aim
- Arm Position when aiming
 - Left elbow
 - Right elbow
 - Front rank, rear rank
- Bending a little the knee
 - Moves the body along a plane in the direction the toe points!
- Footwork
 - Ready Position
 - Direct Fire
 - Oblique Fire
 - Introduce a significant change

Footwork - Ready

- Footwork for Ready or Prime Position
 - Often referred to as the “T”
- 178. (First motion.) Raise the piece slightly with the right hand, making a half face to the right on the left heel; carry the right foot to the rear, and place it at right angles to the left, the hollow of it opposite to and against the left heel; grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band and detach it slightly from the shoulder.

Half face to the right



Carry to the rear
Hollow touches the heel



Footwork – Direct Fire - Aim

- Front Rank:
 - Stays in the “T”
 - From the School of the Company: S.C. 80. He will give to the men, *as a general principle*, to maintain, in the direct fire, the left heel in its place, in order that the alignment of the ranks and files may not be deranged; and he will verify, by examination, after each exercise in firing, the observance of this principle.
- Rear Rank
 - 183. The rear rank men, in aiming, will each carry the right foot about eight inches to the right, and towards the left heel of the man next on the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward.

Front Rank
Aim



Rear Rank
Move foot about 8 inches



Rear Rank
Aim



Rear Rank Footwork – Direct Fire - Aim

The rear-rank man
carries his right foot

About 8 inches

TOWARDS THE LEFT HEEL

of the man next on the right.

The rear-rank man

DOES NOT

step backwards!!!



Oblique Footwork

- It is our assertion that the rear rank man does not derange the direction of the foot he advances.
 - If the rear rank soldier were to derange his feet and point the toe of the foot he advances towards the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader,
 - The rear rank soldier will have difficulty safely firing at the oblique.
 - The ‘bending a little the knee’ will carry the soldier, and likewise the hammer of his musket, in a plane directly towards the head of the man next on the right of his file leader.
 - However, if he maintains the original alignment of the foot advanced (keep the left foot perpendicular to the battle front, keep the right foot parallel to the battle front), then the ‘bending a little the left knee’ will carry the soldier in a plane perpendicular to the front such that he can safely fire at the oblique.
- The following slides provide
 - Basis for assertion
 - Illustration of this footwork.

Advance the Foot - Basis for Solution

- What does it mean to “advance the foot”?
 - Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any instruction in Casey’s, its contemporaries, or its predecessors, that talks to the position of the toes of the advanced foot in the Oblique maneuvers.
 - I was unable to find any evidence in the limited American Civil War documentation I have access to,
 - I did find a clue in British documentation.
- In Field Exercise and Evolutions of Infantry, as revised By her Majesty’s Command, dated 1861; we find:
 - “As a front rank, carry the left foot 10 inches to the left front, (viz., 6 to the front and 8 to the left,) moving the body with it, toes pointing to the front:”
 - (http://ia600105.us.archive.org/19/items/cihm_34208/cihm_34208.pdf)
- In a drill manual for loading and firing the British Snider Enfield, dated 1867, the phrase “advance the left foot” is used in coming to the READY position being used in the British army.
 - “Advance the left foot, moving the body with it, ten inches to the left front (viz. six to the front, and eight to the left), toes to point to the front; ”
 - (<http://www.militaryheritage.com/snider.htm>)
- This British maneuver is not an exact match to the American Civil War maneuver.
 - The British rank movements are inverse of the American.
 - The British rear-rank remains fixed in their ‘T’, while the front-rank moves to create a line of fire for the rear-rank.
- The clue lies in the additional explanation of what it means to “advance the foot”
 - “... ten inches to the left front (viz. six to the front, and eight to the left), toes to point to the front; ” 
 - The 10 inch distance “advanced” is measured on a direct line to the reference point. It lies along the hypotenuse of a triangle, a right triangle even, formed by moving the foot to the front (6 inches) and then to the left (eight inches).
 - More importantly, it is explicitly stated that the “toes to point to the front;” This toes remained aligned with the original ‘T’ position.

Footwork – Right Oblique - Aim

- Front Rank:
 - Stays in the “T”
- Rear Rank



- 278. At the command aim, each front-rank man will aim to the right without deranging the feet; each rear-rank man will advance the left foot about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the left knee.

Front Rank
Aim



Rear Rank
Move foot 8 inches



Rear Rank
Aim



Footwork – Left Oblique - Aim

- Front Rank:

- Stays in the “T”



- Rear Rank

- 280. At the command aim, the front rank will take aim to the left without deranging the feet; each man in the rear rank will advance the right foot, about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the left, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the right knee.

Front Rank
Aim



Rear Rank
Move foot 8 inches



Rear Rank
Aim



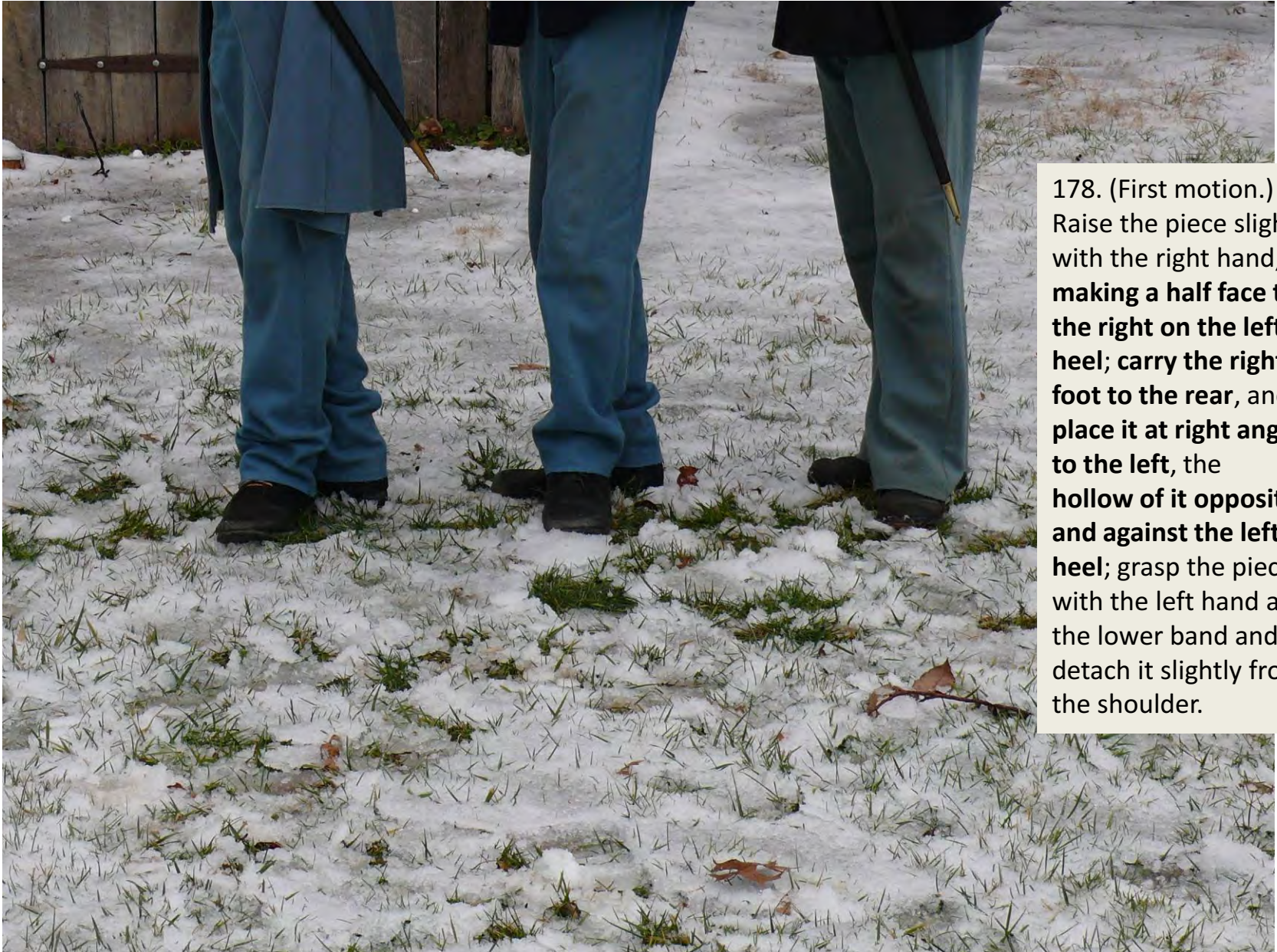
Oblique Fire – Body Movement

- On the oblique command, both ranks turn their body in the direction of the oblique.
 - 277. At the cautionary command, right oblique, the two ranks will throw back the right shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.
 - 279. At the cautionary command left oblique, the two ranks will throw back the left shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.
- The “throw back the shoulder” is a slight turn.
 - We have found that approximately 30 degrees works best
 - If the front rank turns more than 30 degrees, the rear rank can not fire safely.
 - Not aiming at a target
- Because of the required movement of the body, and because of the required movement of the feet, the oblique command must always be given before the command to aim.

Ready Position

- 178. First motion.
Raise the piece slightly with the right hand,
make a half face to the right on the left heel;
carry the right foot to the rear, and
place it at right angles to the left,
the hollow of it opposite to and against the left heel;
grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band and **detach it slightly from the shoulder.**
- The first five mechanisms of the first motion is often referred to as “going to the ‘T’”
 - Note that the Musket Remains at the Shoulder while facing
 - Avoids getting the musket tangled in the traps of your comrade
- 179. Second motion.
Bring down the piece with both hands,
the **barrel upward,**
the **left thumb extended along the stock,**
the **butt below the right fore-arm**
the **small of the stock against the body** and **two inches below the right breast,**
the **muzzle as high as the eye,**
the **left elbow against the side;**
place at the same time the right thumb on the head of the cock the other fingers wider and against the guard.
- Troops often carry the musket too low
 - Small of the stock resting on hip not against the body and below the breast
 - This often causes the muzzle to be elevated too high and not at eye level

Ready Position - footwork



178. (First motion.)
Raise the piece slightly with the right hand, **making a half face to the right on the left heel; carry the right foot to the rear, and place it at right angles to the left, the hollow of it opposite to and against the left heel; grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band and detach it slightly from the shoulder.**

Ready Position -issues to be aware of



Some soldiers elevate the muzzle too high.

Some soldiers carry the musket down on the hip or belt instead of up under the breast.

178. (First motion.) Raise the piece slightly with the right hand, making a half face to the right on the left heel; carry the right foot to the rear, and place it at right angles to the left, the hollow of it opposite to and against the left heel; **grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band** and detach it slightly from the shoulder.

179. (Second motion.) Bring down the piece with both hands, the **barrel upward**, the **left thumb extended along the stock**, the **butt below the right fore-arm** the **small of the stock against the body** and **two inches below the right breast**, the **muzzle as high as the eye**, the **left elbow against the side**; place at the same time the right thumb on the head of the cock the other fingers wider and against the guard.

Ready Position – correct position



178. (First motion.) Raise the piece slightly with the right hand, making a half face to the right on the left heel; carry the right foot to the rear, and place it at right angles to the left, the hollow of it opposite to and against the left heel; **grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band** and detach it slightly from the shoulder.

179. (Second motion.) Bring down the piece with both hands, the **barrel upward**, the **left thumb extended along the stock**, the **butt below the right fore-arm** the **small of the stock against the body** and **two inches below the right breast**, the **muzzle as high as the eye**, the **left elbow against the side**; place at the same time the right thumb on the head of the cock the other fingers wider and against the guard.



Direct Fire – Front Rank - Aim

Notice that by **“raise it, little less the right elbow”** an opening is created through which the rear rank can aim.



soldiers were taught to close the left eye.

181. Raise the piece with both hands, and **support the butt against the right shoulder**; the **left, elbow down**, the right as high as the shoulder; **incline the head upon the butt**, so that the right eye may perceive quickly the notch of the hausse, the front sight, and the object aimed at, the **left eye closed**, the **right thumb extended along the stock**, the fore-finger on the trigger.

182. When recruits are formed in two ranks to execute the firings, **the front-rank men will raise it, little less the right elbow**, in order to facilitate the aim of the rear-rank men.

Direct Fire – Front Rank - Aim



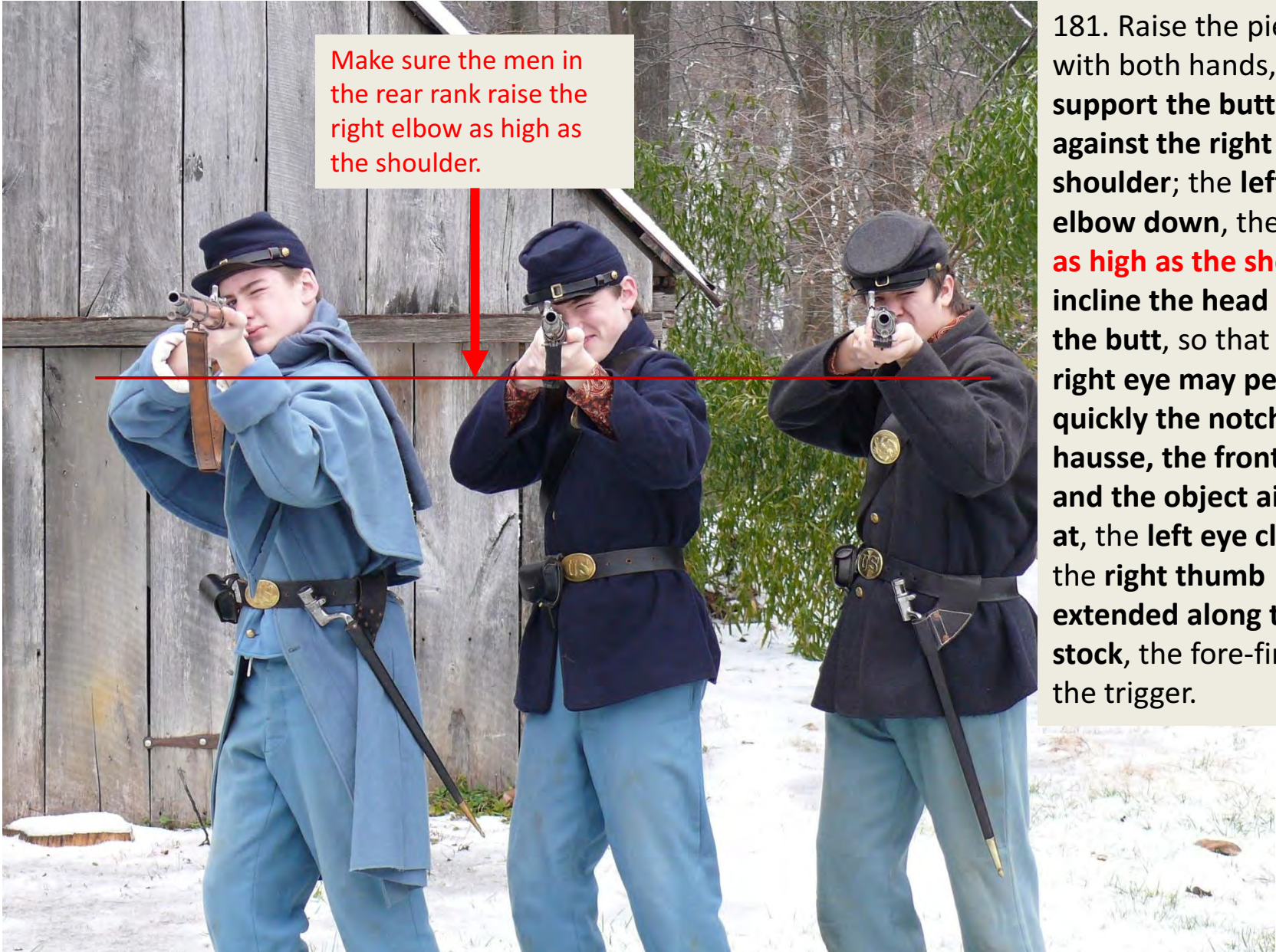
Direct Fire – Front Rank - Aim



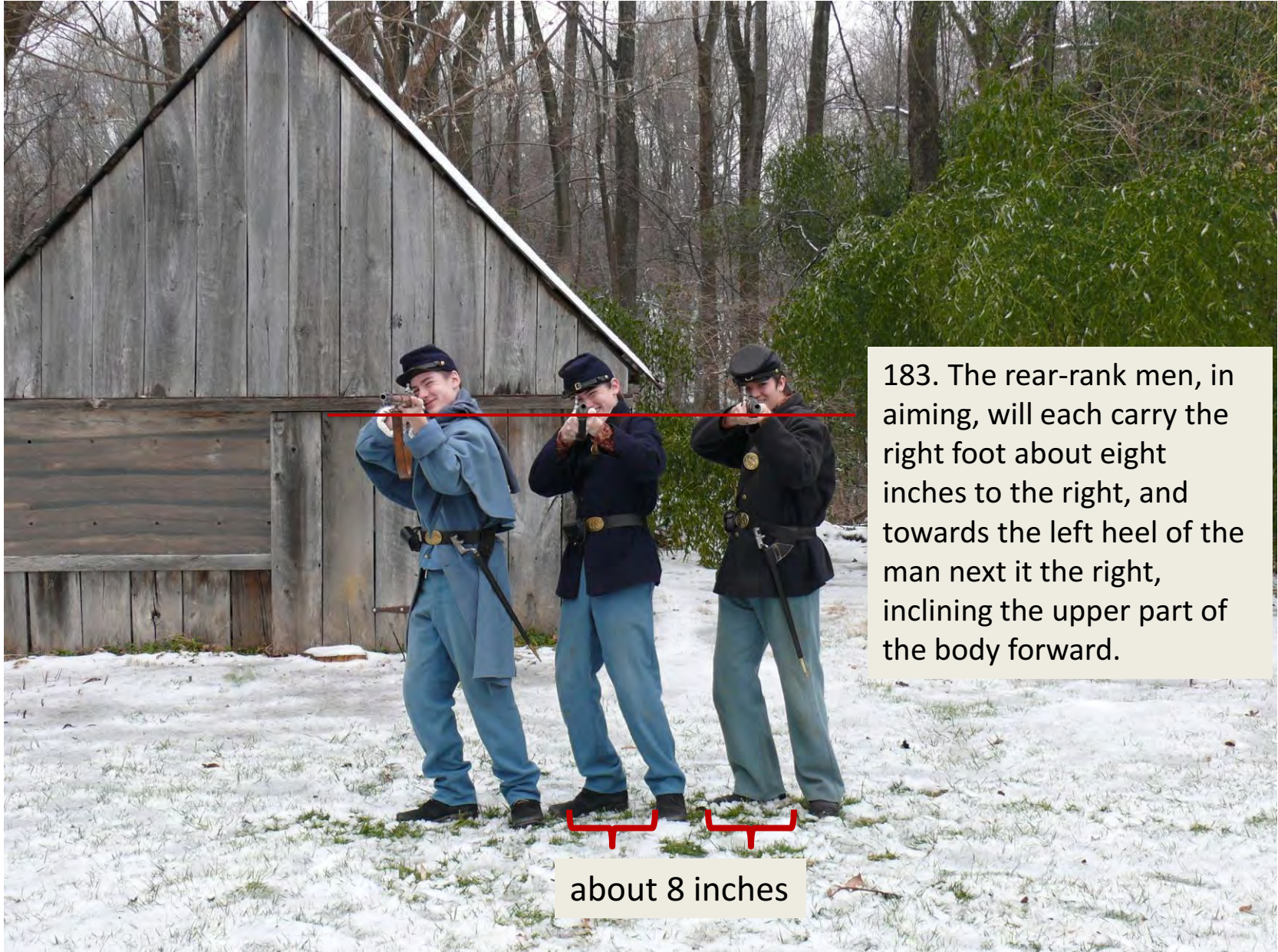
Direct Fire – Rear Rank - Aim

Make sure the men in the rear rank raise the right elbow as high as the shoulder.

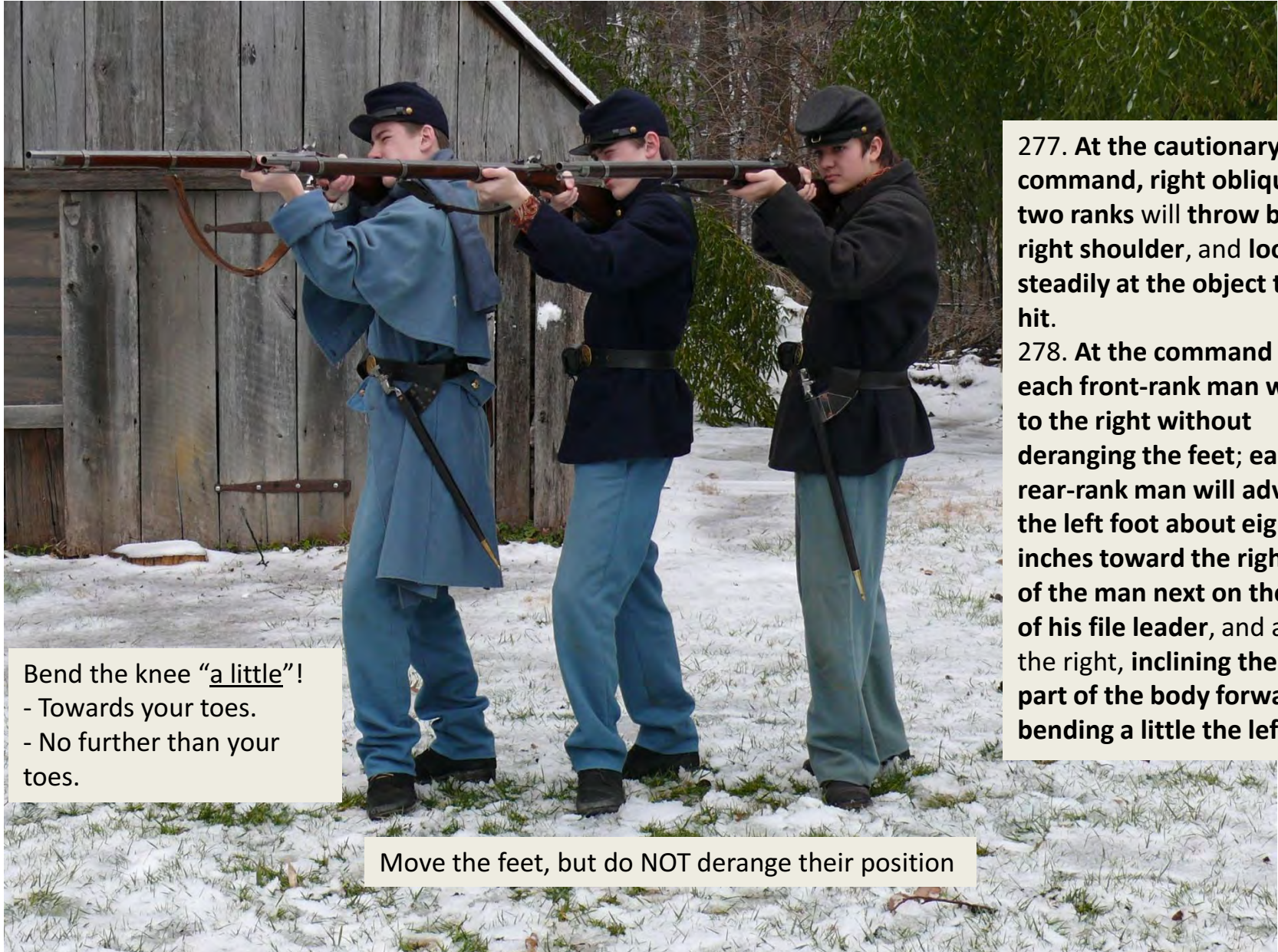
181. Raise the piece with both hands, and **support the butt against the right shoulder**; the left, **elbow down, the right as high as the shoulder**; incline the head upon the butt, so that the right eye may perceive quickly the notch of the hausse, the front sight, and the object aimed at, the left eye closed, the right thumb extended along the stock, the fore-finger on the trigger.



Direct Fire – Rear Rank - Aim



Right Oblique – Rear Rank - Aim



Bend the knee “a little”!

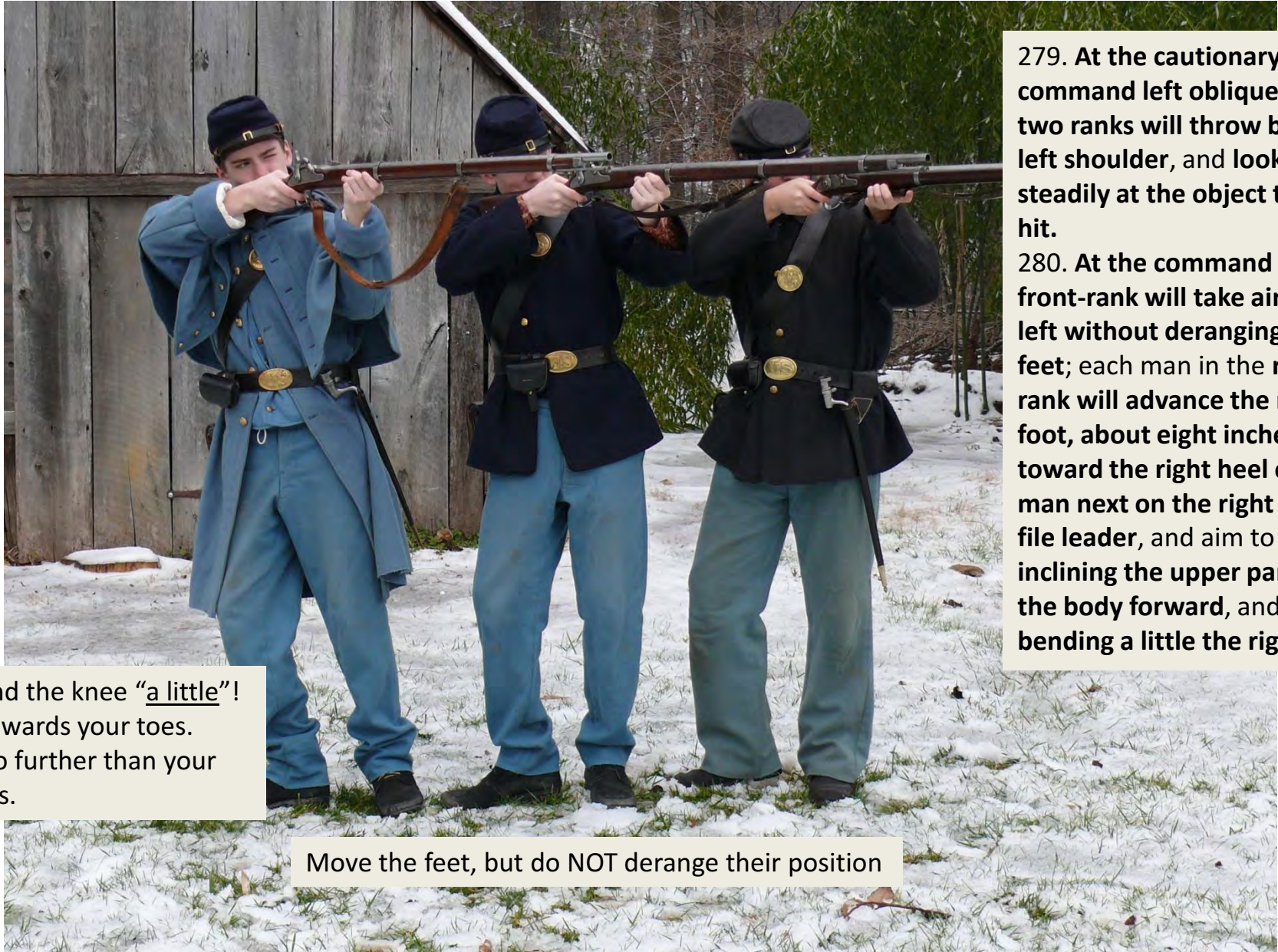
- Towards your toes.
- No further than your toes.

277. At the cautionary command, right oblique, the two ranks will throw back the right shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.

278. At the command aim, each front-rank man will aim to the right without deranging the feet; each rear-rank man will advance the left foot about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the left knee.

Move the feet, but do NOT derange their position

Left Oblique – Rear Rank - Aim



279. At the cautionary command left oblique, the two ranks will throw back the left shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.

280. At the command aim, the front-rank will take aim to the left without deranging the feet; each man in the rear-rank will advance the right foot, about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the left, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the right knee.

Bend the knee “a little”!
- Towards your toes.
- No further than your toes.

Move the feet, but do NOT derange their position

Two Ranks – Direct Fire - Aim

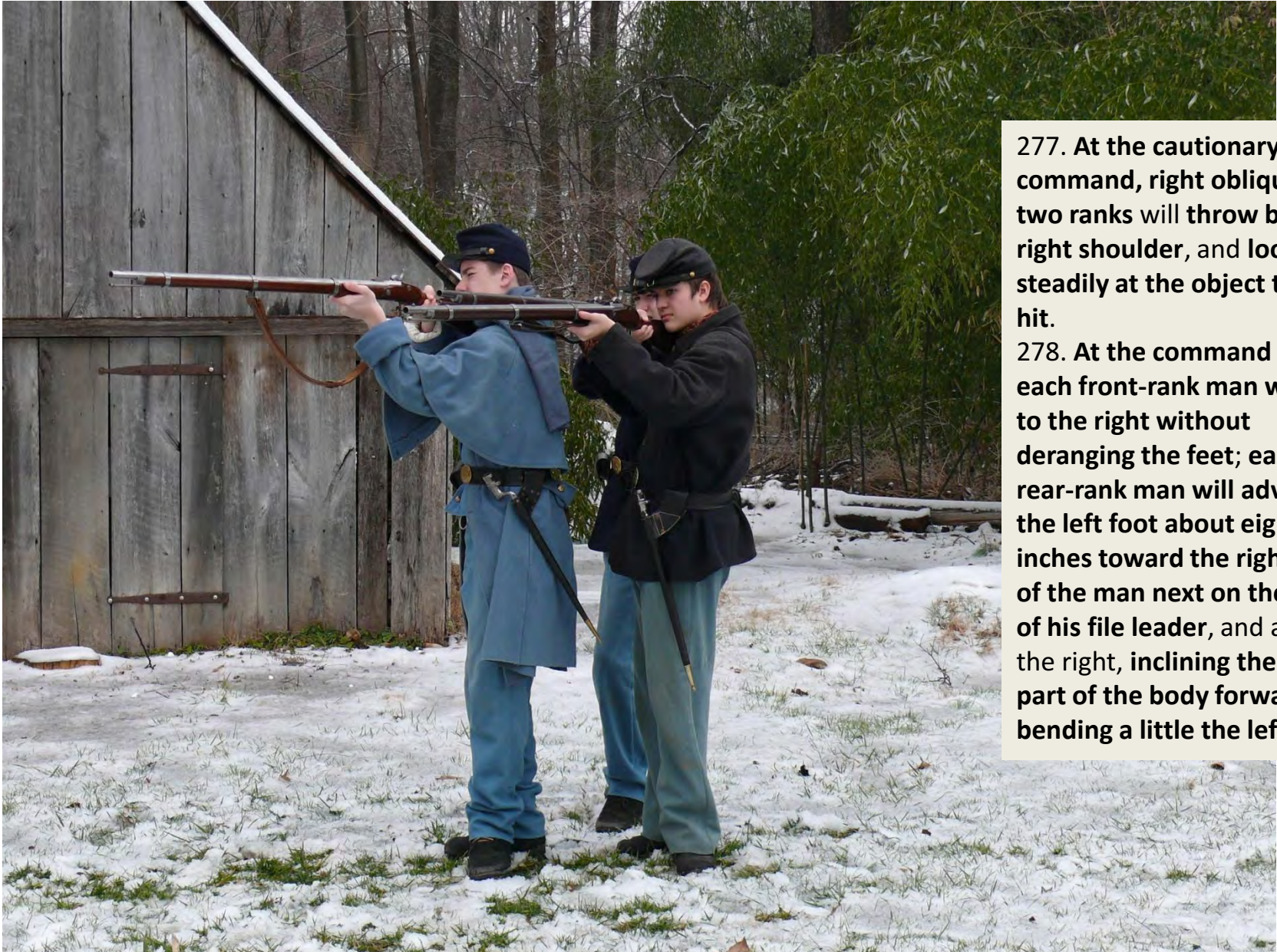
181. Raise the piece with both hands, and **support the butt against the right shoulder**; the **left, elbow down**, the right as high as the shoulder; **incline the head upon the butt**, so that the **right eye may perceive quickly the notch of the hausse, the front sight, and the object aimed at**, the **left eye closed**, the **right thumb extended along the stock**, the fore-finger on the trigger.

182. When recruits are formed in two ranks to execute the firings, **the front-rank men will raise it, little less the right elbow**, in order to facilitate the aim of the rear-rank men.



Notice that because **“the front-rank men will raise it, little less the right elbow,”** the rear rank can shoot directly through the front rank.

Two Ranks – Right Oblique - Aim



277. At the cautionary command, right oblique, the two ranks will throw back the right shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.

278. At the command aim, each front-rank man will aim to the right without deranging the feet; each rear-rank man will advance the left foot about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the left knee.

Two Ranks – Left Oblique - Aim

279. At the cautionary command left oblique, the two ranks will throw back the left shoulder, and look steadily at the object to be hit.

280. At the command aim, the front-rank will take aim to the left without deranging the feet; each man in the rear-rank will advance the right foot, about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the left, inclining the upper part of the body forward, and bending a little the right knee.



Summary

- All footwork for the rear rank carries the soldier a small distance to the right of their file partner.
- For both the direct and oblique fire, the foot is moved: “about 8 inches”.
- Direct Fire Aim: “carry the right foot about eight inches to the right, and towards the left heel of the man next on the right, ...”.
- Right Oblique Aim: “each rear-rank man will advance the left foot about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader,”.
- Left Oblique Aim: “each man in the rear rank will advance the right foot, about eight inches toward the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, ...”.

End of Lesson