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Infantry
Training

The Drummer's Handbook



1985

CHAPTER 4

DRILL FOR CORPS OF DRUMS

SECTION 20. — GENERAL

Introduction

0401. The detail in this Chapter is not intended to countermand the individual tradition of regiments but is given as a guide and to provide a standard drill for use when bands and drums of different regiments are massed.

Positions and Dressing

0402. The Drum Major is to be six paces in front and in the centre of the leading rank. He should not throw or twirl his staff.

0403. Side drummers are to be in fours or fives – two paces between each drummer.

0404. The bass drummer is to be two paces in rear of the rank of side drums.

0405. Tenor drummers are to be on either side of the bass drummer in the outside file. If only one tenor drummer is used, the cymbal player is to make up this rank.

0406. All flautists are to carry bugles. The leading rank is to be two paces in rear of the bass drummer, each player covering off a side drummer. Further ranks are to be at two paces distance. NCO flautists are to be in the rear rank.

0407. Dressing for percussionists is to be by the left if in fours or by the centre if in fives. Front to rear dressing is to be taken from the Drum Major who will be centrally positioned at the head of the Corps.

0408. Flautists are to dress by the left. Front to rear dressing is to be taken from the front rank of side drummers.

SECTION 21. — STAFF DRILL FOR DRUM MAJORS

Introduction

0409. The Drum Major, in his position at the forefront of the Corps of Drums and Band, is the figure who stands out in the public eye. His style, flourish and panaché, enhance the performance of the band and along with the colourful uniforms and music, add much to the eye catching splendour that appeals to the general public and improves the spectacle and pageantry of a military parade.

0410. His personal 'turnout' and drill reflect the standard of the Corps of Drums and the Band. The handling of his staff, with its intricate movements, which alone adds to the display, is also the signal that co-ordinates the marching and playing. It is for this reason that the Drum Major's individual drill and movements of his staff must be of a high standard.

0411. Drum Majors, except those of the Guards Division, when leading their own Corps of Drums or military band are not restricted to the basic drill movements; they may throw or twirl their staff and perpetuate those spectacular movements which over the years have become folklore and Regimental Tradition. However, whenever Drum Majors are in front of massed bands, they are to conform to the basic movements given in this section. On every occasion before a massed parade, the drill to be carried out by all Drum Majors will be agreed and practised.



Stand Easy



Stand at Ease

0412. The basic drill positions, movements between positions and signals for Drum Majors are illustrated in the following text and figures. Included also are other simple drill movements which may be of use to pre-service units and Corps of Drums other than those of the Armed Services.

Staff Drill at the Halt

0413. **Stand Easy.** Elbows into the sides, left hand over the right, fingers closed, thumbs crossed gripping the staff just below the head. Staff vertical, with the point on the ground, centrally between the feet in line with the seam of the toe caps.

0414. **Stand at Ease.** The staff is carried gracefully to the right side in an upward movement to clear the toe of the right boot. At the same time, pull the left arm (closing the fist) to the side of the body. Point of the staff on the ground in line with the toe of the boot and approximately one inch to the right. Grip the staff with the fingers curled around it to the front and the thumb extended along the staff at the rear.



Attention (side view)



Attention (front view)



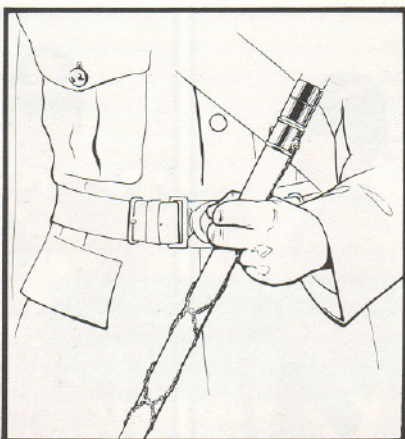
0415. **Attention.** As for the stand at ease position but with the heels together. The right arm and the staff should not move when coming to the position of attention from the stand at ease position and vice versa.

0416. **The Carry Position and Saluting.** The Carry position and Saluting, both movements at the halt, are unlikely drills to be used when Corps of Drums and Bands are massed. The Carry is a basic drill position which is one of the stages of many other movements and combined with Saluting is best taught initially at the halt.

0417. **Procedure.** The staff is brought to the carry position, in two drill movements, and held in that position during the salute. First movement; cant the staff across the body and meet it with the left hand at the belt buckle. Grip the staff with the left hand at the point of balance holding it between the thumb and first two fingers. Second movement; after the appropriate pause, cut the right arm to the side and then salute as normal. On completion of

the salute, the staff is returned to the position of attention using the same drill movements in reverse order.

The Carry
(left hand grip)



The Carry (first movement)

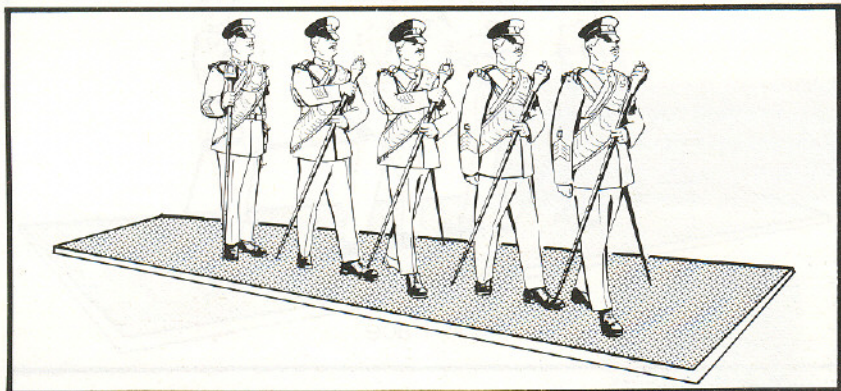


The Carry (second movement)

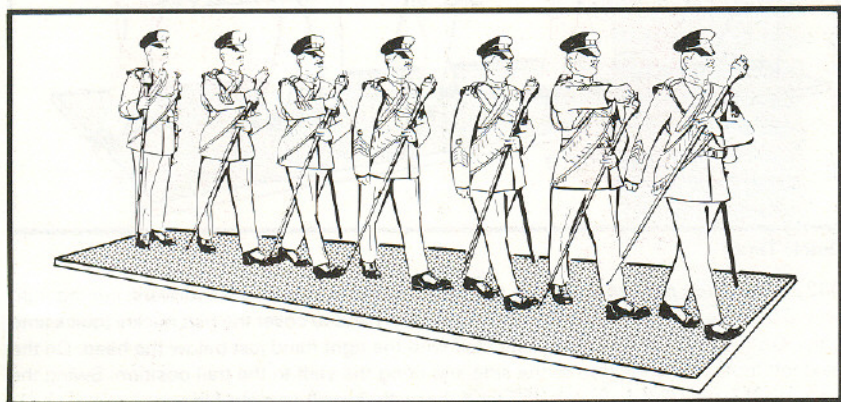
Staff Drill on the March

0418. **The Carry.** The Drum Major will adopt the carry position when marching with the Corps of Drums/Band when they are playing.

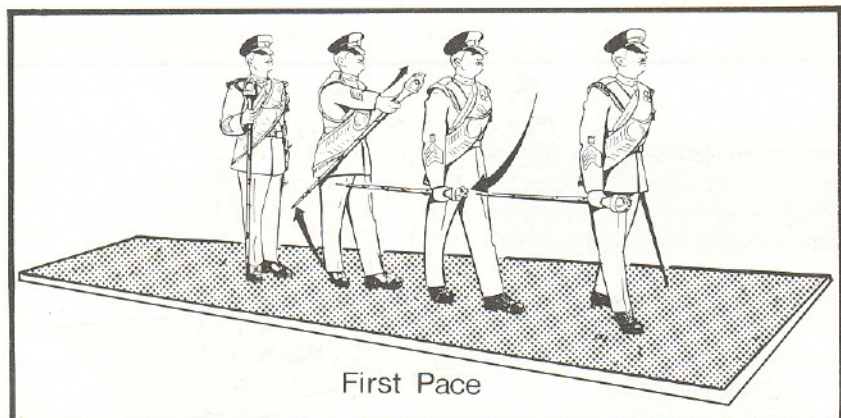
0419. **The Carry (Slow Time).** When stepping off from the position of attention, move the staff to the first position of the carry as the left foot goes forward. On the next left foot, cut the right arm to the side. Continue to march with both arms and the staff held steady.



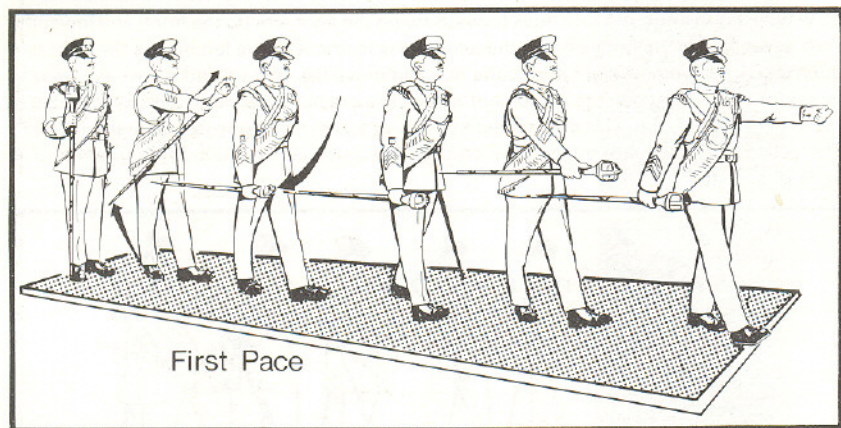
0420. **The Carry (Quick Time).** Step off and go through the first two movements as in slow time. As the next left foot goes forward swing the right arm (to the front) and lower the staff down across the body so that the left hand is in line with the left hip. As the right foot goes forward swing the right arm to the rear and move the staff up and across the body to the right breast. Continue the movement with both arms but ensure that the correct angle of the staff (across the body) is maintained by holding it with a firm grip (see paragraph 0417). The action of the left arm moving the staff up and down across the body is referred to as 'rolling' the staff.



0421. **The Trail (Slow and Quick Time).** The staff is normally carried at the trail when the Corps of Drums/Band are not playing. When stepping off, the staff is carried slightly upwards, then into the position of the trail. Grip the staff with fingers around it and thumb extended along it. When marching in slow time, the arms and staff are kept still. In quick time, the arms and staff are swung from front to rear, with the staff parallel to the ground.



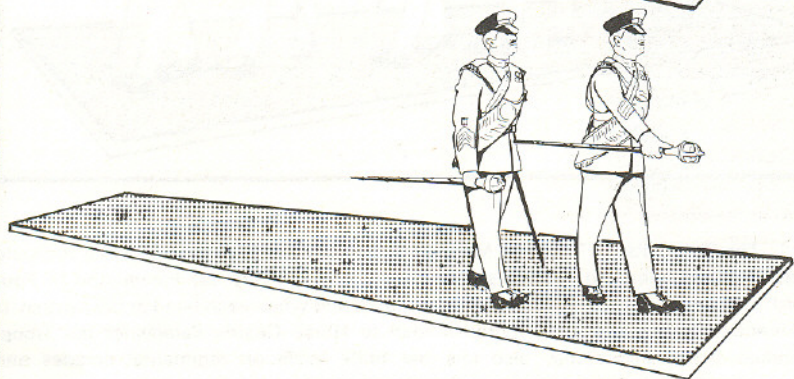
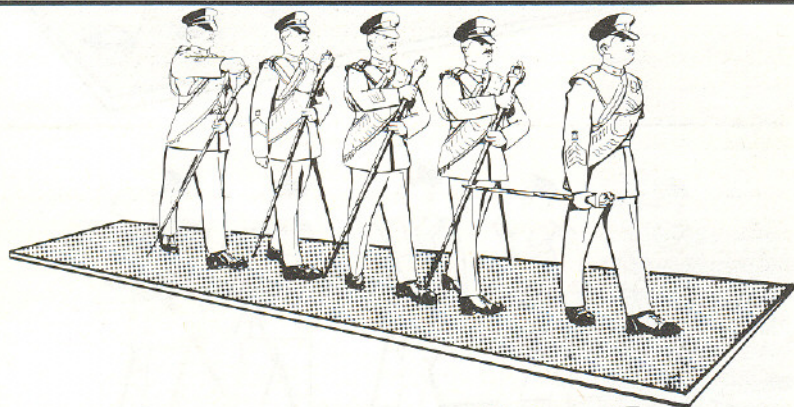
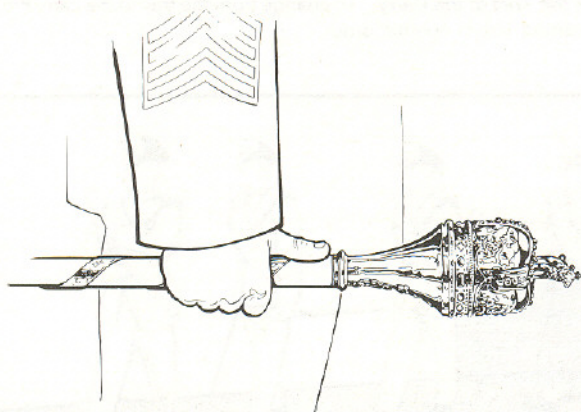
Slow Time



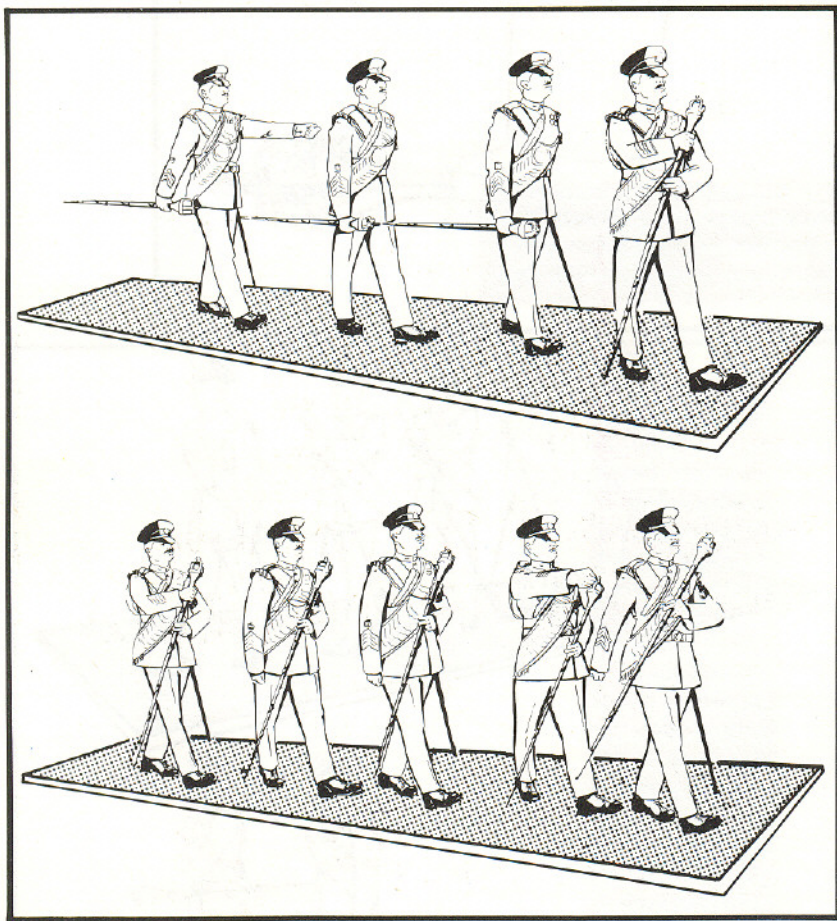
Quick Time

0422. **Changing from the Carry to the Trail.** As the right foot goes forward, cut the right arm to the side and at the same time bring the left hand to cover the belt buckle (quick time only). On the next left foot, grasp the staff with the right hand just below the head. On the next left foot cut the left arm to the side and bring the staff to the trail position. Swing the arms on the next left foot in quick time; keep them still in slow time.

The Trail
(the grip)

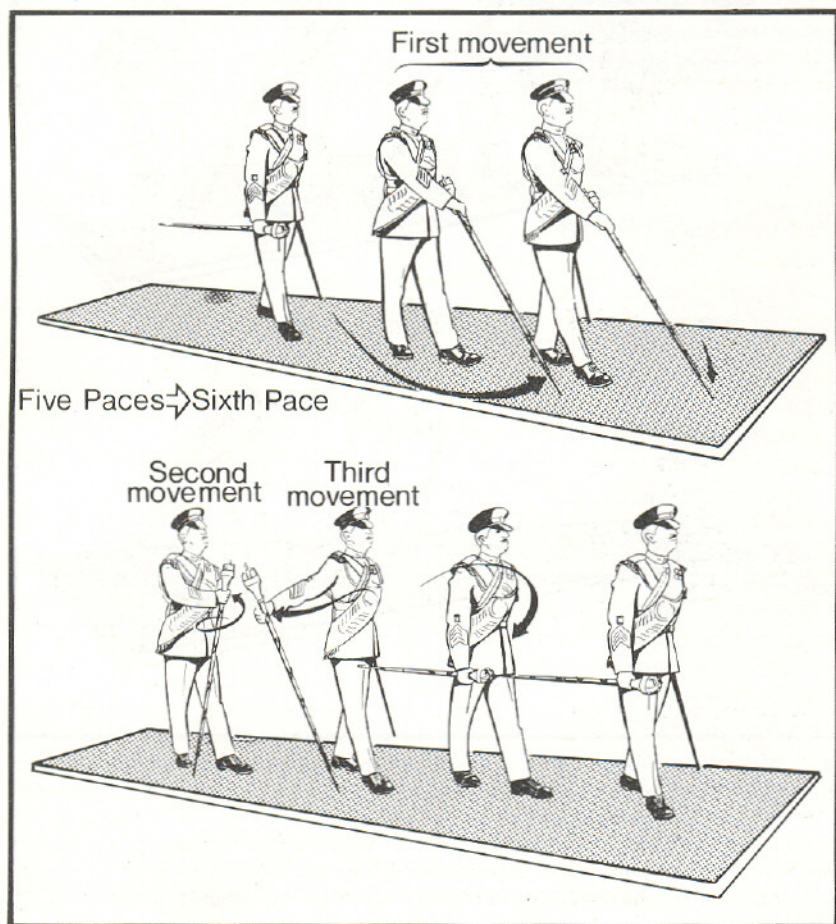


0423. **Changing from the Trail to the Carry.** To change from the trail to the carry the same drill movements are carried out in reverse order.

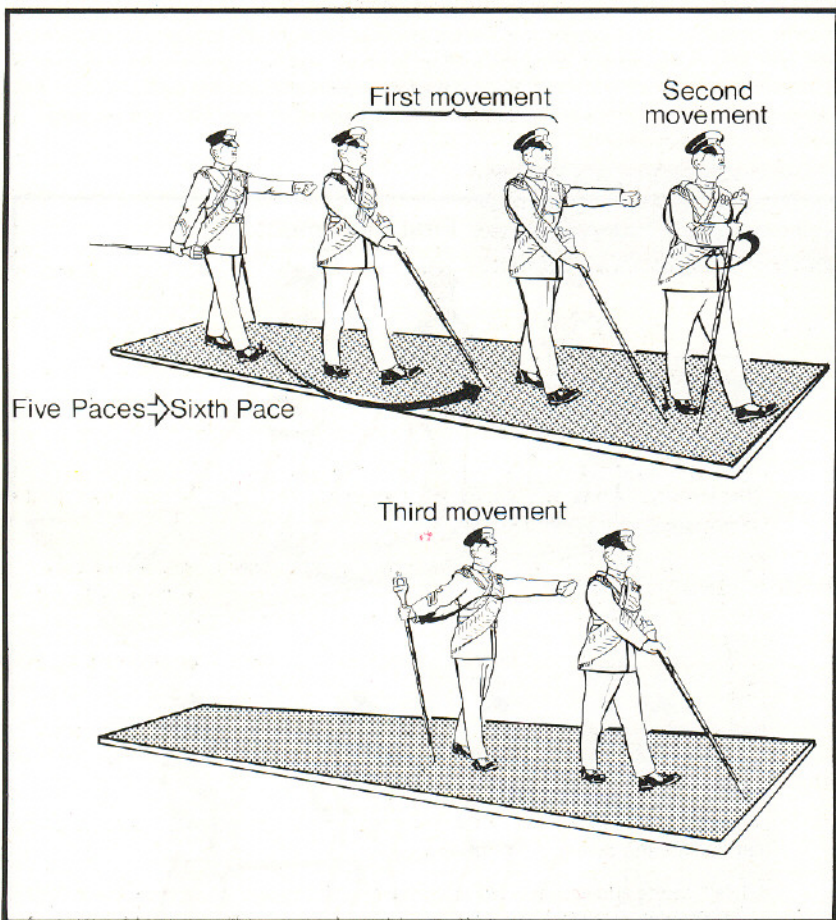


0424. **The State Walk.** The Drum Major uses the State Walk on all ceremonial and state occasions. Traditionally it is always used on the Queen's Birthday Parade and by Foot Guards Battalions on entering and leaving barracks and when each band at the head of its Regiment marches down the approach road to Horse Guards Parade for the Troop. Individual Drum Majors may also use the State Walk on regimental parades and ceremonies; to add to the splendour of such occasions.

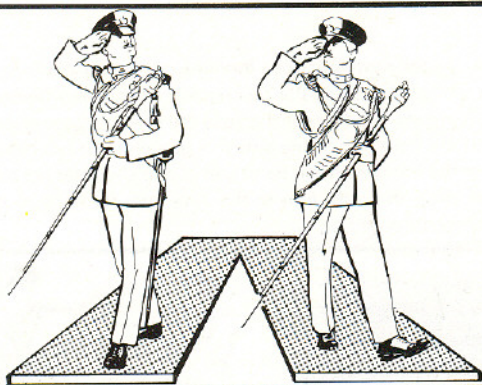
0425. *The State Walk (Slow Time)*. The staff will be brought to the trail and carried in that position for six paces prior to the commencement of the first movement. First movement, bring the staff forward on the left foot and place the point on the ground at the same time as the right foot. Second movement, bring the staff, with a circular movement, out to the right and back across the body to the left breast over one full pace of the left foot. Third movement, carry the staff out to the full extent of the right arm over one full pace of the right foot. Fourth movement, bring the staff up in an arc and back down to the trail; carry it there for two paces (left and right). Repeat the four movements starting as the next left foot comes forward. The complete movement takes six paces in slow time and no pause is made between movements.



0426. **The State Walk (Quick Time).** The movements are the same as for the first three movements in slow time, but the left arm is swung. These movements complete the cycle which is repeated from the position of the right arm extended. The complete movement takes four paces in quick time and no pause is made between movements.



0427. **Saluting on the March.** It is unlikely that this drill will be required when Corps of Drums and Bands are massed but it is one that should form part of the initial training of all Drum Majors. To salute to the left or right, cut the right arm to the side and bring the left hand to cover the belt buckle as the right foot comes to the ground. Salute on the left foot and maintain the salute until the Corps of Drums/Band have passed the saluting base. On completion return to the first position and march with the arms swinging, on successive left feet.



Saluting to the Left

Saluting to the Right

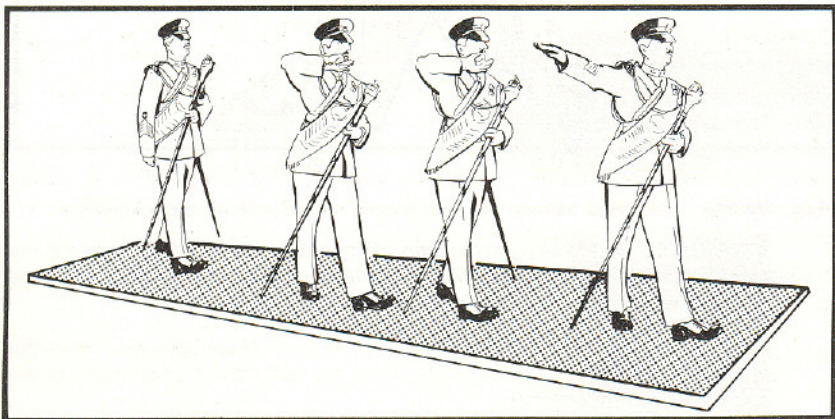
0428. **Halting.** The initial training of Drum Majors should include the following:

- a. *Halting Whilst Marching at the Carry.* When halting, the staff is retained at the carry (left hand covering the belt); then, depending on the situation, after the appropriate pause it is brought to the correct position of attention.
- b. *Halting Whilst Marching at the Trail.* As the Drum Major halts (i.e., bends the right knee to halt) he simultaneously brings the staff from the trail direct to the correct position of attention.

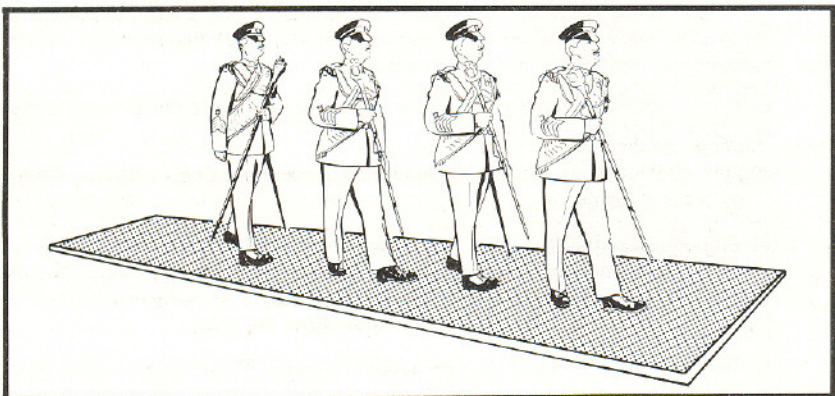
0429. **Marching Off Parade.** When it is necessary to request permission for the Corps of Drums to march off parade, the Drum Major, or Senior Drum Major when Corps of Drums/Bands are massed, should carry out this duty. The drill is as follows:

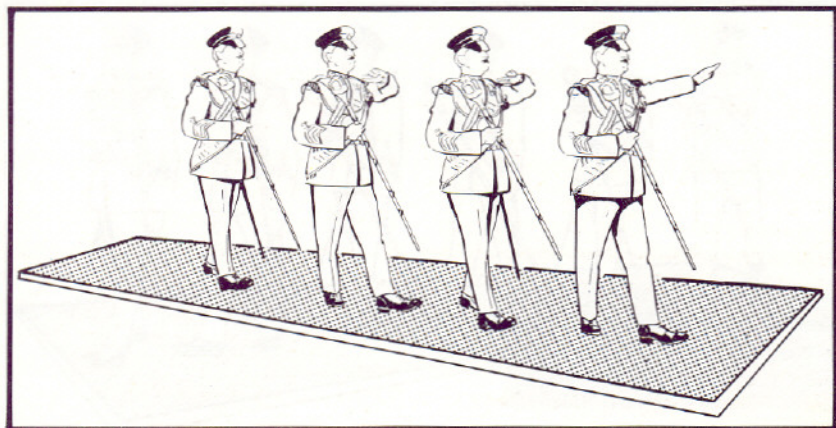
- a. Turn about to face the Corps/Band, stand them properly at ease then turn about again.
- b. Step off towards the senior officer, adopting the trail. (If it is a short distance to the saluting officer, adopt the carry position when stepping off and keeping the left hand at the belt buckle, swing the right arm.)
- c. On approaching the officer, bring the staff to the carry, keep the left hand at the belt buckle and swing the right arm.
- d. Halt, salute and request "Leave/permission to march the Corps of Drums of the . . . off parade, sir, please".
- e. On permission being granted, salute, turn about, step off adopting the trail, and return to the Corps. Adopt the carry and halt in front of and facing the Corps. (It is not obligatory to adopt the carry prior to halting; an alternative, acceptable practice is to halt at the correct position of attention direct from the trail.)
- f. Bring the Corps to attention, turn about and march off, saluting to left or right as appropriate.

0430. **Right Wheel.** As the right foot goes forward, cut the right arm to the side and at the same time bring the left hand to cover the belt buckle. This is only necessary in quick time. On the next left foot bring the right forearm across the chest, elbow raised, forearm parallel to the ground. Extend the right arm to the side in a graceful semi-circular movement, point the first two fingers of the hand with the hand just above shoulder height. When the wheel has been completed, drop the right arm to the side and continue to march at the carry, working on the left foot throughout.



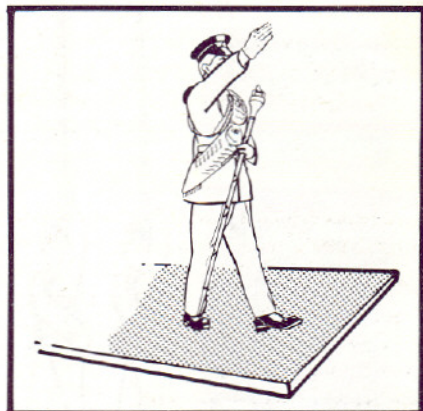
0431. **Left Wheel.** Bring the staff to the carry and the right arm to the side, as above. Then, first movement, transfer the staff to the right hand, left hand extended. On the next left foot bring the left arm to the side. On the next left foot, bring the left forearm across the chest in similar fashion to the right wheel. Extend the left arm as before. On completion of the wheel transfer the staff to the left hand and continue marching at the carry working on the left foot throughout.





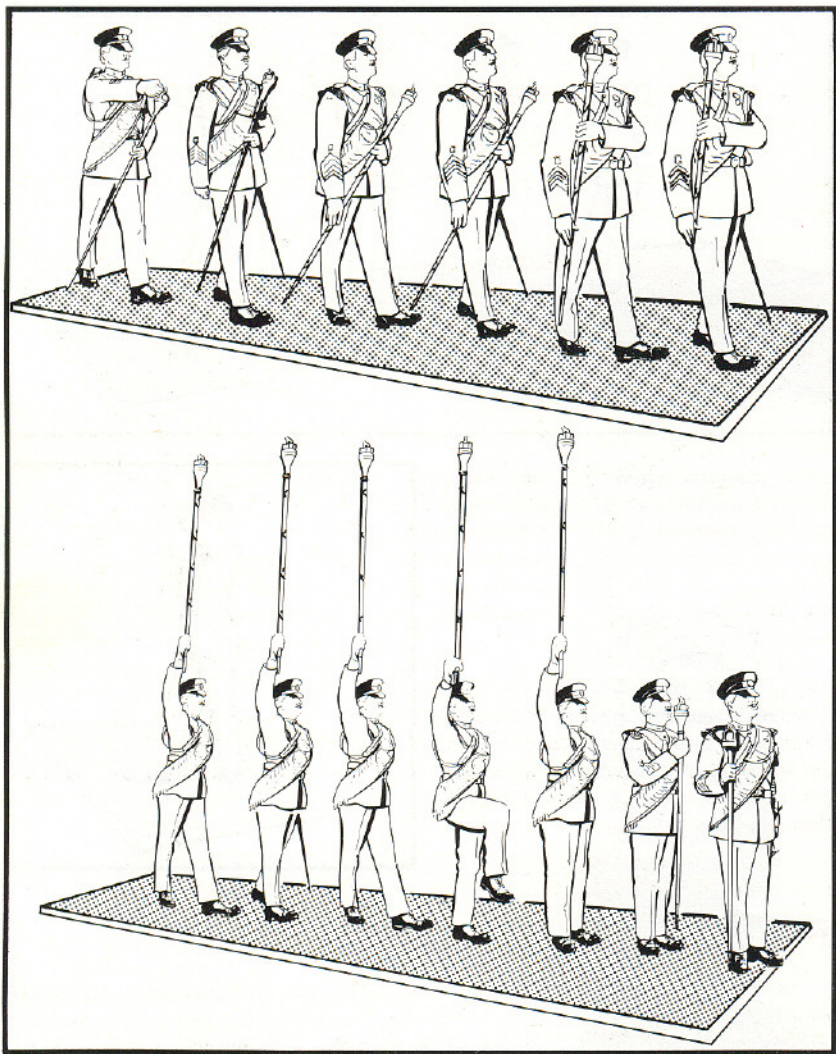
0432. **Countermarch.** To countermarch, bring the staff to the position of the carry, arms still and countermarch to the left. While marching through the Corps/Band swing the right arm; do not roll the staff until emerging through the rear rank.

0433. **Mark Time.** To signal the command mark time, raise the right arm, fingers and thumb outstretched, as the left foot comes to the ground. On the next left foot cut the arm to the side; on the next left, mark time.

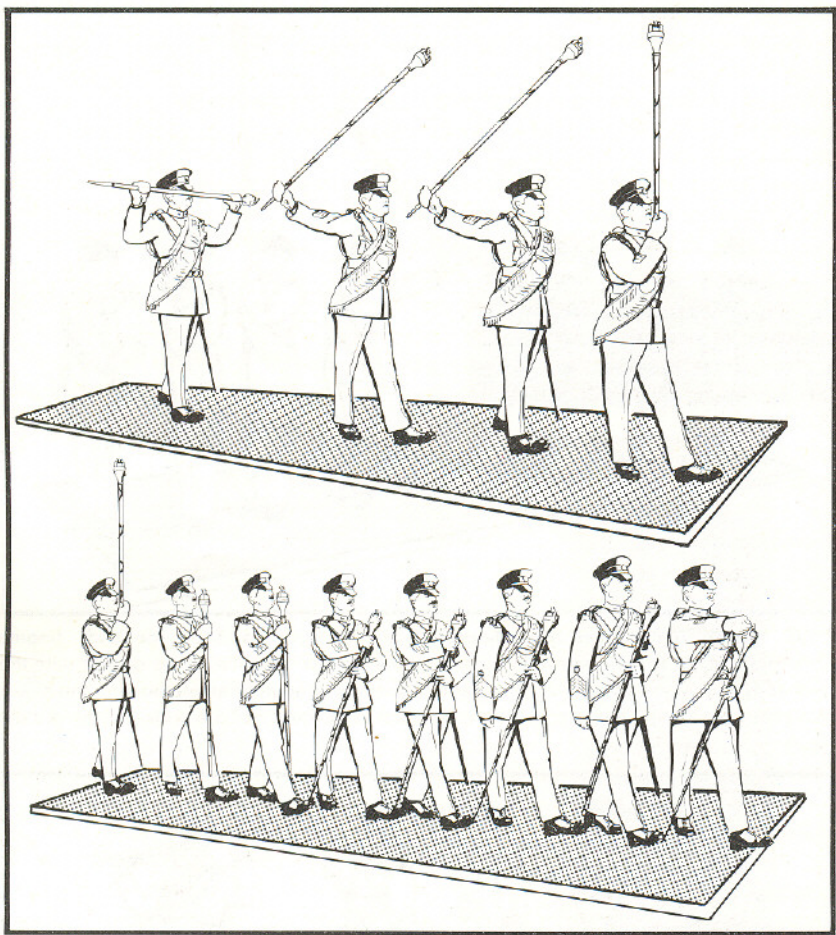


Mark Time

0434. **Halting.** As the right foot goes forward, cut the right arm to the side and at the same time bring the left hand to cover the belt buckle. This is only necessary in quick time. Carry out the next three movements on consecutive left feet. First movement, extend the right arm to grip the staff at the bottom of the chain. Second movement, push the staff, with the left hand, into the vertical position at the right side. Third movement, raise the staff above the head to the full extent of the right arm and cut the left arm to the side, then take a further right and left pace and halt on the next right foot. Drop the staff to the centre of the body after a pause and resume the position of attention. The final right and left pace is executed in time with the music (quick or slow) or as the normal drill movements if music is not being played.



0435. **Cease Playing at the Halt.** To signal cease playing, drop the right hand six inches down the staff then lift to eye level. Extend the right arm parallel to the ground with the staff at 45° with the head of the staff directly above the head. At an appropriate point in the music bring the right arm to the face, forearm vertical, then drop the staff and resume the position of attention.



0437. **Handling of the Staff.** At no time should it be necessary for the Drum Major to look at his staff, particularly when dropping the staff to the centre of the body after completing the halt or cutting off the music.

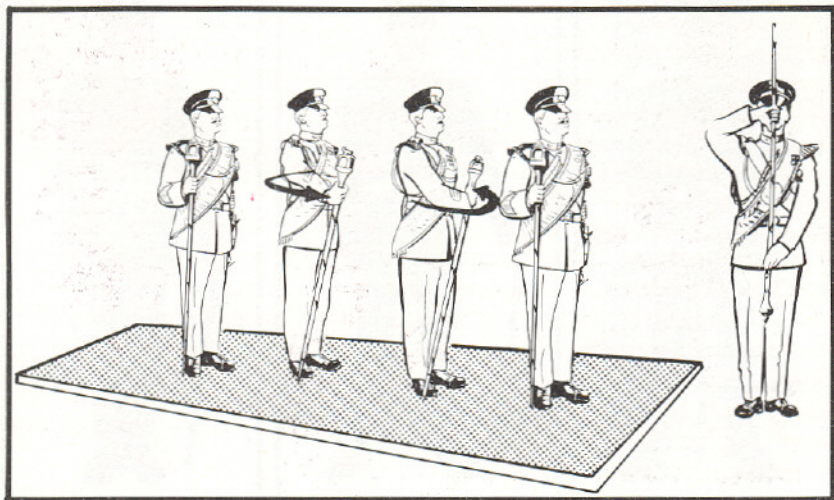
Signals Used by the Senior Drum Major when Corps of Drums/Bands are Massed

0438. **Situation.** When several Corps of Drums or Bands are massed, the Drum Majors form a front rank. The senior Drum Major controls the parade and positions himself centrally in this rank. The format of the parade will be known in advance to all Drum Majors and the senior Drum Major will give cautionary signals in order that all Drum Majors can work in unison. The following additional movements are made only by the senior Drum Major, the remaining Drum Majors conform to the standard staff drill.

0439. **Cautionary Signals.** The standard cautionary signal is the raising of the right arm, as in Mark Time. This position is held for at least six paces to ensure that the signal is observed. The arm is dropped on the left foot and the movement started on the next left foot. When Drum Majors are advancing at the State Walk, the left arm is raised and movements are made on the left foot throughout.

0440. **Cease Playing at the Halt.** To warn the remaining Drum Majors that the signal to cease playing is to be given, the senior Drum Major circles his staff through 360° twice (from the position of attention, through the positions illustrated, then back to the position of attention). All then drop their right hands six inches down the staff (as in paragraph 0435) and lift their staffs to eye level. The senior Drum Major only then dips his staff as the signal for the next movement. As he lifts his staff, from the dip to the 'right arm extended, staff at 45° position', all follow in unison and complete the remaining movements together.

0441. **Cease Playing on the March.** The signal to cease playing on the march is preceded by the standard cautionary signal (paragraph 0439), given by the senior Drum Major. He also dips his staff at the appropriate moment working on the left foot throughout.



Circling the Staff
(first movement)

Circling the Staff
(second movement)

Dipping the Staff