

THE
EXERCISE OF ARMS
IN THE
CONTINENTAL INFANTRY

*Being a Study
of the
Manual of the Firelock
as set forth by
Major-General von Steuben
to which is added
the Motions for the Manual of the
Non-Commissioned Officer,
the Esponton and the Sword
as prescribed by contemporary Authorities
and explained in the Minutiae
through the utilization of a live Model
displayed in 1,000 photographic
and artistic Plates*

by
Capt. Ernest W. Peterkin, USNR (Ret.)

MUSEUM RESTORATION SERVICE

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FOREWORD

On August 20, 1794 General Anthony Wayne's Legion of the United States swept the battlefield of Fallen Timbers with a vigorous bayonet charge, breaking the fighting power of the confederated native peoples of the Great Lakes. More than two years earlier Wayne had taken command of the newly-organized Legion in the wake of devastating American reverses in 1790 and 1791 at the hands of these skilled Indian warriors. Inheriting the shattered relics of a twice-defeated force which lacked discipline, good morale and even elementary training, it is instructional that in one of his first requests to Secretary of War Henry Knox Wayne declared, "Baron Steubens, *blue Book*, [underlined in the original] the Rules & Articles of War are much wanted . . ." Knox quickly responded that "Baron Steubens blue book is out of print — but we will have an edition printed with all expedition . . ." It should come as no surprise that given the daunting assignment of rebuilding a disgraced army that the audacious combat veteran of Monmouth, Stony Point and Green Spring should look to the model provided by General von Steuben. Wayne had personally witnessed, after all, the metamorphosis of George Washington's forces under the personal tutelage of the Prussian which had begun at Valley Forge fourteen years before. The Blue Book had provided a highly effective training and battle manual in the War for Independence and, under different circumstances, would again for Wayne from 1792 to 1796. It would remain in official use until the War of 1812.

For too many today General von Steuben is little remembered except for the Ohio River industrial community and the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine which both bear his name, or perhaps for the annual von Steuben Day parade in New York City. That is unfortunate because the example of von Steuben is a forceful reminder of how critical the role played by foreign assistance was in the American Revolution. Many European military officers and adventurers

had looked to Benjamin Franklin in Paris with the hope that they might be allowed to join in the struggle for freedom. Save for the Marquis de Lafayette, von Steuben is the most familiar of the foreign volunteers to historians, but he is hardly the most representative. His training and qualifications placed him head and shoulders above the rest, thoroughly teaching him the business of war.

What were the factors that made General von Steuben and his Blue Book such a success with the embryonic American military? Besides his natural flair for leadership, sharp intellect and obvious flexibility, the answer to this question must lay in the wide-ranging experience reflected in his military resumé, which, having not been sufficiently emphasized by historians, deserve closer scrutiny than they have hitherto received. Born to a military family in the Prussian fortress city of Magdeburg in 1730 (his father was a distinguished military engineer eventually decorated with the new service order, *Pour le Mérite*), his service in the army of Frederick the Great was indeed impressive. At age sixteen he wore the rose-red facings of Infantry Regiment No. 31 (von Lestwitz), a unit with a battle performance later rated by the King as "good," and in which he was wounded at Prague in 1757. A year later, after nearly all but the officers of his regiment had deserted, he was assigned to the Free Battalion No. 2, von Mayr, the Double-Blues or *Zweimalblauen*, a quasi-light infantry/partisan corps, where he served as adjutant and principal staff officer. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1759 and at the disaster of Kunersdorf was wounded once again. At the siege of Treptow in 1761 he seems to have become a prisoner of the Russians for a short time. That same year he joined the Royal Suite (the King's general headquarters) as *Quartiermeisterlieutenant*, a general staff officer. Such personal notice by Frederick the Great, the military giant who dominated central Europe during the Age of Reason, was cogent proof of von Steuben's



Foreword 1 The American Battalion (Corps of the Continental Line) of *Expedition Liberte* presenting arms at the ceremony of the Trooping of the Colors in the *Cour d'Honneur, Hotel des Invalides*, Paris, France on August 31, 1983 during the Bicentennial of the Signing of the Treaty of Paris.

abilities. Steuben participated in the Prussian Army's siege of the Schwednitz in 1762, and the next year one of his final duties in the king's service was to rebuild the Fusilier Regiment No. 48 (von Salmuth), decimated by desertion.

Von Steuben's service in Regiment No 31, a regular musketeer unit of Frederick's army, is the kind of soldiering today most often associated with him. On paper his regiment was composed of 1,430 rank-and-file, with a total complement of 1,700, divided into two battalions. As an officer candidate Steuben immersed himself into the milieu of the regiment, its organization and life, the "school of the soldier" and the group formations with their disciplined firepower employed both on the drill field and in actual battle. But his less known Free Battalion experience was equally important for his future mastery of training in America. These units were independent commands assigned to forays and missions away from the main Prussian force, a kind of low-level conflict known as *petite guerre*. They dispensed with tentage, cumbersome equipment and accoutrements and crewed their own light field

pieces. The battalions averaged from about five to seven hundred men at full strength but in the field could shrink to as low as one-fourth of that number. Not surprisingly, Frederick the Great despised the necessity of employing these units which he considered weak and unreliable, because they refused to expose themselves to enemy fire. Professor Christopher Duffy characterized the Free Battalions not as light infantry but as "brigand-like mercenary bands that were recruited from the very dregs of mankind." Perhaps the most significant aspect of von Steuben's background was his two years on staff with the Royal Suite. There, as Duffy explains, he held joint "responsibility for finding out about the theatre of war, divising the order of battle, policing the army, directing the field intelligence, arranging winter quarters, planning march routes and determining the sites of camps." A few years later the King, in writing a cautionary memorandum for the *Quartiermeisterlieutenants*, warned that he "who devotes himself to the trade must have considerable natural activity, if he is not to find the labour too hard for him." On the other hand, he continued, a man of quality would steadily advance in the profession of arms, and concurrently, become expert in the responsibilities of command. In 1763, with the re-establishment of the Fusilier Regiment No. 48, von Steuben added a final building block for the future.



Foreword 2 A demonstration of the 18th century linear tactics by the Corps of the Continental Line on the *Avant Cour, Place d'Armes, Chateau de Versailles, France*, on September 2, 1983 during the commemoration of the Signing of the Treaty of Paris of 1783 which ended hostilities of the American War for Independence.

This unit had been raised from a garrison battalion, a specialized class of second rate troops assigned to fortress duties. Considered the refuse of the army, they served reluctantly and were lead by officers not capable of field duties and who were sometimes invalids. They, as well as recruits drawn from recently acquired border areas, provided von Steuben with the material to flesh-out his fusilier regiment. Fusilier infantry was made up of men of smaller stature considered physically inferior to the regular regiments, but who with their unique headgear and arms fought in mass formation like the rest of the Prussian line.

It is not known precisely what prompted the termination of von Steuben's military service. While reorganizing the von Salmuth unit he was twice admonished for dilatoriness in obtaining the proper fabric for uniforming the regiment. It seems likely that this incident was brought to the attention of the ruthless staff General "Wilhelmi" von Anhalt, a powerful but detested figure in the Prussian service. Probably concluding that possibilities for future promotion were now non-existent, von Steuben resigned as staff captain of the von Salmuth Regiment in April 1763.

A revisionist school of thought has disparaged von Steuben's assistance to the American cause. Rejecting what it sees as the traditional view that Prussian discipline was necessary to the winning of independence, it argues that no militaristic, Prussianized Revolutionary force ever existed between 1778 and 1783 (which is perfectly true), and therefore, von Steuben's contribution was of little consequence (which is decidedly not true). In reality, the Contin-

ental Army never sought and assuredly never received a narrow and rigid discipline built along harsh, stereotypical Prussian lines. If General von Steuben's actual military experience is not forgotten, it is easy to see why nothing of this sort was ever proposed by him. He had observed for seventeen years under all conceivable circumstances the behavior of Prussian troops — high and low — and was probably not really too shocked by what he encountered at Valley Forge. The disciplinary qualities of the poorest elements of the Continental Army might well be a match for a Free Battalion, but von Steuben quickly grasped that American motivations for fighting were far different. And so the Continental army adopted the pragmatic doctrines of the Blue Book, by design eminently suitable to George Washington's needs, and as it turned out, the military requirements of the new republic for another generation. Herein may be seen the legitimacy of the von Steuben achievement. As Duffy pointed out, as strange as it might appear, of all the Prussian King's disciples and adherents in Europe, it was von Steuben in America, "a 'genuine' Frederician officer who accomplished what was by far the most successful transformation of a foreign army."

Von Steuben's American exploits were such that they have been chronicled for over two centuries, resulting in several biographies and the publication of his correspondence. Yet with all the scholarly notice given to the man and his accomplishments, almost no serious attention has been focused on the actual arms drill introduced by the Prussian and employed in George Washington's army. Happily, this deficiency has now been rectified with the appearance of *The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry*, by Captain Ernest W. Peterkin, USNR (Ret.). This volume is a noteworthy contribution to the growing body of literature — reflected by the new social history approach — which examines the

life and times of the common soldier. Although the von Steuben manual has been reprinted in the modern era before, most successfully in Joseph R. Rilling's *Baron von Steuben and His Regulations* over two decades ago, no one has ever attempted the insightfully analyzed and exquisitely detailed version so ably rendered here.

With the appearance of this work, a reliable interpretation of the arms drill is possible for the first time. A useful understanding demands more than just a mere reading of a modern edition which lacks annotation and interpretation. Comprehension of the intricacies of the manual calls for both a cognizance of the historical context and an exposure to actual application of the arms drill. The first, a reasoned explanation of arms drill development from the late seventeenth century up to the Revolution, is provided by Capt. Peterkin through an intimate familiarity with the extensive primary sources, giving us a most valuable and necessary discussion. While that takes the dedication of a careful scholar, the second factor, practical experience in the direct employment of von Steuben's tenets, requires the erudition and background of an eighteenth century drillmaster, something not so easy to find today. It is unlikely that anyone else could bring together two such disparate components as successfully as Capt. Peterkin.

The special virtue of this splendid inquiry rests with Capt. Peterkin's extensive field experience gained from demonstrating and teaching arms drill. For a decade-and-a-half he served as drillmaster to the Commander-in-Chief's Guard of the Third United States Infantry (The Old Guard). His work with the elite troops specially selected for this famous ceremonial unit of the U.S. Army was a unique opportunity and education. These activities gave him tremendous insight into the minutiae of the firelock manual and then ushered him into the many diverse areas not fully covered by the Blue Book, which in fact was never intended to be definitive. Von Steuben considered much of the "school of the soldier" and details of drill and regimental life to be a matter of common knowledge for competent officers, or, if they were found lacking, to be readily available from various sources, published or otherwise. Thus through research, study and practical usage, Capt. Peterkin significantly enhances the Blue Book, particularly with his inclusion of motions for the non-commissioned officer, the spontoon and sword drill for the officer and foot placement for the infantryman. Also, his addition of an index further facilitates the usefulness of his book.

Capt. Peterkin also performed a similar drillmaster function for a civilian entity, the Corps of the Continental Line. This unit was established for the

bicentenary of the American Revolution, representing a pooling of the resources of three "recreated" regiments of private citizens, the First Maryland, the Second Pennsylvania and the Ninth Virginia. The Corps mustered on average over 200 men, including field music and artillery, all authentically armed, uniformed and accoutred in a similar manner, operating as one unit and under single command. The objective was a modern representation of a first class, but understrength, veteran battalion of the Continental Army during the second half of the war. The author's assignment was to inculcate the doctrines of the Blue Book into the Corps as he had done with the Third U.S. Infantry. On several occasions the Commander-in-Chief's Guard and Corps appeared together as a composite unit, most notably at the two-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine where it represented Nathanael Greene's division. In addition, under the author's guidance the Corps enlightened the public in the drill, discipline and tactics formulated by von Steuben at numerous commemorations including Valley Forge, Monmouth, Cowpens, Guilford Court House and finally, Yorktown. The last event saw Capt. Peterkin discharging the responsibilities of chief-of-staff for the federal observance in 1981. Five "American" battalions were formed, each in a similar fashion to that of the Corps, representing New England, the North, the Middle States (the Corps), the South and the Militia. In this ultimate example of the Blue Book in action, fourteen-hundred men demonstrated its principles before the Presidents of the French Republic and the United States, as well as to large audiences over four days in October of that year. After representing the American people in France for the bicentenary of the Treaty of Paris, the Corps disbanded in 1983. Since then Capt. Peterkin's expertise in the subject of arms drill has continued to grow in his ongoing work with "living history" organizations spanning a time period from the seventeenth century up to 1815.

The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry is an impressive new contribution to our knowledge of the arms drill of the Continental Soldier. Profusely illustrated, it is a work that instructs not only the mind but also the eye. As an associate of Capt. Peterkin's during the bicentennial era, I find it most gratifying to see his fifteen year effort reach successful fruition with this extraordinary publication, which I predict will be considered definitive in its field.

J. Martin West
Director
Fort Ligonier Association
Ligonier, Pennsylvania
February 2, 1989

PREFACE

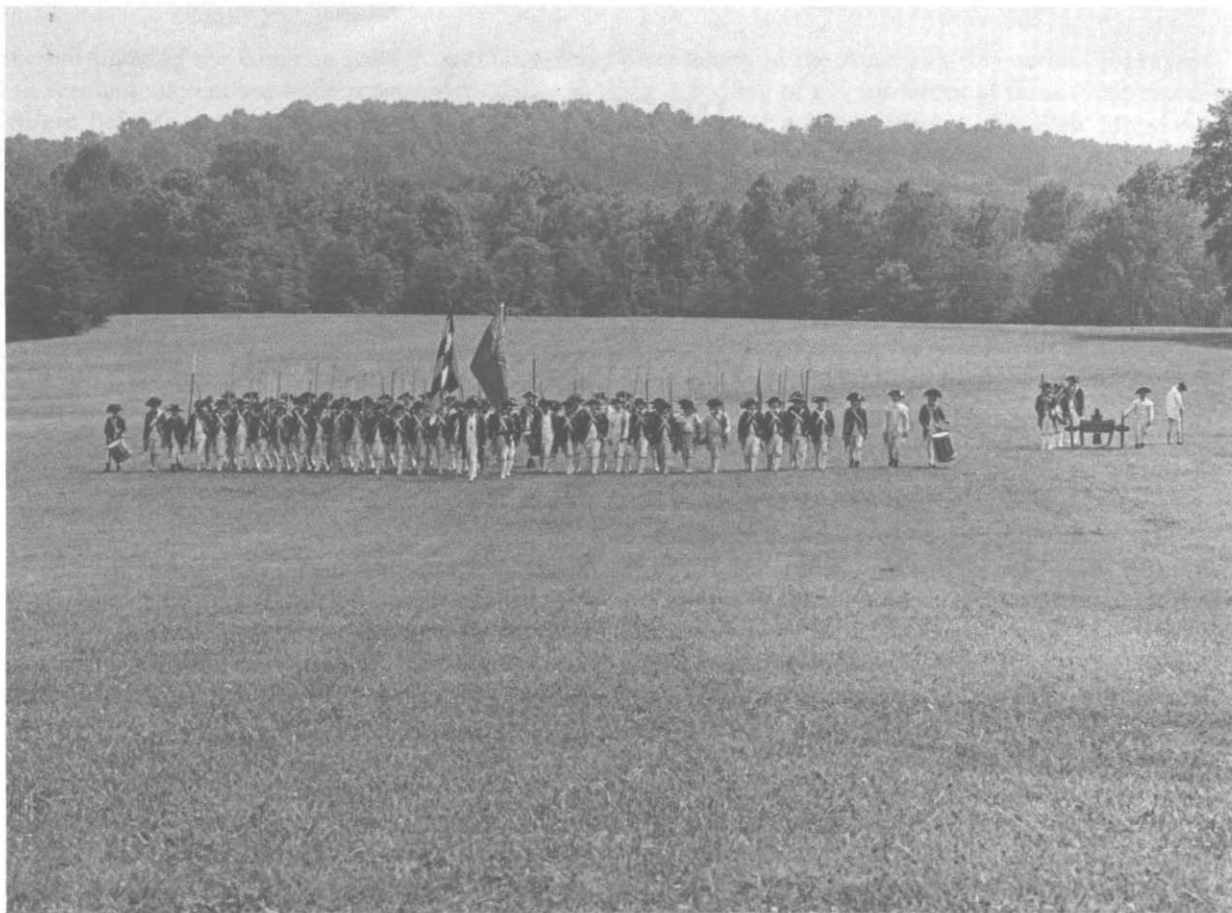
On March 29, 1779, nearly four years after the beginning of hostilities in the Revolutionary War, Congress authorized Major General von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* and thereby established a unique manual of arms for the flintlock musket that would be practiced by the American infantry for the next 40 years. Replaced in the second decade of the 19th century by new regulations reflecting the experience of France, the manual of arms underwent greater modifications by mid-century to accommodate the introduction of percussion ignition and rifled arms. With the coming of breechloading weapons after the Civil War the complexity of the manual of arms was reduced further as the loading and firing became more simple. The manual of arms, once a prime skill of the infantry soldier that he employed in battle, has lost its utility in combat in our times and is retained essentially for ceremonial purposes.

With the advent of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution a growing interest in the military tactics of the American Army during that period has developed among military historians and buffs. Despite the simplification of the manual of arms of von Steuben's *Regulations*, as compared to its predecessors, the details of the movements are intricate, precise, and require minute examination to devise an accurate interpretation of their description. In addition, considerable familiarity with muzzle-loading, flint ignition weapons is essential to understand the technicalities of the mechanisms, safety precautions, and the efficiency of the movements being described. As an additional complication, the illustrations accompanying the various editions of the *Regulations* are minimal and, in some cases, contain errors which are in conflict with the text. This work has been prepared with the hope that it will assist those interested in a detailed interpretation of the manual of arms of the *Regulations*. The original ex-

planations for the Instruction of the Recruit, the Manual Exercise, and the Firings have been amplified and are accompanied by photographs of a model performing each of the movements. Foot diagrams have been provided to clarify and emphasize the importance of the movement of the feet.

As covering sergeants, non-commissioned file closers, and color guards armed with muskets, as well as officers with spontoons and swords, were prescribed in the *Regulations*, explanations of the manuals for these officers have been included to provide greater understanding of the drill of the various individuals of a battalion of infantry. Although the *Regulations* refer to the "piling" (stacking) of arms and the American Infantry of the period used special arms movements during funeral ceremonies, the manuals for these occasions have not been included in the scope of this work.

As the survivors who practiced the manuals of arms of the infantry during the beginnings of the American Army have long gone, the remaining sources of reliable descriptions of the movements are limited to contemporary military manuals. Consequently, the recreation of the details of the movements are subject to interpretation by the reader based on his understanding and experience. In the case of the *Regulations* the explanations are brief, and, in some cases, are confusing to the modern reader. Having labored long myself over the manuals of the period to be able to instruct others in the accurate recreation of the drill of the American Infantry of the Revolution as prescribed by the *Regulations*, one realizes how helpful a picture would have been to clarify the intent of the writer. It is hoped that the pictures supplied in this work will relieve the burden of the reader and simplify the interpretation of the *Regulations*. Much has been learned in the ten years devoted to the preparation of this study and in a few instances a final interpretation must be based on



Preface 1 The Corps of the Continental Line demonstrating linear tactics at Fort Frederick, Maryland during the Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

conjecture, therefore, the writer can not claim that the results are infallible.

After almost a lifetime of interest and study of infantry drill many have contributed to the experience that brought me to the point of attempting this book, however, the following individuals have provided me with their generous assistance without which this publication would not be possible and I am hereby pleased to acknowledge.

To the late Harold L. Peterson for the use of his library and, along with the late Col. Frederick P. Todd, for introducing me to the mysteries of von Steuben's *Regulations* in the early days of the Company of Military Collectors and Historians.

To the late Robert L. Miller for his loan of military manuals covering the entire range of American military history and his warm and rewarding companionship and encouraging friendship of many years.

To Robert L. Klinger for making available his knowledge of the equipment of the Revolutionary War soldier and for bringing me into the recreated First Maryland Regiment. Here it was possible to gain invaluable experience by reducing to practice under the most favorable conditions available to anyone in

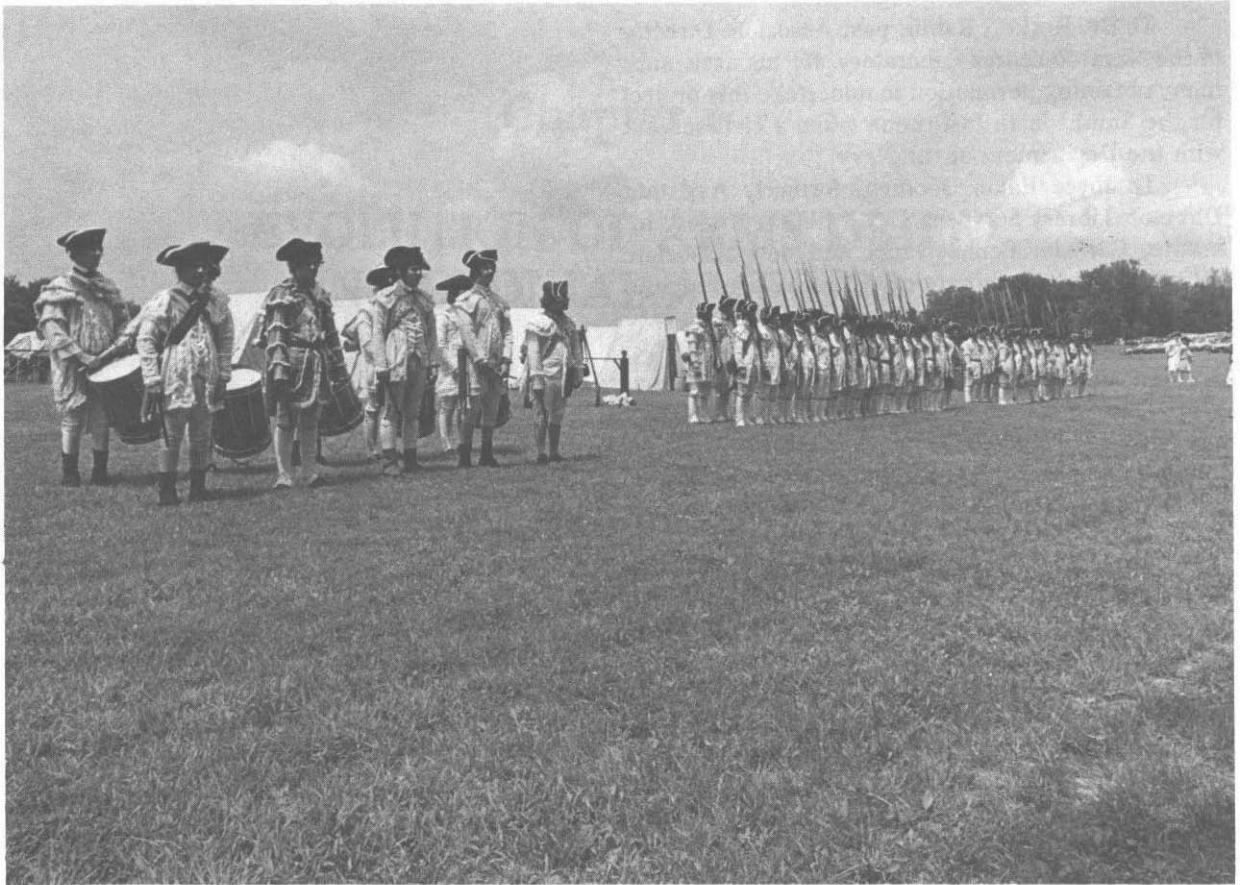
modern times the instruction of the manual exercise to units ranging from a few individuals to that of a full Revolutionary War battalion under conditions of parade and demonstrations of the tactical firing of the musket.

To Donald W. Holst who has shared his knowledge of many aspects of military history of the Revolution and made available the use of rare writings and documents that have made possible the understanding of the foundations of Revolutionary War tactics.

To William L. Brown III, Burton K. Kummerow, and Frederic C. Gaede for their cooperation and assistance in the production of the photographs that accompany the text. Their knowledge of the weapons, equipment, uniforms, and life of the Colonial soldier was an important ingredient in the attempt to achieve an authentic representation in the figures.

To David W. Harp, who photographed a majority of the figures, for his professional skill and understanding under very tedious conditions. His familiarity with the subject matter acquired from a long association photographing the First Maryland Regiment combined with his patience and interest was a fortuitous combination for this project.

To John Yusaitis and John Ennis for their pho-



Preface 2 Field music and infantry of the Corps of the Continental Line performing the *Manual Exercise* at Soldier's Delight, Maryland in 1974.

tography of supplementary views and still shots of equipment.

To my companions in the First Maryland Regiment for the opportunity to increase my practical understanding of the manual of arms of the Revolution through several years as their drillmaster and for their avid interest and interchange of interpretation.

To Colonels Harvey H. Perritt, Jr. and Robert H. Clark and the officers and men of the Third Infantry (The Old Guard) of the United States Army for the opportunity to assist in the training of the recreated Commander-in-Chief's Guard of General Washington. From the superb precision colonial drill displayed by these modern professional soldiers one gains a more complete appreciation of the results that may have been achieved by that elite unit of the American Army 200 years ago.

To Major Stephen F. St. Clair of the Third Infantry I am indebted for his friendship, cooperation, and interchange of instructional material while participating in the preparation of training documents for the Commander-in-Chief's Guard.

To John J. Wilson, who was the model for all of the figures of this work, for his cheerful patience during long, arduous photographic sessions where

his invaluable experience in the theater and television as an actor and set designer and his respected knowledge of military uniforms made possible the impressions he conveyed to the photographs.

To Michael P. Musick of the National Archives for this assistance in providing access to information on the early von Steuben *Instructions*.

To Dr. Emanuel R. Lewis of the Library of the U.S. House of Representatives for discovering the 1810 proposals to amend the 1799 *Regulations*. They confirmed the extrapolations made before they became available and added considerable reassurance to a number of assumptions.

To Sean Shesgreen for the location of Hogarth's engravings of the espoutoon manual and their value in interpreting contemporary instructions.

To James S. Hutchins, Director of the National Armed Forces Museum Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution and his predecessor, the late Colonel John H. Magruder III, USMC (Ret.), for their interest, encouragement, and sponsorship of this study and also for their patience in accepting the delays that evolved after the originally-planned publication expanded as the complexity of the subject became more evident. I am grateful to the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution for the release of this study for publication.

To Dr. Herbert Rabin, past Associate Director of the Naval Research Laboratory, for his assistance in my obtaining permission to undertake this project for the Smithsonian Institution while a civil servant with the Department of the Navy.

To Joyce Eakin Gooding, formerly Assistant Director, Library Services, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania and now Associate Editor, Museum Restoration Service, for her watchful eye over the manuscript as it passed through the various stages to publication

As this project was prepared in the not-too-spare hours remaining from a full-time occupation, I am indebted to my wife, Betty, and family who exhibited the greatest understanding to allow me to maximize the time I could devote to this endeavour.

Ernest W. Peterkin
Captain, USNR (Ret.)

Camp Springs, Maryland,
December 7, 1988.

Chapter I

EVOLUTION OF ARMS DRILL IN COLONIAL AMERICA

Pre-Revolutionary Regulations

During the seventeenth century the inhabitants of colonial America drew their military experience from the disciplines of many European countries. An approximate distribution of nationalities placed the French in Nova Scotia; English in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island; Dutch, French, and English in New York and New Jersey; Swedes in Delaware; English in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia; Scotch, Irish, French, and Germans in the Carolinas and, later, in Georgia; and the Spanish in Florida. [1] In the latter portion of this period the infantry of these nations were undergoing a transition from tactics based on the pike and matchlock to those developed from the introduction of the flintlock musket. An examination of the military manuals of the major powers in America in this period indicates a general similarity of the manual of arms. At any particular time the differences would be determined essentially by the progress each country had made in the development or adaption of improved weapons, accoutrements, and ammunition and their attempts to increase the efficiency of their use.

By the first half of the eighteenth century the American colonies were well established under British rule and their militia and regular infantry would no doubt have followed the tactics prescribed by such manuals as Breton's *Militia Discipline* of 1717 [2] and 1733 [3] and Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline* published in 1727. [4] The manuals of arms for the musket of this period followed the typical arm-length movements held over from the days of the matchlock as depicted in Figure 1-1. [5] Although the soldier was no longer carrying a glowing match in his left hand, the manual he used had been designed to keep the match away from the wooden powder charges suspended from a bandoleer worn over his shoulder. By this time the powder and ball

were carried in paper cylinders in a cartridge box, but the priming powder for the pan was supplied from a flask, thereby requiring separate handling to prime and load the musket. The wooden rammer was still being used in the early decades and required "shortening" against the waist belt before ramming the charge and returning the rod to the musket to allow a starting thrust within the reach of the soldier, avoid a strain on the wooden shaft, and a convenience for replacing the rod in the channel under the barrel. Grose, describing in 1812 the changes in the manual exercise in the English Army, wrote:

Since these [1686] regulations, [6] the national exercise has been frequently changed by authority, three different systems having been practiced within the space of about forty years; among other improvements, the introduction of the quick step in marching and manœuvring, is not the least important; before that, every movement was performed with a slow, and almost funereal solemnity; till about the year 1750, the firelock was carried nearly in the position now termed sloped, and held by the swell [comb of the stock]; the motions were all performed as slow as possible, wide, and in the poize, and divers other motions, at the full extent of the arm. [7]

These factors, the traditional wide movements, the primer flask, and the wooden rammer, resulted in a complex manual of arms [8] comprising 25 commands and 64 distinct operations for firing and loading the musket.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the adoption of the comparatively light flintlock musket, the introduction of the iron ramrod, and the discontinuance of the priming flask began a revolution in the manual of arms, especially the loading and firing operations. The leader in this reform was Frederick Wilhelm I, king of Prussia. William Windham in 1759 describes the impact of these innovations:

The late King of Prussia, then, was the first who altered the motions of the manual exercise, causing them to be performed close to the body: by this alteration, his troops could go through all the exercise, with their files in close

13



Fig. 1-1 Movement 13. *Cast About to Charge!* from the Manual Exercise of the Foot Guards, circa. 1745.

order, in the same manner, as in real action; and their motions being done with great quickness and life, allowing good time between each, and with greatest harmony and uniformity imaginable; a whole battalion appeared as one body, moved by a spring; which had a surprisingly fine effect. But the part of the exercise that he most improved, was the firing and loading; which he greatly shortened, retrenching and changing all such motions, as were absolutely necessary, and, at the same time, the shortest and quickest possible. He also introduced the use of the iron ramrods, secured from falling out, by a spring in the tail-pipe; which not liable to being broken, by their weight render the ramming down the charge much easier, and more certain. By these means, he taught his troops to fire with a quickness, that no one could have conceived possible to be attained to; not less than five or six times a minute.[9]

Variations on the Prussian exercises[10] were made by each country as it added or deleted portions according to the judgement of their commanders. France adopted a similar manual in 1755 and 1766 where the movements were made close to the body. The English also adopted the close movements at this time, but they were not simplified sufficiently to meet Windham's requirements for the militia. His *Norfolk Discipline*, published in 1759, introduced the concept of performing all of the priming and loading movements on the right side of the body, thereby reducing the complexities of the foot movements that constituted essential, but difficult, evolutions for close order firing. As early as 1747 General Blakeney's *New Manual Exercise*, [11] an adaptation of Bland's *Discipline* and printed in Philadelphia by Franklin, had dropped the use of the flask and gave instructions for priming the musket directly from the paper cartridge.

After Braddock's defeat in 1755, Washington was occupied in establishing defenses in western Maryland against the French and Indians. His instructions to officers manning various outposts reflect his concern for the proficiency of their men in the exercise of arms, concern that was to continue in his role as Commander-in-Chief during the Revolution.

INSTRUCTIONS TO MAJOR ANDREW LEWIS:

[Fredericksburg,]
September 6, 1755

3rdly. You are to see that the Muster-Rolls of each Company and Party, are called three times a day; and that the men are as often called out and taught the New Platoon way of Exercising; That you may be better enabled to do this, I shall order a Sergeant or two from Fort Cumberland.[12]

TO CAPTAIN ROBERT SPOTSWOOD:

Fredericksburg,
September 6, 1755

As soon as you arrive in Town with your Recruits, you are to put yourself under the Command of Major Andrew Lewis, or the Field Officer appointed for that Rendezvous; And you are to be strictly obedient to all such lawful Commands, as you shall from time to time receive from him; and particularly to observe, that the Muster Rolls of your Men are regularly called three time a Day, and that they are as often called out to their Exercises; at which times you will be present.[13]

INSTRUCTIONS TO LIEUTENANT
COLONEL ADAM STEPHEN:

Fort Cumberland,
September 20, 1755

6ly. To see that both Officers and Soldiers, are Regularly and constantly, Exercised twice a Day.[14]
11y. To send three Sergeants to each place of Rendezvous; as soon as they shall be thought capable of teaching the Recruits...[15]

TO CAPTAIN HENRY WOODWARD:

Fredericksburg,
October 6, 1755

You are to apply to the Commanding Officer at Winchester, for Arms for your Detachment: also for Sufficient Provisions to serve them at Fort Cumberland. When you arrive at the Fort, you are to see that the men are Exercised daily...[16]

TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL ADAM STEPHEN:

Winchester,
October 29, 1755

You are to see that the men of the Virginia Regiment are exercised as so often every day as the duty will admit; and that they are practised also in shooting at targets; and if there are any who are remarkably awkward, particular pains must be taken with them.[17]

ORDERS:

Winchester,
December 20, 1755

A return to be given in immediately of the Recruits now in this town, by the several Officers who enlisted them mentioning the height, age, trade, &c. The Officers to see that the Sergeants who understand the manual Exercise, do drill the Recruits, at least twice a-day.[18]

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
TO ALL THE CAPTAINS OF COMPANIES:

Fort Loudoun,
July 29, 1757

I also desire that the greatest regularity may be constantly observed in relieving the Guards, the Sentries, and all other parts of ceremonious duty. That the men may not be neglecting this, contract bad habits, but rather thro' a strict observance, become intimately acquainted with, and knowing in their duty. And as I wou'd have the whole regiment tho' never so much divided at present, pursue the same system of discipline, even in the minute punctilios, You are to send an alert Sergeant or Corporal and two or three men, fit for Drill, to this place to be perfected therein, who, on their return, are to instruct the rest of your Command.

I recommend to you, likewise, and in the stongest terms, that you and your officers under your command, do make yourselves master of the necessary salutes. [19]

TO MAJOR ANDREW LEWIS:

Fort Loudoun,
April 21, 1758

I have so often, and earnestly recommended the due practice of the Soldiers in their Exercises, that it is needless, I hope, to urge it again to you in this letter. [20]

ORDERS FOR
LIEUTENANT COLONEL ADAM STEPHEN:

Fort Loudoun,
May 24, 1758

And you are to see that the Exercise we now use, be followed strictly. [21]

In 1764 a new Manual Exercise was ordered by George III for the British Army. These regulations appear to have been influenced greatly by the *Norfolk Discipline* but dropped finally the movement of "clubbing" whereby the musket was sloped inverted on the left shoulder. This new manual, as will be shown later, was the foundation of the manual exercise devised by von Steuben for the American Army in 1779. Printed in the Colonies by various publishers, [22] the "Sixty-fourth" was familiar to Washington [23] and military circles before the Revolution. Pickering published *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia* in Massachusetts in 1775 at the outbreak of hostilities and his treatment of the manual of arms implemented his objections to movements still carried by the latest British manuals:

I shall now endeavor to trace some of the useless motions and attitudes in the exercise of the army and in the Norfolk discipline to their source, from whence it will appear, that as the reasons for them have ceased long since, those motions and attitudes ought not to be continued. [24]

He thereupon launches into a series of short essays against "clubbing," "ordering" with the right hand at shoulder level, and "resting" the musket as a form of salute or intermediate position in the manual. So Pickering, at the eve of the advent of the political revolution about to occur, began a military reform in the manual of arms that was to culminate in the final regulations to be adopted by the Continental Army.

By the second half of the eighteenth century the use of polearms by officers and sergeants had started to give away to the carrying of the fusee, a lighter version of the musket, however, polearms were carried by troops in colonial forces in varying degrees until the Revolution. [25] The manual for the espontoon and halberd were described in the Prussian regulations [26] and for the halberd in the *Norfolk Discipline*. [27] It would have to be assumed that the drill movements for the polearms would have had to depend a great deal on the personal instructions being passed along from person-to-person, a technique that must have been used in the American infantry of the Revolution as no known contemporary instructions were published for this weapon.

The sword, an essential feature of the weapon complement of all infantry ranks in the early part of the century, had also lost its utility toward the latter part of the period. In 1768 the Royal Warrant for the uniforms of the marching regiments prohibited swords to be worn by corporals and private men. [28] Following the trend of other European armies, swords remained the symbol of office for sergeants armed with muskets and a means of defense for officers and musicians. Cuthbertson in 1768 sums up, in an opinion that was probably shared by many of the ranks that had carried swords, that:

The great incumberance of Swords on a March, in point of weight, their well-known inconvenience in Action, or at Exercise, and in general their answering no real end in Quarters, that a Bayonet could not supply, undoubtedly pointed out to all Regiments employed in the late war, the necessity of taking them from the Battalion Companies, and as they have not since been restored, it is probable, they will ever be laid aside, as a useless weapon for a Foot Soldier; [29]

While instructions existed for mounted drill and fencing with the sword, the descriptions for the use of the sword on parade appear to be limited. The French *Ordonnance du Roi* of 1766 specifies for the battalion staff officers the position of "carry" and the method of saluting. [30]

Continental Army Practices.

The exercise of arms in the American infantry of the Revolutionary War, which included the musket, espontoon, and the sword, began with the traditional movements inherited from the three-rank formations practiced by the British colonial and regular forces. Several dominant instructions were available to the American Infantry in 1775. One of these was Bland's [31] and Washington, during the siege of Boston, offered advice to Colonel Woodford of the 2nd Virginia Regiment:

Cambridge,
November 10, 1775

As to the manual exercise, the evolutions and man-

oeuvres of a regiment, with other knowledge necessary to a soldier, you will acquire them from those authors, who have treated upon these subjects, among whom Bland (the newest edition) stands foremost; [32]

The *Norfolk Discipline* was popular among the New England states, but the Massachusetts House of Representatives, in recognizing the advantages of Pickering's new work, [33] adopted his *Discipline* on May 1, 1776 for the use of the militia and stated in the preamble to the Resolution that:

Whereas the Plan of Military Discipline lately published by Timothy Pickering, Esq; appears to this Court to be well adapted to the Use and Practice of a Militia, as it contains all the Motions in the Manual Exercise that are necessary and useful; and is not, like the 64th, Norfolk, and others, clogged with many superfluous Motions, which serve only to burden the Memory, and perplex the Learner; . . . And as it also contains many useful Manoeuvres, &c. not published in the 64th. . . [34]

The 64th as noted previously, was available in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and in New England, and despite the objections of the Massachusetts legislators was soon to become the basis for the manual exercise of the new army.

As the siege of Boston progressed, Washington, in anticipation of the reorganization and expansion of the Cambridge Army, [35] expressed his concern for the discipline:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters,
Cambridge,
December 1, 1775

The Colonels, or Commanding Officers, of the new established regiments, are to take especial care, that the new Recruits are put under proper drill Sergeants, as fast as they join, in order that they may, as quick as possible, be made acquainted with their duty. [36]

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters,
Cambridge,
January 3, 1776

It is expected that Commanding Officers of Regiments, will be exceedingly attentive to their training, exercising and disciplining their men; bringing them as soon as possible acquainted with the different Evolutions and Manoeuvres, necessary to be practiced; . . . [37]

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters,
Cambridge,
January 5, 1776

He is also very desirous of having the Men instructed as speedily as possible in all parts of their duty, and recommends it to all the Colonels, to be very careful in the choice of their Non-Commissioned Officers, and to their Captains, to divide their Companies into small Squads, appointing a Sergeant and Corporal to each, from whom the utmost diligence is expected — Those Sergeants and Corporals are by no means to suffer the Arms, and Accoutrements of any man in their Squads, to be dirty, or unfit for use, and as far as in them lies, to make the men appear neat, clean, and soldier-like — Neglect of duty in these Instances, they may rely upon it will reduce them to the Ranks — [38]

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters,
Cambridge,
February 20, 1776

The Genl. cannot again help urging it in the strongest terms to the Colonels the necessity of the strictest attention to the discipline of their Men — learning them to march and to perform all the different Evolutions and Manoeuvres; which is more essential service, than dwelling too long upon the Manual Exercise — He also recommends to the Colonels a proper attention to the Cloathing of their Officers and Men, that they may appear in a soldierlike manner. [39]

Following the occupation of Boston and the beginning of the campaign in New York, Washington reiterates his concern for the maintenance of instruction:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters,
New York,
July 18, 1776

Altho' the General is very sensible that the great fatigue duty of this Army (which he is highly pleased to see the officers and men go through, with so much cheerfulness and zeal) does not allow much time for manoeuvring and exercising the troops; yet it is a matter of so much consequence to have them well practiced, as time and circumstances will admit; that he earnestly recommends it to the Brigadiers, Colonels of commanding Officers of the Regiments, to take time for that purpose, and particularly to have the men instructed and practice the Evolution, Manoeuvring, as much as the Manual Exercise, as respects loading and firing, not only with quickness, but calmness. [40]

After the winter at Morristown, Washington continued his interest in the drill of the troops but suggested an emphasis on combat, rather than parade, instructions:

TO COLONEL ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

Morris Town,
April 8, 1777

Embrace every opportunity to be drilling your men. Attend more to the manoeuvres, than the manual exercise. To march well; wheel in order; and go through the Platoon Exercise, are essential. The other parts of the Manual Exercise tho well enough to be known (if time would admit of it) is more useful on parade than in actual service. [41]

TO BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM WOODFORD

Head Quarters,
Morristown,
May 10, 1777

Whenever your Brigade can be drawn together, you should make them practice, as much as possible, the Evolutions (as more essential than the Manual exercise) and you are, as much as in your power lies, to see that the Officers attend to the cleanliness of the Men, as one of the best preservatives of Health. [42]

The need for a uniform system of discipline became evident as described by Washington in his reply to an opinion expressed by Brigadier General Alexander MacDougall:

Head Quarters,
Morris Town,
May 23, 1777

I agree perfectly with you in the impropriety of that diversity in the modes of training our Regiments which has

prevailed hitherto. I have it in contemplation, very soon to digest and establish a regular system of discipline, manoeuvres, evolutions, regulations for guard &c. to be observed throughout the Army; in the mean time, I should be glad you would introduce an uniformity among those you command; and would recommend to you, to be particularly attentive to having them instructed in the proper use of their feet, so as to enable them to perform the necessary movements in marching and forming with ease, order agility and expedition. Good consequences would undoubtedly result from accustoming the men to the noise of firing, and to the habit of taking aim at an object. You may therefore bestow a little ammunition on this purpose, having regard to the quantity of this article among us.[43]

A series of admonitions were issued during the summer of 1777 from Morristown repeating the need for training and full participation by the officers with severe penalties for neglect of this responsibility:

TO BRIGADIER WILLIAM SMALLWOOD

Head Quarter,
Morris Town,
May 26, 1777

Improve all the leisure time your Brigade may have from other Duties, in Manoeuvring, and teaching the Men in the use of their Legs, which is of infinitely more Importance than learning them the Manual Exercise. Cause the Officers to attend regularly, and perform their part of these duties with the Men.[44]

GENERAL ORDER

Head Quarters,
Middle-Brook,
June 1, 1777

Each regiment to be paraded at troop and at retreat beating — the rolls carefully called, and absentees punished. All officers, not on duty, to attend parade — to see that their men are clean and decent — their arms and accoutrements in order — their ammunition complete — that they behave well in their ranks, are *silent, steady* and *orderly*.

Once a day, at such time as the Brigadier shall judge most convenient, each corps to be exercised in the manual, and evolutions; and once a week at least, each brigade to be exercised under the direction of its Brigadier — The most essential part of the discipline being the marching and forming, this should be more particularly practiced. All officers, not on duty, to be present on the occasions not as unconcerned Spectators, but to learn and perform their own duty, and to see that the men do theirs — The Field Officers to exercise their regiments themselves, and in their absence the Captains; and not to leave it to Adjutants, as has been heretofore the case. It is necessary the men should be accustomed to the voice and command of those, who are to direct them in Action, and that these should by practice acquire a facility for doing their part.[45]

GENERAL ORDER

Head Quarters,
Middle-Brook,
June 16, 1777

The army not to omit exercising every day, as heretofore practiced. A thing so essential is never to be neglected, unless in such circumstances as render it impossible.[46]

GENERAL ORDER

Head Quarter,
Morristown,
July 6, 1777

The Commander in Chief has observed, with concern, that notwithstanding the orders of June last, requiring all officers of the corps, not sick, or on their duty, to attend the parade daily, at the time of exercise, to learn and per-

form their duty, yet there is a great neglect: He wishes it to be impressed upon the mind of every officer, that nothing can be more hurtful to the service, than the neglect of discipline; for that discipline, more than numbers, gives one army the superiority over another: He therefore, in the most positive manner requires all officers to attend parade, and exercise, agreeably to the orders above mentioned, and that the commanding officers will be put under arrest, any who fail of an exact observance of them.

And whenever corps and brigades assemble for exercise, every officer is to take and keep his proper post; such as have command directing those men who are under their immediate care, and that in such manner as to not interfere with, or delay the execution of the orders of the exercising officer. Those men who appear to be least acquainted with exercises are daily, when off duty, to be sent to the drill, and particular care taken to instruct them.

And the more effectively to promote military discipline in the army, the officers must set the example of a close attention to that point; assembling frequently each corps by themselves, and learning with diligence the manual exercise, and the most useful manoeuvres, together with the easy Salute already directed in General Orders. Such a practice cannot fail of producing the best effects; And nothing can do the officers more honor. They will know their own duty, and what they have a right to expect from all who are under their command. The men excited by the example, will eagerly embrace every opportunity, to improve in the military art; and the whole army be inspired with an emulation to become good soldiers.[47]

Still lacking a uniform manual after the reverses at Brandywine and Germantown, Washington continued to stress the importance of practicing the essential movement of the discipline:

GENERAL ORDER

Head Quarters,
Towamensing,
October 12, 1777

The officers now have an opportunity of attending to the discipline of the troops. Every day the weather permits, the corps are to be turned out and practiced in the most essential exercises, particularly in priming and loading, forming, advancing, retreating, breaking and rallying. No pains are to be spared to improve the troops in these points.[48]

GENERAL ORDER

Head Quarters at Wentz's
Worcester Township,
October 18, 1777

The officers commanding brigades and corps are to now draw out their men, (excepting those on duty) every day when the weather permits, to practice the most necessary manoeuvres, particularly to advance in line from thence, to form columns, to go thro' passes and openings in fences, and to reduce them again; to retire in line and column, and form again; in a word, to perform all those movements, which in action, a woody and inclosed country shall make necessary.[49]

With these almost desperate orders for emphasis on basic evolutions and still no common instruction for their performance, the American army entered into the dispiriting circumstances of winter camp at Valley Forge. Washington little suspected that the confusion surrounding his quest for a common discipline would be dispelled within the next few months with the arrival of a foreign officer, the Baron von Steuben.

EVOLUTION OF ARMS DRILL IN COLONIAL AMERICA

1. David B. Scott, *A Smaller School History of the United States*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1872, pp. 20-53.
2. William Breton, *Militia Discipline*, 3rd. ed., London: Harbin, 1717.
3. William Breton, *Militia Discipline*, Boston: D. Henchman, 1733. Reprinted by Museum Research Associates, Winthrop, Maine: 1975.
4. Humphrey Bland, *A Treatise of Military Discipline*, 4th ed., London: Samuel Buckley, 1740. A "Royal Privilege and License" is reprinted in this edition giving Samuel Buckley the right to publish the original work on April 24, 1727.
5. Movement 13 is one of 48 appearing in eight unbound plates entitled "The Manual Exercise of the Foot Guards" from the library of Harold L. Peterson. These plates are similar to those shown in the *Volunteers Pocket Companion describing the various motions of the Foot Guards in the Manual Exercise, Inscribed to the Brave and Worthy Gentlemen Associators of Great Britain and the Militia of the City of London and Westminster*: 1745. Cf. Boris Mollo, "'Poise Your Musket!' Early Drill Books in the National Museum," *Some Treasures of the National Army Museum*, reprinted from *Connoisseur*, November, 1971. Bland, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-25.
6. Grose's reference to "regulations" is probably *An Abridgement of the English Discipline* ordered by King James II in 1686.
7. Francis Grose, *Military Antiquities Respecting a History of the English Army*. Vol. 1, Picadilly: 1812, p. 346.
8. Bland, *Military Discipline*, 1740, pp. 19-25.
9. William Windham, *A Plan of Discipline Composed for the Use of the Militia of the County of Norfolk*, London: J. Shuckburgh, 1759, pp. xxv-xxvi. Reprinted in the *Limited Edition Military Series*, Ottawa: Museum Restoration Service, 1969.
10. William Faucitt, *Regulations for the Prussian Infantry*, London: J. Nourse, 1759, pp. 31-43. Reprinted in the *West Point Military Library* series, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.
11. General Blakeney, *The New Manual Exercise*, Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1747, p. 3.
12. George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. by John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols., Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931-1944. Vol. 1, p. 170. The "new platoon way of Exercising" refers to those movements of the manual of arms used in firing the musket in combat, namely to: *Prime and Load! Make Ready! Present! and Fire!* Bland's *Abstract of Military Discipline* had been published in Boston in 1754.
13. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 171.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
19. Washington, *Writings*, Vol.2, p. 112.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
21. *Ibid.* p. 204.
22. Edward Harvey, Adjutant General, *A New Manual and Platoon Exercise: with an Explanation*. Published by Order of his Majesty, Williamsburg; Dixon & Hunter, 1775. This 1764 Manual Exercise was also published in Newberryport by E. Hunt and H.W. Tinges in 1774; Providence by John Carter in 1774; New York by H. Gaine in 1775; and in Philadelphia by J. Humphery, R. Sell, and R. Aitken in 1776.
23. Harold L. Peterson, *The Book of the Continental Soldier*, Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 1968, p. 20.
24. Timothy Pickering, Jr., *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia*, Salem: Samuel and Ebenezer Hall, 1775, p. 15.
25. George C. Neuman, *Swords and Blades of the American Revolution*, Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1973, p. 190.
26. Faucitt, *Regulations for the Prussian Infantry*, 1759, pp. 133-144.
27. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*, 1759, p. 27.
28. Thomas Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, 2nd ed., London: J. Milan, 1776, p. 254.
29. Bennet Cuthbertson, *A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Oeconomy of a Battalion of Infantry*, Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1768, p. 94.
30. *Ordonnance du Roy, Pour Regler L'Exercice de L'Infanterie. A Paris: de L'Imprimerie Royale, 1766*, pp. 10-11.
31. Humphery Bland, *A Treatise of Military Discipline*, 9th ed., London: R. Baldwin, et. al., 1762. By the time of this edition the use of the primer flask had been discontinued and there is some reduction in the "Posturing" of earlier manuals.
32. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 4, p. 81.
33. Timothy Pickering, Jr., *An Easy Plan of a Discipline for a Militia*, 2nd ed., Boston: S. Hall, 1776.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
35. Fred Anderson Berg, *Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units*, Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1972, p. 140.
36. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 4, p. 136.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 341.
40. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 229.
41. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 371.
42. *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 41.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
48. *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 361.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

Chapter II

ADVENT OF VON STEUBEN'S DISCIPLINE

Office of the Inspector General and Staff

As the Continental Army withdrew into winter quarters at the end of 1777 definite steps were being taken to consolidate the means for bringing a uniform discipline into force. Baron d'Arendt, commander of the German Regiment of Mulhenberg's Virginia Brigade, suggested to Washington the formation of a staff function of Inspector General and assistants to devise and supervise a system of drill regulations. [1] The method for implementing this objective was put to the General officers:

CIRCULAR TO THE GENERAL OFFICERS

Head Quarters, October 26, 1777

Sir: You will, very shortly, be called to a Council of War when your Sentiments on the following questions will be asked? . . .

(6) Will the Office of Inspector Genl. to our Army, for the purpose, principally, of establishing one uniform sett of Manoeuvres and Manual, be advisable as the time of the Adjutant Genl. seems to be totally engaged with other business[2]

The Council agreed on 29 October that:

6. Such an officer is advisable. The manual manoeuvres, or any regulations to be established, previously to be settled or agreed to by the Commander in chief or a board of officers, appointed by him for that purpose. [3]

In December of 1777 Congress appointed Major General Thomas Conway to the post of Inspector General, but due to his dissatisfaction, he did not assume the duties of the office. [4] Concurrently, the efforts of Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin in France resulted in the arrival in December of the Prussian, ex-military aide to King Frederick II (Frederick the Great), Frederick Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Agustin, the Baron von Steuben, with letters of introduction to Washington extolling his military experience and exaggerating his former rank of Captain[5] to Lieutenant General of the Prussian General Staff. After receiving the approval of Congress in January 1778, von

Steuben arrived at Valley Forge in late February and soon received the approbation of Washington:

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 27, 1778

Baron Steuben has arrived in Camp. He appears to be much of a Gentleman, and as far as I have had an opportunity of judging a man of Military knowledge and acquainted with the World.[6]

Publishing his description of the duties of the Inspector General at Valley Forge, Washington stated:

The business of the office to form a system of manual and manoeuvres, to concert all necessary regulations for the better government and arrangement of the army, in all its departments . . .

The person I would propose, for the Inspector General, is the Baron Steuben. I have had much conversation with this gentleman, and believe him well qualified for the office. He appears to me to have an accurate knowledge of every part of military discipline and arrangement, and to be a man of sense and judgement. [7]

At this point von Steuben began the introduction of a uniform discipline for the drill of the infantry. These regulations were to be promulgated in several stages that included their design, the training of a model detachment, the instruction of the sub- and brigade-inspectors, the dissemination of hand-copied instructions, and, finally, the preparation of the printed manuals. Now, Washington was able to begin his plan of having his troops drilled under the guidance of an experienced, European military officer with the arrival of von Steuben. As the Prussian system of discipline was the basis of the new drill of the major nations, von Steuben provided an opportune keystone on which Washington could lay the foundations of a uniform system of regulations. On February 28, 1778 John Laurens, aide to Washington and interpreter of von Steuben's French, made some observations in a letter to his father, President of Congress, on the Baron's qualifications and attitude:

"I have had several long conversations with the Baron Steuben, who appears to me a man profound in the science of war, and well disposed to render his best services to the United States . . . I think he would be the properest man we could choose for the office of inspector general, and there are several good assistants that might be given him. I have the highest opinion of the service he would render in this line, as he seems perfectly aware of the disadvantages under which our army has labored from short enlistments and frequent changes; seems to understand what our subjects are capable of, and *is not so staunch a systematist as to be adverse from adopting established forms to stubborn circumstances* [italics: E.W.P.]. He will not give us the perfect instruction, absolutely speaking, but the best we are in a condition to receive." [8]

The Model Company

Following his survey of the state of the Army at Valley Forge, von Steuben recognized the need for uniformity of discipline among the regiments. Cognizant of the disadvantages that sweeping reforms would bring by the extension of training time and the abolishment of familiar procedures, the Baron began the development of the unified discipline in consultation with Major General Nathanael Greene and Washington's secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton. As von Steuben spoke no English, he wrote his instructions in French. These were translated by his military secretary, Major Pierre Etienne Duponceau and were edited by Lt. Col. John Laurens and Hamilton. [9] While the manual of discipline was being developed, plans for instructing the army were being initiated by the appointment of division and brigade inspectors to administer and enforce the new discipline and by the organization of a model detachment to indoctrinate the officers of the Inspector General's staff. To implement the latter, the following announcement was made:

TO BRIGADIERS
AND OFFICERS COMMANDING BRIGADES
Head Quarters
March 17, 1778

Sir: As it is found necessary for the purpose of establishing uniformity of discipline and manoeuvres in the army to appoint an Inspector General; and in order to form a well organised Body of Instructors it is proposed to have Sub-Inspectors to superintend divisions or larger portions of the army according to their numbers; and Brigade-Inspectors to be charged with the Instruction of Brigades, which last officers are to be chosen in the Brigades respectively. I have desire of you to make choice of a Major from the Regiments under your command, whose activity, Intelligence, Address and decided Taste for the kind of employment, qualify him in a superior degree for the office.

The importance of the object and the little time which remains for executing what is necessary to accomplish it, render every moment precious; you will therefore without loss of time, make the choice and give me notice of it.

The Brigade Inspector retains his rank, but is to be exempt from the duties of the Line during the exercise of his office. I am, etc.

PS. As the danger of delay in this business is more to be dreaded than any other inconvenience; if no Major should be present possessing the qualities required, any other officer in whom they are united, and who is ready at once to assume the functions of his office may be taken. [10]

The model company to demonstrate this new drill was selected from Washington's Guard of the Commander-in-Chief and reorganized from two officers and fifty-six rank and file to a captain, three lieutenants, a surgeon, four sergeants, three corporals, two drummers, a fifer, and 136 privates [11] as a result of the following order:

GENERAL ORDER
Head Quarters, Valley Forge
Tuesday, March 17, 1778

One hundred chosen men are to be annexed to the Guard of the Commander-in-Chief, for the purpose of forming a corps to be instructed in the maneuvers necessary to be introduced in the army and serve as model for the execution of them. As the General's Guard is composed of Virginians, the one hundred draughts are to be taken from the troops of the other States. [12]

By this time von Steuben was prepared to begin his instructions and the following day the new guard was put in readiness to commence the first application of the new discipline:

GENERAL ORDER
Head Quarters, Valley Forge
March 18, 1778

The men ordered yesterday for His Excellency's guard are to parade tomorrow morning at the guard-mounting on the guard parade. [13]

At the first parade, von Steuben's attempts at instruction were confused by his lack of command of the English language. Captain Benjamin Walker, Brigade Major "pro tem" of the Fourth New York Regiment, volunteered his services as interpreter at this crucial moment and extricated von Steuben from the impasse. "If," said the Baron, "I had seen an angel from heaven I should not have been more rejoiced." [14] Walker soon became aide to von Steuben, his life-long friend, and aide to Washington in 1782. The new discipline underway, Washington issued orders to dispose of other systems.

GENERAL ORDERS
Head Quarters, V. Forge
Sunday, March 22, 1778

As a System of easy Manoeuvres and Exercise is to be introduced with a view of establishing Uniformity in these points throughout the Army the Commanding Officers of Brigades and Regiments are desired to discontinue exercising and manoeuvring their men by way of instruction until new regulations shall be distributed. Such Evolutions and Exercise as are indispensably necessary in the ordinary Camp duties may in the mean time be performed according to the accustomed methods. [15]

Von Steuben continued to provide personal supervision over the training of the Guard and his technique is revealed in his own account of the proceedings:

"I commenced operations by drafting one hundred and twenty men from the line, whom I formed into a Guard for the General-in-Chief. I made this Guard my military school, I drilled them myself twice a day; and to remove that English prejudice which some officers entertained, namely,

TABLE 2-1

Organization of the Office of Inspector General
Spring, 1778

Inspector General: Major General Baron von Steuben
 Secretary: Capt. Pierre Duponceau
 Aides: Lt. Col. Francois-Louis Teissedre de Fleury
 Maj. Augustin-Francois de Epiniere
 Capt. Louis DePontiere
 Capt. Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, Continental Engineers
 Servant: Carl Vogel

Valley Forge, Pa.

Division/Brigade

Maj. Gen. Sullivan's

Brig. Gen. Learned's (Mass.)
 Brig. Gen. Paterson's (Mass.)
 Brig. Gen. Weedon's (Va.)
 Brig. Gen. Muhlenberg's (Va.)

Maj. Gen. Lord Sterling's

Brig. Gen. Maxwell's (N.J.)
 Brig. Gen. Conway's (Pa./Cont.)
 Brig. Gen. Huntington's (Conn.)
 Brig. Gen. Varnum's (Conn./R.I.)

Maj. Gen. Wayne's

1st Pennsylvania
 2nd Pennsylvania (Brig. Gen. John DeHaas?)
 Brig. Gen. Poor's (N.H./N.Y.)
 Brig. Gen. Glover's (Mass.)

Maj. Gen. Lafayette's (Va./N.C.)

Brig. Gen. Woodford's (Va.)
 Brig. Gen. Scott's (Va./Cont.)
 Brig. Gen. McIntosh's (N.C.)

Wilmington, Del.

Brig. Gen. Smallwood's (1st Md.)
 (Brig. Gen. Preun Homme de Borre?) 2nd Md.

Division/Brigade Inspector

Lt. Col. William Davis, 14th Va.

Maj. William Hull, 8th Mass.
 Col. Benamin Tupper, 11th Mass.
 Maj. Samuel Jordan Cabell, 4th Va.
 —?—

Lt. Col. Francis Barber, 3rd N.J.

Maj. Joseph Bloomfield, 3rd N.J.
 Maj. John Hurling, 3rd Pa.
 Capt. Thomas Grosvenor, 3rd Conn.
 Capt. Royal Smith, Stanton's R.I.

Col. John Brooks, 7th Mass.

Maj. Michael Ryan, 10th (5th?) Pa.
 Capt. John McGowan, 4th Pa.
 Maj. Nicholas Fish, 2nd N.Y.
 Lt. Col. Ebenezer Sprout, 4th N.Y.

Lt. Col. Jean-Baptiste Ternant, Armand's Legion.

Maj. Gustavus B. Wallace, 15th Va.
 —?—
 Capt. John Inglas, 2nd N.C.

Lt. Col. F.-L. Teissedre de Fluery, Continental Engineers
 Capt. Archibald Anderson, 3rd Md.

that to drill a recruit was a sergeant's duty and beneath the station of an officer, I often took the musket myself to show the men the manual exercise which I wished to introduce. All my inspectors were present at each drill. We marched together, and in a fortnight my company knew perfectly how to bear arms, had a military air, knew how to march, to form in column, deploy, and execute some little maneuvers with excellent precision . . . I had my company of Guards exactly as I wished them to be. They were well dressed, their arms clean and in good order, and their general appearance quite respectable. I paraded them in the presence of all the officers of the army, and gave them an opportunity of exhibiting all they knew. I afforded a new and agreeable sight for the young officers and soldiers. Having gained my point, I dispersed my inspectors, and my new doctrines were eagerly embraced." [16]

The Staff of the Inspector General

By the end of March the Brigade Inspectors had been appointed [17] and the selection of the division, or sub-inspectors completed by the latter part of April. [18] These officers were charged with the responsibility of enforcing the new discipline of the manual exercise and evolutions during the spring of 1778 and were a vital influence in the success of the retraining of the army. The organization of the Office of the Inspector General is shown in Table 2-1. [19]

Washington's aspiration for the approval of Congress to endorse the concept of the function of the Inspector General is indicated in his petition:

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters,
 April 30, 1778

Sir: The extensive ill consequences arising from a want of uniformity in discipline and manoeuvres throughout the Army, have long occasioned me to wish for the establishment of a well organised inspectorship, and the concurrence of Congress in the same views has induced me to set on foot a temporary institution, which from the success that has hitherto attended it, gives me the most flattering expectations, and will I hope obtain their approbation.

Baron de Steubens length of service in the first military School in Europe, [and his former rank] pointed him out as a person peculiarly qualified to be at the head of this department; this appeared the least exceptionable way of introducing him into the army and one that would give him the most ready opportunity of displaying his talents. I therefore proposed him to undertake the office of Inspector General which he agreed to with the greatest cheerfulness, and has performed the duties of it with a zeal and intelligence equal to our wishes; he has two ranks of Inspectors under him, the lowest are officers charged with the inspection of brigades, with the title of brigade-inspectors; the others superintend several of these; they have written instructions relative to their several functions and the manoeuvres which they are

to practice are illustrated by a company which the Baron has taken pains to train himself.

The Success which has hitherto attended the plan, enables me to request with confidence the ratification of Congress, and is I think a pledge of the establishment of a well combined general System, which insurmountable obstacles have hitherto opposed. I have the honor to be, &c. [20]

The Original Instructions

During the last week of March, all of April, and the first half of May the drills continued based on the written instructions prepared by von Steuben and his staff. Accompanied by the brigade adjutants and orderly sergeants, the Brigade Inspectors attended Headquarters and copied the discipline into the Brigade orderly books. One of these orderly books resides in the National Archives and contains the handwritten record of these dictated regulations. [21] The new regulations were entitled "Baron Stubens Instructions" and occupied 75 pages of manuscript plus one page showing the posting of officers in a battalion formed from four, eight, or 16 platoons. The instructions were composed of ten chapters and were dated according to the following schedule:

March 24, 1778	Chapter 1 Elementary Evolutions
March 30, 1778	Chapter 2 Service of Guards-Grand Parade
	Chapter 3 General Rules for the Formation of Troops
	Chapter 4 Instructions for Changing Front of a Battalion By Closing & Displaying the Collum Form'd By Wheeling
	Chapter 5 Instructions for the Formation of the Battalion of Guards with the Several Detachments brot on the Grand Parade by Brigade Majors
	Chapter 6 Honours Due from Guards to Genls and other Officers of the Army Ordered by his Excellency to be Observed in the future
	Chapter 7 Instructions for Officers of the Guards, etc., etc.
May 10, 1778	Chapter 8 Instructions of Troops in Several Formations of Solid Columns & Several Ways of Displaying
	Chapter 9 Instructions for Facing [firing] & Charging Bayonets
	Chapter 10 Instructions for the Inspectors of the Army

The first chapter is divided into 16 numbered paragraphs covering such subjects as the position of the soldier at attention, the slow and quick step, wheeling right and left, right and left oblique, marching by file, forming in two ranks, and the evolutions under arms. These evolutions include platoon drill and the introduction of arms drill.

The Manual Exercise will be reduced to a few Motions. The Soldier need only know the following for the Present —

"Poise your Firelock!"
"Shoulder your Firelock!"
"Present your Arms!"
"Fix your Bayonets!"
"Unfix your Bayonets!"
"Load your Firelock!"
"Make Ready!"
"Present!"
"Fire!"

"Order your Firelock!"

However they Should not amuse themselves in ye Beginning with Manuall, but Our Whole Intention Should be given to teach the Soldiers how to March, the few Commands of manuall Exercise that will be retained may be learnt in two Days, — [22]

Three points should be made regarding the manual exercise of the original instructions. First, the commands are in the form of the contemporary British manual exercise whereby "your" is introduced between the word for the position to be taken and the command of execution, and "Present" is used for the command to "Aim." In the chapters introduced a week later, a change takes place toward simplification with the dropping of "your" between the preparative and the command of execution. "Shoulder your Firelock!" became "Shoulder, Firelock!" The command for aiming, however, remained "Present!" throughout these initial instructions. The second point to be made is that portions of the words in the commands are underlined and correspond in most cases to the instructions given by Pickering for emphasis. [23] These are the only known, contemporary guides to the pronunciation of military commands in colonial America. Thirdly, there are no instructions for performing these nine movements of the manual. In the ninth chapter, "Instructions for Firing and Charging Bayonets," the movement of "*Charge, Bayonet!*" is introduced:

The Soldier Seizing his Firelock with his right hand as in the 1st motion of Poizing, He throws the Bayonet Forward bringing the but Under his right arm, and at the Same time Seizing the Firelock with the [Left] Hand, about 8 Inches above the Lock holding the But firm under his Arm & Keeping Square to the front, the men of the front rank have the Bayonet about a Foot higher than the but. [24]

The Two-Rank Formation

With the introduction of linear tactics by the Swedish and the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, the three-rank battle formations required the first rank to kneel and the center and rear ranks to fire over their heads. The files were required to arrange themselves in echelon to fire between the intervals of the men ahead of them in order to present the highest concentration of fire. This led to complicated foot movements to assume the firing and loading positions, disturbance to the line of fire in the inadvertent jostling that resulted from the crowded ranks, and the accidents that were frequently inflicted on the front rank by those in the rear. Pickering discusses the disadvantages of firing in three ranks in his *Discipline* [25] by quoting from such contemporary authorities as Major Young and Marshal Saxe who felt that the method was not only dangerous but ineffectual because of the kneeling front rank's apprehension of being fired upon by the rear rank [26] and:

after they have fired, do not rise up, in order to load again, with a briskness which is necessary. [27]

One can only suppose that von Steuben may have been influenced by these opinions as a salient feature of the Valley Forge *Instructions* was the use of the two-rank system. The differences in the three- and the two-rank systems are explained in the *Instructions*:

In presenting [aiming], the Soldier should put his right foot 6 Inches at Least behind the other that being the Natural Position to Stand in.

In other Nations the men of the 2d Rank are accustomed to Step of [f] with one foot to the right, in order to clear the foot of the front Rank Man — Who Kneels but as in our army, the front Rank fires Standing, the 2d Rank will in making ready Step a Little to the right in order to Present in the Interval of the front Rank & having Loaded his Piece in Coming to a Shoulder he Steps Back to his Place. [28]

The resulting reduction in the complexity of both the manual of arms for firing in ranks and the evolutions of the battalion shortened the training time required to ready the American Army for the coming operation in the summer of 1778.

Application of the New Tactics

Having completed the exercises as platoons and companies by the end of March, the concentration of training the troops continued through April. The disparity in the sizes of the regiments was overcome by organizing the provisional battalions of 112 to 208 files. [29] By the beginning of May brigade drill had commenced:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters, Valley Forge,
Sunday, May 3, 1778

On Monday next the several Brigades will begin their Exercise at six o'Clock and continue 'till eight o'Clock in the morning and from five to six o'Clock in the afternoon, the men for guard not to attend the Exercise. [30]

In order to preserve the uniformity Washington reemphasized the importance of the new regulations:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters, V. Forge,
Monday, May 4, 1778

The sub and Brigade Inspectors are to be pointedly Exact in pursuing the written Instructions of the Inspector General.

That the strictest Uniformity may be observed throughout the whole Army, they are not to practice a single Manoeuvre without his direction, nor in a method different from it. Any Alteration or Innovation will again plunge the Army into that Contrariness and Confusion from which it is endeavouring to emerge. The hours for Exercise are also to be exactly attended to by each Brigade for which purpose and that no difference may arise on account of Watches, proper attention is to be paid to the order of the first of last April, for regulating them by that of the Adjutant General.

The Commander in Chief requests the Brigadiers and Officers commanding Brigades will see that these orders are strictly complied with, hoping we shall not let slip the golden Opportunity which now presents itself of disciplining the Army and that each brigade will vie with the other in arriving at the highest and earliest Pitch of Excellence. [31]

By the end of April sufficient progress had been made that the effects of the new discipline were to be

displayed at a Grand Review to celebrate the news of the confirmation of the Alliance with France. The success of the evolutions by the brigades, the culmination in a *feu de joie* [32], and the martial appearance of the troops brought forth a compliment from Washington:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters, Valley Forge,
Thursday, May 7, 1778

The Commander-in-Chief takes particular Pleasure in acquainting the Army that their Conduct yesterday afforded him the highest Satisfaction; The Exactness and order with which their Movements were performed is a pleasing Evidence of the Progress they are making in military Improvement, and an earnest of the pleasing Perfection to which they will shortly arrive, with a Continuance of that laudable Zeal and Emulation which so happily prevails; The General at the same time presents his thanks to Baron Steuben and the Gentlemen under him for the indefatigable Exertions in the duties of their Office, the good effects of which are already so apparent, and for the Care, Activity and Propriety manifested in conducting the business of yesterday. [33]

Von Steuben's Appointment as Inspector General

Following General Washington's recommendation, Congress resolved Baron Steuben's appointment to the office of Inspector General. The news reached Valley Forge after the success of the Grand Review and the announcement was made by the Commander-in-Chief at the evening reception. The Army was notified a few days later:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters, V. Forge,
Saturday, May 9, 1778

Congress has been pleased to appoint Baron De Steuben, Inspector General with the Rank of Major General and the Commander in Chief being vested with Power to appoint the Inspectors and Brigade Inspectors, He continues those who have already been nominated and appointed. [34]

Until Congress could fix and define the duties of the Office of Inspector General, Washington set forth a temporary plan, which specified, among other things, that it would be the function of this office to:

— comprehend the instituting a System of rules and regulations for the Exercise of the Troops in the Manual and Manoeuvres — [35]

The responsibility for conducting the training was given to the chain of command with the assistance of the Sub- and Brigade Inspectors, thereby removing some of the dissatisfaction that had developed between the inspectors and the general officers:

All Rules and Regulations shall first be approved and authorized by the Commander in Chief and either published in general orders or otherwise communicated thro' the Adjutant General, from whom the Division and Brigade Inspectors will receive them and communicate them to the Major Generals and Brigadiers and to their respective Divisions and Brigades.

The Major Generals will exercise their respective Divisions agreeable to the Rules and Regulations so established; The Brigadiers to the Brigades; the Colonels their

Regiments, or in the absence of either the Officer present next in Command. The Division and Brigade Inspectors will assist in the execution under the immediate orders of the Major Generals, Brigadiers and Colonels Commandant. [36]

Aftermath of the Spring Campaign

In the orderly retreat at Barren Hill on May 19, Lafayette's Continentals and militia were "ascribed to the improvement made in their discipline owing greatly to the Baron de Steuben." [37] Despite the confusion at Monmouth and the lack of decisive action brought about by General Lee's retreat in the early phases of the battle, the results of the training at Valley Forge caused a turning point in the history of the American Army. Thereafter, its battalions displayed a discipline to equal the British regulars.

— the army responded to the lesson of discipline and repulsed a pursuing enemy confident of victory. There can be no higher test of soldiership. This new combat efficiency was a creation of Steuben's genius. The Baron gave Washington a fit instrument for victory. [38]

Notes to Chapter 2

ADVENT OF VON STEUBEN'S DISCIPLINE

1. John F. Palmer, *General von Steuben*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937, p. 131.
2. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 9, p. 441.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 441, n. 60.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 288, n. 9. The Conway Cabal, a disastrous attempt to circumvent Washington's authority as Commander-in-Chief, is described in James T. Flexner's *Washington, The Indispensable Man*, 1974.
5. Palmer, *General von Steuben*, p. 47.
6. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 10, p. 519.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. 37, p. 546.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 328, n. 40.
9. Palmer, *General von Steuben*, 1, p. 140.
10. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, p. 108.
11. Carlos E. Godfrey, *The Commander-in-Chief's Guard, Revolutionary War*, Washington, D.C.: Stevenson-Smith Co., 1904, p. 54.
12. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, p. 98.
13. *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 107.
14. Godfrey, *The Commander-in-Chief's Guard*, p. 55.
15. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, p. 132.
16. Godfrey, *The Commander-in-Chief's Guard*, p. 56.
17. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, pp. 73-74. General Orders of March 29, 1778.
18. *Ibid.*, General Orders of April 19, 1778, Vol. 11, p. 280 and April 27, 1778, Vol. 11, p. 313.
19. As compiled from General Orders of April, 1779; the Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army for April, 1778 (Cf. *The Sinews of Independence, Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army*, Charles H. Lesser, ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976).
20. *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, pp. 328-329, 331.
21. *Orderly Book No. 17, June 1, 1777 to March 25, 1780*, War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93, National Archives. This book is annotated "Lt. Col. Smith's Orderly Book" and from names mentioned in the daily entries (Cols. Jackson, Lee, and Henley) is probably that of Lt. Col. William S. Smith of Col. William R. Lee's Additional Continental Regiment from Massachusetts. Cf. Berg, *Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units*, 1972.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
23. Pickering, *Discipline*, 1775, pp. 32-33.
24. *Orderly Book No. 17*, p. 150.
25. Pickering, *Discipline*, 1775, pp. 126-130.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 126. Pickering quotes here from Major William Young's, *An Essay on the Command of Small Detachments*, [1766], p. 5.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 127. Pickering quotes from Marshal Saxe's, *Mes Reveries*, [1757], pp. 45, 46, 98.
28. *Orderly Book No. 17*, pp. 148-150.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
30. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, pp. 345-346.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347.
32. Palmer, *General von Steuben*, p. 164. A running fire of musketry by files from right to left described by John Laurens on this occasion as an honor to the King of France. Cf. Simes, *Military Guide*, 1776, p. 188.
33. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 11, pp. 362-363.
34. *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 366.
35. General Orders, June 15, 1778. Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 12, p. 66.
36. *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 67.
37. Palmer, *General von Steuben*, p. 170.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Chapter III

THE NEW REGULATIONS

Publication of the "Blue Book"

Following the action at Monmouth von Steuben's attempts to retain his temporary command of a division met with the reluctance of Washington to aggravate the prejudice of American officers against foreign officers. After a reconsideration of his idle threat to resign and return to Europe, von Steuben resumed his function as Inspector General. Having restored the training schedules, he turned his attention to preparing the manual of discipline he had recommended to Congress in his overall plan for the duties and function of the Office of the Inspector General. In early November, 1778 he and his staff left for Philadelphia to prepare the manuscript for the new regulations. Assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Fleury, who prepared the original text in French, which was translated into English by Duponceau and Walker, [1] von Steuben forwarded his draft of the first twelve chapters of the new discipline to Washington at Middle Brook. Washington's remarks included changes to the manual of arms, recommending that:

"The word of command *take sight* is to be universally used instead of *present*. The motion of grounding the Firelock is omitted, as it is frequently useful and when executed ought to be done in order, a word of command for that purpose seems necessary. The Words of Command for fixing and unfixing the bayonet ought likewise to be inserted." [2]

In the final publication the command "Take Sight" became "Take Aim" and the instructions for grounding arms and fixing bayonets were included. Instructions for unfixing the bayonet continued to be omitted.

After Washington's final comments on the remainder of the manuscript, [3] which dealt with the firings, logistics, camp regulations, inspections, signals, service of guards, arms and ammunition, treatment of the sick, reviews, and the duties and responsibilities of the officers and grades of enlisted men, Von Steuben submitted his *Regulations* to Congress.

Philadelphia
25th March 1779

Gent:

Authorized by his Excellency General Washington I have the honour of presenting the Honble Congress with a System of Regulations for the Infantry of the United States consisting of Elementary Instructions with some general principles which may be adapted to every circumstance.

I have as much as possible followed the Regulations of the English they being already familiar to our Troops and where I have been obliged to depart from them I have endeavoured to adapt to our Constitution the Military principles most generally received in Europe.

Convinced that a multiplicity of Maneuvers & unnecessary details save only to confuse the Troops and that on the Contrary when once perfectly acquainted with the general & preparatory movements the General may lead them at his will. I have rejected every thing which tended only to Parade and confined myself to what alone appeared to me absolutely necessary and I flatter myself the Work will be found equally useful to the Regular Troops and Militia.

The Regulations having been begun by order of his Excellency the Commander in Chief, corrected by him and examined and approved by the Board, of War, I hope they will meet with the approbation of Congress and that they will give them such Authority as will insure the observance of them in the Army. I want only this to return to Camp and use every possible endeavour to see them carried into execution, the repose of a Camp being much more proper to introduce discipline in an Army than during the tumult of a Campaign and the little time that remains being too precious to be lost.

His Excellency Genl. Washington was pleased to approve my Rules last Campaign. My zeal is not in the least abated, your approbation, that of the Army and the esteem of the General will be my greatest Reward and is all all I aspire to. I have the honour to be with the greatest respect,
Gent.

Your most Obedient
& most humble Servant
Steuben

The Honorable
The Congress [4]

Four days later Congress approved the new regulations:

In CONGRESS, 29th March, 1779

CONGRESS judging it of the greatest importance to prescribe some invariable rules for the order and discipline of the troops, especially for the purpose of introducing an

uniformity in their formations and manoeuvres, and in the service of the camp:

ORDERED, That the following regulations be observed by all the troops of the United States, and that all general and other officers cause the same to be executed with all possible exactness.

By Order,
JOHN JAY, President

Attest.
CHARLES THOMPSON
Secretary [5]

Thereby was established von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. First bound in blue and known to the Army as the "Blue Book," it was evaluated by von Steuben's biographer, Palmer, as "one of the most influential books ever published in America," [6] drawing together the state components of the national army into an effective union.

While Duponceau and Colonel Pickering, the secretary of the Board of War, were struggling with the printer to produce the manuals, [7] Washington agreed with von Steuben's suggestions that Colonel Fleury should return to headquarters at Middlebrook with the *Regulations* for their "immediate application." [8] The scheme of copying the instructions was reinstated from the previous year:

GENERAL ORDERS

Head Quarters, Middle Brook,
Monday, April 12, 1779

All the Brigade Inspectors and Adjutants of Regiments to attend at the Orderly Office tomorrow morning ten o'clock to copy the 5th. and 6th. chapters [9] of the Baron Steuben's instructions which are to be strictly adhered to and immediately put in practice: The hours of exercise to be from 6 to 8 o'clock in the afternoon [10]

After the brigades had received these chapters, each officer was instructed to "furnish himself with a copy of the chapter on the instruction of recruits" [11] and to begin these drills on the next day. Washington urged his officers to carry the new regulations into effect as "speedily" as possible and pressed the Board of War for the new manuals, reminding them that "We cannot put the business effectively in train until each officer has the regulations by which he is to govern in his hand." [12] By June 30 the manuals had arrived at headquarters in New Windsor but production problems in Philadelphia continued. It was fall before the first printing was completed. Armed with their new discipline, General Wayne's light infantry captured Stony Point on July 15 with the bayonet. Von Steuben's training had provided a tactical victory that raised world opinion of the potential of the Continental Army.

The New Manual of Arms

When the *Regulations* appeared in March, 1779, they were expanded considerably over the *Instructions* issued the year before by increasing the

number of chapters from ten to twenty-seven. The Manual Exercise was also increased, adding eighteen new commands to the original ten and still omitting *unfix bayonet*, despite Washington's specific suggestion that it be added. With these twenty-seven commands were the complete instructions for the performance of the component movements. Although L'Enfant was able to prepare plates of the evolutions and the camp layouts, there were no illustrations in the original *Regulations* depicting the manual of arms. This omission and some inaccuracies in the post-war illustrations make it difficult in this day to interpret a few of the explained movements and necessary to resort to extrapolation to provide the answer to implied or unexplained movements included in the *Regulations*.

The firelock, sword, and esponton are the weapons specified by the *Regulations* for the infantry officers and men of the Continental Army, but only the firelock is given a manual for parade and firing purposes. In addition to those movements covered by the manual exercise, there are new positions that are mentioned specifically, but unexplained, in the evolutions of the battalion and guard mountings and movements between these positions that cannot be derived from the manual exercise. The performance of such operations as cease fire, inspection of arms, and unfixing bayonets is implied but left undescribed. Other well-known movements for the firelock practiced by contemporary armies and the American militia, as well as the manual of arms for the non-commissioned officer, receive no mention.

The Explained Movements

The twenty-seven commands for the new manual exercise are organized into two main categories, the "platoon" and "parade" exercises. The platoon exercise included the movements required to load and fire the musket. The parade exercise covers the various positions used at reviews, rendering honors, and alternate positions for marching. The movements are arranged in a orderly progression, building from one position to the next and from one side of the body to the other.

Platoon Exercise from Shouldered Firelock

Commands for the movements that simulate the firing of a loaded musket with the bayonet unfix:

1. *Poise, Firelock!*
2. *Cock, Firelock!*
3. *Take, Aim!*
4. *Fire!*

Commands for the movements that simulate the loading of a musket with the bayonet unfix:

5. *Half-cock, Firelock!*
6. *Handle, Cartridge!*

7. *Prime!*
8. *Shut, Pan!*
9. *Charge with Cartridge!*
10. *Draw, Rammer!*
11. *Ram down, Cartridge!*
12. *Return, Rammer!*
13. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

Parade Exercise from Shouldered Firelock

Commands for grounding arms and return to *Shoulder* without the bayonet, thereby avoiding the possibility of the rear rank striking the front rank with the point of the bayonet when the piece is lowered to the ground with the ranks at open order:

14. *Order, Firelock!*
15. *Ground, Firelock!*
16. *Take up, Firelock!*
17. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

Commands to place the lock under the left arm to protect the mechanism from inclement weather: The initial movements are identical to those of the succeeding movement for fixing the bayonet. Introducing the movement here while the bayonet is not yet fixed, avoids the possibility of the rear rank striking the front rank with the point of the bayonet when the muzzle is lowered near the ground:

18. *Secure, Firelock!*
19. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

Commands for fixing the bayonet follow as an extension of the initial movements of the preceding *Secure* and prepares the musket for charging bayonet in the final, three movements:

20. *Fix, Bayonet!*
21. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

Commands for the movements that work progressively across the body from the center to the right side:

22. *Present, Arms!*
23. *Shoulder, Firelock!*
24. *Charge, Bayonet!*
25. *Shoulder, Firelock!*
26. *Advance, Arms!*
27. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

The manual exercise also simulates the battle sequence beginning with the most essential movements of firing the musket, loading, fixing the bayonet, and charging. Although live ammunition was not fired during the manual exercise, the movements began assuming that the firelock was loaded. The loading procedures followed from the half-cock position with the pan open as a result of firing the musket. A series of fifteen instructions for *Prime and Load* are introduced after the Manual Exercise to cover the typical situation prior to combat. Here the troops would be at *Shoulder, Firelock* with unloaded muskets and the pans closed. Instructions are also included for the specific movements of the front and rear rank when firing at close order.

The cocking and firing of the musket in combat

is accomplished through the procedure of *Make, Ready!, Take, Aim!, and Fire!* Achieving the priming position and opening the pan in *Prime and Load!* and coming to *Make, Ready!* are both performed by the way of the motion of *Recover, Arms!* In this movement the firelock is thrown up before the left center of the body in essentially one motion as opposed to the step-by-step procedure used for going to *Poise, Firelock!*

The Unexplained Movements

In the chapters following the "Instruction of Recruits," specific commands, as well as movements between positions of the manual, are prescribed that have no instructions for their performance. The specific movements are to *Support, Arms!* and *Carry, Arms!* [13] and will be described in later portions of this work. In Chapter VI, Article 2 of the *Regulations* the command *As You Were!* is used to interrupt the firing, but no procedures are described for its performance. Commands are introduced during the description of the guard mounting requiring movements between positions that are unexplained, namely:

- Shoulder, Firelock!* to *Support, Arms!* [14]
- Support, Arms!* to *Present, Arms!* [15]
- Present, Arms!* to *Recover, Arms!* [16]
- Recover, Arms!* to *Shoulder, Firelocks!* [17]

The Implied Movements

Throughout the *Regulations* inferences are made to other movements of arms drill but no instructions are specified for their performance:

Command	Movement
"Cast about" [18]	Change from the priming position to the ramming position
"Inspection of arms" [19]	Unload arms and cartridge boxes
"Pile arms" [20]	Stack arms by interlocking the bayonets
"Fetch in arms" [21]	Take up arms from the stacks
"Handle arms from support arms" [22]	Shoulder arms
"Unfix bayonet" [23]	Remove the bayonet from the muzzle and return it to the scabbard

Unmentioned Contemporary Movements

Pickering observed that the position of being shouldered becomes tiresome after a long interval:

"'tis highly necessary that the posture of the firelock should be changed. This may be done several ways, both standing and marching. If it be to ease the men on the march, you may order them to *slope*, to *support*, to *advance* their firelocks, or to *carry them in their right hands*. All these different modes of carrying the firelock are practiced in the army, though neither of them is mentioned in the exercise of 1764, save that of advancing it." [24]

The *Regulations* prescribe *support* and explain *advance*, but make no mention of *slope* or *trail*. The latter is equivalent to Pickering's *carry them in their right hands*. The first plates included in the *Regulations* after 1800 illustrate *support*, *slope*, and *trail*

and are therefore included in this work. As there were no descriptions for the movements under arms for *rest*, *at ease*, or facing to the right about, they have been extrapolated from contemporary manuals. Another omission was the manual for the non-commissioned officer, the espontoon, and the sword.

Origins of the New Manual of Arms

Between the time of the issuance of the *Instructions* at Valley Forge in March 1778 and the authorization of the new *Regulations* by Congress in March 1779, considerable expansion had taken place. The early chapters of the *Regulations* appear to be slight modifications of those of the French *Ordonnance Du Roi* of 1766, possibly due to the influence of Lt. Col. Fluery who had been a staff officer [25] in the French Army and was assisting von Steuben in the writing of the new regulations. Other portions were based on the *Prussian Regulation* or were an expansion of the earlier *Instructions* issued the year before. The language of the manual exercise was taken predominately from the British manual exercise of 1764 with occasional extractions from the *Norfolk Discipline* of 1759, Pickering's *Discipline* of 1775, the French *Exercice de l'Infanterie* of 1755 [26] and 1776, and the English translation of the *Prussian Regulations* of 1759. What role Pickering and Walker played in influencing the descriptions used for the various movements is not known, but the positions of Walker as a translator of von Steuben's and Fleury's French to English and Pickering's as Secretary to the Board of War could account for the liberal use of the *Norfolk Discipline* and Pickering's own writings.

Changes in the Manual

Except for the modernization of the style of writing wherein "your" before a noun is changed to "the" and the capitalization of internal nouns in a sentence is dropped, the new manual exercise exhibits little originality in its description of the movements. The important innovation was the elimination of "your" between the preparatory portion of the command and the word of execution. This simplification should have received the approval of Pickering who complained that the addition of the words *your firelock* to the frequently used motion of *shouldering* "rather favours of tautology." [27] The new manual continued to retain the tradition of utilizing the word "Arms" instead of "Firelock" for the command of execution in the positions for *presenting*, and *advancing* and later, in *supporting*, *carrying*, *sloping*, and *trailing* the musket. These commands were used historically for those motions to be followed by both musketeers and pikemen and were ascribed by Pickering to the *Exercise of Foot* ordered

by William III (1689-1702). [28] The remarkable coincidence in the wording of the new manual exercise and that of contemporary British, French, and American manuals is shown in a phrase-by-phrase comparison that follows.

The Comparison of Sources

The Position of a Soldier under Arms

The correct position of the soldier at attention and shouldered firelock was an essential prerequisite for performing the manual exercise. Unlike other manuals of the times, the new *Regulations* separated in the instructions for the recruit the descriptions of the *Position of a Soldier without Arms* and the *Position of a Soldier under Arms*. The instructions under arms repeat and add to those given for the soldier at attention *without arms*.

From the <i>Regulations</i> , 1779: <i>Position of a Soldier without Arms</i> He is to stand straight and firm upon his legs, with the head turned to the right	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Position of a Soldier under Arms</i> To stand straight and firm upon his Legs; Head turned to the Right; [29]
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so far as to bring the left eye over the waistcoat buttons;	From the <i>Norfolk Discipline</i> , 1759: <i>Directions to Officers</i> . . . VII.(1.) . . . enough to see the face of the man that is next to him. [30]
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the heels two inches apart. [31]	From the <i>Ordonnance du Roy</i> , 1755: <i>Shoulder your Firelock</i> heels . . . two inches apart . . . [32]
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The separation of the heels at the position of *shoulder* had been undergoing a constant change since the introduction of firearms and was decreased through the years as the weight of the weapons was lightened. Bland in 1727 prescribed a stance with the heels "a step apart." [33] The *Prussian Regulations of 1759* required that:

"the man's leg must be a large hand's-breadth from each other, in the performance of each motion and word of command, except when they stand shouldered, in which position, their heels must be closed together, and their toes turned outwards." [34]

The *Norfolk Discipline* of 1759 required a separation of the heels of "not more than 4 inches asunder." [35] The French regulations of 1755 specified a two-inch separation, while those of 1766 required them to be joined. [36]

Continuing the derivation of the position of the soldier at shouldered arms:

From the <i>Regulations</i> , 1779: <i>Position of a Soldier under Arms</i> : the toes a little turned out, the belly drawn in a little without constraint the breast a little projected,	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Position of a Soldier under Arms</i> : Toes a little turned out; the belly drawn in a little, but without Constraint; the Breast a little projected;
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the shoulders square to the front and kept back, the right hand hanging down the side, with the palm close to the thigh, the firelock carried on the left shoulder,

at such height that the guard will be just under the left breast,

the fore-finger and thumb before the swell of the butt, the last three fingers under the butt, the flat of the butt against the hip bone, and pressed so that the firelock may be felt against the left side, and stand before the hollow of the shoulder, neither leaning towards the head or from it, the barrel almost perpendicular. When exercising, he is to be very exact in counting a second of time between each motion. [39]

The Manual Exercise

From the *Regulations*, 1779: I. *Poise — Firelock!*
1st. With the left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front,

keeping the piece [42] perpendicular.
2d. With a quick motion bring up the firelock from the shoulder

directly before your 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 upon the stock; the left hand must be of an equal height with the eyes.

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764

II. *Cock—Firelock!*
1st. Turn the barrel opposite your face, and place your thumb upon the cock, raising the elbow square at this motion.
2d. Cock the firelock by drawing down the elbow,

Shoulders square to the Front and kept back; the right Hand hanging straight down the Side, with the Palm close to the Thigh, the Firelock to be carried on the left Shoulder, [37]

From Pickering's *Discipline*, 1775: and so low down that the guard will be just under the left breast. [38]

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764: the three last Fingers under the Butt; the Fore-finger and Thumb before the Swell;

the Flat of the Butt to be supported against the Hip-bone; and to be pressed so that the Firelock may be felt against the left Side; and that it may stand before the Hollow of the Shoulder, not leaning towards the Head nor from it; the Barrel almost perpendicular. To be very exact in counting a Second of Time, or *One, Two*, between each Motion. [40]

From the *Norfolk Discipline*, 1759:

I. *Rest your Firelock!*
1. . . . at the same time turning it with your left hand, so that the lock may be outwards or towards the front; [41]

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:

1. . . . keeping the Firelock perpendicular.
2d. Bring up the Firelock with a quick Motion from the Shoulder, [43]

From Bland's *Discipline*, 1740:

II. *Poise your Firelocks*
. . . directly opposite to your Face. [44]

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:

1. *Poise your Firelocks!*
2d. and seize it with the left Hand just above the Lock, so that the little Finger may rest upon the Spring,

and the Thumb lie upon the Stock;
. . . the left Hand must be of an equal Height with the Eyes.

2. *Cock your Firelocks!*
1st. Turn the Barrel opposite to your Face, and place you [r] Thumb upon the Cock, raising the Elbow square at this Motion.
2d. Cock your Firelock by drawing your Elbow down,

immediately placing your thumb upon the breech-pin, and the fingers under the guard.

III. *Take Aim!*

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 the butt-end of the firelock against your right shoulder; place the left hand forward on the swell of the stock, and the fore-finger of the right hand before the trigger; sinking the muzzle a little

below a level

IV. *Fire!*

Pull the trigger briskly, and immediately after bringing up the 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 fore-finger and thumb of the right hand, the back of the hand up.

Note: The 1779 *Regulations* omit directions for the movement of the right hand and thereby slavishly follow the instructions of the 1764 *Manual Exercise*. The omission of instructions from the 1764 *Manual* may have been influenced by several preceding works. Both *Bland's* and the *Regulations for the Prussian Infantry* introduce a separate motion, *Join Your Right Hand to Your Firelock!* between the commands *Shoulder Your Firelock!* and *Poise Your Firelock!* whereby the right hand grasps the small of the stock while the firelock is still resting on the left shoulder. As there is no change of position of the right hand in going to *Poise Your Firelock!* no instructions are required regarding the right hand's movement. Neither the *Norfolk Discipline* nor Pickering's *Discipline* use the position of *Poise Your Firelock!* and therefore provided no precedent for the description of this movement from *Shoulder, Firelock!* The French *Regulations of 1755 and 1766* and the British *Manual Exercise of 1791* are specific in the first motion of *Poise!* and prescribe that the small of the stock should be grasped by the right hand at the time the lock is turned to the front as is borne out by the illustrations of the first movement of *Poise, Firelock!* of the contemporary British illustrations of Figure 4-1 and the American motions shown in Figures 4-7 and 4-8.

placing your Thumb upon the Breech Pin, and the Fingers under the Guard.

3. *Present!*

Step back about six Inches to the Rear with the Right Foot, bringing the left Toe to the Front; at the same Time the Butt End of the Firelock must be brought to an equal Height with your Shoulder, placing the left Hand on the Swell, and the Fore-Finger of the right Hand before the Tricker,

sinking the Muzzle a little. [45]
From Bland's *Discipline*, 1740: V. *Present*

. . . lower than the Butt. [46]
From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:

4. *Fire!*

Pull the Tricker briskly, and, immediately after bringing up the right Foot, come to the Priming Position, [47]
From Pickering's *Discipline*, 1775 v. *Prime and Load!*

2. . . (Keeping them [the heels] close together) till the right toe points to the right, [48]
From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764: 4. *Fire!*

with the Lock opposite to the right Breast, the Muzzle the Height of the Hat, [49]

From Pickering's *Discipline*, 1775: V. *Prime and Load!*

2. . . the left hand (which is just forward of the hammer-spring,) [50]

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:

4. *Fire!*
keeping it firm and steady,

and at the same Time seize the Cock with the Fore-Finger and Thumb of the right Hand, the Back of the Hand turn'd up.

V. *Half-cock—Firelock!*
Half bend the cock briskly,
bringing down the elbow to
the butt of the firelock.

VI. *Handle—Cartridge!*
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

to the powder

and bring the hand as low
as the chin,
with the elbow down.

VII. *Prime!*
Shake the powder into the
pan,
place the three last fingers
behind the hammer,
with the elbow up.

VIII. *Shut—Pan!*
1st. Shut your pan briskly,

bringing down your elbow
to the butt of the firelock,

holding the cartridge fast
in your hand.
2d. 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 kept fast
in this motion.
IX. *Charge with Cartridge!*
1st. Turn up your hand and
put the cartridge into the
muzzle,
shaking the powder into the
barrel.

2d. Turning the stock a
little towards you,

place your hand closed,
with a quick and strong
motion,
upon the butt of the rammer,

the thumb upwards, and
the elbow down.

X. *Draw Rammer*
1st. Draw your rammer with
a quick motion half out,
seizing it instantly at the
muzzle back-handed.

5. *Half Cock your Firelocks!*
Half bend the Cock briskly
with a draw back of the right
Elbow, bringing it close to the
Butt of the Firelock.

6. *Handle your Cartridge!*
Bring your right Hand with a
short Round to your Pouch,
slapping it hard;
seize the Cartridge,
and bring it with a quick
Motion to your Mouth,
bite the Top well off . . . [51]
From the *Ordonnance du Roi, 1766:*

11. *Tear the cartridge*
. . . to the powder. [52]
From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

6. *Handle your Cartridge!*
. . . and bring the Hand as low
as the Chin,
with the Elbow down.

7. *Prime!*
Shake the Powder into the
Pan,
Placing the three last Fingers
behind the Hammer,
with the Elbow up.

8. *Shut your Pans!*
1st. Shut your Pan briskly, [53]
From the *Norfolk Discipline, 1759:*
XXIV. *Prime and Load!*
4. . . drawing down your elbow. [54]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*
8. *Shut your Pans!*
. . . holding the Cartridge fast
in your Hand,
2d. Turn the Piece nimbly
round to the loading Position,

with the Lock to the Front,
and the Muzzle the Height
of the Chin,
bringing the right Hand behind
the Muzzle;
both Feet kept fast
in this Motion.
9. *Charge with Cartridge!*
1st. Turn up your Hand and
put the Cartridge into the
Muzzle,
shaking the Powder into the
Barrel. [55]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*
V. *Prime and Load!*

8. . . then instantly turning the
stock a little towards you, [56]
From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

9. *Charge with Cartridge!*
2d. Place your Hand, closed,
with a quick and strong
Motion,
upon the Rammer. [57]
From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*
V. *Prime and Load!*

8. . . (the thumb and fore-finger
uppermost) and the elbow down. [58]
From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

10. *Draw your Rammers!*
1st. Draw the Rammer with
a quick Motion, half out,
seizing it at the
Muzzle back-handed.

2d. Draw it quite out,
turn it,
and enter it into the muzzle.
XI. *Ram down—Cartridge!*
Ram the cartridge well down
the barrel, and
instantly recovering and
seizing the rammer back-hand-
ed 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,

XII. *Return—Rammer!*

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!*

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

XIV. *Order—Firelock!*

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.

2d. 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

2d. Draw it quite out,
turn it,
and enter it into the Muzzle.
11. *Ram down your Cartridge!*
Ram the Cartridge well down
the Barrel,
instantly recovering and
seizing the Rammer back-hand-
ed at the Center, [59]
From the *Prussian Regulations, 1759:*

XIV. *Put them in the barrels!*
. . . draw it entirely out . . . [60]
From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

11. *Ram down your Cartridge!*
turning 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,

12. *Return your Rammers!* [61]
From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*
V. *Prime and Load!*
10. . . thrusting down the
rammer . . . [62]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*
12. *Return your Rammers!*
1st . . . bringing up the Piece with the
left Hand to the Shoulder,

seizing it with the right
Hand under the Cock,

keeping the left Hand fast
at the Swell,
turning the Body square
to the Front.

13. *Shoulder your Firelock!*

1st. Quit the left Hand,
and place it strong upon the
Butt.
2d. Quit the right Hand
and throw it down the
right Side. [63]

From the *Norfolk Discipline, 1759:*

II. *Order your Firelock!*
1st. . . sinking it [the fire-
lock] with your left hand as
low as you can,
without constraint,
and seize it at the same
time . . . [64]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*
XXXVII. *Carry your Firelock in
your right hand!*

1. Throwing up the right hand,
seize the firelock just below the
swell by the tail pipe, the little
finger touching, or being near,
the left shoulder, and almost as
high as the top of it.
2. Quit the left hand. [65]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

15. *Order your Firelocks!*
3d. . . and with your Right,
bring down the Butt-End
strong upon the Ground,
placing it even with the Toe
of your right Foot;
the Thumb of your right Hand

lying along the barrel, and the muzzle being kept a little distance from the body. [66]

lying along the Barrel, and the Muzzle kept a little Distance from your Body. [67]

In this instance of describing the movements of *Order, Firelock!* the writers of the *Regulations* drew upon that part of the description used by the *Norfolk Discipline* for going from *Rest your Firelock!* (a position similar to the modern *present arms*, but held at the right side) to *Order your Firelock!* The second portion is taken from Pickering's *Discipline* description of the movements for changing from *Shoulder to Trail Arms!*, which Pickering also uses for describing the movement from *Shoulder to Order, Arms!* Curiously, these words fit the movements prescribed by the French *Ordonnance* of 1766, whereby they introduce the unique motion of extending the left arm to drop the firelock at the left side so the butt will just strike the ground when it is lowered with the right hand to the right side. [68]

From the *Regulations, 1779:*

XV. Ground—Firelock!

1st. With the right hand turn the firelock, bringing the lock to the rear and instantly step forward with the left foot a large pace, lay the piece on the ground, the barrel in a direct line from front to rear placing the left hand on the knee to support the body,

the head help up,

the right hand and left heel in a line, and the right knee almost to the ground.

2d. Quitting the firelock,

raise yourself up,

and bring back the left foot to its former position.

XVI. Take up—Firelock!

1st. Step forward with the left foot,

sink the body, and come to the position described in the first motion of grounding.

2d. Raise up yourself and firelock,

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*

XLI. Ground your Firelock!

3. . . . turn the firelock on the butt, till the lock points to the rear, then, without making the least pause, step with the left foot directly forward a moderate pace, . . . lay the firelock on the ground, the barrel in a straight line to the front, . . . placing the left hand on the left knee, (by way of support to the body) . . .

. . . your head sufficiently erect to see the feugle man, or posture maker

(. . . the right hand and the left hand may be about on a line) . . . and bending the right knee till it comes down by the piece within an inch or two of the ground,

4. Quitting the firelock, [69]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

16. Ground your Firelocks!

3d. Raise yourself up again nimbly, bringing back your left Foot to its former Position, [70]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*

XLII. Shoulder!

1. Step forward with the left foot, [71]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

17. Take up your Firelocks!

2d. Sink your Body down and come to the Position described in the second Motion of Grounding. [72]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*

XLII. Shoulder!

2. Raise up yourself and firelock,

stepping back again with the left foot, and as soon as the piece is perpendicular, turn the barrel behind, thus coming to the order.

XVII. Shoulder—Firelock!

1st. Bring the firelock to the left shoulder,

throwing it up a little,

and catching it below the tail-pipe,

and instantly seize it with the left hand at the butt.

2d. With a quick motion bring the right hand down by your side.

XVIII. Secure—Firelock!

1st. Bring up the right hand briskly,

and place it under the cock.

2d. Quit the butt with the left hand, and seize the firelock at the swell,

bringing the arm down close upon the lock, the right hand being kept fast in this motion, and the piece upright.

3d. Quitting the piece with your right hand, bring it down by your side,

at the same time with your left hand

throw the muzzle directly forward,

bringing it within about a foot of the ground, and the butt close up behind the left shoulder,

holding the left hand in a line with the waist belt,

and that arm covering the lock.

XIX. Shoulder—Firelock!

1st. Bring the firelock up to the shoulder,

seizing it with the right hand under the cock.

2d. Bring the left hand down strong upon the butt.

3d. Bring the right hand down by your side.

XX. Fix—Bayonet!

1st and 2d motion the same as the two first motions of the secure.

stepping back again with your left foot, and as soon as the piece comes nearly perpendicular, . . . turn the barrel behind; coming to the position of the 2d motion of explanation 29 [order].

3. and 4. Bring the firelock to your left shoulder. [73]

XL. Shoulder!

. . . taking care to give the piece a little toss up, and to slip down your hand below the swell by the tail-pipe, [74]

XXXVI. Shoulder!

2. . . . seize the butt with the left hand, . . .

3. Throw your right hand down by your side. [75]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

20. Secure your Firelocks!

1. Bring the right Hand briskly up, and place it under the Cock, . . .

2d. Quit the Butt with the left Hand, and seize the Firelock with it at the Swell,

bringing the Elbow close down upon the Lock, The right Hand kept fast in this Motion, and the Piece still upright.

3d. Quitting the right Hand, and bring it down your right Side, [76]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*

XXIX. Secure your Firelock!

3. Throw down your left hand briskly along with the firelock, . . . the muzzle pointing straight to the front,

and coming within about a foot of the ground, and the butt close to the hind part of the arm-pit. [77]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

20. Secure your Firelocks!

3d. . . . the left Hand in a Line with the Waist-Belt. [78]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775:*

XXIX. Secure your Firelock!

3. . . . and you cover the lock with the left arm, [79]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764:*

21. Shoulder your Firelock!

1st. Bring the Firelock up to a perpendicular Line, seizing it with the right Hand under the Cock.

2d. Quit the left Hand, and place it strong upon the Butt.

3d. Quit the right Hand, and bring it smartly down the right Side.

22. Fix your Bayonets!

1st. and 2d. Motions as in the two first of Secure.

3d. Quitting the piece with your right hand, sink it with your left down the left side,

as far as may be without constraint, at the same time seize the bayonet with the right hand, draw and fix it, and pressing in the piece to the hollow of the shoulder.

XXI. *Shoulder—Firelock!*
1st. Quitting the piece with the right hand, with the left bring it to the shoulder, and seize it again with the right hand under the cock, as in the second motion of the secure.
2d. Bring the left hand down strong upon the butt
3d. Bring the right hand down by your side.

XXII. *Present—Arms!*
1st and 2d motion the same as in coming the the poise.

3. Step back briskly 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 under the guard, with fingers extended and drawing in the piece 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.

XXIII. *Shoulder—Firelock!*
1st. 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

3d. Quit the right Hand, and bring the Firelock smartly down to the left Side with the left Hand, as far as will admit without Constraint, seizing the Bayonet at the same Time with the right Hand, and fixing it, placing the Hand just below the Brass, with the Piece kept close to the hollow of the Shoulder.

23. *Shoulder your Firelock!*
1st. Quit the right Hand, and bring up the Firelock with the Left, seize it again under the Cock with your Right, as in the second Motion of the Secure.
2d. Quit the left Hand, and place it strong upon the Butt.
3d. Quit the right Hand, and bring it down the right Side. [80]
(See the previous corresponding comparison from Windham's *Norfolk Discipline*, Bland's *Military Discipline*, and the *Manual Exercise, 1764* for Poise, Firelock!)

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764*:

14. *Rest your Firelocks!*
3. 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, [81] sinking it as far down before your left Knee as your right Hand will permit without Constraint; . . . and your Right with Fingers extended held under the Guard, taking care to draw in the Muzzle well towards your body. [82]

From the *Ordonnance du Roi, 1766*:

20. *Present your arms.*
2d. . . . you detach the firelock from the shoulder, quitting the left hand . . . [83]
From the *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*:
V. *Rest your Firelock!*
1st. . . . and seize it with your left just above the feather-spring, [84]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764*:

19. *Shoulder your Firelocks!*
1st. Lift up your right Foot, and place it by your Left; bring the Firelock at the same time to your left Shoulder, and seize the Butt-End with the left hand, keeping in the same Position as

the first motion of the secure.
2d. Bring the right hand down by your side.
XXIV. *Charge—Bayonet!*
1st. The same as the first motion of the secure.

2d. Bring the butt of the firelock under the right arm,

letting the piece fall down strong on the palm of the left hand, which receives it at the swell,

the muzzle pointing directly to the front,

the butt pressed with the arm against the side;

the front rank holding their pieces horizontally,

and the rear rank muzzles of theirs so high as to clear the heads of the front rank, both ranks keeping their feet fast. [92]

From the *Regulations, 1779*

XXV. *Shoulder—Firelock!*
1st. Bring up the piece smartly to a shoulder, seizing the butt with the left hand.
2d. Bring the right hand down by your side.
XXVI. *Advance—Arms!*
1st and 2d same as the two first motions of the poise.

3d. 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,

above described.

2d. Throw your right Hand briskly back. [85]

(See the previous corresponding comparison from the *Manual Exercise, 1764* and Pickering's *Discipline, 1775* for the 1st. motion of *Secure your Firelock!*)

From the *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*:

Directions to Officers . . .
10. . . . bringing the piece close under the right breast, the butt just under the right armpit. [86]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764*:

32. *Charge your Bayonets!*
2d. Bring the Swell of the Firelock down strong upon the Palm of the Hand. [87]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775*:

III. *Charge your Bayonet!*
2. . . . the bayonet is presented directly to the front, [88]

From the *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*:

Directions to Officers . . .
8. . . . press the right hand firm against the side, [89]

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764*:

32. *Charge your Bayonets!*
2. . . . The Firelock upon a level, [90]

From Pickering's *Discipline, 1775*:

V. *Prime and Load!*
2. . . . and its muzzle so high as to clear the man's head in the rank before you, [91]

The instructions in the *Regulations* for *Charge, Bayonet!* were a unique exception as it was the only manual exercise before or after that did not require a movement of the feet or body away from the front.

From the *Manual Exercise, 1764*:

33. *Shoulder your Firelocks!*
1st. Bring up the Firelock to the Shoulder, place the right [sic., left] Hand upon the Butt, . . .
2d. Quit the right Hand, and throw it down the right Side.
34. *Advance your Arms!*
1st. and 2d. as in Explanation one. [to *Poise your Firelocks!*
1st. and 2d. motions]
3d. Bring the Firelock down 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, [93]

and instantly shifting the position of the right hand,	From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: XXXV. <i>Advance your Firelock!</i> 2. . . . at the instant you . . . shift the right hand, [94]	close to the left breast, but not pressed,	From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: <i>V. Prime and Load!</i> 1. . . . the barrel of the firelock is to be perpendicular. [107]
take the guard between the thumb and fore-finger, and bring the three last fingers under the cock, with the barrel to the rear. 4th. Quit the firelock with the left hand,	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: 34. <i>Advance your Arms!</i> 3d. . . . the Guard between the thumb and the Fore-Finger of the right Hand, the three last Fingers under the Cock, with the Barrel to the Rear. 4th. Quit the left Hand. [95]	the barrel perpendicular.	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> 2d. Bring the Firelock down with a brisk Motion to the priming Position, [108] From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: IX. <i>Fire!</i> 1. . . . as directed in explanation 5th motion 2d. [Prime and Load] [109]
bringing it down by your side.	From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: XXXV. <i>Advance your Arms!</i> 3. Throw your left hand down by your side. [96]	as directed in the 4th word of command,	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> 2d. . . . the Thumb of the right Hand against the Face of the Steel, the Fingers clenched, and the Elbow a little turned out, that the Wrist may be clear of the Cock. [111]
XXVII. <i>Shoulder—Firelock!</i> 1st. Bring up the left hand, and seize it at the swell;	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: 35. <i>Shoulder your Firelocks!</i> 1st. Bring up the left Hand and seize it at the Swell. [97]	instantly placing the thumb of the right hand against the face of the steel, the fingers clenched, and the elbow a little turned out, that the wrist may be clear of the cock. [110]	
instantly shifting the right hand to its former position. [98]	From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: XXXV. <i>Advance your Firelock!</i> 2. . . . and the instant you . . . shift the right hand, coming to the position just described [99] From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: 35. <i>Shoulder your Firelocks!</i> 2d. Come smartly up to a Poise.		
2d. Come smartly up to a poise. 3d. and 4th. Shoulder.	3d. and 4th. Shoulder.		
<i>Explanation of the Priming and Loading, as performed in the Firings. Prime and Load!</i> 1st. Come to the recover,	<i>Explanation of PRIMING and LOADING</i> <i>Prime and Load!</i> 1st. Come smartly to the Recover, [100] From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: <i>V. Prime and Load!</i> 1st. Throw up your firelock briskly, [101] From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> by springing the Firelock streight up with the left Hand, [102] From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: <i>V. Prime and Load!</i> 1. . . . directly before the left breast, [103] From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> turning the Barrel inwards . . . [104] From Pickering's <i>Discipline</i> , 1775: <i>V. Prime and Load!</i> 1. . . . catching the piece with both hands, the right hand below the lock . . . [105] From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> the left Hand comes with a quick Motion from the Butt, above the Lock, the little Finger of the left hand at the Spring of the Lock, the left Hand at an equal Height with the Eyes, the Butt close to the left Breast, but not pressed, [106]		
throwing up your firelock,			
with a smart spring of the left hand,			
directly before the left breast,			
and turning the barrel inwards;			
at that moment catch it with the right hand below the lock,			
and instantly bringing up the left hand, with a rapid motion, above the lock, the little finger touching the feather-spring; the left hand to be an equal height with the eyes, the butt of the firelock			
		From the <i>Regulations</i> , 1779: <i>Prime and Load!</i> 3. Open the pan by throwing back the steel with a strong motion of the right arm, keeping the firelock	From the <i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764: <i>Prime and Load!</i> 3d. Open the Pan by throwing up the Steel with a strong Motion of the right Arm, keeping the Firelock

A significant omission at this point in the 1764 instructions fails to mention that it is necessary to face to the right on the heels in order to assume the *priming position* as described in the final movement of *Fire!* of the 4th word of command of the *Manual Exercise* of 1764. The necessity of facing to the right is verified later in the 1764 *Manual* by the requirement to "turn the Body square to the Front" [112] in the final motion of *Return your Rammers!* of the 12th word of command of the *Manual Exercise* of 1764. The von Steuben *Regulations* make the same omission. The *Prussian Regulations*, the basis for much of the 1764 *Manual*, also omit this instruction but for the reason that the left foot was not moved in taking the position of aiming or the priming position. The right foot was moved to the rear in the *Prussian Regulations* to aim and was held in this position all during the loading procedure until the charge was rammed down. At this time the right foot was placed before the left. When the rammers were returned, the right foot was brought back to the side of the left foot, The *Norfolk, French 1766* and Pickering manuals give this instruction for facing to the front after returning rammers with variations in the position of the right foot. The movements of the manual exercise were performed at open ranks and do not take up the movements required for the front, center, or rear ranks when firing at close order, [113] a subject to be dealt with later.

steady in the left hand.
 4th. Handle cartridge!
 5th. Prime!
 6th. Shut pan!
 7th. Cast about!
 8th. and 9th. Load!
 10th. and 11th. Draw rammer!
 12th. Ram down cartridge!
 13th. Return rammer!
 14th. and 15th. Shoulder!
 N.B. The motion of recover, and coming down to the priming position, and opening the pan, to be done in the usual time, the motions of handling the cartridge to shutting of the pan, to be done as quick as possible;
 when the pans are shut, make a small pause, and cast about together; then the loading and shouldering motions are to be done as quick as possible. [114]

steady in the left Hand.
 4th. Handle the Cartridge!
 5th. Prime!
 6th. Shut Pans!
 7th. Cast about!
 8th. and 9th. Load!
 10th. and 11th. Draw Rammers!
 12th. Ram down the Cartridge!
 13th. Return the Rammers!
 14th. and 15th. Shoulder!
 N.B. The Motions of Recover, and coming down to the priming Position, and opening Pans to be done in the usual Time. The Motion of handling Cartridge, to shutting the Pans, to be done as quick as possible;
 when the Pans are shut, a small Pause is to be made, and cast about together; then the loading Motions are to be done as quick as possible; [115]

immediately seizing the firelock with the right hand, close under the lock; the piece to be held in this manner perpendicular, opposite the left side of the face, the body kept straight, and as full to the front as possible, and the head held up, looking well to the right. [119]

the right Hand seizing the Firelock close under the Cock firmly;
 . . . The piece to be held in this Position perpendicular, opposite the left Side of the Face,
 . . . the Body to be streight, and as full to the Front as possible;
 the Head kept up, looking to the Right of the Rank, [120]

The directions in the *Regulations* for the front rank to *Take Aim!* and *Fire!* are simply "As before explained" and refer to the third and fourth command of the manual exercise. At the command *Take Aim!* the front rank steps back six inches with the right foot. The directions in the *Regulations* for the rear rank to *Make Ready!* require an additional movement:

As the British tactics used a three-rank system with the front rank kneeling and the center and rear ranks standing during the firings, the instructions for the von Steuben two-rank system drew upon the *1764 Manual* only for firing by the center and rear ranks.

From the *Regulations*, 1779:
Rear Rank! Make Ready!
 Recover and cock as before directed,

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:
Rear Rank! Make Ready!
 Recover the Firelock and Cock as before directed for the center Rank.

at the same time stepping about six inches to the right,

as the Firelock is recovered and cocked, step briskly to the Right with the right Foot a full pace. [121]
 From the *Norfolk Discipline*, 1759:
As Rear Rank! Make Ready!
 3. . . . so that their bodies may be opposite to the intervals of the file leaders and the files upon the right, [123]

so as to place yourself opposite the interval of the front rank. [122]

The instructions in the *Regulations* for the rear rank to *Take Aim!* and *Fire!* are also "As before explained." If the directions for the third and fourth command of the *Manual Exercise* are to be followed literally, then the rear rank will be required also to step back six inches at the time of aiming. Except for the shorter distance separating them, the relative position of the feet of the front and rear ranks, with the left heels unmoved and toes directed to the front, is similar to the positions of the feet of the standing center and rear ranks perscribed by the *Norfolk* [124] and *Pickering* [125] *Disciplines*.

From the *Regulations*, 1779:
Position of each Rank in the firings.

Front Rank! Make Ready!
 Spring the firelock briskly to a recover, as soon as the left hand seizes the firelock above the lock, the right elbow is to be nimbly raised a little, placing the thumb of that hand upon the cock, the fingers open by the plate of the lock, and as quick as possible cock the piece, by dropping the elbow, and forcing down the cock with the thumb, [116]

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:

Explanations of the Position of each Rank in the FIRINGS.
Center Rank! Make Ready!
 Spring the Firelock briskly to the Recover; as soon as the left Hand seizes the Firelock above the Lock, the right Elbow is to be nimbly raised a little, placing the Thumb of that Hand upon the Cock, the Fingers open by the Plate of the Lock, and as quick as possible force the Piece to the Cock, by dropping the Elbow, and forcing down the Cock with the Thumb, [117]

At this point the *1764 Manual* directs a movement of the right foot for the center rank which does not apply for von Steuben's front rank as their feet were not to be moved in accordance with the second command of the manual exercise, *Cock—Firelock!* A description of the "New Manual Exercise" used by the British in 1794 notes that "In firing with the front rank standing, that rank will make ready, &c. as specified in the article relative to Platoon Exercise." [118] This 1794 explanation for *Platoon, Ready!* implies, as does the 1764 directions for *Cock your Firelocks!*, that there would be no movement of the right foot.

The Contributions of Contemporary Sources

Approximately 2,125 words are used in the *Regulations* to describe the instructions for the performance of the *Manual Exercise* and the *Firings*. As shown in the previous analysis seven contemporary manuals have been identified as the probable sources for these instructions. The distribution of the number of words of von Steuben's *Regulations* influenced directly by each of these disciplines is shown below:

From the *Regulations*, 1779:
Front Rank! Make Ready!

From the *Manual Exercise*, 1764:
Center Rank! Make Ready!

Source	Number	Percent
<i>Manual Exercise</i> , 1764	1665	78
<i>Pickering's Discipline</i> , 1775	345	16

Norfolk Discipline, 1759	82	4
Ordonnance du Roi, 1766	14	*
Prussian Regulations, 1759	7	*
Bland's Discipline, 1740	7	*
Ordonnance du Roy, 1755	5	*

* Less than 1%

The predominance of the '64 *Manual* may reflect von Steuben's willingness to avoid a change in a discipline familiar to many of the troops of the Valley Forge army. The surprising influence of Pickering's writings could have come about by their merit and perhaps by Pickering's presence as a reviewer and the weight of his influence as secretary to the Board of War. The Norfolk Discipline would have been familiar to Walker and well known to Pickering. Although Pickering's appraisal of the Norfolk Discipline indicates that he considered his own work an improvement, the instructions of the Norfolk Discipline may have been more appropriate in some cases for modifying the *Manual Exercise* of 1764. The minor selections from the French drill could represent the influence of Fleury and Duponceau. The older disciplines of Bland and the Prussian regulations drew little attention. A melange of old and new disciplines, von Steuben's new manual exercise provided the common discipline to fulfill one of Washington's important goals for the Army.

Notes to Chapter 3

THE NEW REGULATIONS

- Palmer, *General von Steuben*, p. 200.
- Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 14, p. 151, fn. 60.
- Ibid.*, Vol. 14, pp. 227-229. Letter to Baron Steuben, March 11, 1779.
- National Archives, Record Group 360. *Records of the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention*. Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Roll 181: Various Letters and Reports, 1775-1821.
- U.S. Congress, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1779, p. 3.
- Palmer, *General von Steuben*, p. 204.
- Riling's account of the printing and binding problems are discussed in his *Baron Steuben and His Regulations*, Philadelphia: Ray Riling Arms Books Co., 1966, pp. 9-16.
- Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 14, p. 298.
- The fifth and sixth chapters covered the instructions for recruits (facings, marching, and the manual exercise) and the exercise of a company (opening ranks, firing, marching by files, and wheeling) respectively.
- Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 14, p. 369.
- Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 14, p. 488. General Orders, May 4, 1779.
- Washington, *Writings*, Vol. 15, p. 254. Letter to the Board of War, June 9, 1779.
- Regulations, 1779. Support, Arms!* is specified in Ch. X, Art. 1; Ch. XXII, Art. 2, and *Carry, Arms!* in Ch. X, Art. 1; Ch. XVII.
- Ibid.*, Ch. XXII, Art. 2, P. 101.
- Ibid.*, p. 103.
- Ibid.*, Ch. XII, Art. 3, p. 104.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*, Ch. V., p. 27, *Explanation of Priming and Loading, 6th command*.
- Ibid.*, Ch. VI, Art. 2, p. 33; Ch. XIII, p. 64.
- Ibid.*, XVII, p. 81.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*, XXII, Art. 3, p. 106.
- Ibid.*, Ch. XXV, Instructions for the private soldier, p. 154.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, p. 9.
- Washington, *Writings*. Vol. 11, p. 330. Letter to the President of Congress, April 30, 1778. Washington wrote of Fleury that he "had exercised the office of Aid-Major in France."
- Exercice de l'Infanterie Françoise, Extrait de l'Ordonnance du Roy du 6. May 1755*. Reprinted in Edward P. Hamilton's *The French Army in America*, Historical Arms Series No. 7, Ottawa: Museum Restoration Service, 1967.
- Pickering, *Discipline, loc. cit.*
- Ibid.*
- The Manual Exercise, As Ordered by His Majesty, in 1764*, New York: H. Gaine, 1775, p. 2.
- Windham, *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*, Part II, p. 6, para. VII(1). Emphasis is being placed on the instruction to turn the entire head instead of the eyes only. "The old way was only to cast the eyes, and not turn the head;"
- Regulations 1779*, Ch. V, p. 11.
- Ordonance du Roy, 1755*, p. 7.
- Bland, *Discipline, 1740*, p. 18.
- Faucitt, *Prussian Regulations, 1759*, p. 31.
- Windham, *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*, Part I, p. 1.
- Ordonnance du Roi, Pour Regler L'Exercice de L'Infanterie, Du 1. er Janvier 1766. A Paris: de L'Imprimerie Royale, 1766*, p. 54.
- Manual Exercise, 1764, op. cit.*, p. 2.
- Pickering, *Discipline*, Part I, p. 14.
- Regulations, 1779*, Ch. IV, p. 15.
- Manual Exercise, 1764, op. cit.*
- Windham, *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*, Part I, p. 2. The order of the phrases of the first movement of *Rest your Firelock!* have been rearranged to match those of *Poise!* of the *Regulations, 1779*.
- Ibid.* The word "piece" is used instead of "firelock" by Windham to describe a similar movement.
- Manual Exercise, 1764, op. cit.*, p. 3.
- Bland, *Discipline, 1740*, p. 20.
- Manual Exercise, 1764, op. cit.*, p. 3.
- Bland, *Discipline, 1740, loc. cit.*
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, p. 17.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, p. 17.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Ordonnance du Roi, 1766*, p. 64. "Dechirez la cartouche . . . jusqu'a la poudre."
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Windham, *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*, Part I, p. 13.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, Part I, p. 18. To which is added, "so as to come at the rammer easily."
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 4.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775, loc. cit.*
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 5.
- Faucitt, *Prussian Regulations, 1759*, p. 34.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, pp. 4-5.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775, loc. cit.*
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 5.
- Windham, *Norfolk Discipline, 1759*, Part I, p. 3.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, Part I, p. 29.
- Regulations, 1779*, Ch. V., pp. 16-21.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, pp. 5-6.
- Ordonnance du Roi, 1766*, p. 75. In the *Petit Maniement des armes* the first motion of *Order, Firelock [Le Fusil pres du pied]* requires the musket to be dropped from the position of *Shoulder* to the length of the left arm, instructing, "Au premier, on laissera tomber le bras gauche de toute sa longueur pour baisser le fusil . . ."
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*, Part I, p. 31.
- Manual Exercise, 1764*, p. 6.
- Pickering, *Discipline, 1775*. Pickering eliminated the command *Take up your Firelock!* and went directly from the ground-

- ded position to *shoulder* in four movements. The first two completed the movement to *order* and the third and fourth from *order* to *shoulder*.
72. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 6.
 73. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. *loc. cit.*
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 30
 75. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
 76. *Manual Exercise*. 1764. 1., p. 7.
 77. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 26.
 78. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 7.
 79. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 26.
 80. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 7.
 81. The position of "rest" referred to in the *Regulations*, 1779 is never explained. Possibly because it was well understood by military personnel of the times. The direct correspondence of this word with the text of the *Manual Exercise*, 1764 indicates that it intended to describe the final position of the salute with the musket. In this position the piece is held vertically before the left knee with the right arm extended its full length, grasping the musket below the guard, and the left forearm horizontal with the left hand above the lock. The solitary use of this unexplained term strengthens the evidence of the extent to which other manuals were copied verbatim.
 82. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 5.
 83. *Ordonnance du Roi*. 1766, p. 67. "... on detachera le fusil de l'épaule, l'abandonnant de la main gauche ..."
 84. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*, 1775. Part I, p. 5.
 85. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 7.
 86. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*. 1775. Part II, p. 12. "Directions to the Officers about the Methods of teaching the Exercise." Explanation 24, Motion 1st.
 87. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 9.
 88. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 16.
 89. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*. 1775, Part II, p. 12. "Direction to Officers . . ." XXIII, 8.. Explanation 22.
 90. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 9.
 91. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 17.
 92. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, pp. 21-25.
 93. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 9.
 94. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 28.
 95. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 9.
 96. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 16.
 97. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 9.
 98. The words, "former position," are used several times in the English translation of the Prussian *Manual Exercise*. Cf. Faucitt's *Regulations for the Prussian Infantry*, 1755, pp. 33, 42.
 99. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 28.
 100. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, pp. 9-10.
 101. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775. Part I, p. 16.
 102. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 10.
 103. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1759. Part I, p. 16.
 104. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 10.
 105. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1759. Part I, p. 16.
 106. *Manual Exercise*. 1775, p. 10.
 107. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1759. Part I, p. 16.
 108. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 10.
 109. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1759, p. 21.
 110. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, pp. 21-27.
 111. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 10.
 112. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 113. Pickering, *Discipline*. 1775, Part II, p. 110. "in this position [open ranks] the battalion will go through the manual exercise, the Major giving the words of command; after which he will order them to prime and load, and close rear ranks to the front. The battalion will be ready to go through the firings . . ."
 114. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, pp. 27-28.
 115. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 10.
 116. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, p. 28.
 117. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 12.
 118. "Treatise on Military Affairs, New Manual and Platoon Exercise, Sect. V." *The New Royal Encyclopaedia*, ed. by W.H. Hall and T.A. Lloyd, London: C. Cooke, ca. 1795, Vol. 2.
 119. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, p. 28.
 120. *Manual Exercise*. 1764, p. 12.
 121. *Ibid.*
 122. *Regulations*. 1779, Ch. V, p. 29.
 123. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*, 1759, Part I, pp. 17-18.
 124. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 125. Pickering, *Discipline*, 1775, Part I, pp. 22-23.

Chapter IV

CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATIONS

The purpose of including illustrations with written instructions is to bridge those details that are difficult to explain or to insure that the written word will have a standard interpretation. Uniformity in the performance of the manual exercise was an important goal of the infantry in the 18th century and was a decisive factor in the degree of efficiency and discipline that could be achieved. Although illustrations of the movements of the manual exercise would have facilitated the introduction of the new *Regulations* among the various commands of the fledgling American army, none were included in the editions of the "Blue Book" during the Revolution. If the delays encountered by von Steuben in the production of the text and L'Enfant's relatively simple schematic diagrams of maneuvers and camp layouts [1] were any indication of the additional problems that may have resulted in attempting to provide plates requiring renditions of a soldier performing the 54 basic movements of the manual exercise, their omission can be understood under the lack of publishing resources in wartime Philadelphia. When the illustrations were first included in the editions published at the beginning of the 19th century, they contained many minor errors. The plates included in succeeding editions of the *Regulations* suffered from over-simplification and major errors.

British Illustrations

About 16 years after the issue of the first United States *Regulations* in 1779, six plates of the British manual of arms appeared in England [2] with the second edition of Hall's *New Royal Encyclopaedia*. The plates and their text explained the "Old Manual" as practiced in 1791 and the new manual of the "new regulations" of the Duke of York as performed in 1794. The plates were drawn from life, engraved by W. Granger, and printed in 1795, except the first plate, which was printed in 1790. The first three plates, Fi-

gures 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3, explain the 35 commands of the 1791 manual in 36 major and 50 minor figures. The fourth plate, Figure 4-4, demonstrates the firing of three ranks, the officer's salute with the fusée and sword, and the positions of trailed and advanced arms for the manual of 1794 in 12 major figures and one minor figure. The last two plates, Figures 4-5 and 4-6, show movements for the seven commands of the 1794 manual exercise, support and trail arms, prime and load, and making ready and firing in three ranks in 23 major and 20 minor figures. The manual as practiced in 1791 appears very similar to the manual exercise of 1764, however, the instructions accompanying the plates for the 1791 manual are quite different than those authorized for the '64 and are reflected in Grainger's renditions. Conversely, some written instructions for the 1791 manual are not reproduced faithfully by the plates. These inconsistencies with the 1764 manual exercise and the radical changes incorporated in the 1794 manual provided several pitfalls for American engravers who appear to have adopted the British engravings for illustration of the manual exercise of the *Regulations*.

American Renditions

The first American illustration of the manual exercise of von Steuben's *Regulations*, Figure 4-7, appeared on the well-known "Take Notice" recruiting poster issued in 1798 [3] during the quasi-war with France. Engraved by "B..Jones, Sc.," the poster included sixteen figures for the first eleven commands of the manual exercise for the *Regulations* of 1779 and three additional figures for *support*, *slope*, and *trail arms*. Except for combining the movement of *Take Aim!* and *Fire!* into one figure and the lesser quality of the engraving, the first sixteen major and minor figures agree almost exactly with the first plate of the British rendition of the manual exercise of 1791. The last three figures appear to be original renditions as

*Manual Exercise according to the Discipline practiced in 1791.
See Treatise on Military Affairs. Section 8.*

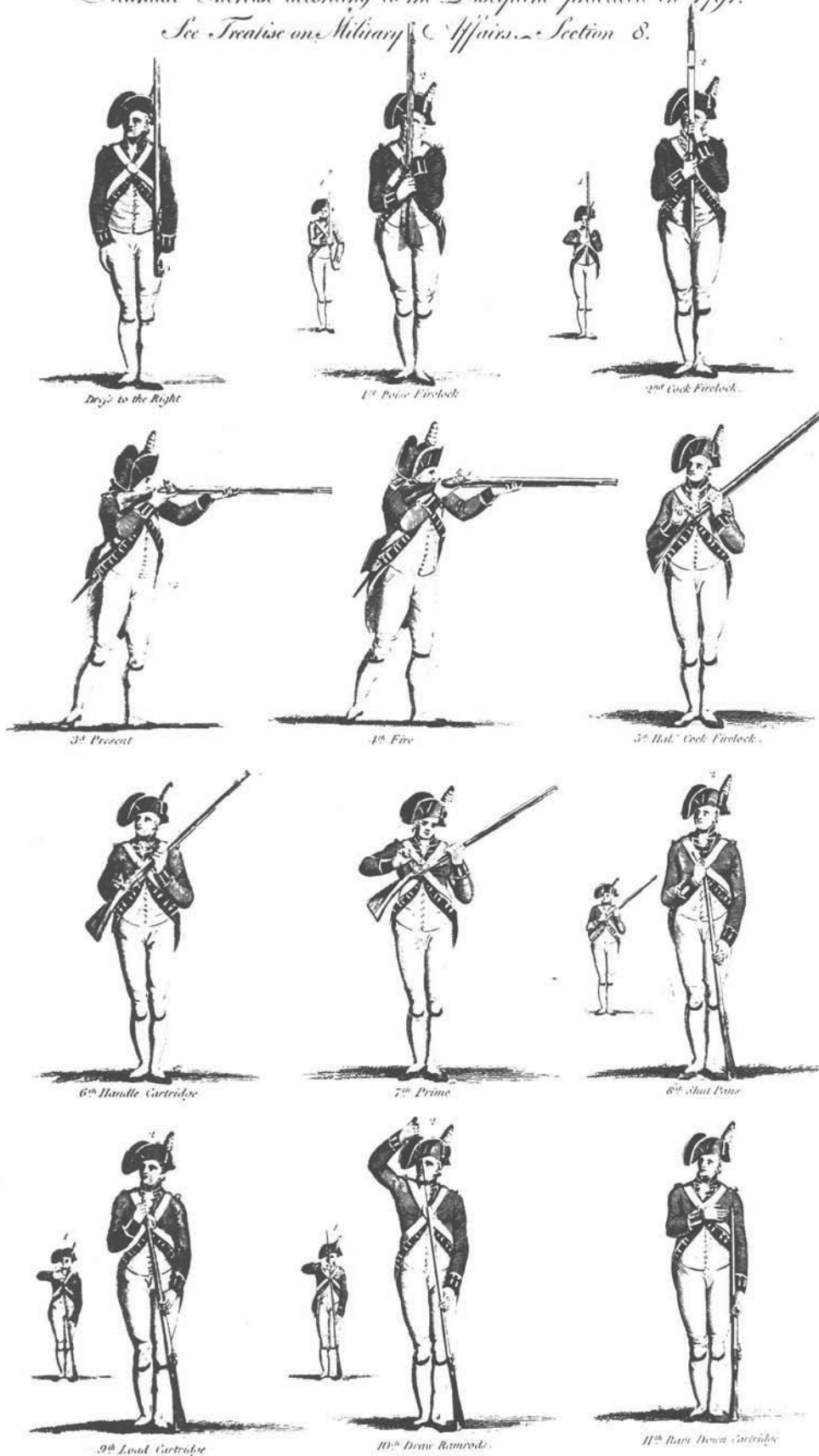


Fig. 4-1 The first through the 11th commands of the British Manual Exercise of 1764 as practiced in 1791.

*Manual Exercise necessary to the Discipline practiced in the Year 1791.
See Treatise on Military Affairs Section 8.*

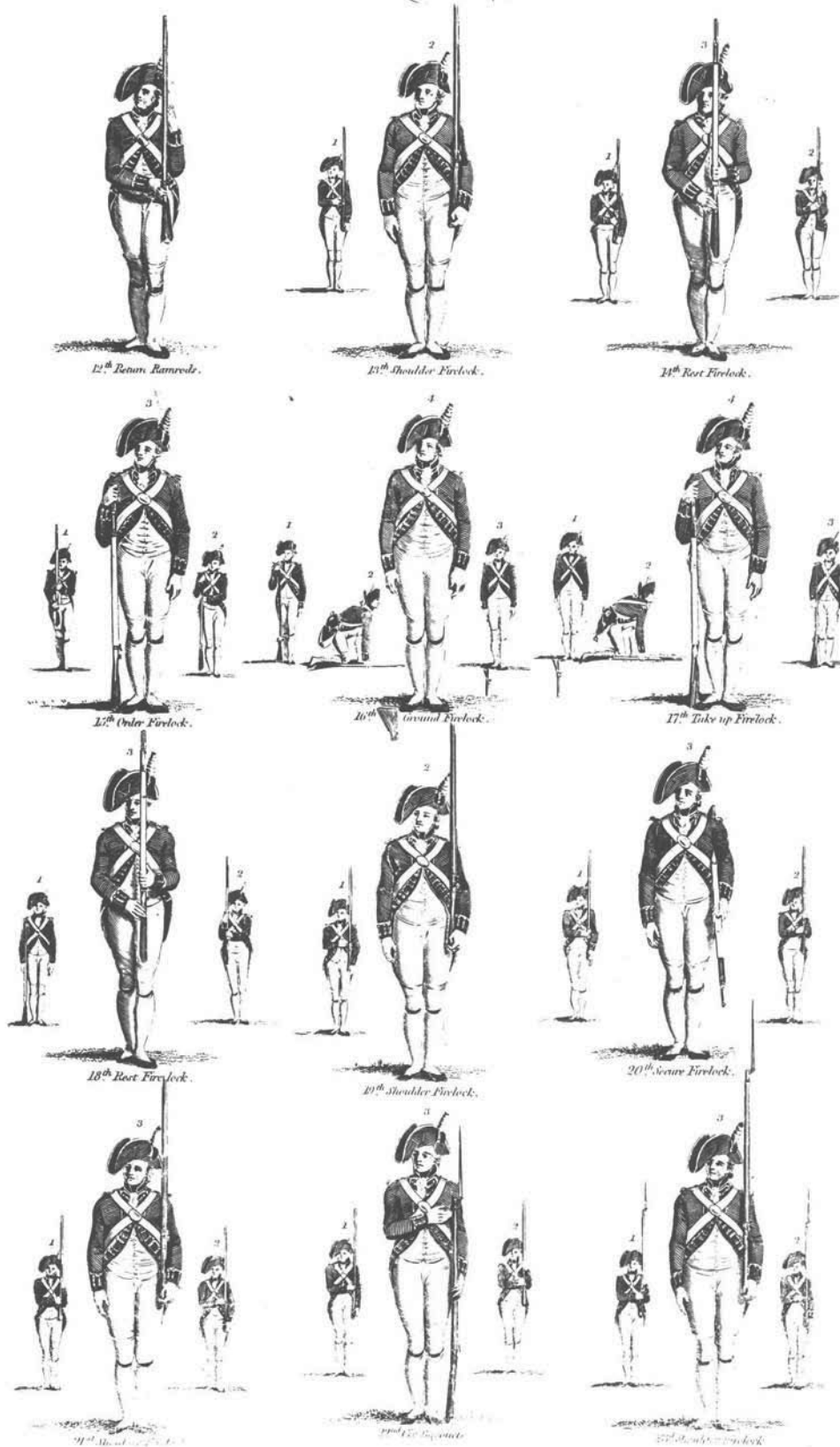


Fig. 4-2 The 12th through the 23rd commands of the British Manual Exercise of 1764 as practiced in 1791.

*Manual Exercise according to the Discipline practised in the Year 1791.
 (See Treatise on Military Affairs Section 8.)*

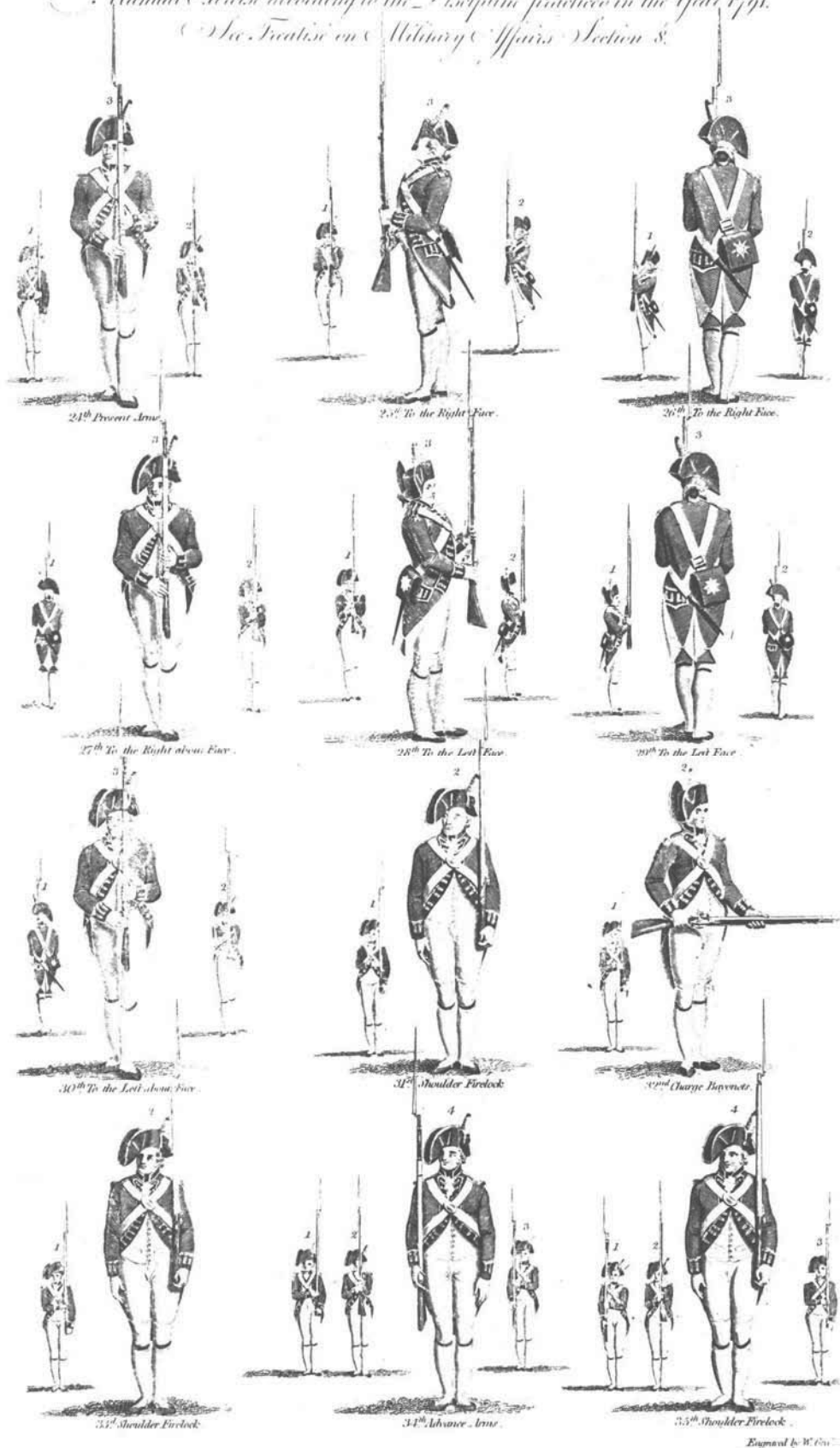


Fig. 4-3 The 24th through 35th commands of the British Manual Exercise of 1764 as practiced in 1791.

*Three Rank Firings, with Officers Fusee and Sword Salute.
See Treatise on Military Affairs, Section 6. § 7.*

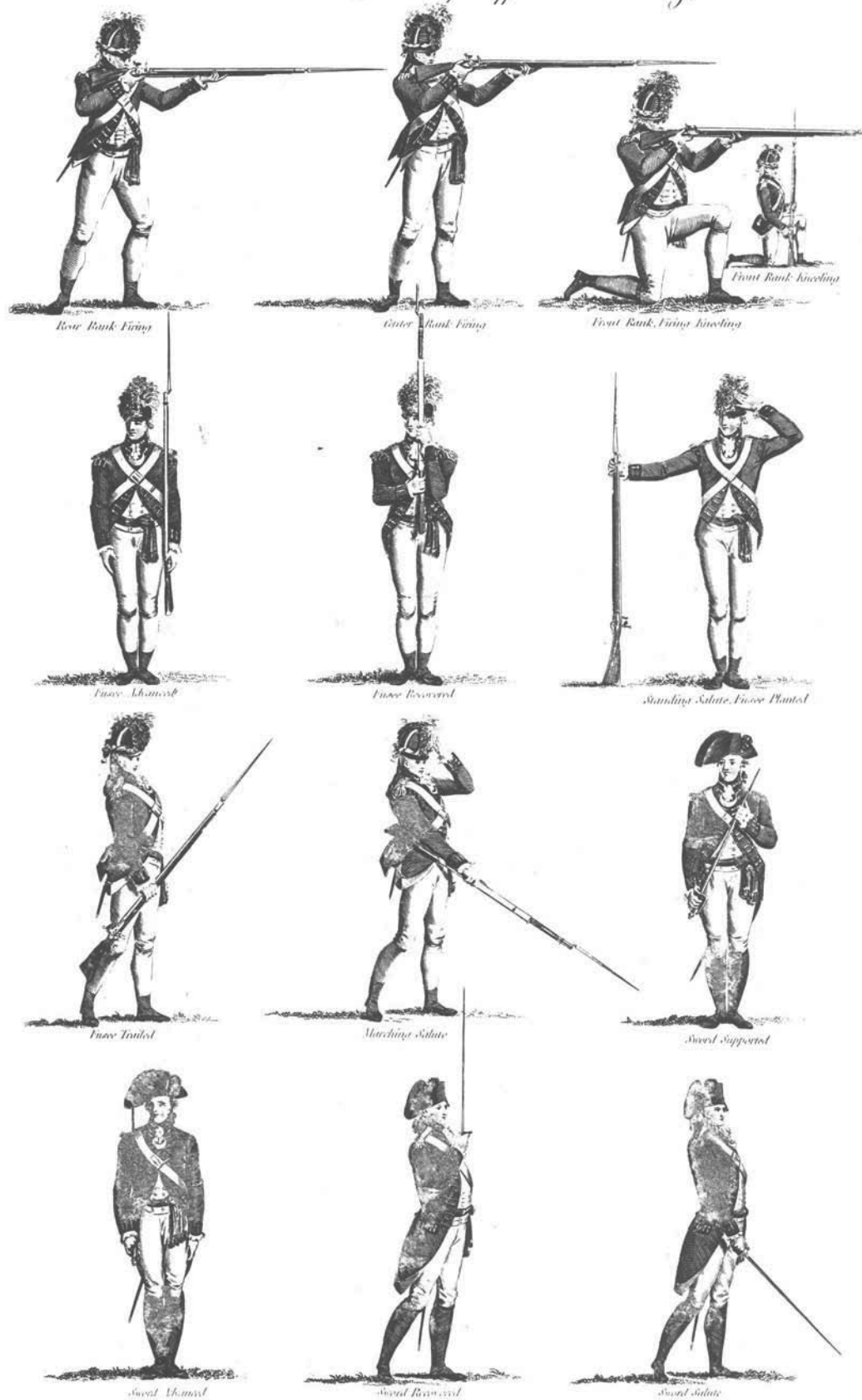


Fig. 4-4 British manuals for firing in three ranks and saluting with the fusee and sword as practiced in 1794.

*Manual Exercise according to the late regulation by the Duke of York.
See Treatise on Military Affairs.*

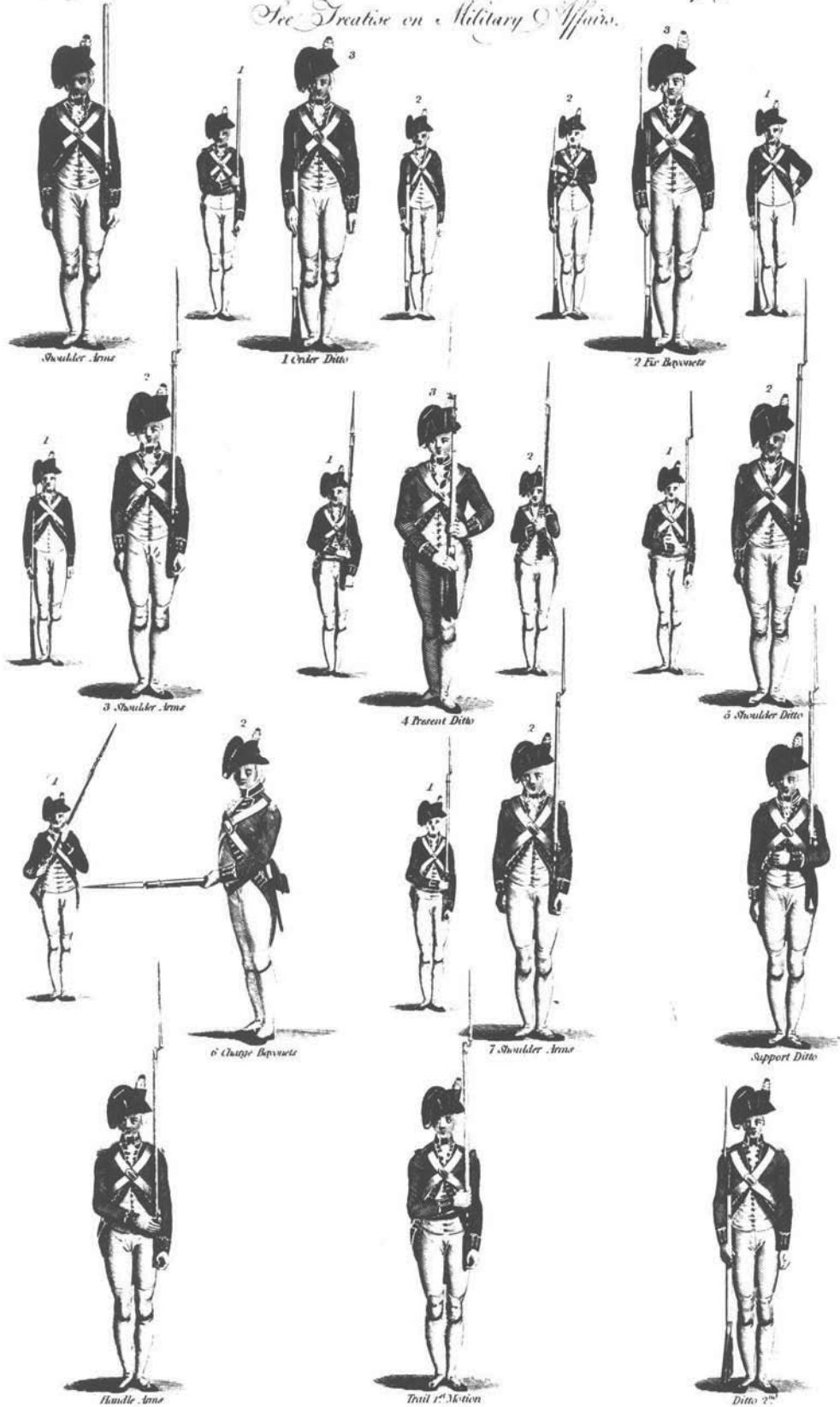


Fig. 4-5 The British New Manual Exercise as practiced in 1794.

*Manual Exercise according to the late regulation by the Duke of York.
See Treatise on Military Affairs.*

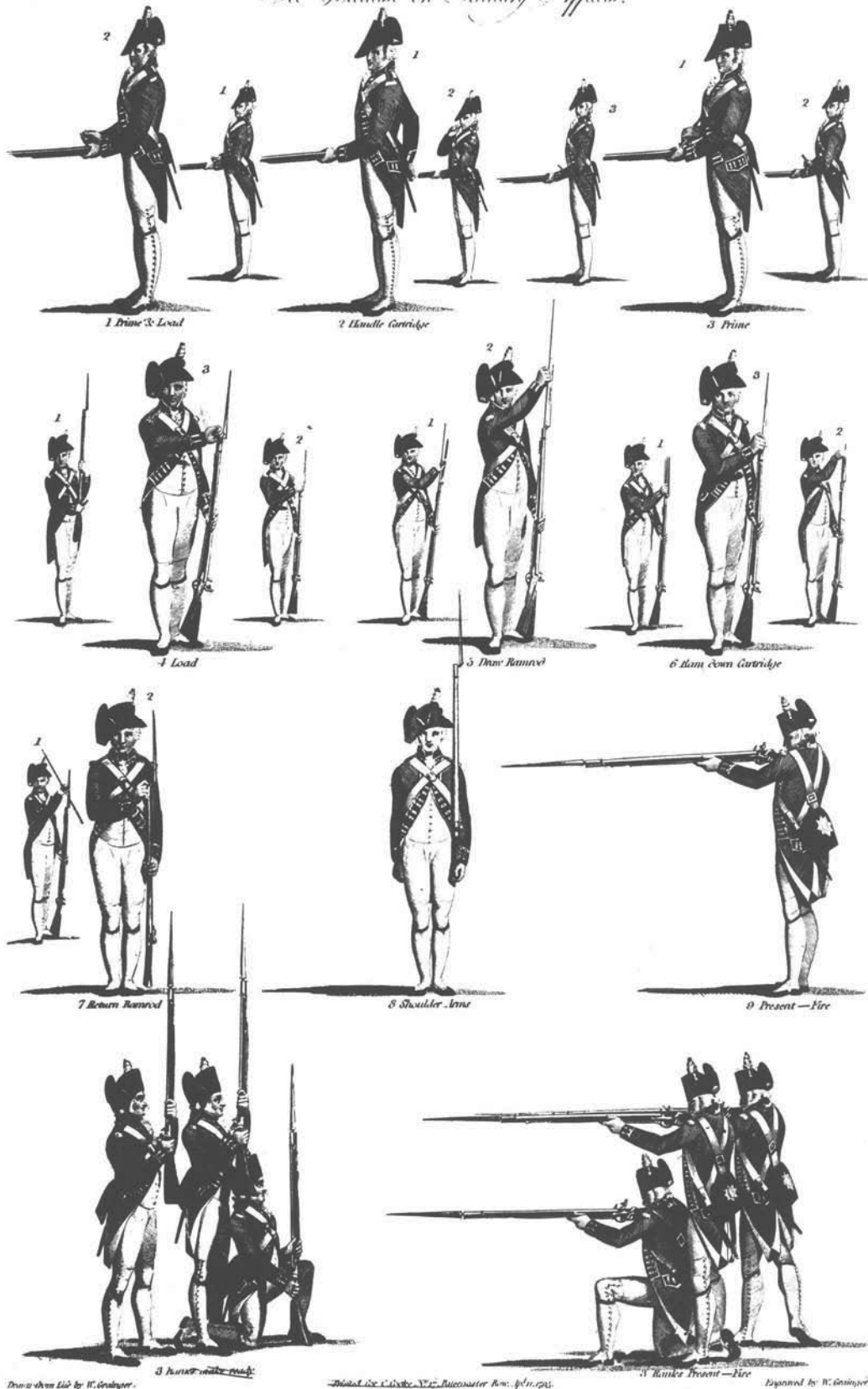
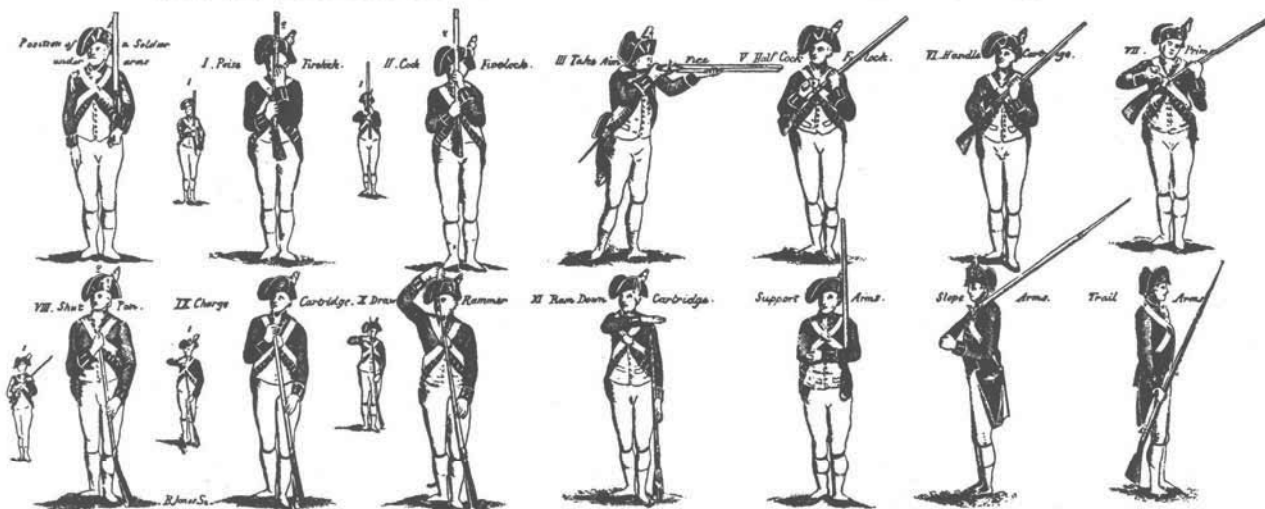


Fig. 4-6 The British New Platoon Exercise as practiced in 1794.

TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL
 DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
 IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,
 NOW RAISING UNDER
GENERAL WASHINGTON,
 FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
 OF THE UNITED STATES,
 Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE,



THAT *Middlesex* *Wednesday* *Thursday* *Friday* *Saturday* at *Spotswood* in
London and Recruiting with his music and recruiting party of *Country*, attendance will be given by
Battalion of the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Ogden, for the purpose of receiving the enrollment of
 such youth of SPIRIT, as may be willing to enter into this HONOURABLE service.
 The ENCOURAGEMENT at this time, to enlist, is truly liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of TWELVE dollars, an annual and fully sufficient
 supply of good and handsome clothing, a daily allowance of a large and ample ration of provisions, together with SIXTY dollars a year in GOLD
 and SILVER money on account of pay, the whole of which the soldier may lay up for himself and friends, as all articles proper for his subsistence and
 comfort are provided by law, without any expence to him.
 Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have an opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular
 manner, the great advantages which these brave men will have, who shall embrace this opportunity of spending a few happy years in viewing the
 different parts of this beautiful continent, in the honourable and truly respectable character of a soldier, after which, he may, if he pleases return
 home to his friends, with his pockets FULL of money and his head COVERED with laurels.
 GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

Fig. 4-7 Recruiting poster of 1798 showing the Manual Exercise of the United States Regulations of 1779.

the views for *Support!* and *Trail Arms!* are different than those shown for the first time in the British 1794 manual of Figures 4-4 and 4-5. The position of *Slope!* is a new figure and is not shown in any of the British plates.
 Illustrations of the manual exercise first appear in the editions of the *Regulations* after 1800. Figure 4-8 is an example of the plate published in Boston [4] and contains all twenty-seven commands of the manual exercise in twenty-five major and twenty-seven minor figures, and in almost exact duplication of the British 1791 manual exercise of Figures 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3. Editions of the *Regulation of 1803* [5] and 1807 [6] carried new renditions of the manual as shown in Fi-

gures 4-9 and 4-10, respectively. These latter plates have been reduced to twenty-seven major figures with no minor figures to explain the intermediate movements. Although the uniforms have been modified to reflect contemporary headgear, and some corrections have been made in the positions, the introduction of a number of errors in the representation of the position of the bayonet and the primitive appearance of the engraving, makes these plates less informative than those first issued. The identification of the inconsistencies between the text of the manual exercise of the *Regulations* and the extant contemporary illustrations will be examined in the discussion that follows.

THE Manual Exercise.

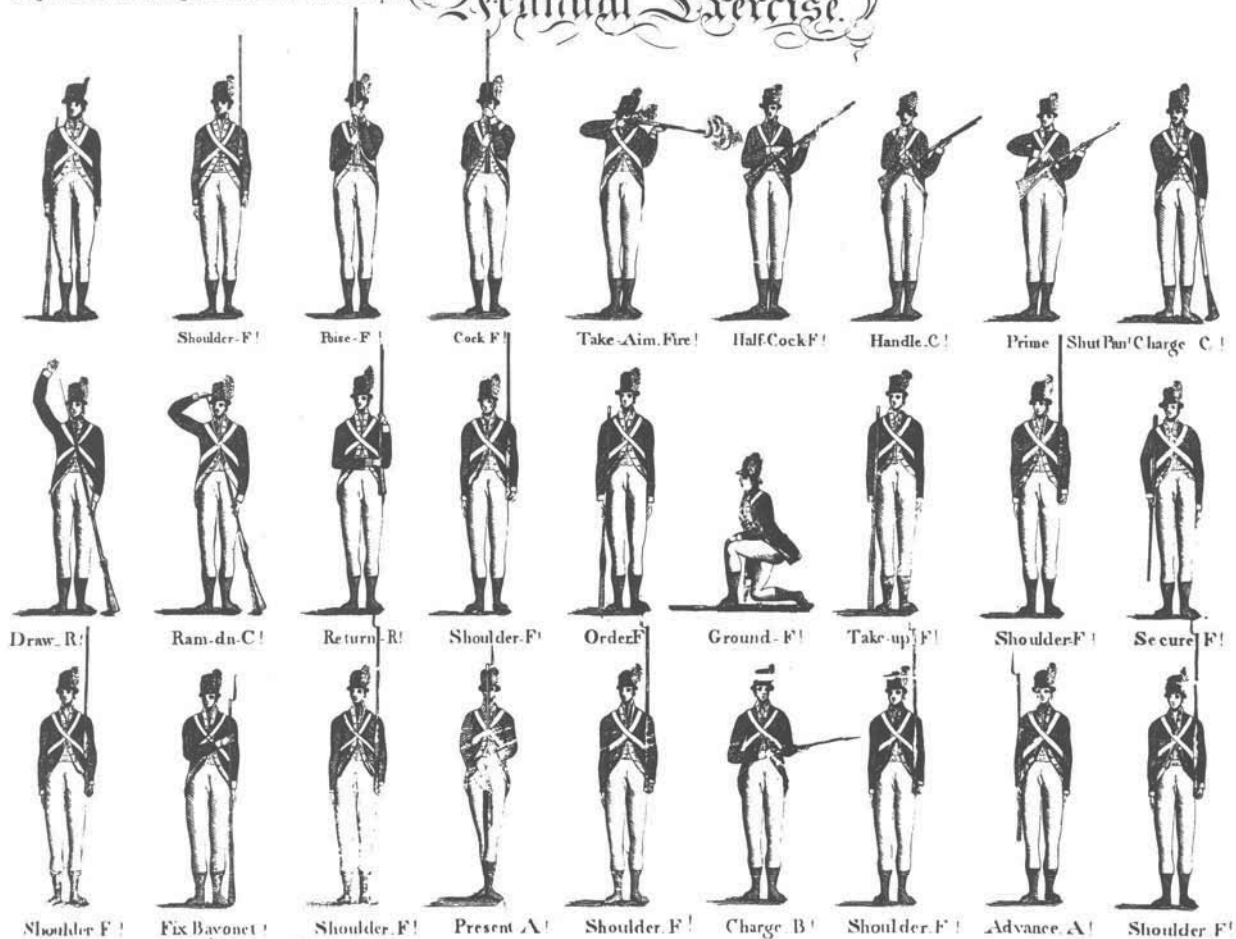


Fig. 4-9 Plate from a D. & S. Whiting book of 1803 illustrating the Manual Exercise of the United States Regulations of 1779.

Errors in the Contemporary Illustrations

Position of the Soldier under Arms

Left Hand — The 1764 manual exercise and the 1779 *Regulations* specify that the musket shall be held in the left hand with the thumb and forefinger before the tang of the butt plate and the last three fingers under the butt. The instructions for the 1791 manual are not specific, but the 1794 instructions require the “firelock rest full on the hand, (not on the tops of the fingers as was the custom formerly).” The engraving of all the plates lacks sufficient detail to determine if this distinction is made clearly in the plates of 1791 and 1794 manuals, however, the American plates of 1798, 1800, 1803 and 1807 all show the left hand improperly in every view of the position of *Shoulder, Firelock!*

Left Arm — The left hand is held too high resulting in the left elbow being bent excessively in the 1798 and 1800 figures.

Heels — The separation of the heels in the 1798 and 1800 figures is variable and indistinct, but tends toward being closed more than spaced at two inches. The heels were to be closed in the 1791 manual.

I. Poise, Firelock! (2nd. motion)

Left Hand — In the 1791 manual the left hand and wrist should be flat on the sling with the fingers pointing up. The 1798 and 1800 plates are shown similarly but not in accordance with the 1764 and 1779 instructions which require the little finger to rest upon the feather spring and the thumb on the stock. The position of the left hand was corrected in the 1803 and 1807 plates with the little finger shown touching the feather spring of the lock.

IV. Take Aim!

Right Foot — The position of *Take Aim* and *Fire* are combined in the 1798 and 1800 plates and both are copies of the British 1791 engravings. Although all of these manuals prescribe that the right foot is to be drawn back six inches to assume this position, the right foot is shown about 18 inches behind the left. The weight of the body is shifted to the left leg and the soldier is leaning forward sufficiently to require the right heel to be raised off the ground. None of this is described in the 1764, 1779, 1791, or 1794 manuals for this step of the manual exercise. The last group of fi-

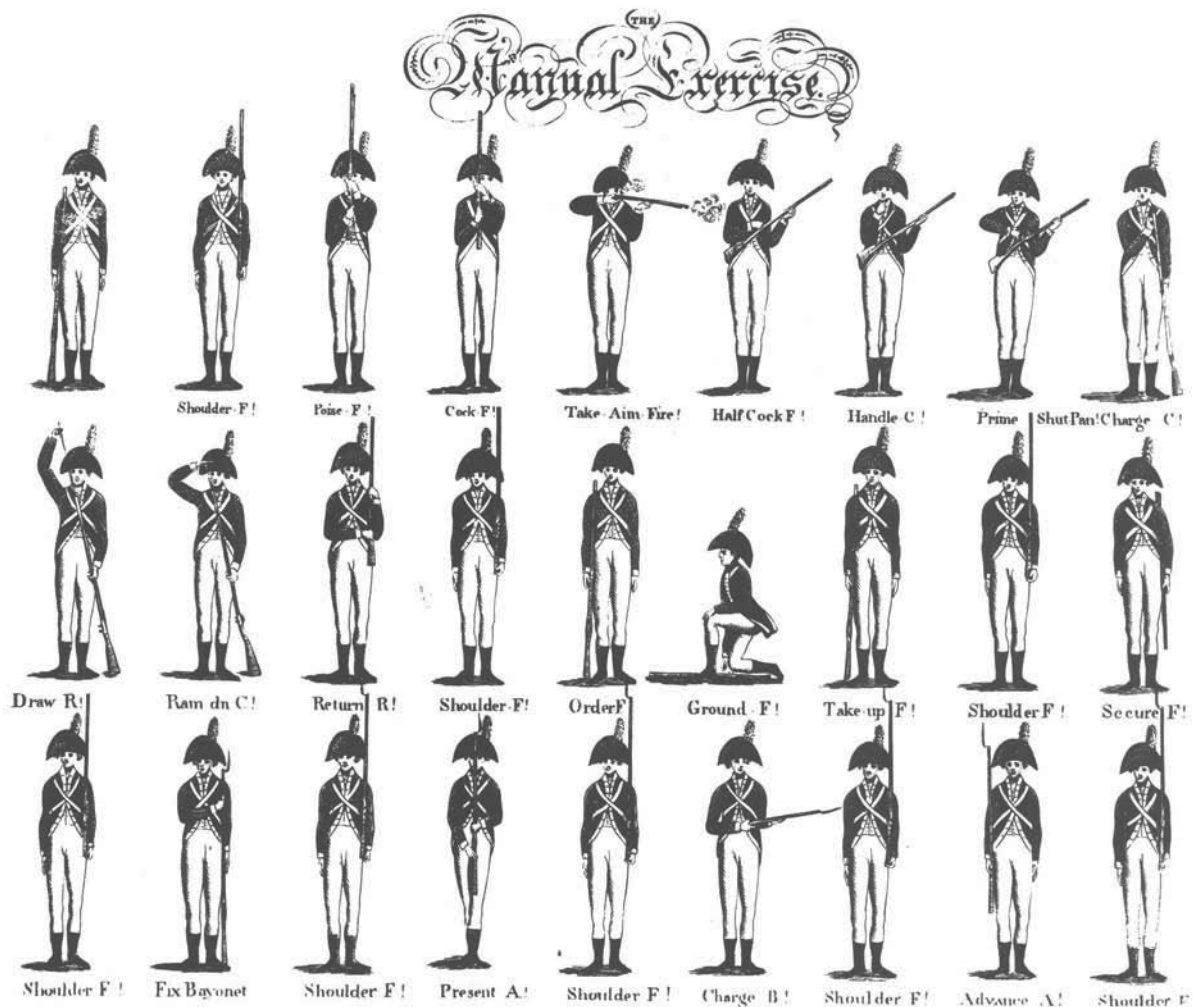


Fig. 4-10 Plate from an Evert Duyckinck book of 1807 illustrating the Manual Exercise of the United States Regulations of 1779.

figures in Figure 4-6 show three ranks presenting and this same posture with the heel raised can be seen for the rear rank as viewed from the left side. The movements for both ranks concerned with aiming and firing during the manual exercise of the American Regulations appear to be those motions prescribed for the front rank only and approximate those for the center rank in the British 1791 manual less the side step required to span the right leg of the kneeling front rank man. A good deal of confusion is introduced by the copying of the British plates to represent the movements of the 1779 Regulations. The 1803 and 1807 plates are more representative of the 1779 position of the feet described for *Take Aim!* and *Fire!* but the art work is so indistinct that their correct spacing is not well defined.

Right Elbow — The 1803 and 1807 position for *Take Aim!* and *Fire!* show the right elbow raised and square to the body while the earlier British and American plates indicate that the elbow is lowered to the side. There are no corresponding instructions in either American or British manuals, but the *Norfolk*

Discipline indicates that the positions should have “both arms close to your body.” [8] The more likely interpretation is furnished by Pickering as “put the elbows down, but in easy positions.” [9]

Muzzle — Neither the instructions for the 1791 nor the 1794 British manuals prescribe that the muzzle should be lowered slightly to avoid firing too high and their accompanying illustrations show the barrels as level at the *present* and *fire* positions. The 1798 and the 1800 plates show the barrel level at *Take Aim!* despite the instruction in the 1779 Regulations for “sinking the muzzle a little below a level.” [10] The 1803 and 1807 plates correct this feature but have exaggerated the depression of the muzzle to an extreme.

V. Half-cock, Firelock!

Muzzle — The elevation of the muzzle in the priming position during the movements of *Handle Cartridge!*, *Prime!*, and *Shut Pan!* is prescribed at the height of the hat for both the 1779 Regulations and the 1791 manual exercise, but the corresponding figures



Fig. 4-11 "Camp at Valley Forge" by Edwin Austin Abbey, 1852-1911. A popular, but improbable, version of American recruits at Valley Forge in the winter of 1778 receiving instructions from a general-grade officer, the Baron von Steuben. While von Steuben inspired the officers and men by his personal attention to drill instruction, the positions of the men and their arms bear little resemblance to any contemporary military manual they may have had to learn or unlearn.

of 1795, 1798, and 1800 plates show the muzzle much too high. This misrepresentation was corrected in the 1803 and 1807 plates but in these the left hand supports the musket too far forward, the lock is not opposite the right breast, and the butt is too low under the right arm. In all of the plates, except those of 1794, the musket is shown almost parallel, rather than at right angles, to the front.

VI. *Handle, Cartridge!*

The 1791, 1798, and 1800 plates illustrate the first position of the movement where the soldier slaps the flap of the cartridge box in the gesture of opening the cover. The 1803 and 1807 plates show the cartridge being held at the level of the chin after the final motion of the position where the end of the cartridge has been bitten off. This final movement is also shown in the plates of the 1794 manual.

VII. *Shut, Pan!* (2nd. movement)

The 1791, 1798, 1800, 1803, and 1807 plates all show the musket cast about in the loading position with the butt resting on the ground. The 1791 manual exercise specifies that the butt is to be placed on the ground in loading, contrary to the instructions of the *Norfolk Discipline*, the 1764 manual exercise, and the *Regulations* of 1779. Although the manual exercise of 1794 requires the butt to be kept two inches above the ground during the loading, the plates show the butt on the ground, thereby offering no guidance to the engravers making corrections to the 1803 and 1807 plates. This error is maintained in the 1800, 1803 and

1807 plates in all the figures representing the loading position.

IX. *Charge with Cartridge!*

The caption used in the plate of the 1791 manual exercise for this movement is "*Load, Cartridge!*" instead of "*Charge with Cartridge!*" The correct caption was used in the 1800 plate, and although "*Load!*" has been corrected to "*Charge*" in the 1798, 1803, and 1807 plates, "*with*" was still omitted.

XI. *Ram down Cartridge!*

The 1791 manual exercise specifies and illustrates the last position of this movement with the fingers of the right hand pressing the muzzle of the musket into the hollow of the left shoulder. The position illustrated for this movement in the 1798 and 1800 plates is almost identical to that shown in the 1791 manual except for the horizontal attitude of the right hand with the edge of the palm on the head of the rammer, however, this is the position of the first movement of the 1779 *Regulations* for "*Return, Rammer!*" The final motion is shown correctly in the 1803 and 1807 plates with the rammer inserted in the channel only as far as the lower pipe.

XII. *Shoulder, Firelock!* (2nd. movement)

The left hand is too high in the 1800 plate causing the arm to bend too much. All figures show the left hand incorrectly under the butt.

XIV. *Order, Firelock!*

The 1803 and 1807 plates show incorrectly the right hand flat on the stock and sling of the musket. Although the 1800 plate is correct, the engravers of the 1803 and 1807 plates may have been influenced by the 1794 plates which demonstrate the identical, new British position of the right hand at *Order Arms*.

Right Foot — The 1791 plates show the right foot behind the butt of the musket with the lock turned to the rear in accordance with the instructions. The 1800 plates show the feet in the same position contrary to the instructions of the 1779 *Regulations*.

Right Knee — In the second part of the first movement the musket is placed on the ground with the lock up. The right knee will fall directly over the musket in this motion as is indicated in the 1791 plates. The same figure was used in the 1800 plate and shows the position incorrectly for the 1779 *Regulations* where the right knee should be to the left of the musket.

XVI. *Take up, Firelock!* (2nd. motion)

The final position of this motion at *Order, Firelock!* in the plates of 1800, 1803, and 1807 shows the right hand incorrectly flat on the stock instead of grasping the barrel between the thumb and fingers.

XVII. *Shoulder, Firelock!* (2nd. motion)

All fingers of the left hand are shown incorrectly under the butt in the 1800, 1803, and 1807 plates.

XVIII. *Secure, Firelock!* (3rd. motion)

The musket is held improperly on the right instead of the left in the 1803 plate. This error was corrected in the 1807 plate, but the rendition makes it appear that the musket is in a vertical rather than a sloping attitude.

XIX. *Shoulder, Firelock!* (3rd. motion)

Left Hand — All fingers of the left hand are shown incorrectly under the butt in the 1800, 1803 and 1807 plates.

Heels — The heels in the 1800 plate are closed rather than two inches apart.

XX. *Fix, Bayonet!* (3rd. motion)

Butt — The 1791 manual in this motion requires the butt to be dropped to the ground as the musket is released with both hands and the barrel rested in the crook of the right elbow to draw the bayonet. This enables the soldier to grasp the socket of the bayonet with the right hand and the scabbard with the left to facilitate the withdrawal of the bayonet. The *Regulations* require the musket to be held in the left hand at the swell during the entire process of fixing the bayonet, so the butt should strike the ground only in the case where the soldier is very short. The 1800, 1803 and 1807 plates show incorrectly the butt resting on the ground.

Left Hand — The 1803 and 1807 plates show the left hand flat upon the sling in violation of the requirements of the *Regulations* to suspend the musket at the swell. The engravers again may have been misled by

the 1791 plates where the bayonets were fixed with the butt on the ground and the left hand flat upon the stock.

Right Hand — At the completion of the movement in the 1791 manual the musket is pivoted on the butt and pulled back with the left hand into the hollow of the left shoulder. The tips of the fingers of the right hand touch the "nose brass" [11] and guide the barrel into position. In the final movement of the *Regulations* the musket must be pivoted in the left hand and the muzzle must be pushed back to the hollow of the left shoulder with the right hand against the barrel. The 1800 plates copy the 1791 manual and represent the final position erroneously. The position of the right hand is shown correctly in the 1803 and 1807 plates.

XXI. *Shoulder, Firelock!* (3rd. movement)

In addition to the usual misrepresentation of the fingers of the left hand under the butt, the bayonet is reversed in both the 1803 and 1807 plates.

XXII. *Present, Arms!*

1st. Motion — In this motion the 1791 manual requires the lock to be turned to the front as in the first motion of *Poise, Firelock!*, however, the position of the bayonet indicates that the musket has not been turned. The identical instructions are described in the *Regulations*, but the 1800 plates repeat the error of the British illustration representing the position of the musket.

3rd. Motion — Centering: The position of the bayonet is reversed improperly in the 1803 and 1807 plates and the musket is centered before the body instead of the left knee.

Height of musket: The 1791 manual directs that the little finger of the left hand is to be placed as low as the feather spring. The right is placed under the guard and extended no lower than will position the butt before the center of the left thigh. The 1791 plates show clearly that the height of the butt is to be halfway between the knee and the waist. This same position was copied in the 1800 plates despite the instructions of the *Regulations* which specify that the musket is to be held by the left hand just below the tail pipe before the left knee as far as the right hand will permit without constraint. These instructions are the same as those specified for the 1794 manual and the result can be seen in the 1794 plates where the butt is level with the knee. This error in the height of the butt was corrected somewhat in the 1803 and 1807 plates but the left hand appears to be too close to the lock.

Right Foot: The *Regulations* instruct that in stepping back the right foot should be placed a hand's breadth from the left heel, as also instructed by the 1764 manual exercise. If the instruction is to be in-

terpreted literally, the right foot would be moved directly to the rear as emphasized in the 1791 manual, "step back 4 inches, with the right foot in a direct line; and on no account to cross your left heel." [12] All of the plates suffer from inaccuracies in representing the position of the feet for this movement. The 1791 and the 1800 plates show a slight crossing of the heels, as well as the 1794 plates where the right foot is supposed to be drawn back only one inch. The 1803 and 1807 plates show the right foot well behind the left heel in the style of the French *Ordonnance* of 1766. [13]

XXIII. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

The 1800 plate omits a figure at this command and refers the reader to the figure for Command XIII, repeating, therefore, the errors of the second movement. The 1803 and 1807 plates repeat the usual misrepresentation of the fingers under the butt and in addition shows the bayonet reversed.

XXIV. *Charge, Bayonet!*

Right Foot — One unique feature of the 1779 *Regulations* was the instruction that both ranks were to keep their feet "fast" on assuming the position of *Charge, Bayonet!* from *Shoulder, Firelock!* The 1800 plate views the position from the right side and shows the feet incorrectly at right angles to each other in imitation of the 1791 plate. The position of the feet in the 1803 and 1807 plates has been corrected with respect to the front, but the figure is confusing because the barrel of the musket is not directed to the front contrary to the *Regulations*.

Musket — The position of the musket in the *Regulations* is level for the front rank. The muzzles of the rear rank were to be elevated to clear the heads of the front rank. As the ranks were usually opened to perform the manual exercise, the rear rank could level their bayonets without striking the front rank, so this instruction may apply to the combat formation rather than that used in the manual exercise. The 1803 and 1807 plates show the muzzle of the musket elevated slightly, but not sufficiently to clear the front rank at close order. The barrel is also directed at almost forty-five degrees, rather than directly, to the front. The bayonet is reversed in both of these plates.

XXV. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

The figures for this command are omitted in the 1800 plates referring the reader to Command XIII and thereby repeating the errors of that figure for the second movement. The bayonet is reversed in the 1803 and 1807 plates.

XXVI. *Advance, Arms!*

The instructions for the 1791 manual specify

that the lock is to be turned to the front in the first motion from the position of *shoulder*, however, the position of the bayonet indicates that the musket has not been turned. The *Regulations* carry the same instruction, but the same error was copied in the figure for the first movement in the 1800 plate.

XXVII. *Shoulder, Firelock!*

The position of the fingers of the left hand on the butt is incorrect in the 1800, 1803, and 1807 plates. The butt is carried too high in the 1800 plate. The bayonet is displayed reversed in the 1803 and 1807 plates.

Support, Arms!

The position of *Support, Arms!*, mentioned frequently in the *Regulations*, but never described, and illustrated in the 1798 recruiting poster and the 1800 plate follows correctly the instructions for the *Norfolk Discipline* which specifies that the left hand is to be rested at the bend of the right elbow. [14]

Slope, Arms!

Slope Arms is never mentioned in the *Regulations* but it appears in the 1798 recruiting poster and the 1800 plate. The position taken by the figure is similar to the description by Pickering [15] which he inserts in his *Discipline* noting that the movement was practiced by the Army.

Trail, Arms!

Known earlier as "Carry your Firelock (or Fuzee) in your right hand" in both the *Norfolk Discipline* and Pickering's *Discipline*, this position of "trail" was first illustrated for the fuzee and musket in the plates of the 1794 manual. Except for the use of the word "trayle" as applied to the manual of the pike [16] and "trail your rest" in the manual of the matchlock, [17] the term reappears in the instruction for the 1794 manual for the fuzee and was utilized in the 1798 poster and the 1800 plate for the *Regulations*.

Standardization of the Manual Exercise

That so many errors could appear in the American plates for such a well established manual as the *Regulations* can only be explained by a severe lack of communication between artists, engravers, publishers, and the military authorities of the times. The maintenance of the standardization of the manual exercise in the American infantry after the turn of the century must have depended heavily on the experience of officers and non-commissioned officers to compensate for the conflicts that existed between the text of the instructions and the illustrations.

An example of the misunderstanding of the

manual exercise of the *Regulations* by the generations following the Revolution is displayed in Abbey's 1911 romantic painting, Figure 4-11, of Von Steuben drilling troops at Valley Forge. [18] The formation of the 12-man squad in two ranks with the front rank kneeling unnecessarily, the erroneous postures of the individuals, and the unrelated procedures being conducted by the two ranks (the rear rank ramming down the charge and the front rank at an indecisive position of the "ready"), represent little from earlier manuals or the new *Instructions* issued at Valley Forge. Contrary to a basic principle of von Steuben's instructions, the members of the squad would have been considered unqualified to be instructed in such large numbers in a procedure as advanced as firing in two ranks until they had mastered the elementary movements of the manual exercise. The remainder of this work may serve to clarify the interpretation of manual exercise of the *Regulations* of 1779.

Notes to Chapter 4

CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Riling, *Baron Steuben and His Regulations*, 1966, p. 10.
2. "Treatise on Military Affairs, New Manual and Platoon Exercises, Sect. V.," *The New Royal Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2, ed. by W. H. Hall and T. A. Lloyd, London: C. Cooke, ca. 1795.
3. John A. Garraty, *The American Nation*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1971, p. 213. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, broadside, "Take Notice," Ab 1798-24.
4. U.S. Congress, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, Boston: William Norman, 1802.
5. _____, _____, Albany: Daniel and Samuel Whiting, 1803.
6. _____, _____, New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1807.
7. This is also the distance that the center rank steps back for *presenting* in the *Norfolk Discipline*, q.v., Command XXX, "As Center Rank, Make Ready!" Part I, p. 16.
8. *Ibid.*, Command XXVII, "Present!" Part I, p. 16.
9. Pickering, *Discipline*, Command VII, "Present!" Part I, p. 21.
10. *Regulations, 1779*, Command III, *Take Aim* p. 17.
11. "Treatise on Military Affairs," *op. cit.*, Section VII, Command XXII, "Fix your Bayonet!"
12. *Ibid.*, Command XIV, "Rest your Firelock!"
13. *Ordonnance du Roi, 1766, Fig 25*, "Presentez vos armes."
14. Windham, *Norfolk Discipline*, 1759, Part I, p. 21.
15. Pickering, *Discipline*, 1775, Part I, p. 27.
16. Gross, *Military Antiquities*, Vol. 1, "Exercise of the Pike, Pl. 1."
17. *Ibid.*, "Manual Exercise of the Musketeers, Pl. 3."
18. "Camp at Valley Forge," painting by Edward Austin Abbey, 1911. Library of Congress Negative No. LC-UZ61-67. The original is located in the Capitol at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Painted in Abbey's London studio, it was completed by his associates after his death in 1911. (Private correspondence with Michael J. Ripton, Director, Bureau of Historical Museum Services, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, March 20, 1987.)