



A SEMINAR ON CASEY'S SCHOOLS OF INSTRUCTION

SCHOOLS OF THE SOLDIER AND COMPANY

ALIGNMENT

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16 DECEMBER 2025

Alignment lesson – why teach this 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.
- So why teach this instruction now?
 - To mitigate the drill-challenges we face 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.
 - Mitigation = 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 – “turn the head gently”
 - It is not sudden. It is not big. It is not fast.
 - 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.

Right (or Left) DRESS - As Individuals

- 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 for *Eyes - RIGHT*(referenced in S.S. 321 “as prescribed in the first lesson of the first part”)
 - **S.S. 320.** The instructor will at first teach the recruits to align themselves, man by man, in order the better to make them comprehend the principles of alignment; to this end, he will command the two men on the right flank to march two paces to the front, and having aligned them, he will caution the remainder of the squad to move up, as they may be successively called, each by his number, and align themselves successively on the line of the first two men.
 - **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.
 - Note that the final approach to the line is a shuffle not a full step
 - **322.** The instructor seeing the rank well aligned, will command:
 - FRONT.
 - **323.** At this, the recruits will turn eyes to the front, and remain firm.
 - **324.** Alignments to the left will be executed on the same principles.

Right (or Left) DRESS – As a Rank

- Once individuals are competent, dress as a rank.
 - Dress each man individually until they execute it correctly.
- **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.
 - Think of the image of dominos falling in sequence
 - The second man cannot align himself, until the first has aligned himself, the third align himself cannot until the second has, and so on ...
- **328.** The instructor, seeing the greater number of the rank aligned, will command:
 - **FRONT.**

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 takes small steps forward to the new line.

Company Alignment in Open Ranks – step 1

To open Ranks. As described in School of the Company

- **S.C. 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.*
- **S.C. 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.
 - Here “paces” is a unit of measure = i.e. 28 inches
 - Since when marching backward, the length of the step is 14 inches, we should be taking at least 8 steps
- **S.C. 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.

NOTE: Per S.C. 10, this is the opportunity for the Battalion Staff to align the closers **before** the command “March” is issued. Ensuring that the NCOs are positioned properly will ensure the rear rank is properly aligned and looks sharp.

Company Alignment in Open Ranks – step 2

To open Ranks. As described in School of the Company

- **S.C. 10.** The instructor {after ensuring the rear rank is properly aligned} ... will command:
 - 5. MARCH.
- **S.C. 11.** At this command, the front-rank will stand fast.
- **S.C. 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.”
- **S.C. 13.** The covering sergeant will align the rear-rank on the left guide placed to mark the left of this rank.
- **S.C. 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.
- **S.C. 15.** The instructor seeing the rear-rank aligned, will command:
 - 6. FRONT.
- **S.C. 16.** At this command, the sergeant on the left of the rear-rank will return to his place as a file closer.
- **S.C. 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.

Battalion Alignment in Open Ranks – step 1

To open Ranks. As described in School of the Battalion

- S.B. 27. The colonel, wishing the ranks to be opened, will command:
 - 1. Prepare to open ranks.
- S.B. 28. At this command, the lieutenant colonel and major will place themselves on the right of the battalion, the first on the flank of the file closers, and the second four paces from the front rank of the battalion.
- S.B. 29. These dispositions being made, the colonel will command:
 - 2. To the rear, open order. 3. MARCH.
- S.B. 30. At the second command, the covering sergeants, and the sergeant on the left of the battalion, will place themselves four paces in rear of the front rank, and opposite their places in line of battle, in order to mark the new alignment of the rear rank; they will be aligned by the major on the left sergeant of the battalion, who will be careful to place himself exactly four paces in rear of the front rank, and to hold his piece between the eyes, erect and inverted, the better to indicate to the major the direction to be given to the covering sergeants.
 - Here the “the sergeant on the left of the battalion” is the 2nd Sgt of the left-most Company.
 - Note the instruction for this Sgt “to hold his piece between the eyes, erect and inverted” to enable the Major to align the covering sergeants.
 - When in Battalion formation, only the 2nd Sgt of the left-most Company is positioned in the Front-Rank. All other 2nd Sgts are positioned as file closers in their respective Companies.

Battalion Alignment in Open Ranks – step 2

To open Ranks. As described in School of the Battalion

- S.B. 31. At the command march, the rear rank and the file closers will step to the rear without counting steps; the men will pass a little in rear of the line traced for this rank, halt, and dress forward on the covering sergeants, who will align correctly the men of their respective companies.
- S.B. 32. The file closers will fall back and preserve the distance of two paces from the rear rank, glancing eyes to the right; the lieutenant colonel will, from the right, align them on the file closer of the left, who, having placed himself accurately two paces from the rear rank, will invert his piece, and hold it up erect between his eyes, the better to be seen by the lieutenant colonel.
 - Here the “the file closer of the left” is the left-most file closer of the left-most Company.
 - Note the instruction for this file closer “to hold his piece between the eyes, erect and inverted” to enable the Major to align the covering sergeants.
- S.B. 33. The colonel, seeing the ranks aligned, will command:
 - 4. FRONT.
- S.B. 33. (continued) At this command, the lieutenant colonel, major, and the left sergeant, will retake their places in line of battle.
 - The Captains and Covering Sergeants remain in the Front-Rank and Rear-Rank respectively.

Alignment Notes

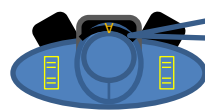
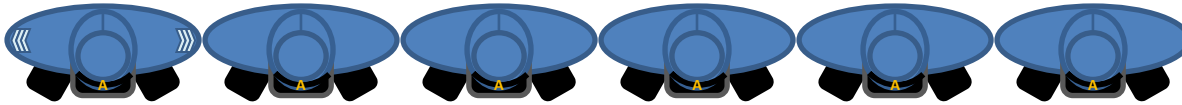
- Dress
 - Regardless if dressing forward or backward
 - always finishes by taking small steps to the front
- Dress Forward
 - The new line should be at least two paces forward of the existing line.
 - The soldier takes regular steps forward up to the point at which he is 6 inches away from the new line.
 - 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
- Soldiers maintain *Eyes-RIGHT* (or *LEFT*) until the Officer directs them to turn their eyes to the front.

Dressing Forward – individual

A stop-motion illustration

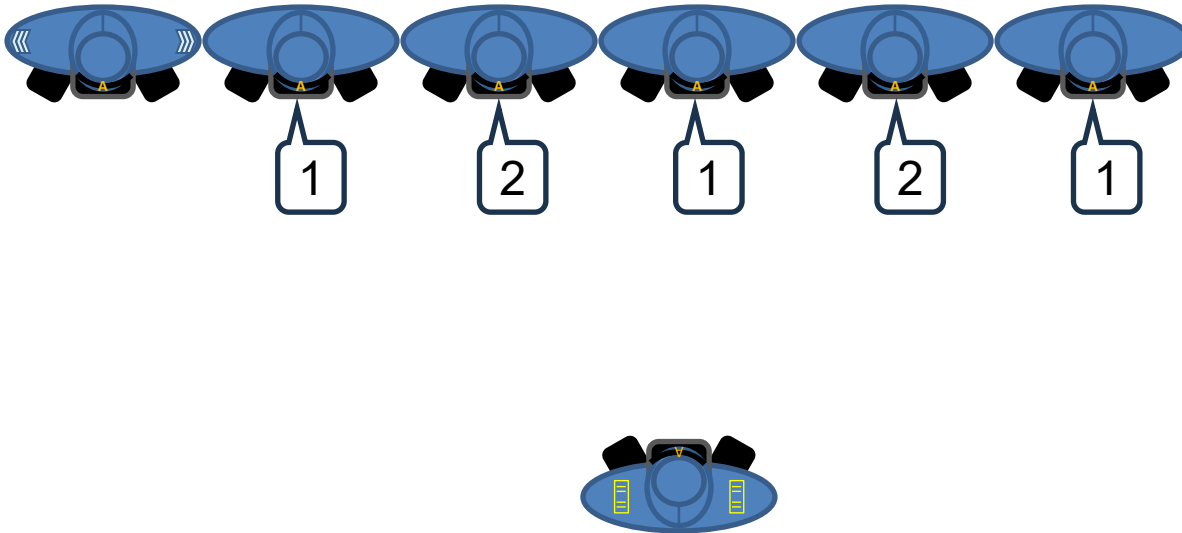
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Dressing Forward - individual

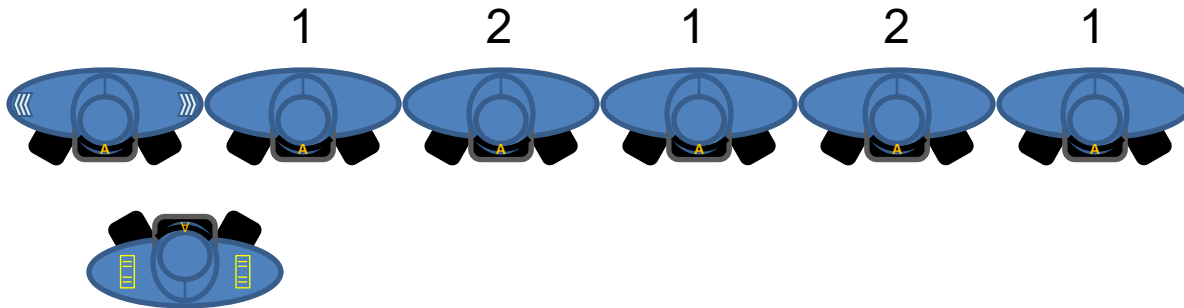


In each rank—Count TWOS.

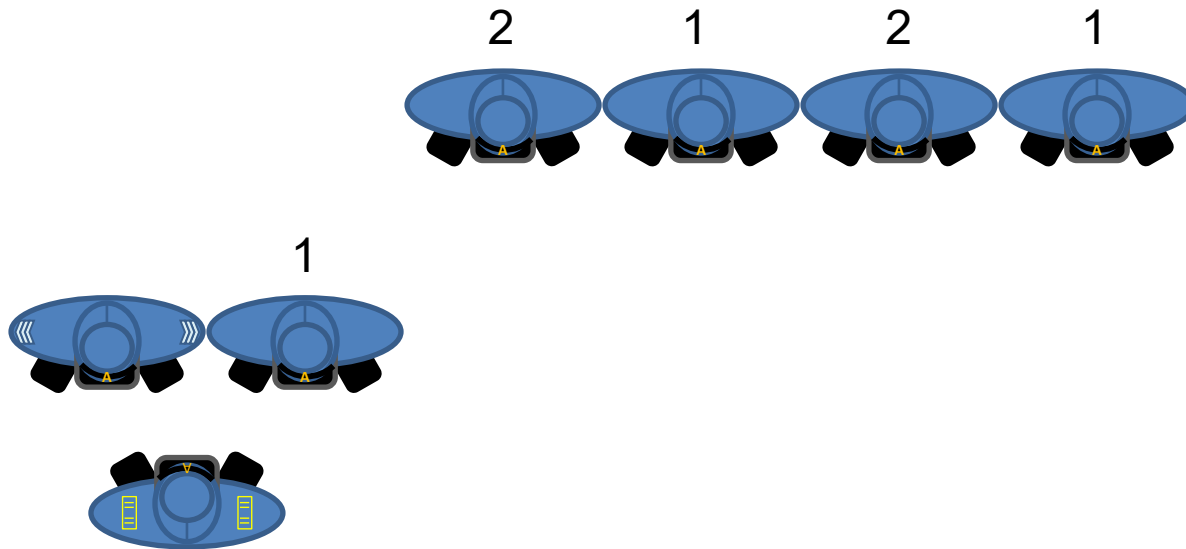
Dressing Forward - individual



Dressing Forward - individual

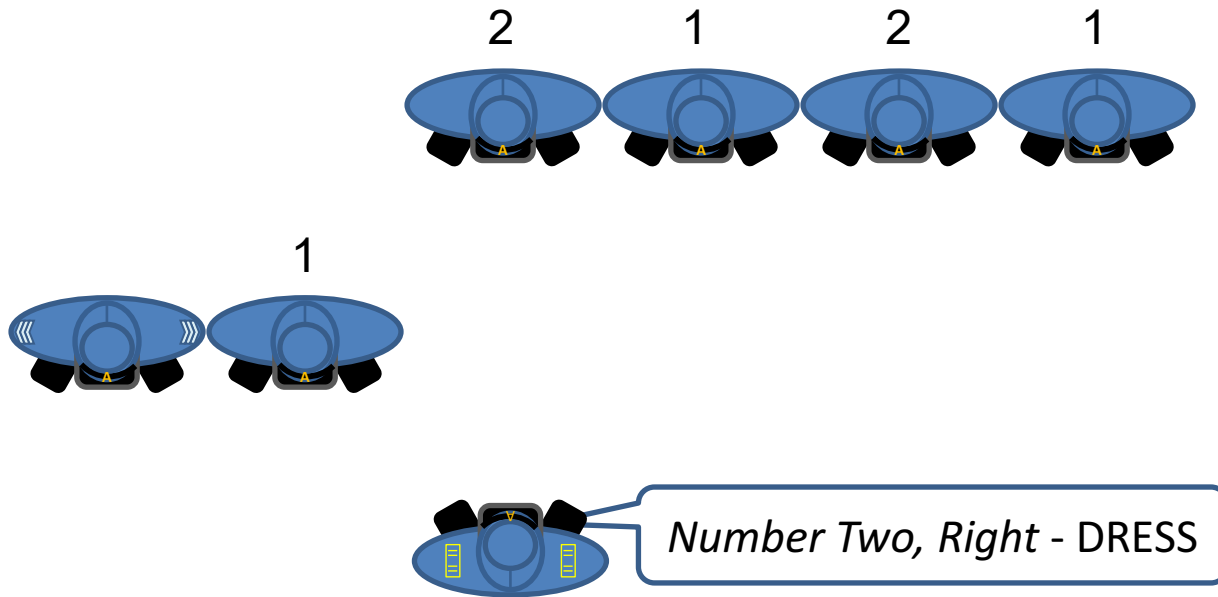


Dressing Forward - individual



Set the new line

Dressing Forward - individual

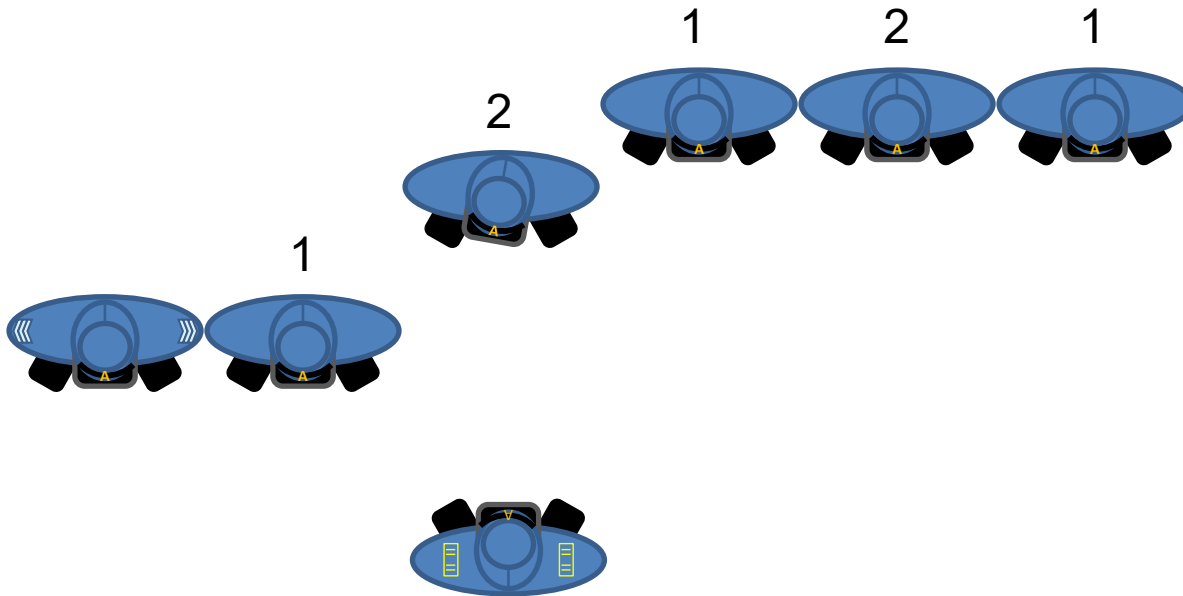


Successively call each soldier by his number.

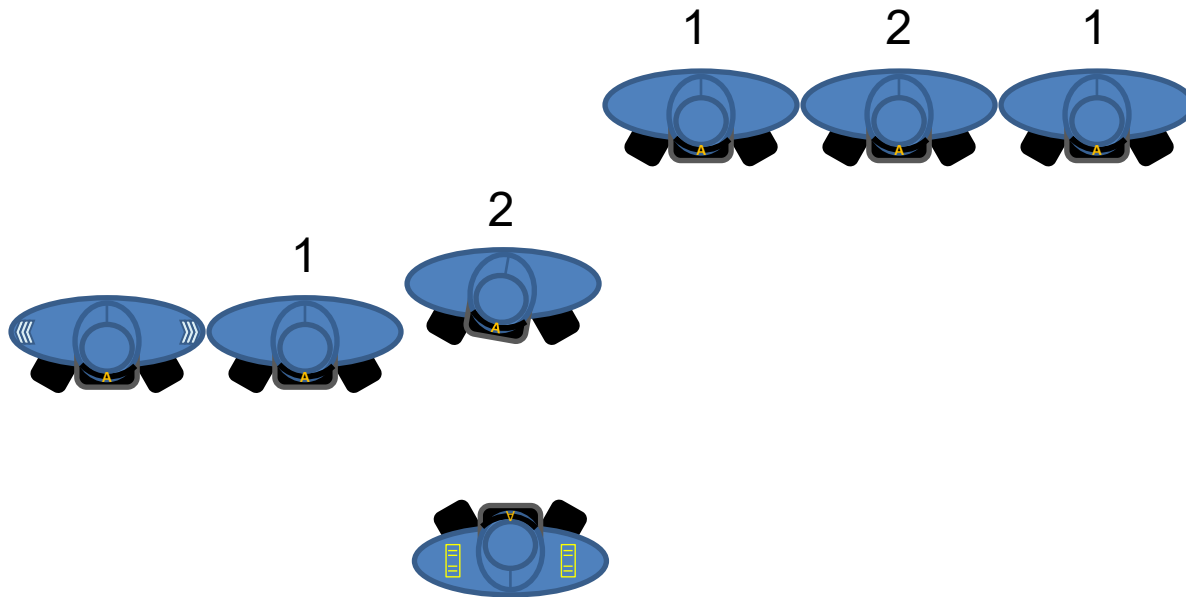
Observing each individual and correcting any faults in execution.

Dressing Forward - individual

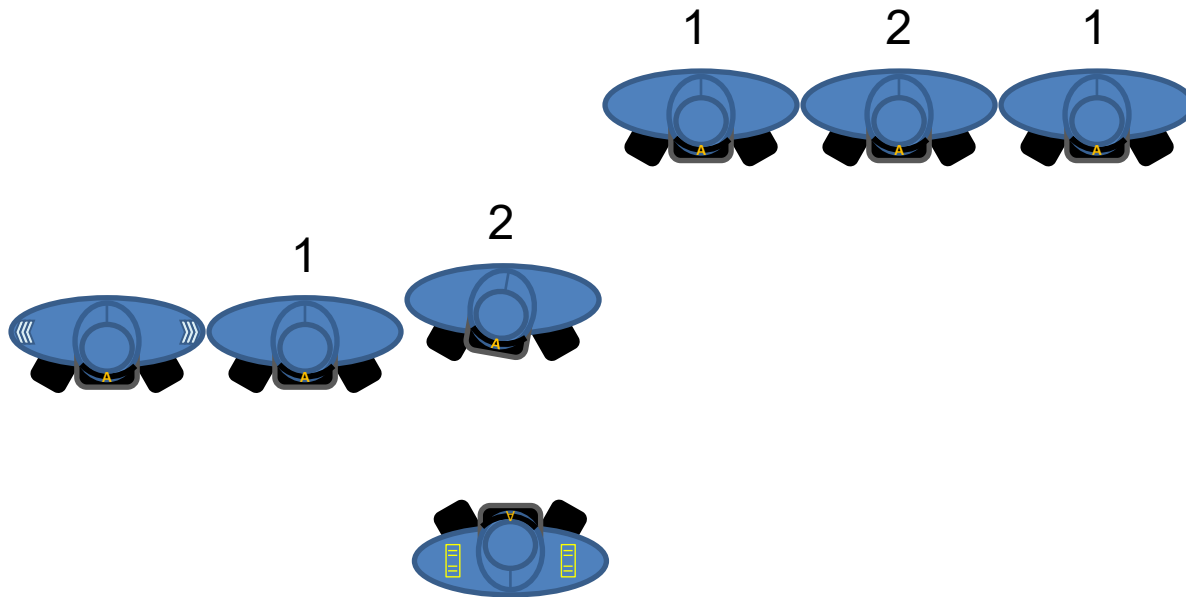
The soldier executing the alignment turns the head and eyes right according to the method instructed for *Eyes-RIGHT*



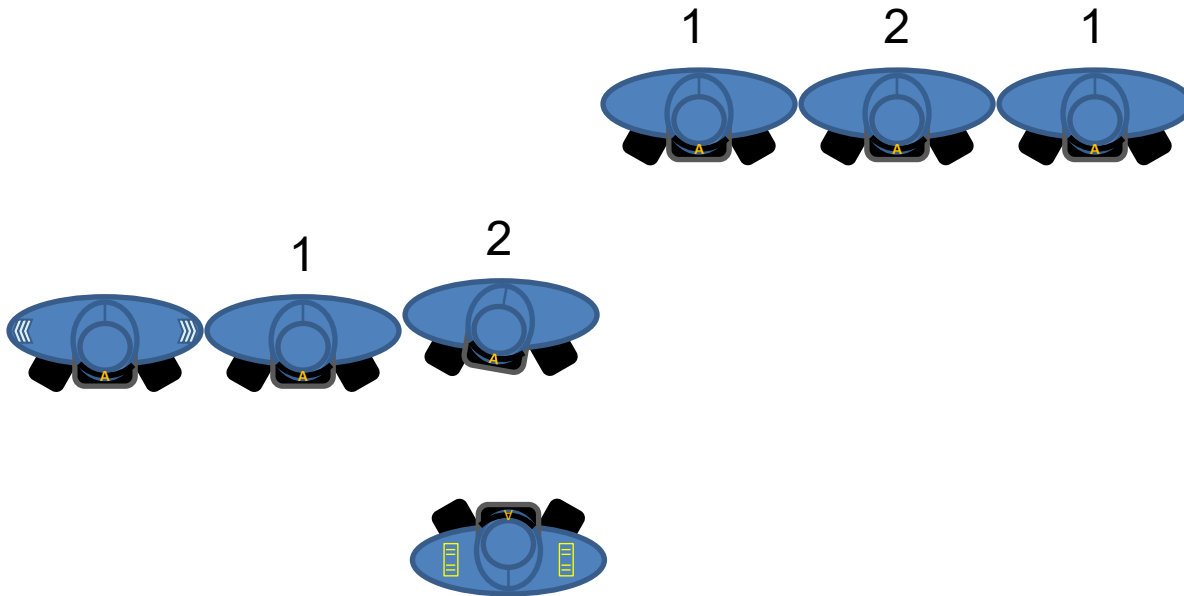
Dressing Forward - individual



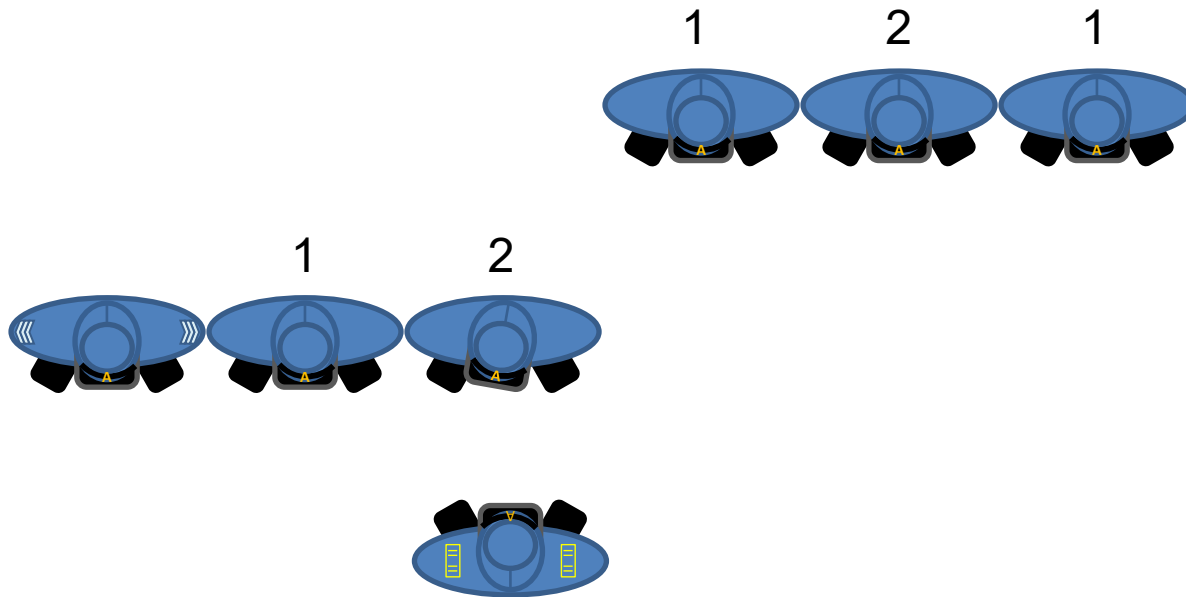
Dressing Forward - individual



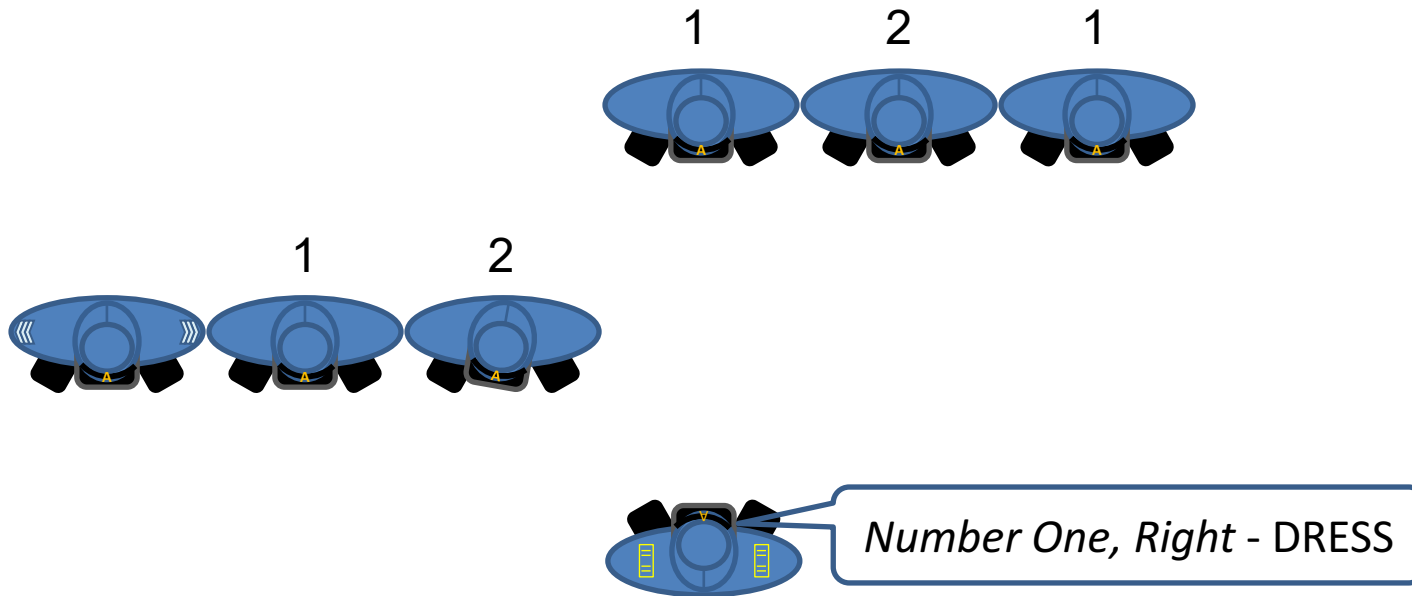
Dressing Forward - individual



Dressing Forward - individual



Dressing Forward - individual

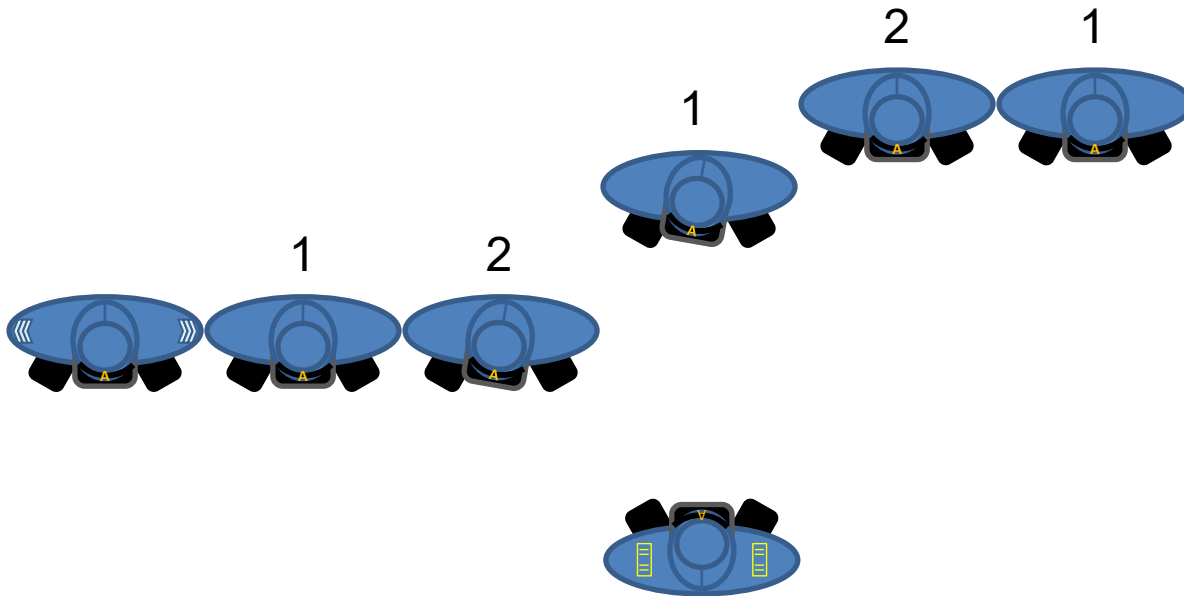


Note that the soldiers that have aligned themselves remain at *Eyes – RIGHT* until commanded to return their eyes to the Front

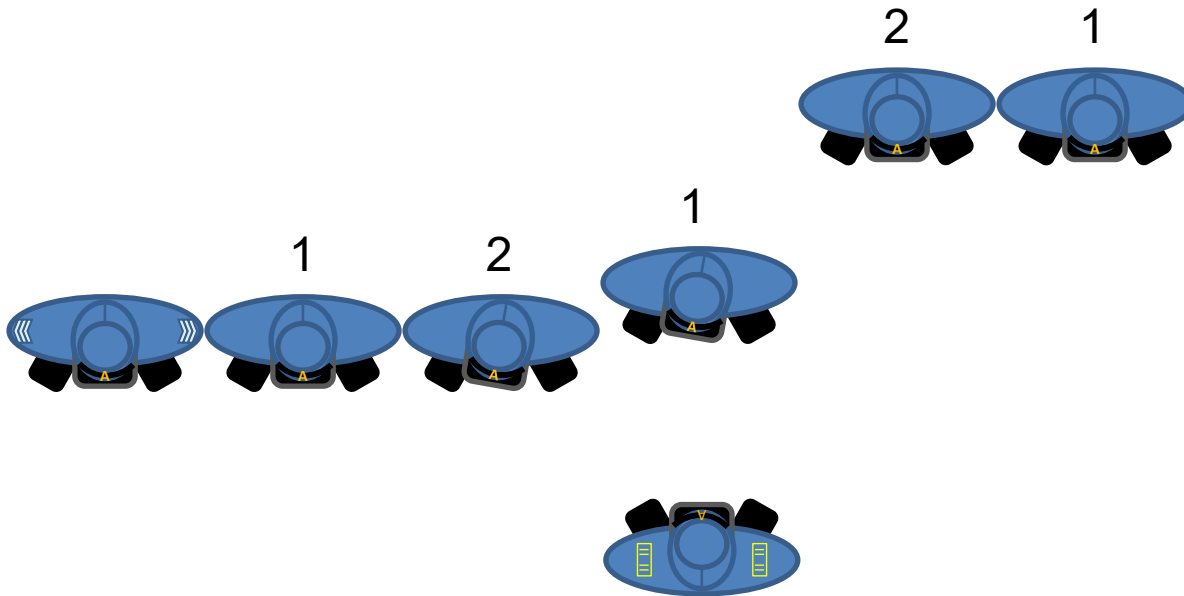
Successively call each soldier by his number.

Observing each individual and correcting any faults in execution.

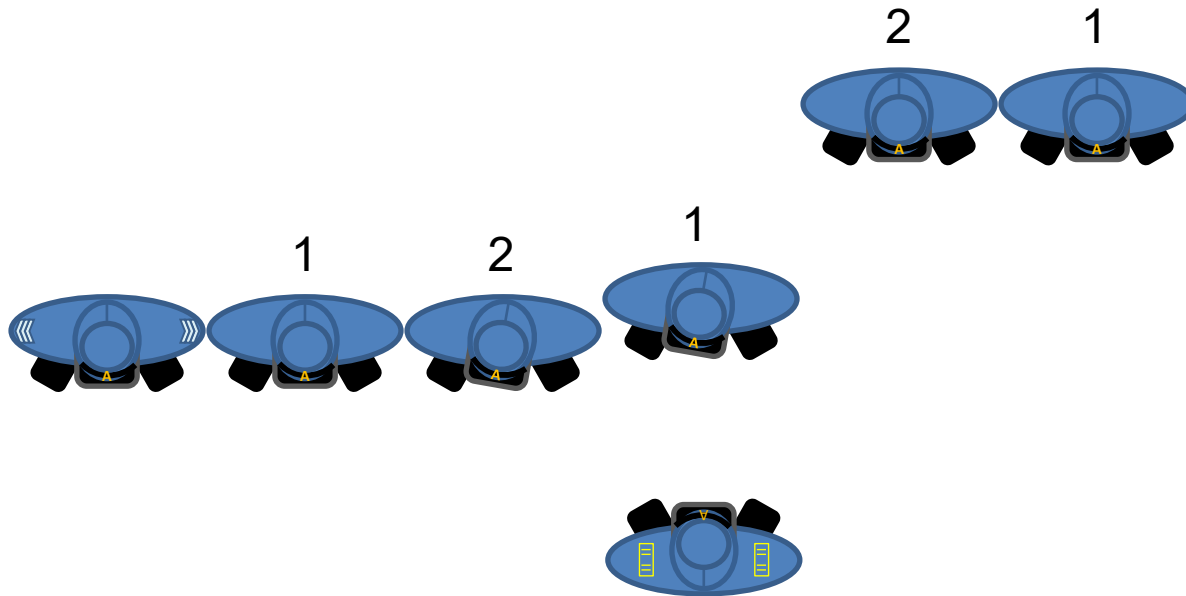
Dressing Forward - individual



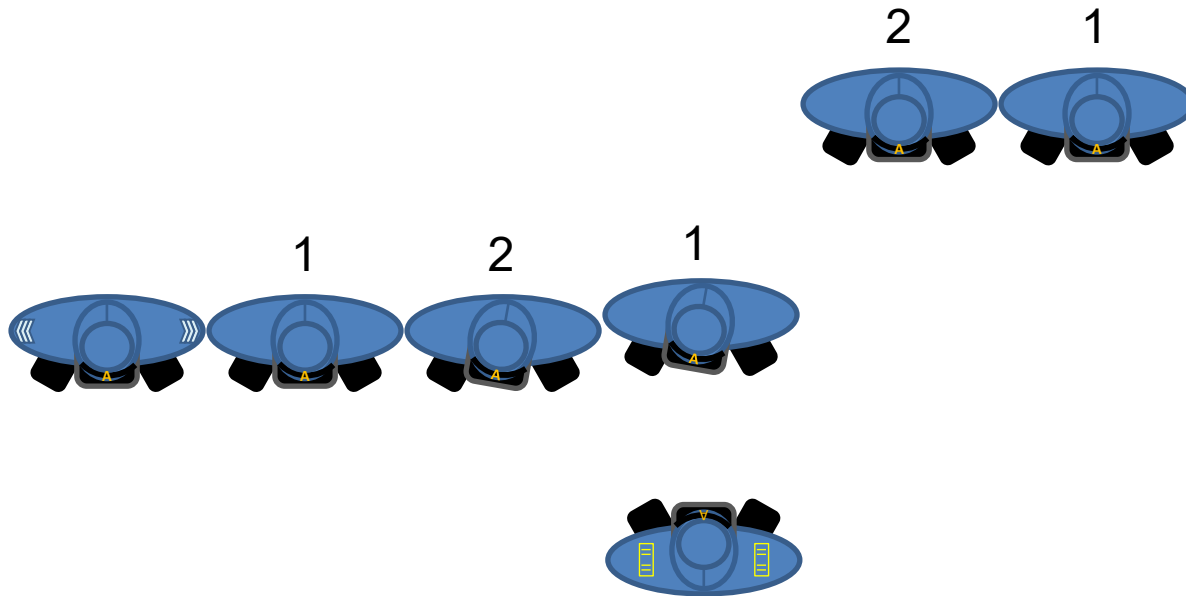
Dressing Forward - individual



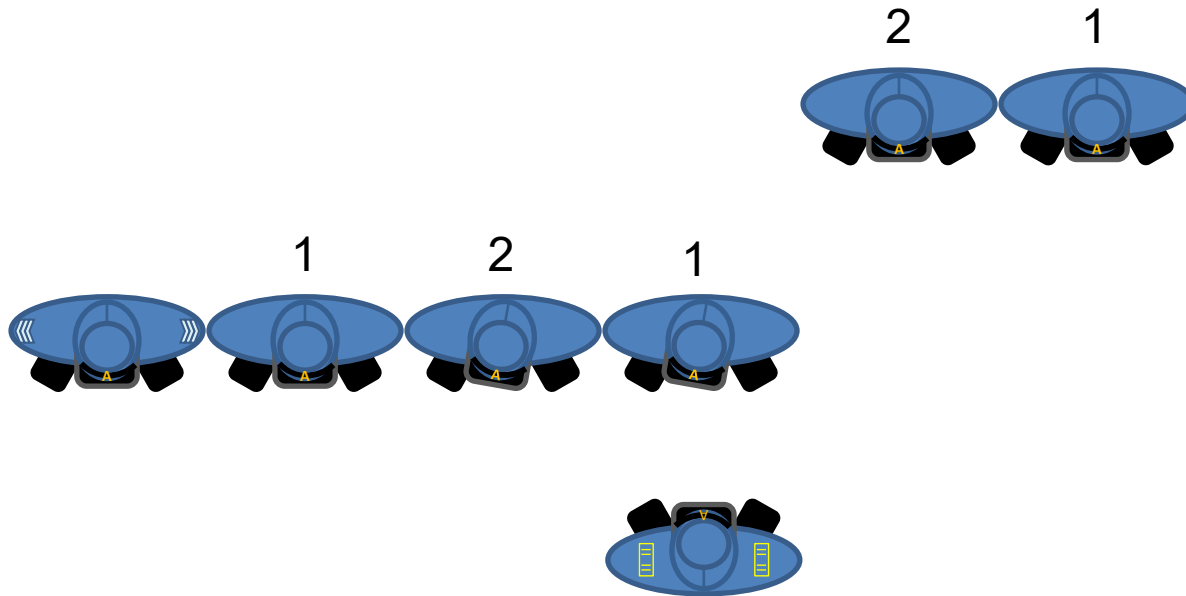
Dressing Forward - individual



Dressing Forward - individual



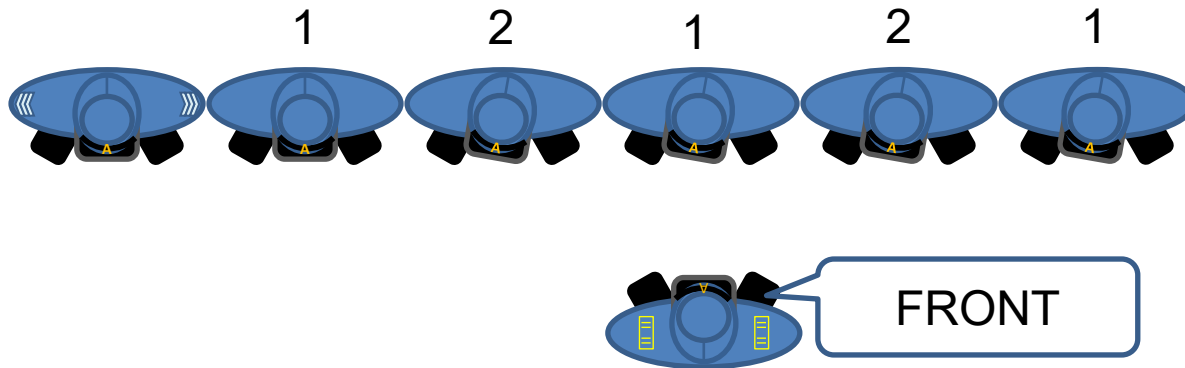
Dressing Forward - individual



Continue on down the line.

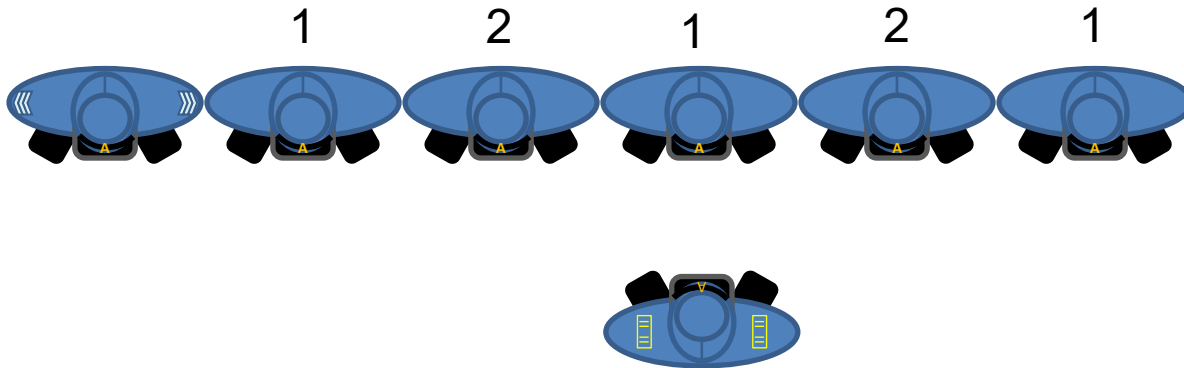
Observing each individual
and correcting any faults in
execution.

Dressing Forward - individual



Once alignment is complete, direct the men to turn their eyes to the front and to remain firm.

Dressing Forward - individual

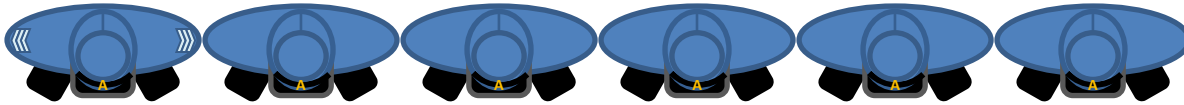


Dressing Forward – as a rank

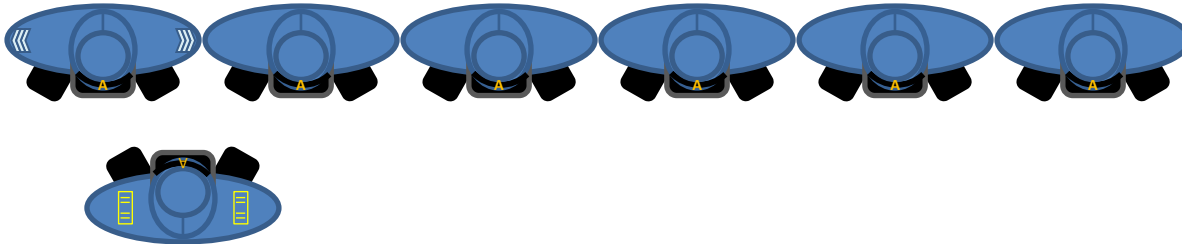
A stop-motion illustration

(page through the sequence to view the animation)

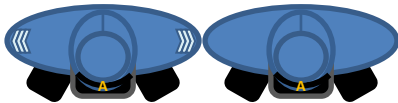
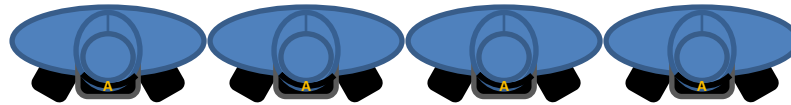
Dressing Forward – as a rank



Dressing Forward – as a rank

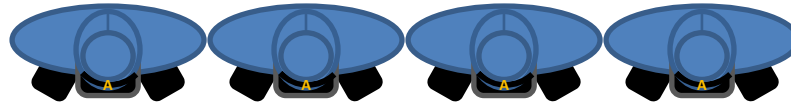


Dressing Forward – as a rank



Set the new line

Dressing Forward – as a rank



Let the man on your right step off before you do.

You cannot align before he does, so don't get ahead of him.

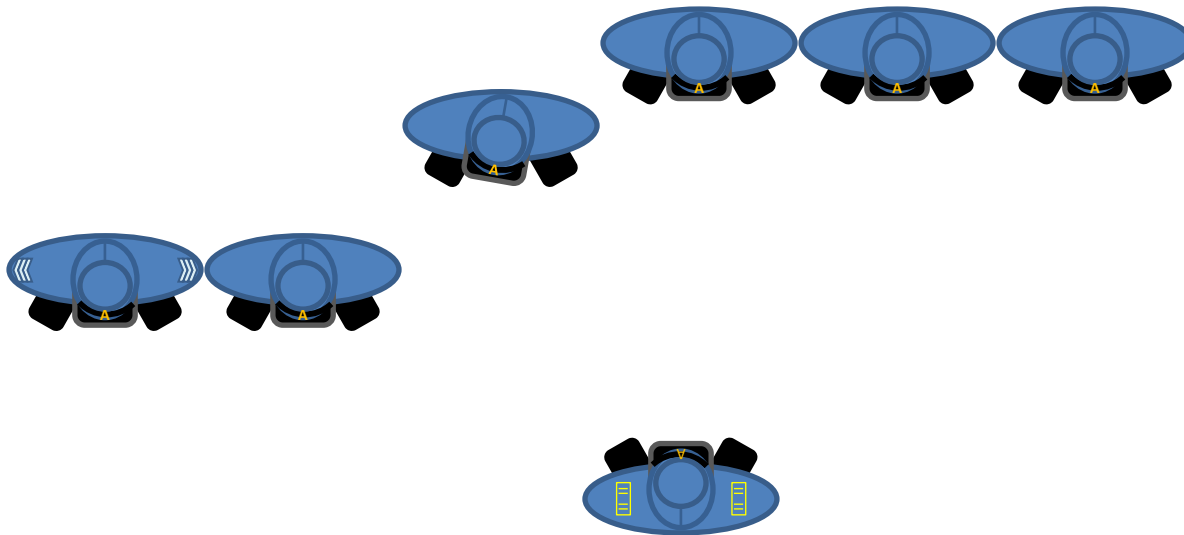


Let him take his first step then you take yours.



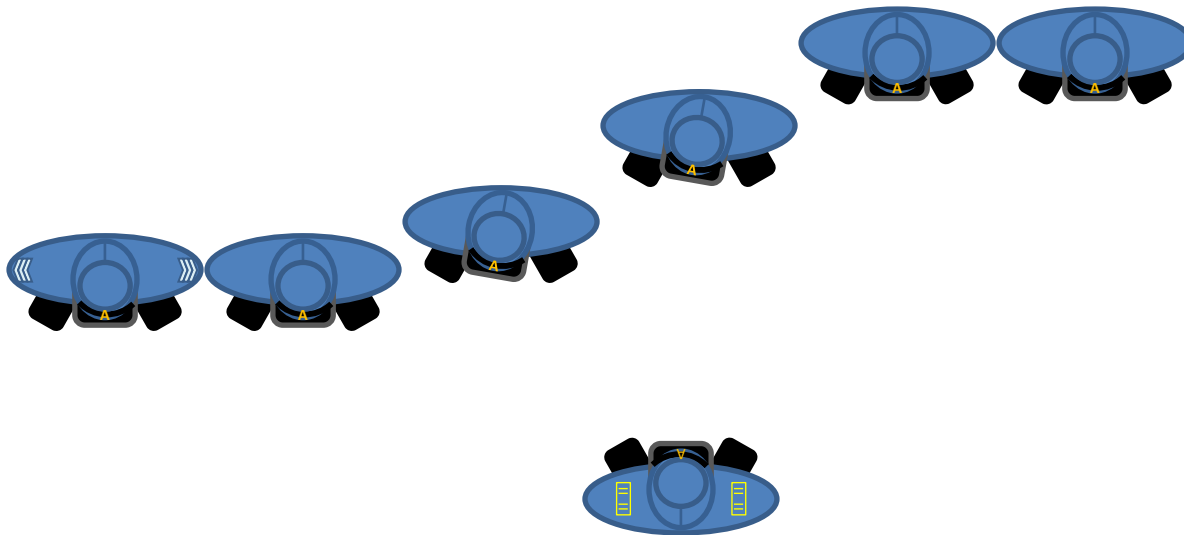
We should look like dominoes falling into place.

Dressing Forward – as a rank

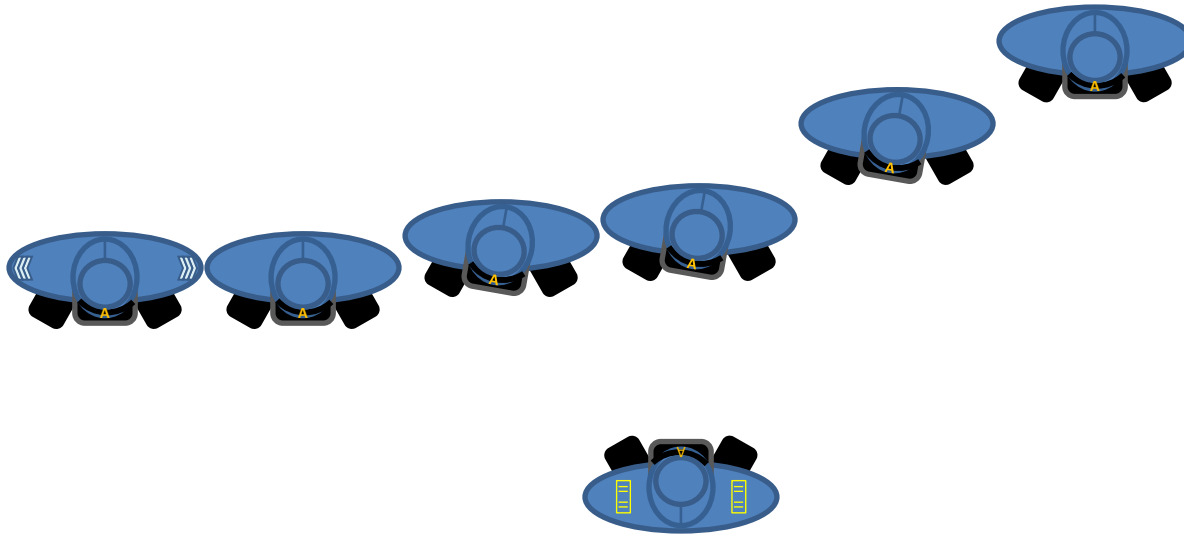


Dressing Forward – as a rank

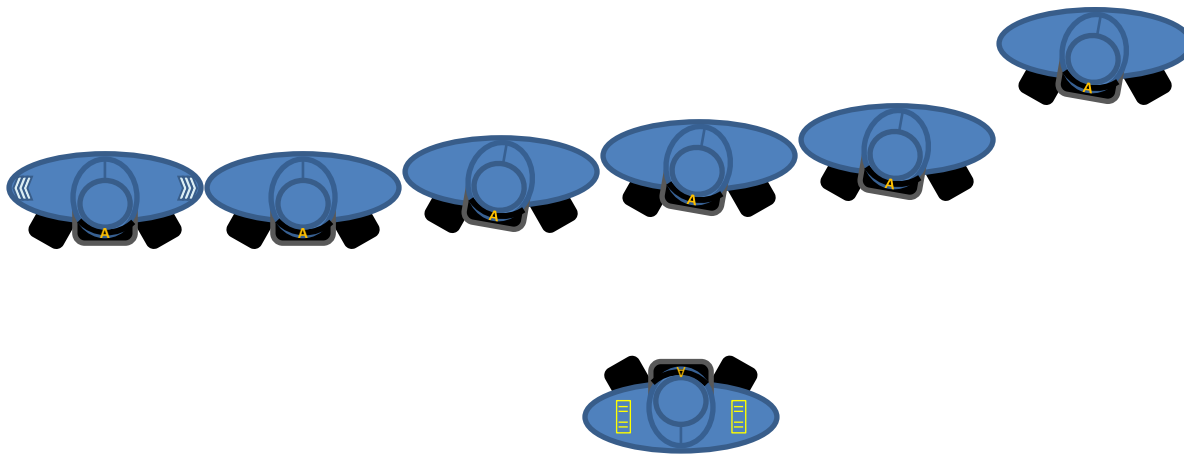
The soldier executing the alignment turns the head and eyes right according to the method instructed for *Eyes-RIGHT*



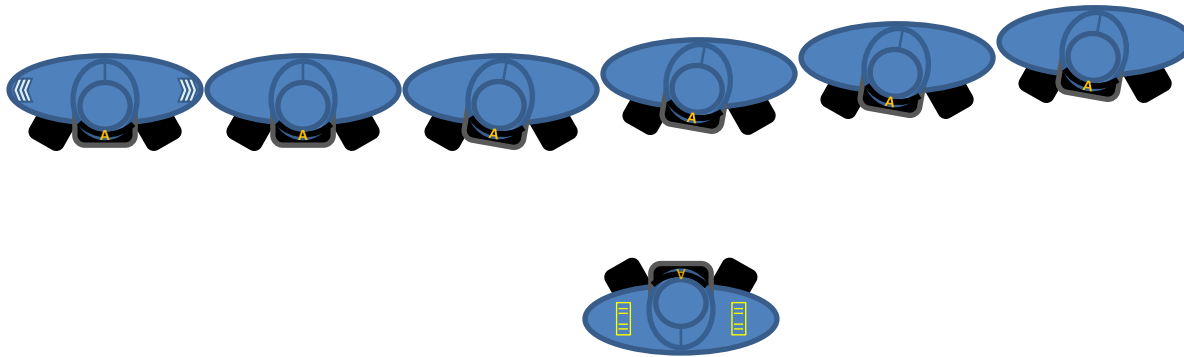
Dressing Forward – as a rank



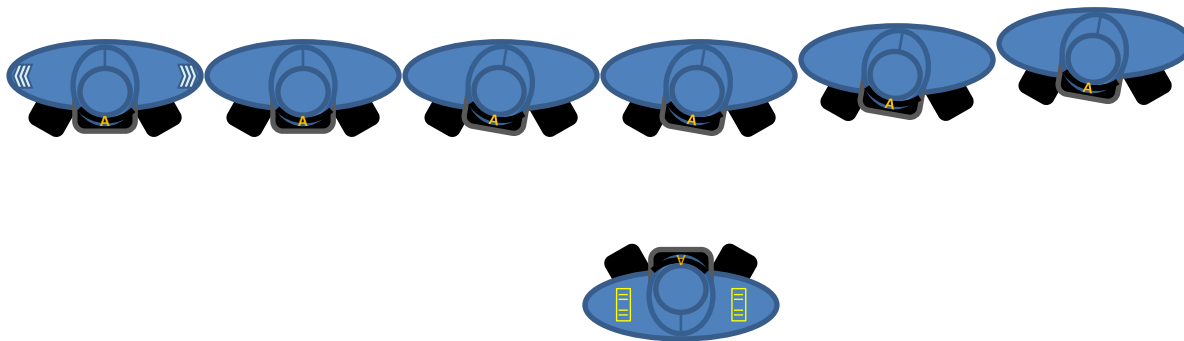
Dressing Forward – as a rank



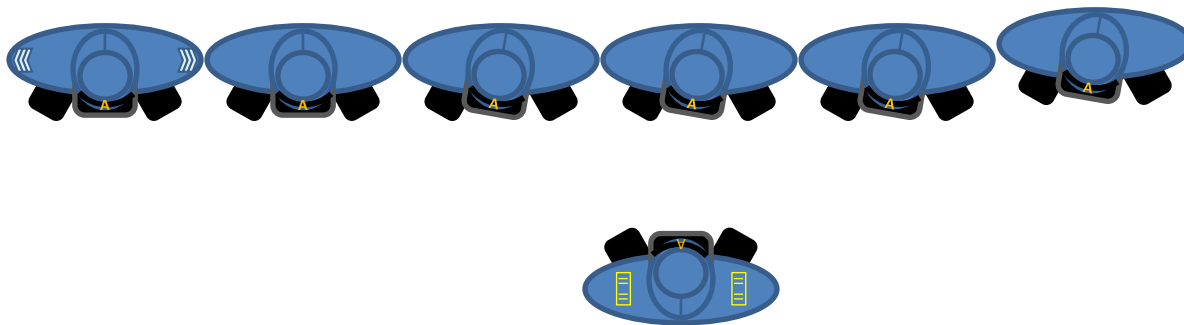
Dressing Forward – as a rank



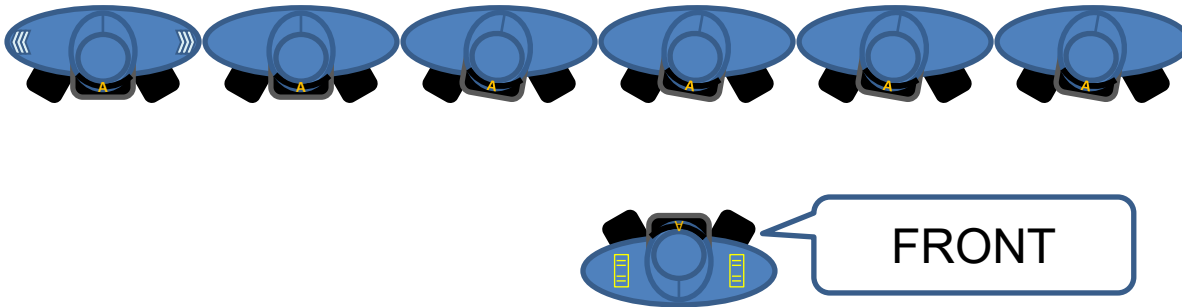
Dressing Forward – as a rank



Dressing Forward – as a rank

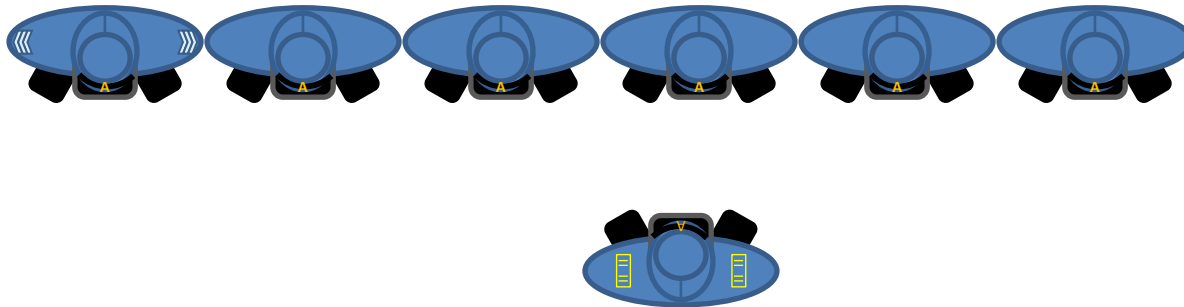


Dressing Forward – as a rank



Once alignment is complete, direct the men to turn their eyes to the front and to remain firm.

Dressing Forward – as a rank

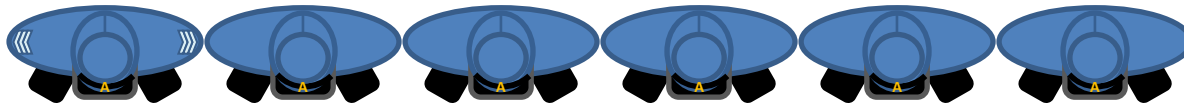


Dressing Backward - individual

A stop-motion illustration

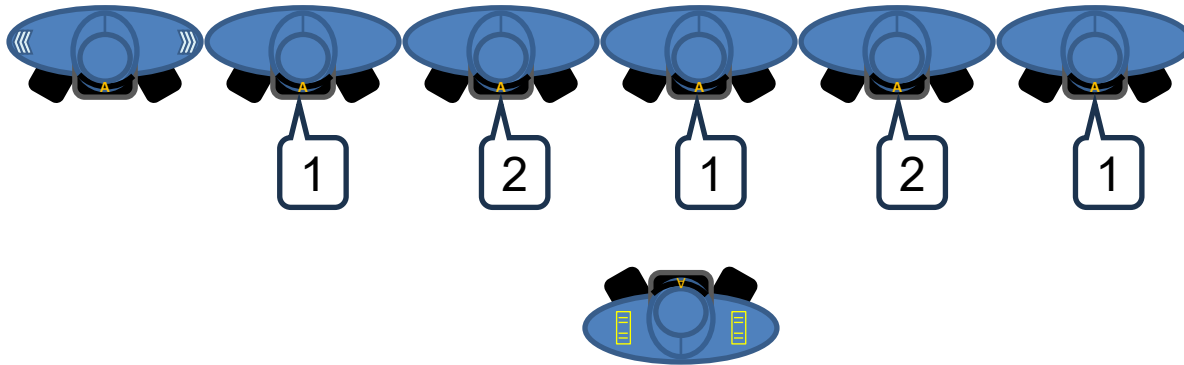
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Dressing Backward - individual

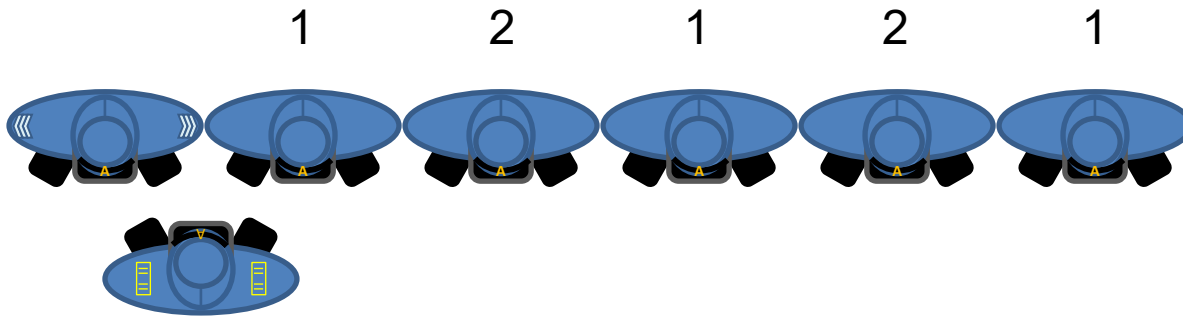


In each rank—Count TWOS.

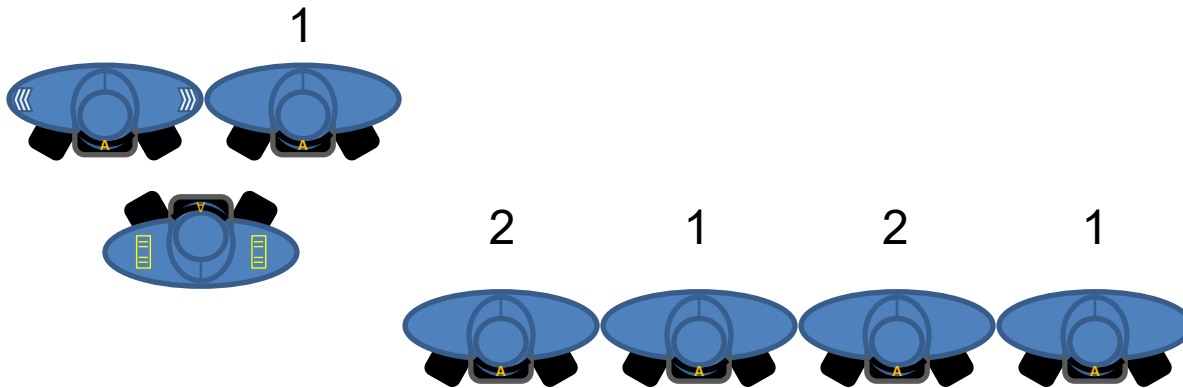
Dressing Backward - individual



Dressing Backward - individual

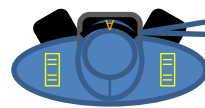
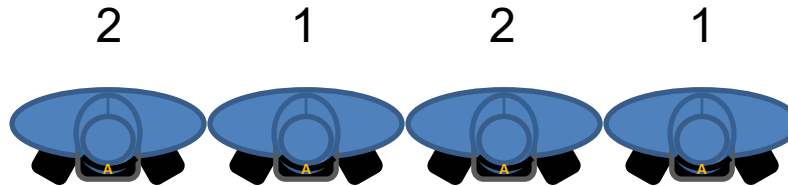
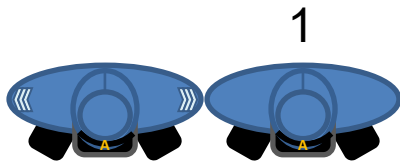


Dressing Backward - individual



Set the new line

Dressing Backward - individual



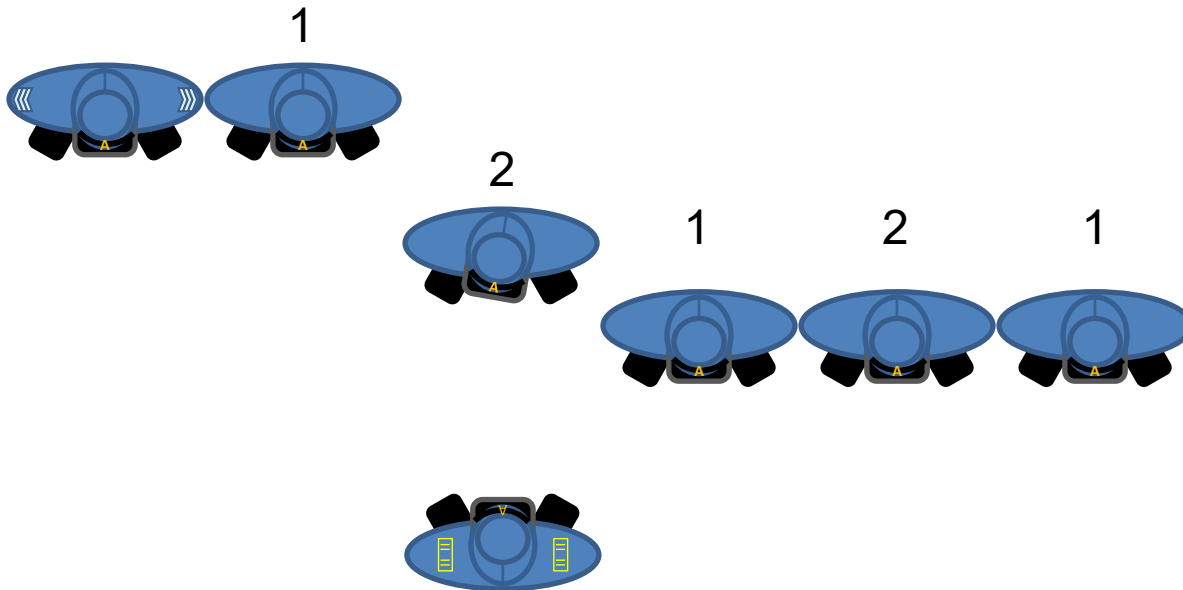
Number Two, Right backward - DRESS

Successively call each soldier by his number.

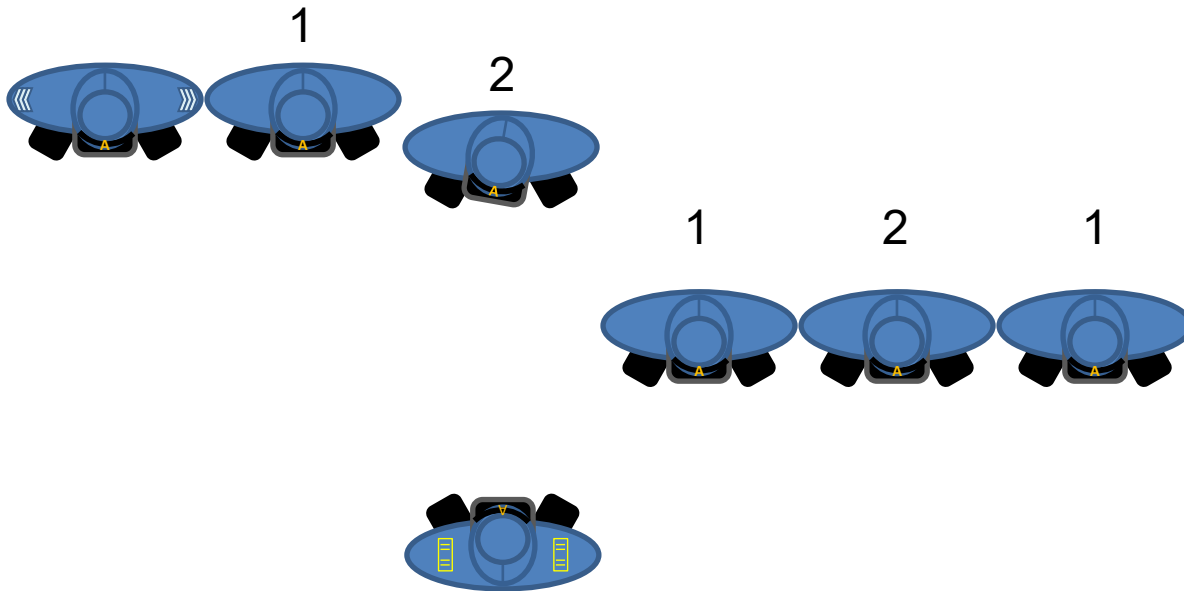
Observing each individual and correcting any faults in execution.

Dressing Backward - individual

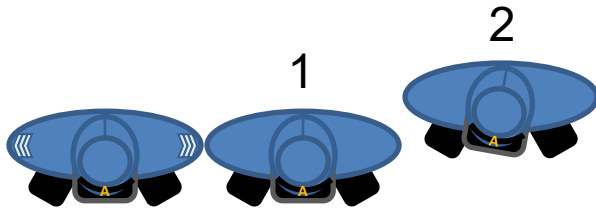
The soldier executing the alignment turns the head and eyes right according to the method instructed for *Eyes-RIGHT*



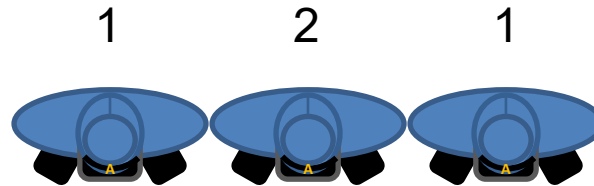
Dressing Backward - individual



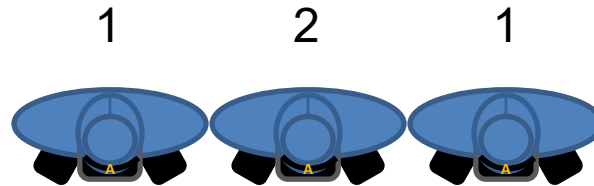
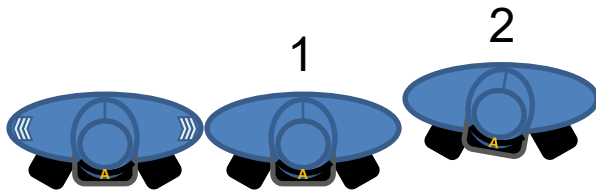
Dressing Backward - individual



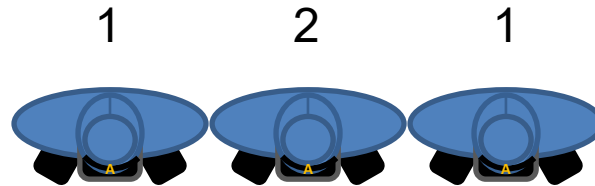
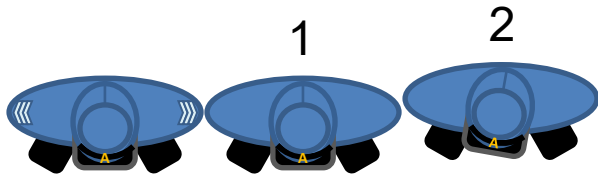
Step backward a short distance behind the new line, just enough so you can perceive the new alignment.
The dress forward.



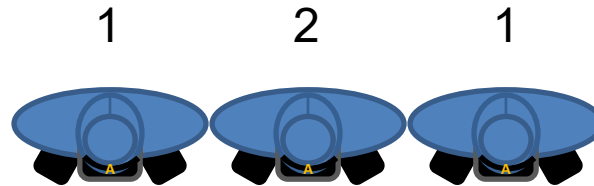
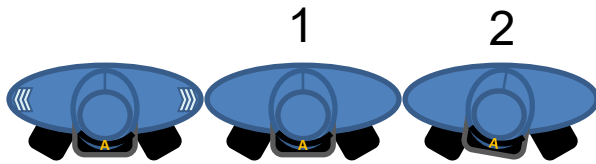
Dressing Backward - individual



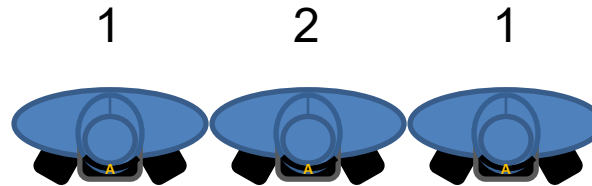
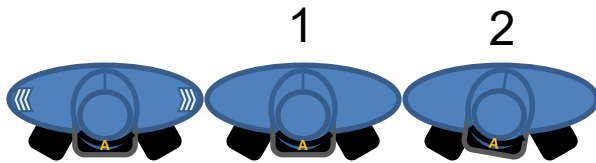
Dressing Backward - individual



Dressing Backward - individual



Dressing Backward - individual

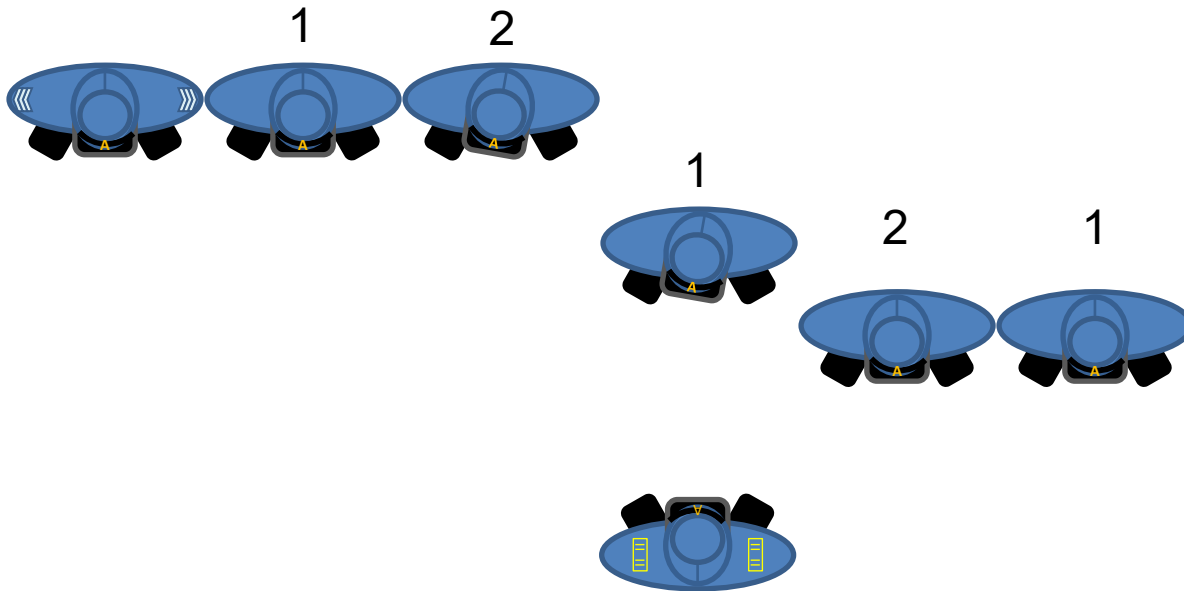


Number One, Right backward - DRESS

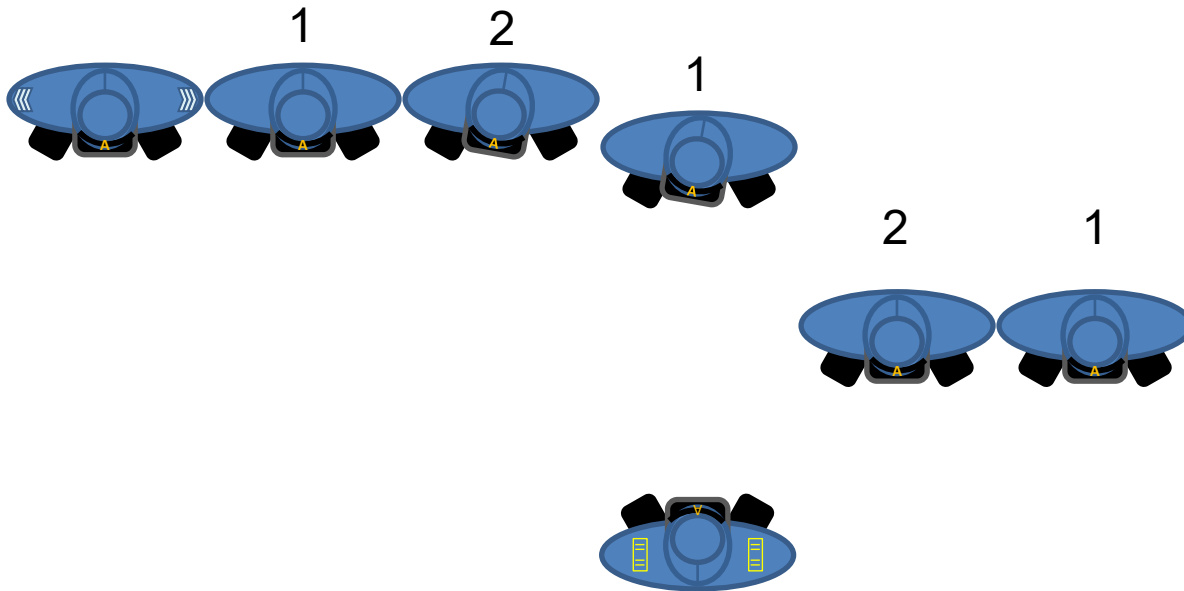
Successively call each soldier by his number.

Observing each individual and correcting any faults in execution.

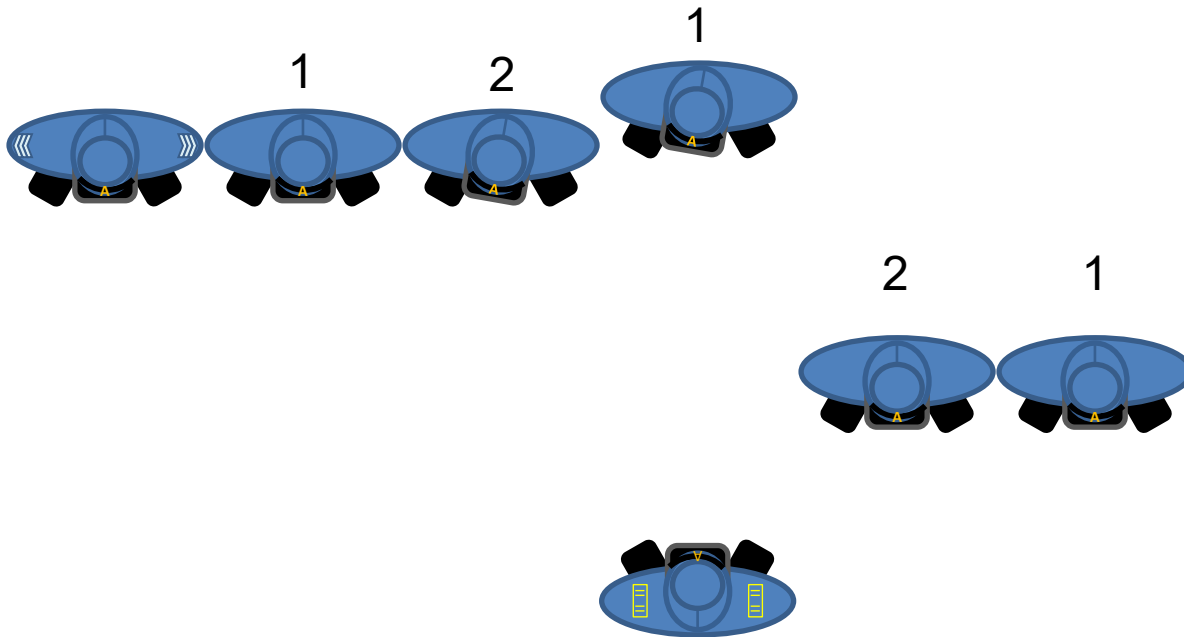
Dressing Backward - individual



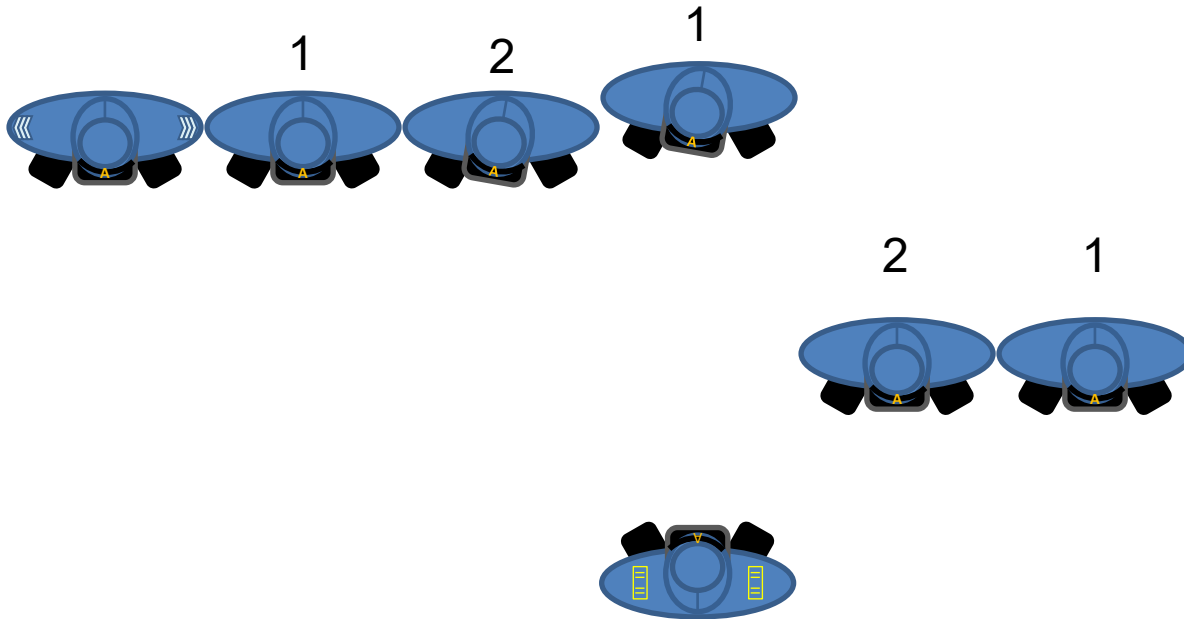
Dressing Backward - individual



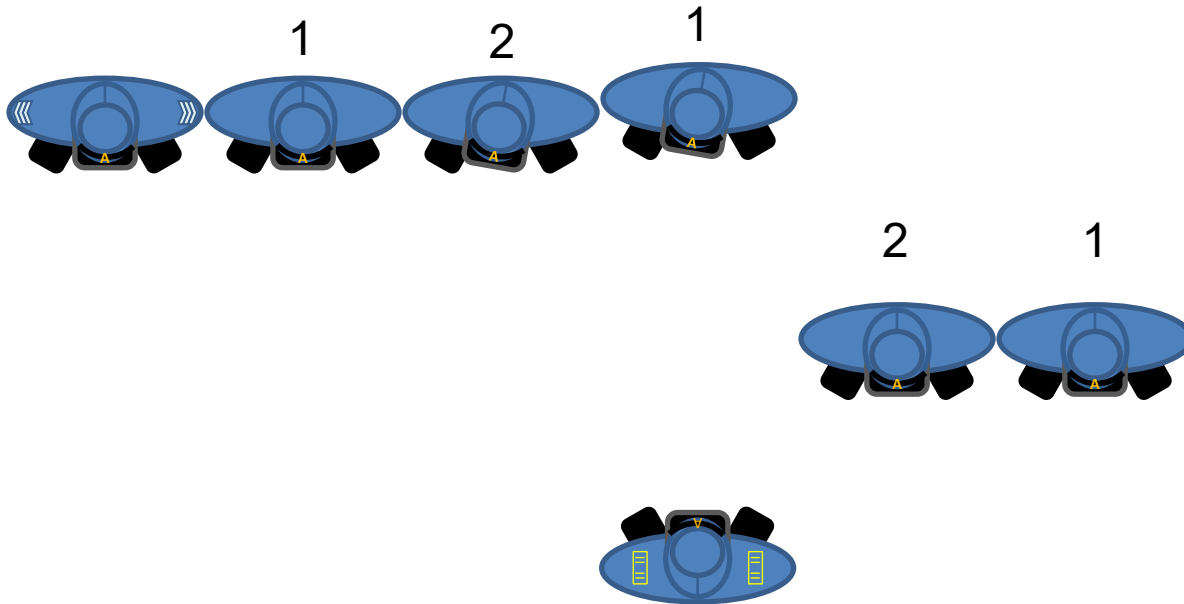
Dressing Backward - individual



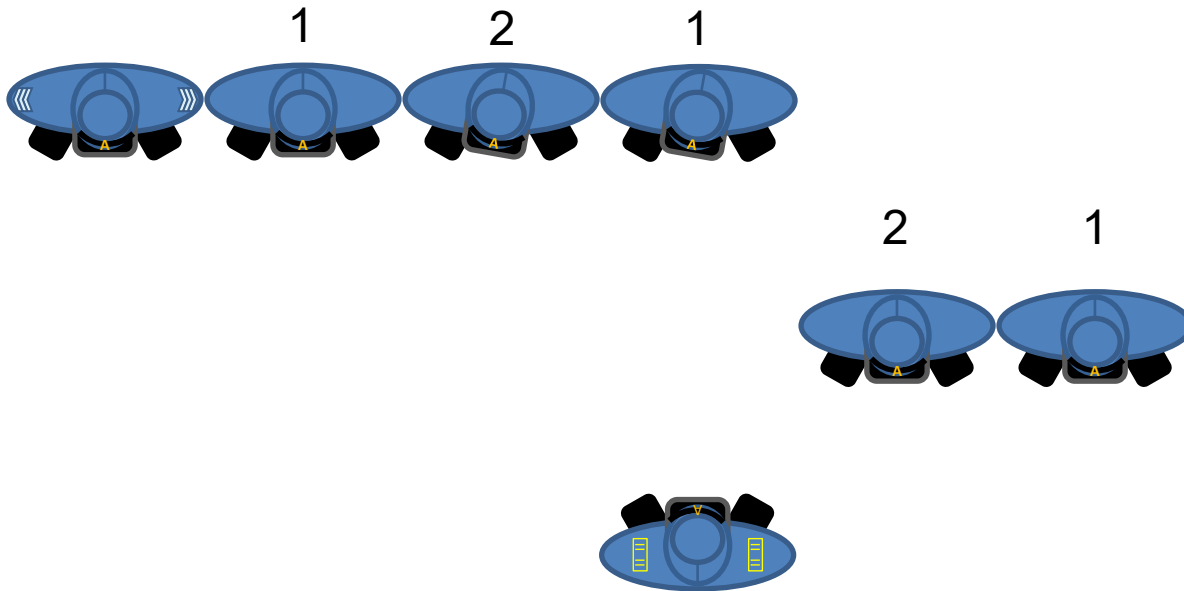
Dressing Backward - individual



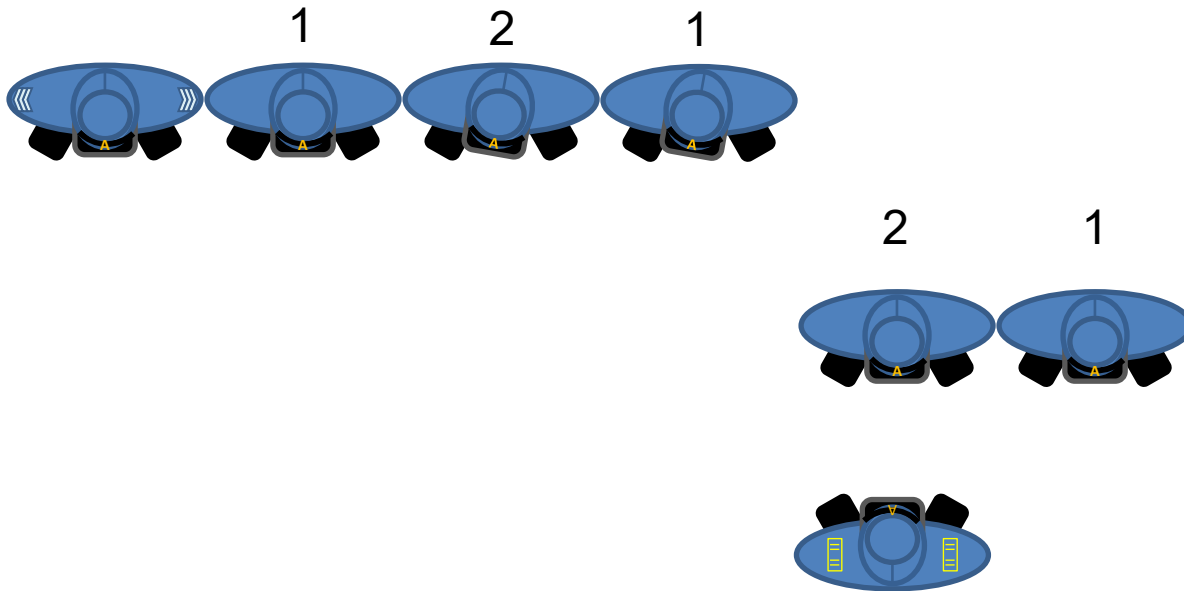
Dressing Backward - individual



Dressing Backward - individual



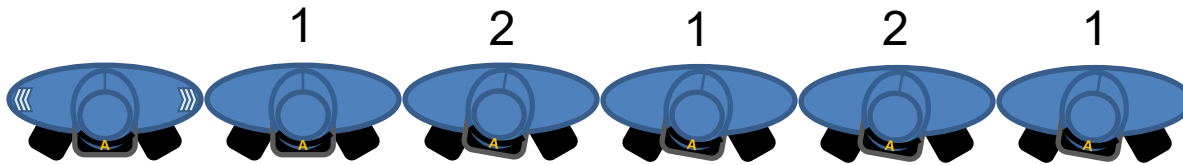
Dressing Backward - individual



Continue on down the line.

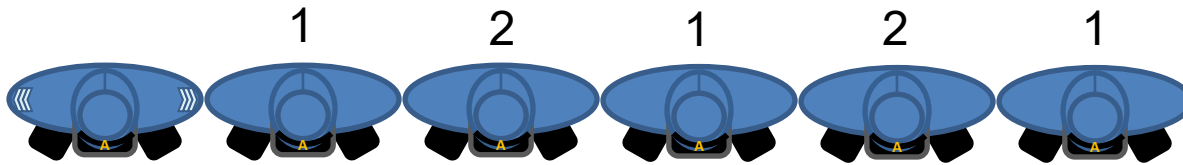
Observing each individual and correcting any faults in execution.

Dressing Backward - individual



Once alignment is complete, direct the men to turn their eyes to the front and to remain firm.

Dressing Backward - individual



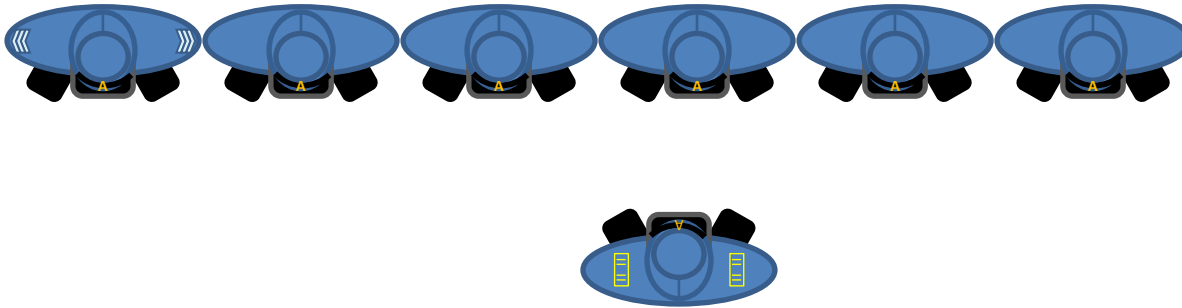
Once alignment is complete, direct the men to turn their eyes to the front and to remain firm.

Dressing Backward – as a rank

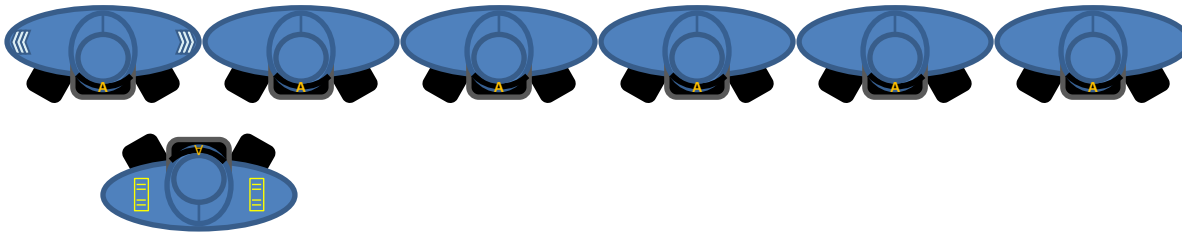
A stop-motion illustration

(page through the sequence to view the animation)

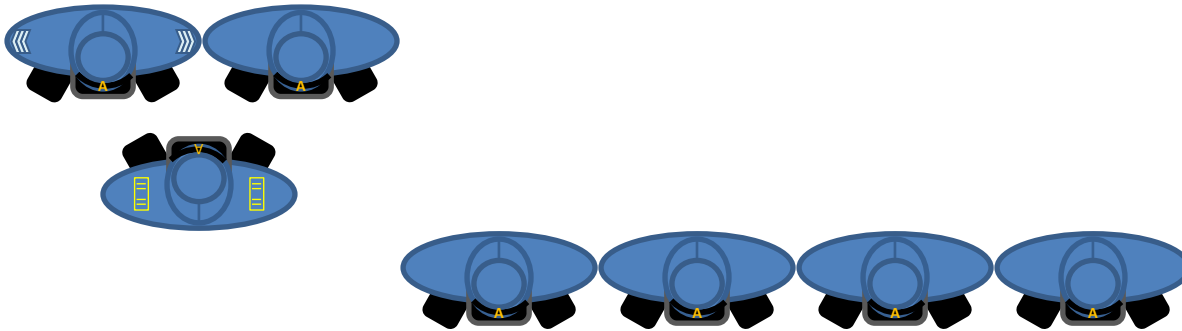
Dressing Backward – as a rank



Dressing Backward – as a rank

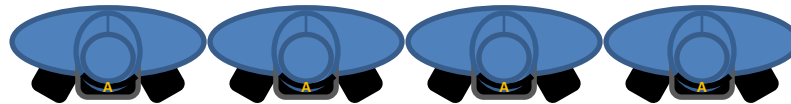


Dressing Backward – as a rank



Set the new line

Dressing Backward – as a rank



Right backward - DRESS

Let the man on your right step off before you do.

You can't align before he does so don't get ahead of him.

Let him take his first step then you take yours.

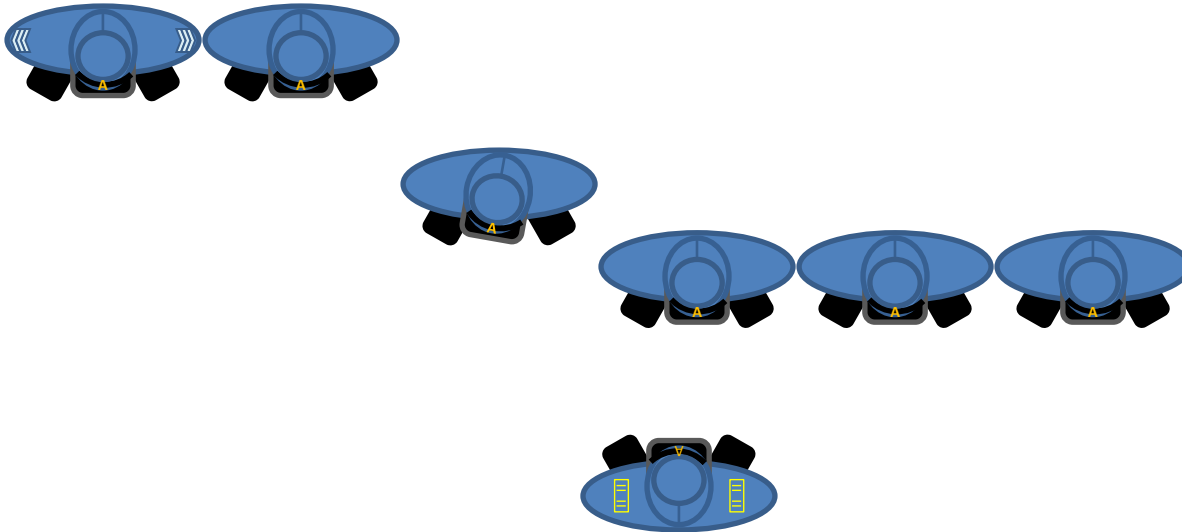
We should look like dominoes falling into place.

Make sure the men in the rear are careful that they do not step too far behind the guides!

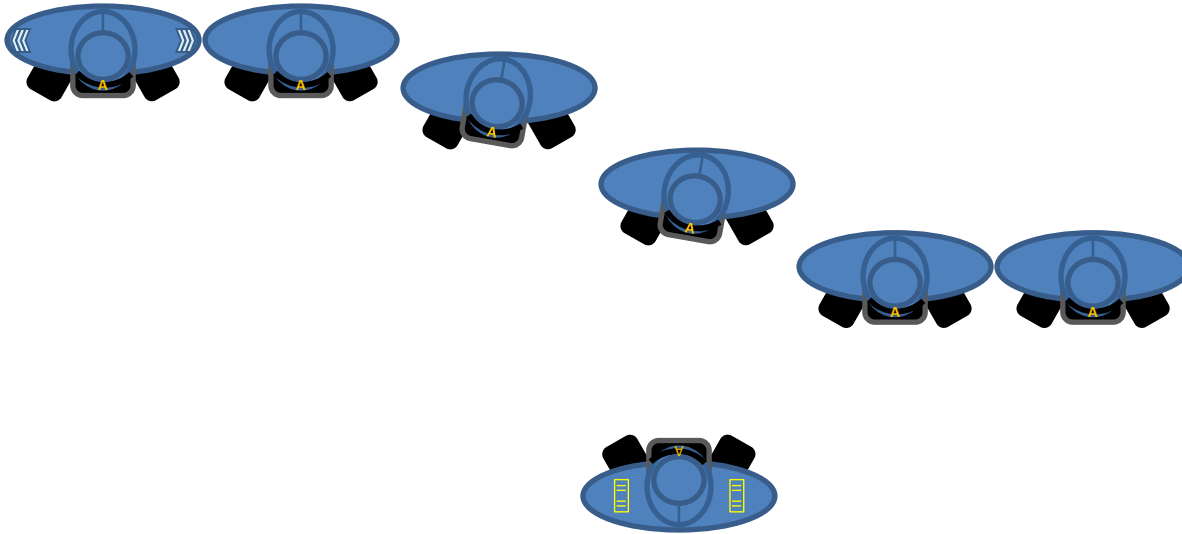
Doing so has a compound effect for the men following them.

Dressing Backward – as a rank

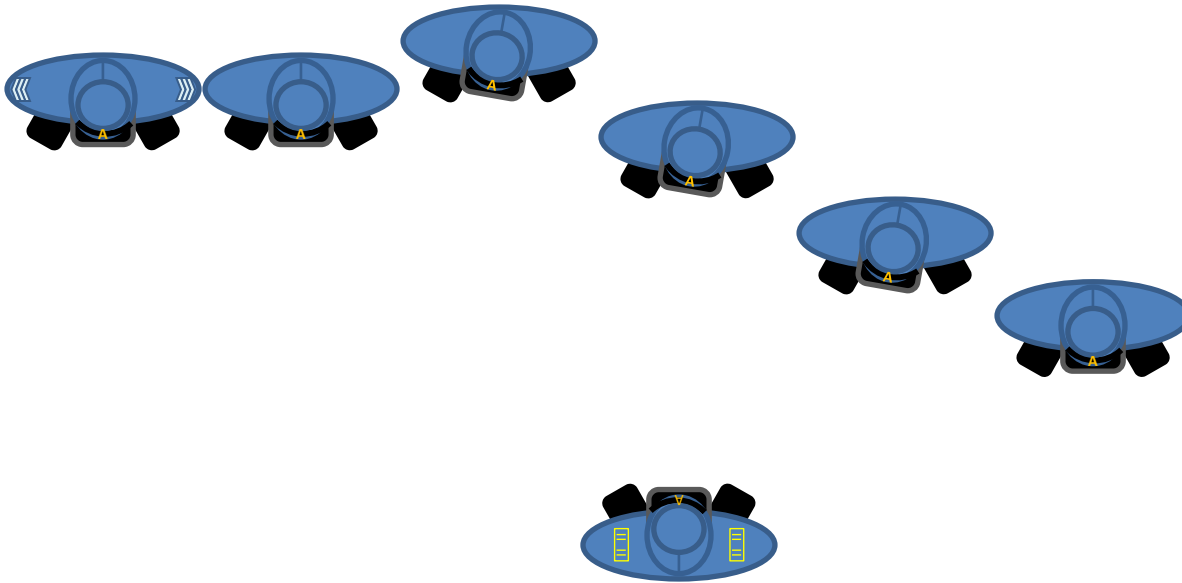
The soldier executing the alignment turns the head and eyes right according to the method instructed for *Eyes-RIGHT*



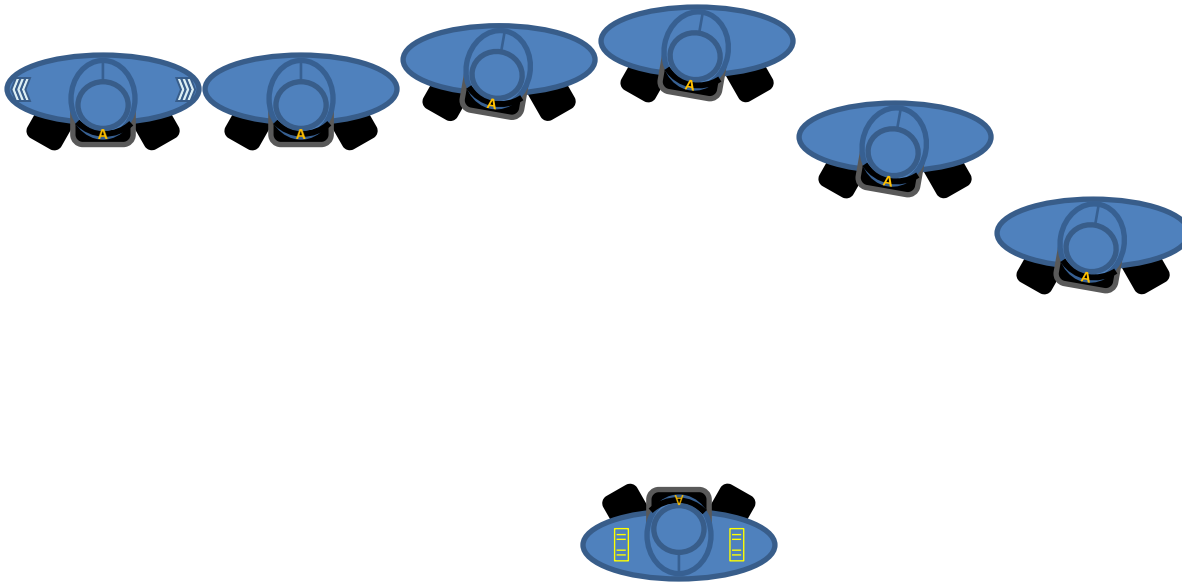
Dressing Backward – as a rank



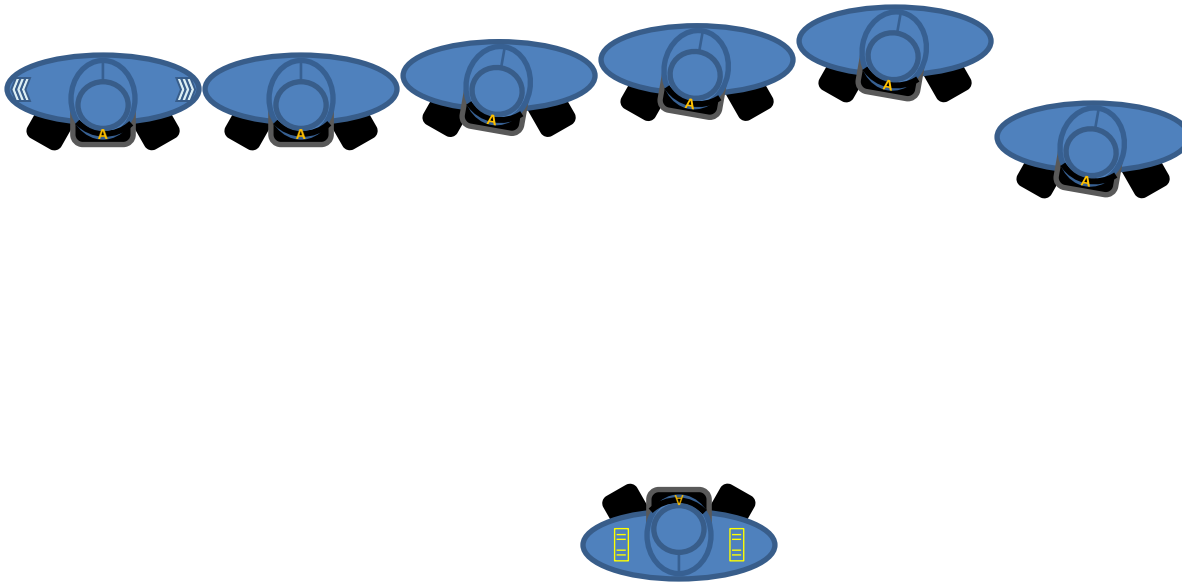
Dressing Backward – as a rank



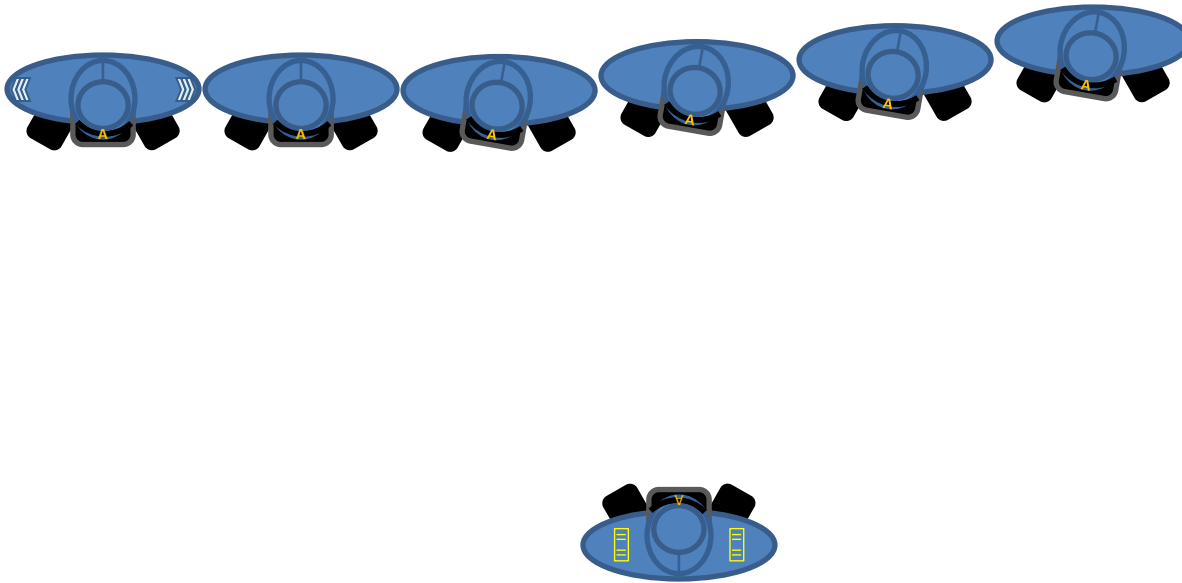
Dressing Backward – as a rank



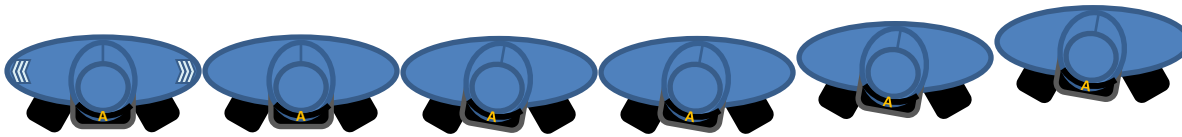
Dressing Backward – as a rank



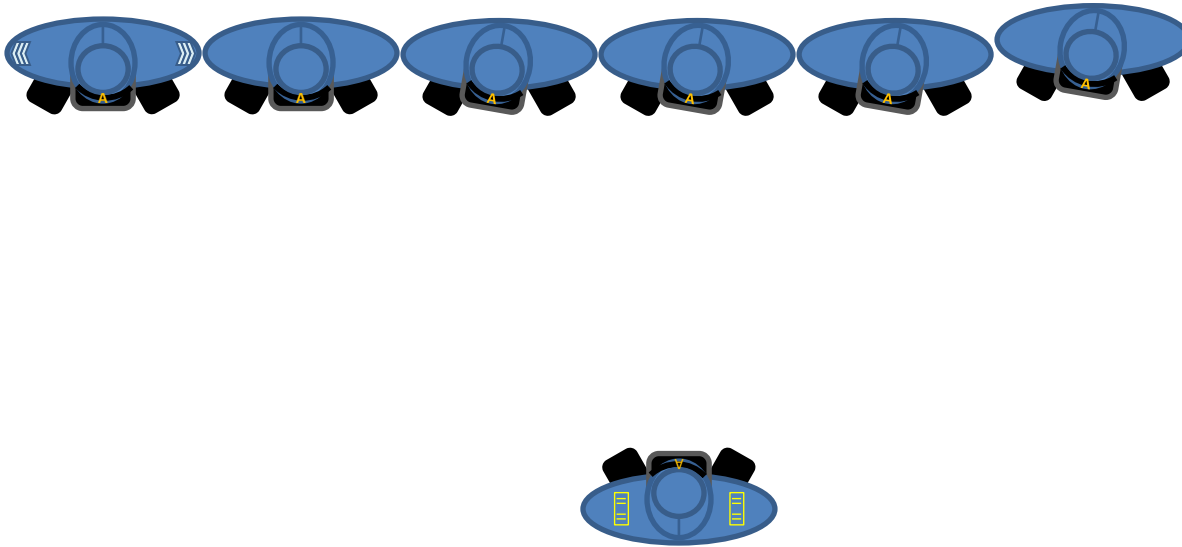
Dressing Backward – as a rank



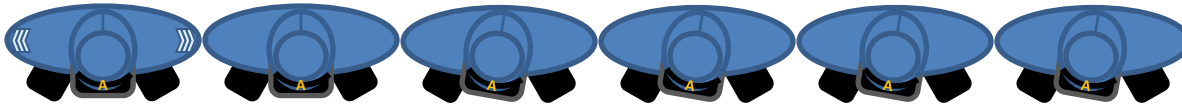
Dressing Backward – as a rank



Dressing Backward – as a rank

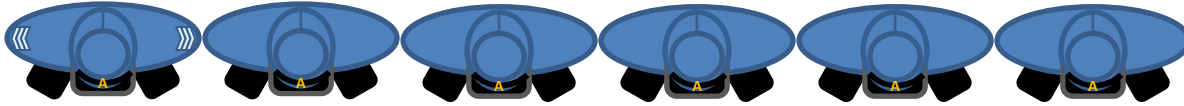


Dressing Backward – as a rank



Once alignment is complete, direct the men to turn their eyes to the front and to remain firm.

Dressing Backward – as a rank



Maintaining Alignment while Marching

the soldier at fault corrects himself

- Stay in step!
- Correct your fault **by lengthening or shortening your step.**
- Make **many small-adjustments**! “by degrees, almost insensible”
 - Your fault may have deranged a portion of the line.
 - If so, other soldiers will need to make corrections as well.
- **S.S. 336** 336. The instructor will observe, in marching to the front, that the men touch lightly the elbow toward the side of the guide; that they do not open out the left elbow, nor the right arm; that they yield to pressure coming from the side of the guide, and resist that coming from the opposite side; that they **recover by insensible degrees, the slight touch of the elbow, if lost**; that they maintain the head direct to the front, no matter on which side the guide may be; and **if found before or behind the alignment, that the man in fault corrects himself by shortening or lengthening the step, by degrees, almost insensible**.
- **S.C. 107**. During the continuance of the march, the instructor will be watchful that the men follow parallel directions, in conforming to the principles prescribed in the school of the soldier, for preserving the general alignment; **whenever the men lose the alignment, he will be careful that they regain it by lengthening or shortening the step, without altering the cadence, or changing the direction.**

Maintaining Alignment while Marching in double quick time

- **Manuevers in double quick time still maintain rank and file alignment!!!!**
 - The Company cannot halt and quickly come to firing positions if the alignment of the ranks and files does not exist!
- **S.S. 338.** The impulsion of the quick step having a tendency to make men too easy and free in their movements, the instructor will be careful to **regulate the cadence of this step**, and to habituate them to **preserve always the erectness of the body**, and the **due length of the pace**.
- **S.S. 344.** The squad being at a march in quick time, the instructor will command:
 - 1. Double quick. 2. MARCH.
- **S.S. 345.** At the command march, which will be given when either foot is coming to the ground, the squad will step off in double quick time. The men will endeavor to follow the principles laid down in the first part of this book, **and to preserve the alignment**.