

MANUAL OF ARMS

Each of these commands is normally executed in a series of discrete motions rather than as one continuous action. "Shoulder Arms" is the basic position from which all commands are given. After performing each of the commands, the officer will return the company to "shoulder arms" prior to executing the next command. Each command is given in two parts, the first part is preparatory to give you a second to figure out what to do, the action is taken on the second part.

Shoulder – Arms



The musket is in the right hand—with the barrel nearly vertical and resting in the hollow of the shoulder, the guard to the front, the arm hanging nearly at its full length near the body. The thumb and forefinger surround the trigger guard, the remaining fingers are grasping the swell of the stock just under the cock, which rests on the little finger.

Order – Arms



Seize the musket briskly with the left hand near the upper band and detach it slightly from the shoulder with the
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right hand. Loosen the grasp of the right hand and lower the musket with the left hand, then grab it again with the right hand above the lower band, the butt about four inches from the ground, the right hand supported against the hip, then drop the left hand by the side. Let the musket slip through the right hand to the ground.

Support – Arms



Lift the musket away from the body and seize the musket with the left hand at the lower band, raise this hand as high as the chin, and seize the musket at the same time with the right hand four inches below the cock. Rotate the barrel to the front; and then place the musket on the left shoulder, supporting it with the cock against the left forearm, the left hand resting on the right breast.

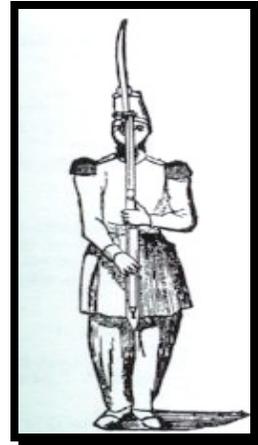
Right Shoulder Shift – Arms



Bring the musket away from the body, rotating the barrel 90 degrees to the left, while at the same time raising the musket. Grab the musket with the right hand between the barrel and the sight, and slide the left hand down the

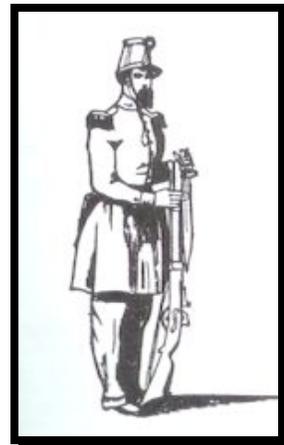
stock, with the first two fingers on either side of the beak and the other fingers under the butt plate. Rest the musket on the right shoulder, lock plate upwards. Many reenactment groups prefer the barrel to be more vertical, although modern research indicates that the proper position was angled behind the head as shown above.

Present – Arms



With the right hand bring the musket erect before the center of the body with the rammer to the front. Grab the musket with the left hand half-way between the guide sight and lower band. The left thumb should be extended along the barrel and against the stock, with the left forearm horizontal and resting against the body. Grasp the small of the stock with the right hand below and against the guard. The cock should rest on the top of the belt.

Inspection – Arms



Start just like "Load", and place the musket between the feet, barrel to the

front. Holding the musket with the right hand, reverse the left hand, withdraw the bayonet, and fix it to the barrel. Grasp the musket with the left hand below and near the upper band, seize the rammer and withdraw it in two steps as in loading. Glide the ramrod to the bottom of the bore, and resume the position of "Order Arms." The officer will then inspect each musket. As the officer reaches you, raise your musket as if you are going to "Shoulder Arms", regrasp it with your left hand between the lower band and guide sight, the lock to the front, the left hand at the height of the chin, and hand it to the officer. After he has inspected it, he will return it and you will grasp it with the right hand and return to the position of "Order Arms." After the officer is finished inspecting the man to your immediate left, bring the musket back between the feet, return the rammer to the pipes and resume the position of "Order Arms".

If, instead of inspection of arms, the instructor should merely wish bayonets to be fixed, he will command:

Fix - Bayonets

Take the position as described above, fix the bayonet using the left hand, and resume the position of "Order Arms." "Unfix - Bayonets" is used to remove the bayonet and return to "Order Arms."

Spring - Rammers

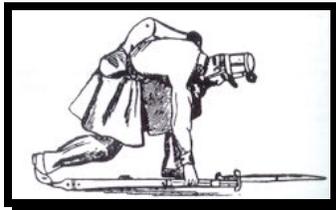
This command is used to determine if the barrel of the musket is clear. Put the rammer in the barrel as has been explained above, and immediately retake the position of ordered arms. The officer will take the rammer by the small end, and spring it in the barrel, or cause each recruit to make it ring in the barrel. "Return - Rammers" will be given to return the rammer and return to "Ordered Arms."

Secure Arms



Begin just like "Support Arms," but instead of raising the musket to the shoulder, simply lower it with the left hand. All muskets to be inclined at the same angle.

Ground - Arms



Turn the musket with the right hand, the barrel to the left, while grabbing the cartridge box with the left hand, bend the body, advance the left foot, the heel opposite the lower band; and lay the musket on the ground with the right hand, the butt of the musket not moving from its original position. Rise up, bring the left foot by the side of the right, let go of the cartridge box with the left hand, and drop the hands by the side. "Raise Arms" reverses the process to pick up the musket.

Trail - Arms

The same as the first motion of "Order Arms," but keep the butt of the musket about four inches from the ground. Incline the musket forward at an angle so that the rear rank men will not touch the front rank men with their bayonets. All muskets to be inclined at the same angle.

Parade - Rest



At the word "rest" move the right foot six inches to the rear of the left heel, the left knee slightly bent, the musket resting against the hollow of the right shoulder, the hands crossed in front, left over right. If muskets are not being held, the hands are crossed in front, left over right. At the command "Attention", resume the position of "Order Arms."

Many late-war photos show the position modified with the musket across the body, lock plate in.



In Place – Rest



At the word “rest” move the right foot six inches to the rear of the left heel, the left knee slightly bent, the musket moved between the feet, lockplate in, with the right hand grasping the muzzle above the upper band, and the left hand placed across the right wrist. The above directions are not historically accurate but are widely used in reenactments as a compromise between the more formal “Parade Rest” and the informal do-whatever-you-want-but-keep-one-foot-in-place “In Place Rest” of the drill manuals.

Stack - Arms

This gets complicated as there are several different versions and each unit has a favorite.

Break Ranks – March

This is the command that usually follows “Stack Arms.”

Take – Arms

This is the command used after the men are lined up again in front of the stack.

“LOAD IN NINE TIMES”

The following nine steps are the individual movements used in training a soldier to fire his musket.

1. Load



Grasp the musket with the left hand, shift the right hand to the upper band, place the butt of the musket between the feet with the barrel to the front; then seize it with the left hand near the muzzle, which should be three inches from the body. Move the right to the cartridge box and open the flap.

2. Handle Cartridge

Seize a cartridge with the thumb and next two fingers, and place it between the teeth.

3. Tear – Cartridge

Tear the paper to the powder, hold the cartridge upright between the thumb and first two fingers and place it in front of and near the muzzle, the back of the hand to the front.

4. Charge – Cartridge

Empty the powder into the barrel. Seize the head of the rammer with the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand. {The musket ball would be removed from the paper at this point and set in the barrel. For firing demonstrations –NOT battle reenactments - a portion of the blank cartridge paper is often wadded up and used to demonstrate a bullet.}

5. Draw – Rammer

Half draw the rammer by extending, the right arm; steady the rammer in this position with the left thumb; regrasp the rammer near the muzzle with the right hand, thumb down and extended along the rammer. Clear the rammer from the pipes by again extending the arm; and turn the rammer, the little end of the rammer passing near the left shoulder; place the head of the rammer on the ball, the back of the hand to the front.

6. Ram – Cartridge

7. Return – Rammer

Draw the rammer half-way out, steady

it with the left thumb; grasp it near the muzzle with the right hand, thumb down, clear the rammer from the bore by extending the arm, turn the rammer, the head of the rammer passing near the left shoulder, and insert the rammer in the pipes. Force the rammer home by placing the little finger of the right hand on the head of the rammer.

8. Prime

With the left hand raise the musket, grasp the small of the stock with the right hand; half -face to the right; place the right foot behind the left foot at right angles with. the hollow of the right foot against the left heel. Slip the left hand down to the lower band with the thumb along the stock and the left elbow against the body; and bring the musket to the right side with the butt below the right forearm and the small of the stock against the body and two inches below the right breast, and with the muzzle on a level with the eye. Half cock with the thumb of the right hand and remove the old cap with the right hand, and with the thumb and fore-finger of the same hand take a cap from the cap pouch and place it on the nipple. Press the cap down with the thumb and seize the small of the stock with the right hand.

9. Shoulder - Arms

Reface the front and go to shoulder arms.

Firing (Ready-Aim-Fire)

Ready



Similar to Prime. With the muzzle as high as the eye, place the right thumb on the head of the cock, and the other fingers under and against the guard, fully cock the musket, then grasp the musket with the right hand at the small

of the stock (*fingers away from the trigger!*).

Aim (Front Rank)



Raise the musket with both hands, the butt against the right shoulder; the left elbow down, the right as high as the shoulder; incline the head to sight the musket, the right thumb extended along the stock, the fore-finger on the trigger. The front rank men will raise their right elbow a little less in order to facilitate the aim of the rear rank men.

Aim (Rear Rank)



The rear rank men will each move their right foot about ten inches to the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward.

Fire

Squeeze the trigger. If this is the first time that the weapon has been fired in combat, remain in the "Fire" position until the officer gives the "Load" command. The command "Fire at Will" means that you go straight to the "load" sequence without waiting for any command. If part of a demonstration or firing a salute, do not move from the "fire" position until "Recover – Arms", is given. This command takes you back to the "Ready" position. "Recover" was a training-only command and was not used in combat.

Cease Firing

At this command stop firing but continue to load your musket if it is not loaded.

ask a sergeant or other officer to attempt to clear the musket.

FIRING AT REENACTMENTS

1. The main difference is that the ramrod is not used, and is sometimes required to be left in camp for safety reasons. Once the powder is placed in the barrel, the musket butt is tamped gently a few times to seat the powder in the bottom of the barrel.
2. The command "load" means do all of the loading steps – the individual steps will not be called out.
3. Once you've fired, reload. You may generally continue to fire until commanded otherwise.
4. Firing "by the Oblique"
From a battle line it may be necessary to fire at an angle to the left or right without repositioning the whole line. The officer will call "Ready, by the Right Oblique, Aim, Fire". On the word Aim, the front rank rotates their upper torso to the right without moving the feet, and the rear rank moves their left foot forward to aim around the front rank man. On a "Left Oblique", the rear rank man advances his right foot.
5. Firing "by File"
The command sequence is "Fire by File, Company, Ready, Commence Firing". The rightmost two-rank file will fire first, with the rear rank man calling "Aim, Fire", as he brings his musket forward, followed by the next file and so on down the line.
6. Firing "by Rank"
The command will be "Fire by Rank, Company, Ready (both ranks), Rear Rank, Aim, Fire, Load...(once several rear rank men have reloaded) Front Rank, Aim, Fire, Load."
7. Jammed Muskets and Misfires
If your musket does not fire, tap the butt gently once or twice on the ground, reprime with a new cap, and try to fire again. Do NOT load more powder into the musket. If it still does not fire,

MARCHING

While marching the musket will generally be held at one of three positions – Shoulder Arms, Support Arms, or Right Shoulder Shift. For longer marches the unit will be placed “at the route step”, which means that you keep your places in line but you don’t keep cadence. This command is often accompanied by “Arms at Will.” This does not mean to hold the musket any which way – it must still be on the shoulder, held with one or both hands, the muzzle elevated. Once the command “Halt” is given the company returns to “shoulder arms” regardless of what position they were previously in. For marching “at the double quick” or any other such rapid movement, the muskets are automatically taken to “right shoulder shift.”

Position of the Soldier

When at “Attention”, the heels should be on the same line, with the feet turned out equally, and forming something less than a right angle. The arms should hang naturally with the palm of the hand turned a little to the front, the little finger behind the seem of the pants, and the eyes fixed straight to the front.

Eyes - Right, and Front

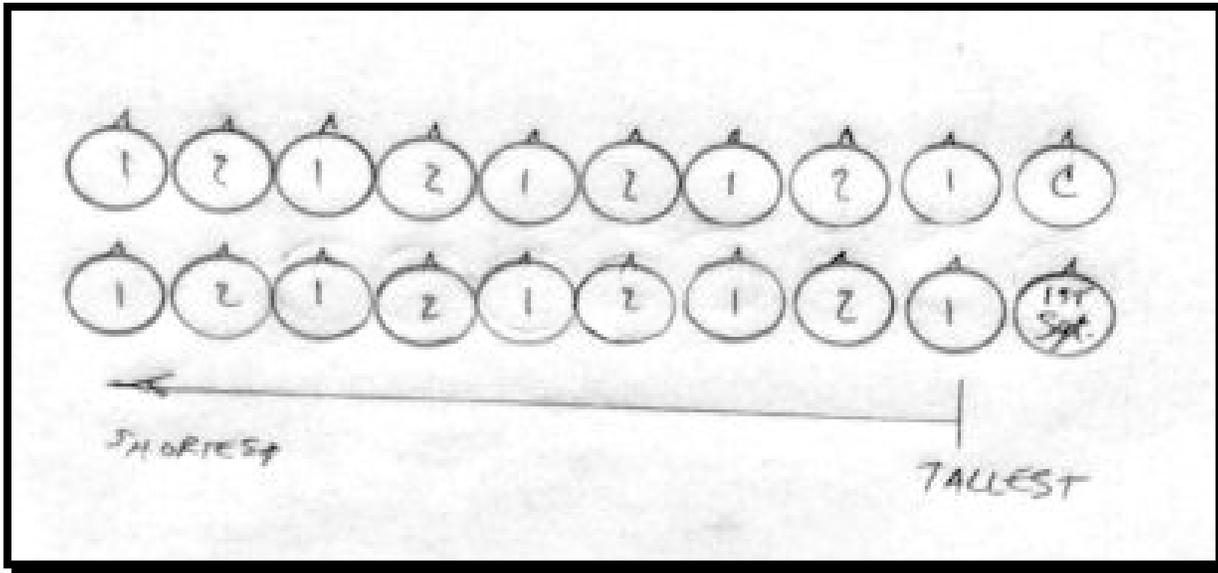
At the command “Right”, turn the head gently, so as to bring the inner corner of the left eye in it line with the buttons of the coat, the eyes fixed on the line of the eyes of the men in, or supposed to be in, the same rank. At the command “Front” return the head to the previous position.

Attention - Company

At the second, word return to the prescribed position with steadiness.

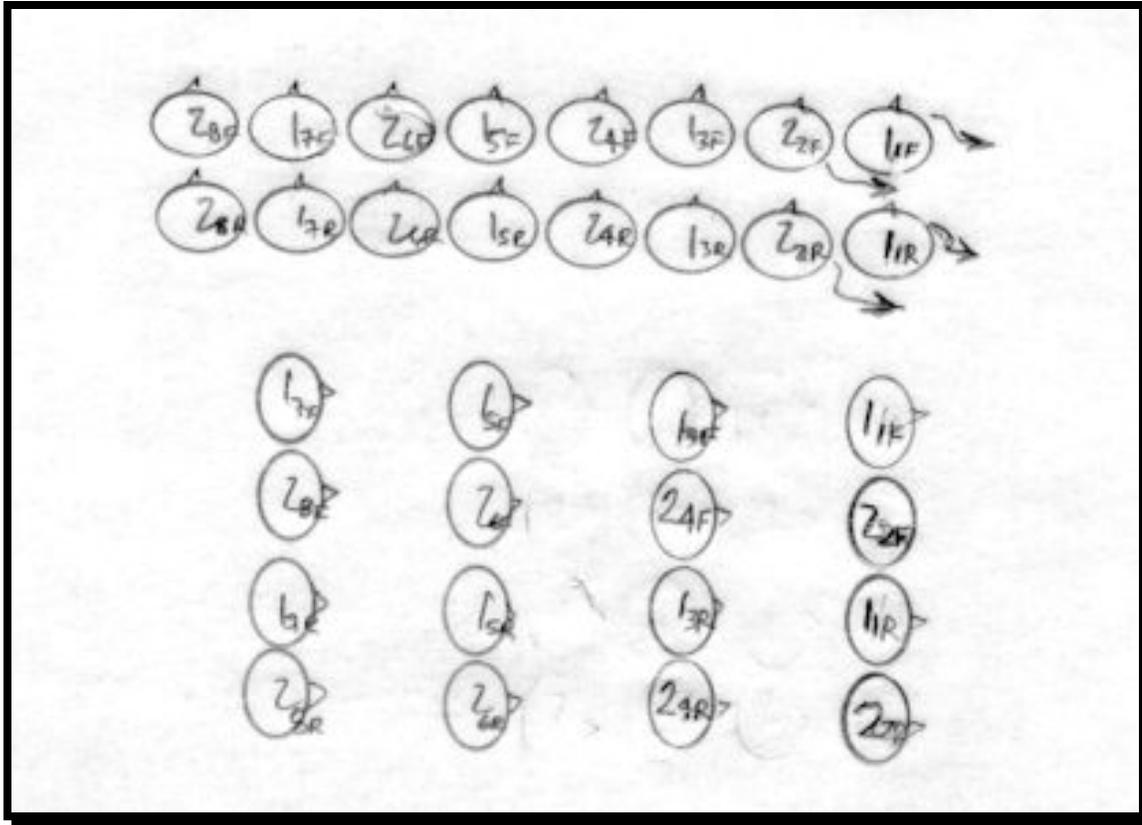
In Each Rank Count – Twos

At this command, starting from right to left, the first file counts “one”, the second file counts “2”, the third file counts “one”, and so on down the line. If you tend to forget which number you are, use a finger or two on your left hand to help



Right - Face

At the second command, the Number 1 men stay in place, turn on their left heel and then replace the right heel by the side of the left. The number two men turn and step up between the two Number 1 men. This changes the formation from a “battle line” formation of two ranks to a “column of fours” most often used for marching. Facing are most often done to the right, however, if they are done to the “Left”, the “twos” stay and place and the “ones” step up.



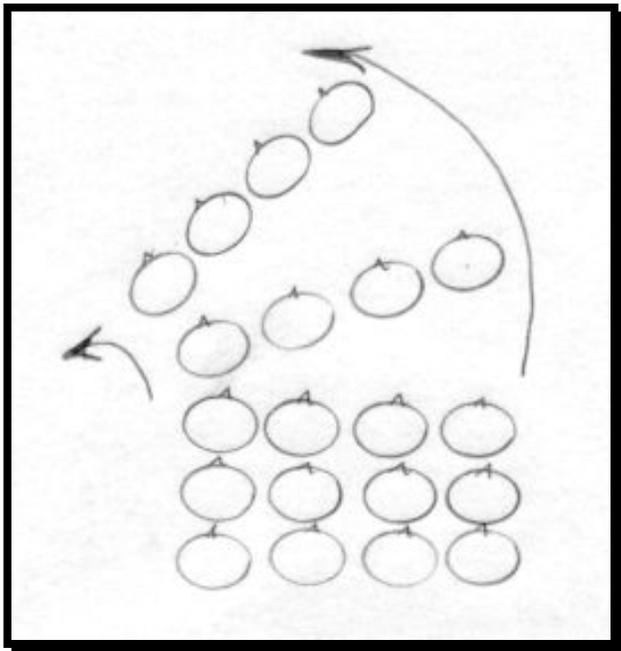
About -Face

At the word “about”, the recruit will turn on left heel, bring the left toe to the front rear, the hollow opposite to, and full heel, the feet square to each other. At the word “face”, the recruit will turn on both heels, bringing, at the same time, the right heel by the side of the left.

Forward - March

At the word “march”, step off with the **left** foot.

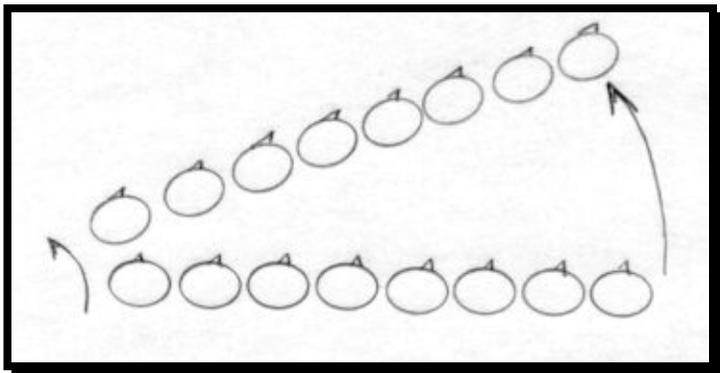
When the officer shall wish to stop the march, he will command “Company - Halt”. At “Halt”. Which should be given at the instant when either foot is coming to the ground, the foot in the rear will be brought up, and planted by the side of the other.

By File Left – March

From a column of fours, the front begins a “wheel” as shown, the inner pivot man taking smaller steps than the outer men. The command is understood to mean a turn of 90 degrees in the direction commanded.

Countermarch, By File Left – March

Same as “By Files Left”, except understood to reverse direction 180 degrees.

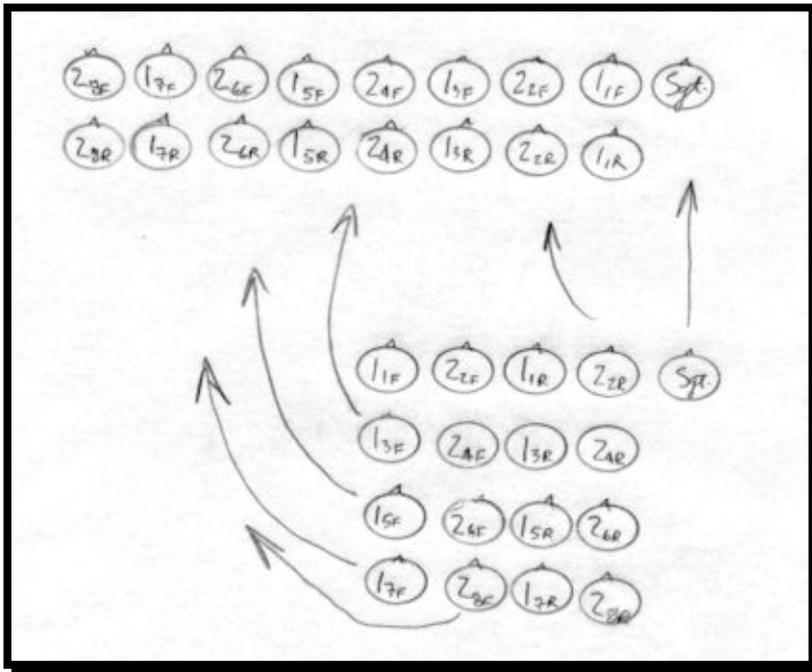
Left Wheel - March

Command is given from a battle line of two ranks. Keep elbows touching, look to the outside of the wheeling pivot. Stop the wheel and continue forward at “Forward – March.”

Left Oblique – March

Take a half turn to the left, touching shoulders with the man adjacent. Stop the oblique and continue forward at “Forward – March.”

By Company Into Line – March



From a Column of Fours the battle line is formed. The sergeant continues to march straight and each file moves at the double quick (at right shoulder shift), coming onto the line one file after the other from right to left. They take the step from the sergeant and come to “Shoulder – Arms.”

Saluting

To salute the soldier raises his right hand to the right side of the visor of his cap, palm to the front and the elbow raised to the height of the shoulder. Sergeants with muskets will salute by bringing the left hand across the body, so as to strike the musket near the right shoulder. Corporals and privates out of ranks and with muskets at “Shoulder Arms” salute in the same manner.



When to Salute

1. When a soldier meets an officer he is to salute looking at the same time in a respectful and soldier-like manner at the officer, who will return the compliment thus offered. When approaching an officer the salute should be made six paces before meeting him and held until six paces after past him.
2. A NCO or soldier being seated, and without particular occupation, will rise on the approach of an officer, and make the customary salutation. If standing, he will turn toward the officer for the same purpose. If the parties remain in the same place or on the same ground, such compliments need not be repeated.

3. A NCO or soldier when he addresses an officer or is spoken to by one, salutes; on receiving the answer or communication from the officer, he again salutes before turning to go away.
4. When a soldier enters an officer's quarters armed, he simply makes the required salute, and does not take off his cap; but without arms, he takes off his cap and stands in the position of the soldier (stands at attention). He remains standing until invited to sit down. When soldiers are in a room and an officer enters they should rise and remain standing until invited to sit down.
5. A sentry or guard when on a post will salute lieutenants and captains by facing to them and coming to "shoulder arms" and holding until the officer passes. A sentry or guard when on a post will salute officers above the rank of captain, officers of the day, and commanding officers (whether above the rank of captain or not) by turning to them and going to "Present Arms." Armed bodies of men passing near a sentinel's post, commanded by an officer are entitled to a "present arms;" if by a NCO they are saluted by a "shoulder arms."

When Not To Salute

1. Sentinels and guards do not give a salute between retreat and reveille (sun-down to sun-up). Pickets do not salute officers.
2. When soldiers are marching or in ranks, they do not salute. If employed at any work, they are not expected to discontinue their employment to salute.

Federal rank Identification

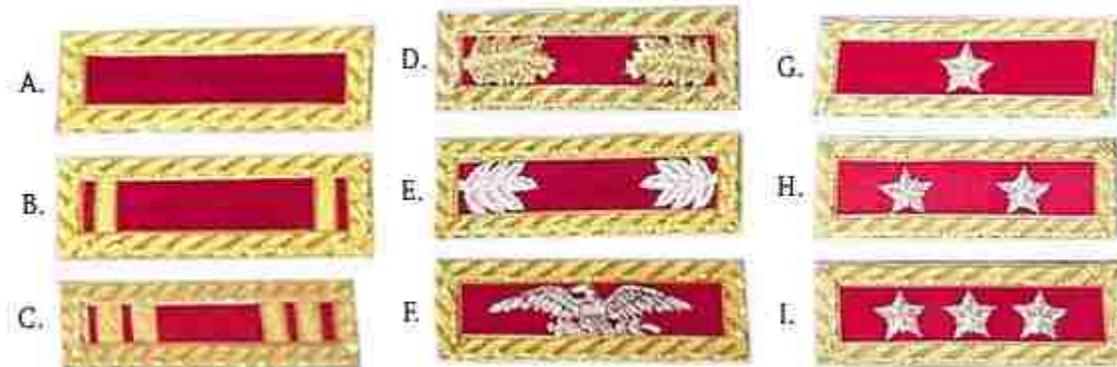
Corporal



Sergeant



1st Sergeant



- A. 2nd Lieutenant - A Bar-less board.
- B. 1st Lieutenant - One Gold Embroidered bar at each end.
- C. Captain - Two gold embroidered bars at each end.
- D. Major - Gold embroidered leaves.
- E. Lieutenant-Colonel - Silver embroidered leaves.
- F. Colonel - Silver embroidered eagle.
- G. Brigadier General – One silver embroidered star
- H. Major General – Two silver embroidered stars
- I. General-In-Chief – Three silver embroidered stars.