

CHAPTER 7

PLATOON DRILL

“If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.”

Sun Tsu, On the Art of War, trans. 1910

Section I. FORMATIONS

The platoon has two prescribed formations—line and column (Figure 7-1, page 7-2). However, the platoon may be formed into a file or a column of twos from a column formation. When in a line formation, the elements (squads) of a platoon are numbered from front to rear; in a column formation, from left to right. (Appendix G contains an explanation of the symbols used in figures.)

7-1. BASIC INFORMATION

For the most part, platoon drill merely provides the procedures for executing drill movements in conjunction with other squads formed in the same formation. Individual drill movements and the manual of arms are executed as previously described while performing as a squad member during the conduct of platoon drill. For continuity purposes in this chapter, “platoon sergeant” may also denote “platoon leader” when the platoon sergeant is executing drill from his post.

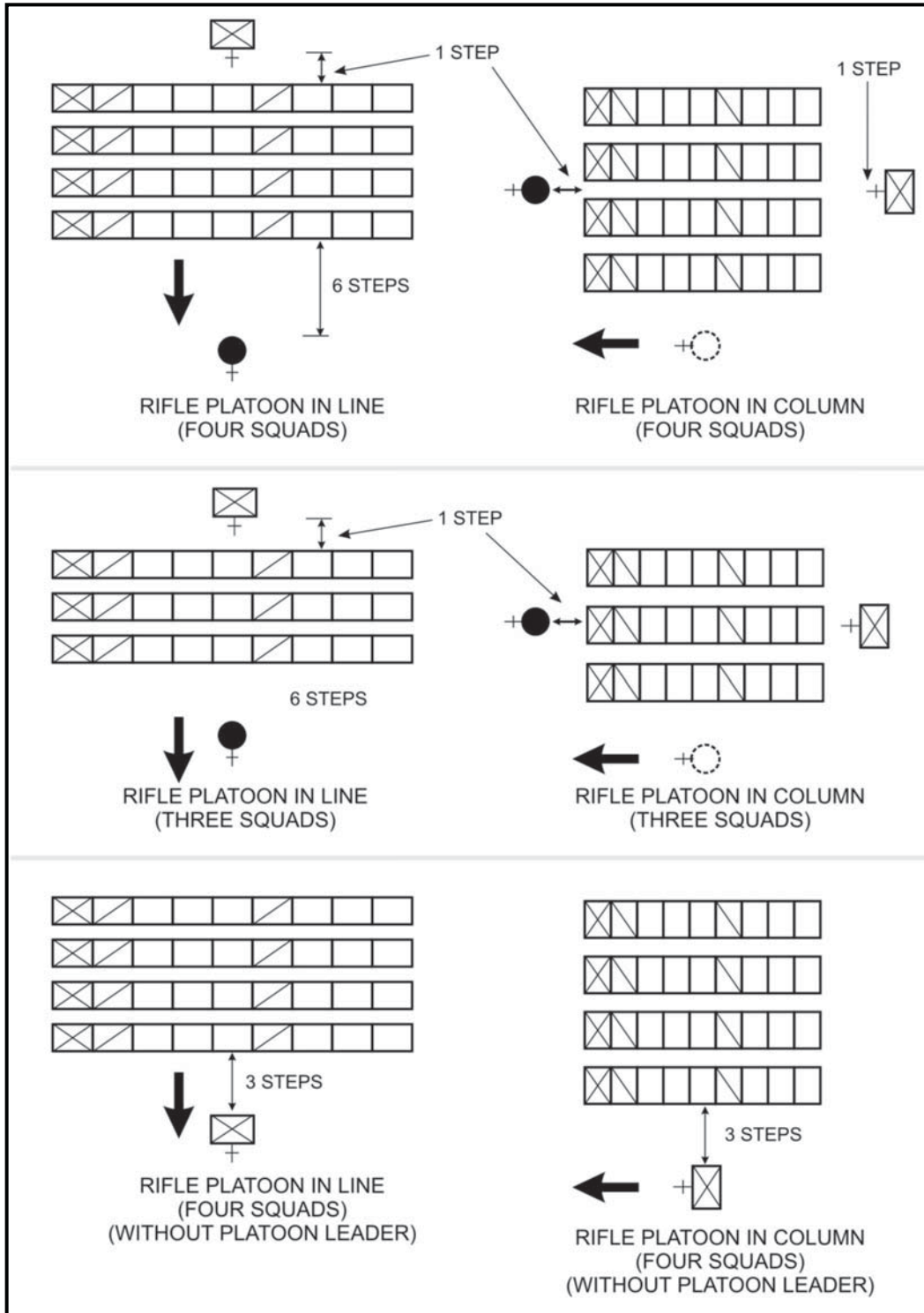


Figure 7-1. Platoon formations.

a. During all drill and ceremonies, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant carry their rifles at *Sling Arms*. When the platoon drills as part of a larger unit, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant remain at *Sling Arms* during all manual of arms movements except when executing the *Hand Salute* while at *Sling Arms*.

b. When the platoon drills as a separate unit or as part of a larger unit in a line formation, without officers present, the post for the platoon sergeant is three steps in front of and centered on the platoon. When in column formation, the post for the platoon sergeant is three steps to left flank of and centered on the platoon.

c. The post for the platoon sergeant with the platoon leader present is one step to the rear and centered on the platoon in line or column formation.

d. When assuming his post in column from a line formation with the platoon leader present, the platoon sergeant faces to the left in marching (on the command of execution **FACE**) and marches in the most direct route to his post. He then halts and faces to the right. When assuming his post in line from a column formation, he faces to the right in marching (on the command of execution **FACE**) and marches in the most direct route to his post, halts centered on the platoon, and faces to the left.

NOTE: When the files (columns) are uneven, the platoon sergeant normally directs the men in longer files to move to another file to balance the formation; or he may fill the vacancy himself as the last man in the right file.

e. When control of the formation is being exchanged between the platoon sergeant and the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant will **always** travel around the **right flank** (squad leader) of the formation when marching from post to post. The platoon leader will **always** travel around the **left flank** of the formation when marching post to post.

f. On the command *Open Ranks, MARCH; Backward, MARCH; Right (Left) Step, MARCH; Forward, MARCH* and on commands that cause the platoon to change interval in line, he moves at the same time (with the appropriate step) so as to maintain proper position.

g. The leader of the first squad serves as the base when the platoon is a line formation. The leader of the fourth squad serves as the base when the platoon is in a column formation.

h. If for some reason the platoon is authorized a guidon or phase banner (in training units for example), the bearer's post is one step in front of and two 15-inch steps to the right of and facing the person forming the platoon. When the formation is faced to the right for a marching movement, he executes in the same manner as explained in Appendix H, except that his post is three steps in front of and centered on the squad leaders. If the platoon leader is present and at his post, the bearer's post is one step to the rear and two 15-inch steps to the left of the platoon leader.

i. When the platoon drills as a separate unit, in a line formation, the post for the platoon leader is six steps in front of and centered on the platoon; when in a column formation, the platoon leader is six steps to the left flank and centered on the platoon. When marching as part of a larger formation, his post is one step in front of and centered on the squad leaders.

j. When the platoon leader commands *Open Ranks, MARCH; Backward, MARCH; Right (Left) Step, MARCH; Forward, MARCH* or causes the platoon to change interval, he moves at the same time (with the appropriate step) so as to maintain proper position.

(1) When assuming his post in column from a line formation, the platoon leader faces to the right in marching (on the command of execution **FACE**) and marches in the most direct route to his post, halts, and faces to the left.

(2) When assuming his post in line from a column formation, the platoon leader faces to the left in marching (on the command of execution **FACE**) and marches in the most direct route to his post, halts perpendicular to the formation, and faces to the right.

7-2. FORMING THE PLATOON

The platoon normally forms in a line formation; however, it may re-form in a column when each man can identify his exact position (equipment grounded) in the formation.

a. The platoon forms basically the same as a squad. The platoon sergeant assumes the *Position of Attention* and commands **FALL IN (At Close Interval, FALL IN or In Column, FALL IN)**. On the command **FALL IN (At Close Interval, FALL IN)**, the squad leader and the first squad (when formed) is three steps in front of and centered on the platoon sergeant. Other squad leaders cover on the first squad leader at the correct distance, which is obtained by estimation. The members of the first squad fall in on their squad leader as prescribed for squad drill. Members of the other squads fall in on their squad leader, assume the *Position of Attention*, and turn their heads and eyes to the right. They obtain correct distance by taking short steps forward or backward and align themselves on the man to their right. They then sharply turn their heads and eyes to the front as in the *Position of Attention* and obtain proper interval by taking short steps left and right to cover on the man to their front. Members of all squads, other than the first squad, will not raise their left arms unless the man to their immediate left has no one to his front in the formation on which to cover.

b. When armed, members fall in at *Order Arms* or *Sling Arms*. For safety, the commands **Inspection, ARMS; Ready, Port, ARMS; Order (Sling), ARMS** are given at the initial formation of the day and just before the last command, **DISMISSED**.

c. When a report is appropriate, the platoon sergeant commands **REPORT**. The squad leaders, in succession from front to rear, turn their heads and eyes toward the platoon sergeant and salute (holding the *Salute* until returned) and report. The squad leaders do not state the unit. For example:

(1) **Situation 1**. When all squad members are in formation, the report is “**All present.**”

(2) **Situation 2**. When squad members are absent, the soldiers and reasons for absence are reported:

Pvt. Smith - CQ runner.

Pvt. Jones - sick call.

Pvt. Williams -AWOL.

d. The platoon sergeant turns his head and eyes toward the reporting squad leader, receives the report, and returns the salute. After receiving the report from the squad leaders, the platoon sergeant faces about and awaits the arrival of the platoon leader or a directive from the first sergeant to **REPORT**. When the platoon leader has halted at his post, the platoon sergeant salutes and reports, “**Sir, All present**”; or “**Sir, All accounted for**”; or “**Sir, (so many) men absent.**” The platoon leader returns the *Salute*. After the *Salute* has been returned, the platoon sergeant faces to the right in marching, inclines around the squad leaders, halts at his post, and faces to the right. If reporting to the first

sergeant, the platoon sergeant turns his head and eyes toward the first sergeant, salutes, and reports.

e. If the platoon leader is not present for the formation, and the commander is in charge of the formation, the platoon sergeant steps forward three steps (after receiving the squad leader's report) and, on the command **POST**, assumes the duties of the platoon leader.

f. When appropriate, the platoon may be formed by the platoon leader rather than by the platoon sergeant. The procedures are the same as previously described except that the first squad forms six steps in front of and centered on the platoon leader, and the platoon sergeant forms at his post to the rear of the platoon. For continuity purposes in this chapter, "platoon sergeant" may also denote "platoon leader" when the platoon leader is executing drill from his post.

7-3. BREAKING RANKS

When the situation requires one or more individuals to leave the formation or to receive specific instructions from the platoon sergeant, the platoon sergeant directs: "**Private Doe (pause), front and center**"; or, "**The following personnel front and center—Private Doe (pause), Private Smith.**" When the individual's name is called, he assumes the position of *attention* and replies, "**Here, Sergeant (Sir).**" He then takes one (15-inch) step backward, halts, faces to the right (left) in marching, and exits the formation by marching to the nearest flank. *The soldier does not look left or right.* Once the individual has cleared the formation, he begins to double-time and halts two steps in front of and centered on the platoon sergeant.

NOTE: When a group of individuals are called from the formation, the group forms centered on the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant should direct (point) the first man into position so that the rank will be centered when the last man has joined the group.

7-4. COUNTING OFF

The platoon counts off in the same manner as the squad. When in a line formation, the squads count in unison from right to left; each squad leader sounds off, "**ONE.**" When in a column formation, the men abreast of each other count in unison from front to rear; each squad leader sounds off, "**ONE.**"

7-5. CHANGING INTERVAL

The platoon changes interval in a line formation in the same manner as the squad.

a. To change interval when the platoon is in a column at the *Halt*, the right file stands fast and serves as the base. All other members (abreast of each other) execute the movement as previously described. To obtain *Close Interval* from *Normal Interval*, the third squad takes one right step, the second squad takes two right steps, and the first squad takes three right steps. To obtain *Normal Interval*, the procedures are the same except that the squads execute the same number of left steps.

b. To change interval when the platoon is marching in a column, the preparatory command **Close Interval** is given as the right foot strikes the marching surface, and the command of execution **MARCH** is given the next time the right foot strikes the

marching surface. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the base squad (right file) takes one more 30-inch step and then executes the *Half Step*. All other men take one more step, simultaneously execute a *Column Half Right*, and march until *Close Interval* is obtained. They execute a *Column Half Left* and assume the *Half Step* when abreast of the corresponding man of the base squad. On the command **Forward, MARCH**, all men resume marching with a 30-inch step. The commands **Mark Time, MARCH** and **Platoon, HALT** may also be given.

c. To resume marching at *Normal Interval*, the preparatory command **Normal Interval** is given as the left foot strikes the marching surface, and the command of execution **MARCH** is given the next time the left foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon members obtain *Normal Interval* in the same manner prescribed for *Close Interval* except that they each execute *Column Half Left* and then *Column Half Right*.

d. To obtain *Double Interval* from *Normal Interval*, the procedures are the same as from *Close Interval* to *Normal Interval*.

e. To obtain *Normal Interval* from *Double Interval* (closing the formation in column from *Open Ranks*), the procedures are the same as obtaining *Close Interval* from *Normal Interval*.

7-6. ALIGNING THE PLATOON

The platoon is aligned similar to the squad.

a. On the command of execution **DRESS**, the first squad leader stands fast and serves as the base. Other squad leaders obtain correct distance by estimation. The members of the first squad execute in the same manner as in squad drill to obtain exact interval. All other squads execute as the first squad, except that each squad member raises the left arm only for uniformity, actually covering (glancing out the corner of the left eye) on the man to the front.

b. If the platoon sergeant wants exact alignment, he faces to the *Half Left (Half Right)* in marching and marches (on the command of execution **DRESS**) by the most direct route to a position on line with the first squad, halts one step from the squad leader or left flank man, and faces down the line. From this position, he verifies the alignment of the first squad, directing the men to move forward or backward, as necessary, calling them by name or number: **“Private Jones, forward 2 inches; Number eight, backward 4 inches.”** The platoon sergeant remains at *Attention*, taking short steps to the right or left as necessary, to see down the squad.

(1) Having aligned the first squad, the platoon sergeant, after centering himself on the first squad, faces to the left (right) in marching, taking two (three if at open ranks) short steps to the next squad, halts, faces down the line, and aligns the squad in the same manner.

(2) After the last squad is aligned, the platoon sergeant centers himself on the squad leader by taking short steps left or right, faces to the right (left) in marching, returns to his position (centered on the platoon), halts perpendicular to the formation, faces to the left (right), and commands **Ready, FRONT**.

NOTE: When the platoon dresses as part of a larger formation, all squad leaders turn their heads and eyes to their right and align themselves on the unit to their

right. The platoon sergeant aligns the platoon from the left flank rather than from the right flank when his platoon is not formed as the right flank platoon.

c. To align the platoon in column, the commands are **COVER** and **RECOVER**. On the command **COVER**, the fourth squad leader stands fast and serves as base. The squad leaders with the exception of the left flank squad leader, raise their arms laterally and turn their heads and eyes to the right. The members of the fourth squad raise their left arms horizontally (as in squad drill) to the front and cover the man to their front at correct distance (one arm's length plus 6 inches). Squad members of the third, second, and first squads raise their left arms horizontally to the front (for uniformity only), cover on the man to their front, and, at the same time, glance out of the corner of their right eyes aligning on the man to their right. To resume the *Position of Attention*, the command is **RECOVER**. On this command, each man sharply returns to the *Position of Attention*.

NOTE: When the platoon is aligned in column as part of a larger unit but is not the lead platoon, the squad leaders do not raise their arms or turn their heads and eyes but cover on the squad to their front. The platoon sergeant must wait until the platoon to his front has been given the command **RECOVER** before giving the command **COVER**. If the platoon leader is at his post, he must wait until the platoon leader of the platoon to his front has commanded **RECOVER** before he faces about and gives the command **COVER**.

7-7. OPENING AND CLOSING RANKS

To open or close ranks, use the following procedures:

a. *Open Ranks, MARCH* is executed from a line formation while at the halt. It may be executed while at any of the prescribed intervals. The command for this movement is *Open Ranks, MARCH*. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the front rank takes two steps forward, the second rank takes one step forward, the third rank stands fast, and the fourth rank takes two steps backward. If additional ranks are present, the fifth rank takes four steps backward, and the sixth rank takes six steps backward.

NOTE: After taking the prescribed steps, the men do not raise their arms. If the platoon sergeant wants exact interval or alignment, he commands *At Close Interval (At Double Interval), Dress Right, DRESS*. If the platoon is to align on an element to the right, the squad leaders turn their head and eyes to the right and align themselves with that element.

b. To *Close Ranks*, the command is *Close Ranks, MARCH*. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the first rank takes four steps backward, the second rank takes two steps backward, the third rank stands fast, and the fourth rank takes one step forward. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant take the appropriate number of steps to maintain their posts.

7-8. RESTING THE PLATOON

The platoon rests in the same manner prescribed for the squad.

7-9. DISMISSING THE PLATOON

The procedures for dismissing the platoon are basically the same as prescribed for the squad.

a. If the platoon sergeant so desires, the squads may be released to the control of the squad leaders. The platoon sergeant commands **TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR SQUADS**, and *Salutes* are exchanged. The platoon sergeant is no longer part of the formation.

NOTE: Without leaving their positions, the squad leaders turn their heads and eyes over the left shoulder and command **FALL OUT**. The squad leaders move to a position in the immediate area, and command **FALL IN**. Then, they carry out the previous instructions and or give any instructions for actions before the next duty formation.

b. At times the platoon sergeant may want to turn the formation over to a subordinate; for example, to have the subordinate march the platoon to a different location.

(1) The platoon sergeant calls on an individual and the individual breaks rank (paragraph 7-3). The designated soldier posts two steps from and facing the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant passes on any additional instructions and *Salutes* are exchanged. After exchanging *Salutes*, the platoon sergeant moves to a position where he can observe, or he may resume his post at the rear of the formation.

(2) The subordinate steps forward two steps, and assumes the post of the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant is no longer part of the formation; however, he may march along side of, or behind, the formation to make any corrections or to give further guidance, if necessary.

c. If the platoon leader is at his post, he commands **PLATOON SERGEANT**. The platoon sergeant faces to the left in marching and inclines around the squad leaders' left flank, halts three steps in front of and centered on the platoon, and faces to the right. The platoon leader then commands **TAKE CHARGE OF THE PLATOON**, and *Salutes* are exchanged. The platoon leader is no longer part of the formation. The platoon sergeant remains at his post, faces about, and carries out the platoon leader's instructions.

Section II. MOVEMENTS

The platoon marches in the same manner prescribed for the squad. When the platoon is marching in a line, the first squad leader serves as the guide, and when the platoon is marching in a column, the fourth squad leader serves as the guide. When marching in line, each member of each squad (glancing out of the corner of his right eye) maintains alignment on the man to his right. When marching in column, each member of the first, second, and third squads maintains alignment on the man to his right.

7-10. EYES RIGHT

The platoon renders courtesy during ceremonies or when marching past the Colors by executing *Eyes Right*. The commands for this movement are *Eyes*, **RIGHT** and *Ready*, **FRONT**.

a. At the *Halt*, all men (on the command of execution, **RIGHT**), while keeping their shoulders parallel to the front, turn their heads and eyes to the right at a 45-degree angle. They focus on and follow the person passing to the front until they are again looking forward, at which time their heads and eyes remain fixed to the front. Only the platoon leader renders the *Hand Salute*.

b. When marching, the preparatory command *Eyes* is given as the right foot strikes the marching surface and the command of execution **RIGHT** is given the next time the right foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution **RIGHT**, all men, except the right file, turn their heads and eyes to the right and align themselves on the right file while continuing to march. Men in the right file do not turn their heads and eyes but continue looking straight to the front and maintain correct distance. Only the platoon leader salutes. To terminate the courtesy, the preparatory command *Ready* is given as the left foot strikes the marching surface, and the command of execution **FRONT** is given the next time the left foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution, the men turn their heads and eyes sharply to the front and the platoon leader terminates the *Hand Salute*.

7-11. CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF A COLUMN

The platoon changes the direction of marching basically the same as the squad.

a. During a column movement, the base element is the squad on the flank in the direction of the turn.

b. To change the direction 90 degrees, the command is *Column Right (Left), MARCH*. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the base squad executes the movement as in squad drill except that the squad leader takes one 30-inch step and then takes up the *Half Step*. The squad leader continues marching with the *Half Step* until the other squad leaders come abreast. The other squad leaders, while maintaining correct (offset) interval, execute a 45-degree pivot and continue marching in an arc. As they come on line (abreast) with the base squad leader, they take up the *Half Step*. When all squad leaders are abreast, they step off with a 30-inch step without command. All other platoon members march forward on the command of execution and execute the column movement at approximately the same location as their squad leaders and in the same manner.

NOTE: When the platoon sergeant is marching his platoon as a separate unit or when the company is marching without officers in charge, the platoon sergeant stays centered on his platoon. When the platoon leader and platoon sergeant are marching at their post in column as part of a larger formation, they execute a *Column Half Right (Left)* rather than a 90-degree column movement. After executing the *Column Half Right (Left)*, they continue marching in an arc, incline as necessary, and resume their correct positions. After sensing that the squad leaders are abreast of each other, the platoon leader resumes the 30-inch step. At times, the platoon leader may find it necessary to shorten or lengthen his step in order to maintain correct distance from the unit to his front.

c. To change the direction 45 degrees, the command is *Column Half Right (Left), MARCH*. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon executes the movement

in the same manner as a 90-degree turn except that the base squad leader, as well as the other squad leaders, execute a *Column Half Right (Left)*.

NOTE: When executing a column movement at *Double Time*, elements adjust the length of their steps so that interval and distance are maintained through and beyond the pivot point.

d. The platoon marches in the opposite direction (**Rear, MARCH**) in the same manner as the squad.

e. The platoon inclines in the same manner as the squad. The squad nearest the direction of the turn serves as the base. To avoid an obstacle in the path of the march, the platoon leader directs **INCLINE AROUND LEFT (RIGHT)**.

f. When space is limited and the platoon sergeant wants to march his unit in the opposite direction (reverse), with the squad leaders at the head of their squads, he commands **Counter Column, MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH** (at the *Halt*), the first squad marches forward three steps, executes a *Column Right*, marches across the front of the platoon, and executes another *Column Right* just beyond the fourth squad. The second squad steps forward one step, executes a *Column Right*, marches forward, and execute another *Column Right* between the third and fourth squads. The third squad executes two short *Column Lefts* from the *Halt* and marches between the remainder of the third squad and the second squad. The fourth squad marches forward two steps, executes a *Column Left*, marches across the front of the platoon, and executes another *Column Left* between the first and second squads (Figure 7-2).

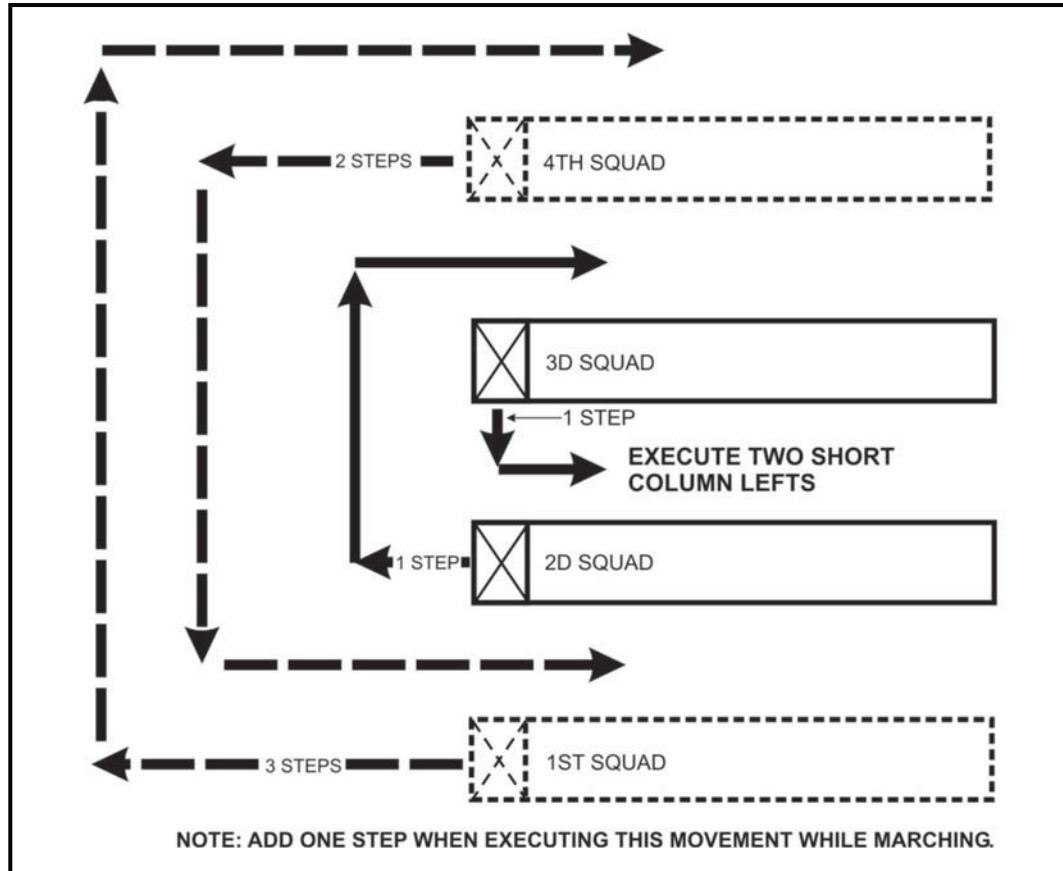


Figure 7-2. Counter-Column March at the Halt.

g. As the third squad leader marches past the last man in the third squad, he and his squad begin to march at the *Half Step*. After marching past the last man in each file, all other squads incline to the right and left as necessary, obtain *Normal Interval* on the third squad, and begin to march with the *Half Step*. When all squads are abreast of each other, they begin marching with a 30-inch step without command.

h. During the movement, *without the platoon leader present*, the platoon sergeant marches alongside the first squad. *With the platoon leader present*, the platoon sergeant marches one step to the rear and centered between the second and third squads (Figure 7-1, page 7-2) and the platoon leader marches alongside the first squad.

i. When marching, the preparatory command **Counter-Column** is given as the left foot strikes the marching surface and the command of execution **MARCH** is given the next time the left foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon executes the movement basically the same as from the *Halt*, except that the squad takes one additional step to ensure that the pivot foot is in the correct position to execute the movement.

- NOTES:**
1. When there are only three squads in the column, the first squad takes two steps before executing.
 2. When the platoon leader and platoon sergeant are marching at their posts as part of a larger formation, the platoon leader takes three steps forward

and executes a column right, marches across the front of the platoon, executes another column right (just beyond fourth squad), marches to his post in the most direct manner, takes up the *Half Step*, and then steps off with a 30-inch step when the squad leaders come on line. The platoon sergeant inclines to the right, follows the third squad until the movement is completed, and then resumes his post.

7-12. MARCHING TO THE FLANKS

The platoon marches to the flank in the same manner as the squad.

7-13. FORMING A FILE AND RE-FORMING

The platoon forms a single file, from the right, left, or as designated, only when in column and at the *Halt*. The commands are *File from the left (right)*, **MARCH** or *File in sequence three-two-four-one*, **MARCH**.

NOTE: If the squad's direction of travel is to the left, or the squad is immediately following an element on the left, then *all* supplementary commands will be given over the left shoulder. If the squad's direction of travel is forward or to the right, or is immediately following a squad on the right, *all* supplementary commands will be given over the right shoulder. The squad leaders give the appropriate command so that they are following the last soldier in the preceding squad at the correct distance.

a. On the preparatory command, the squad leader of the designated squad gives the supplementary command *Forward*. The other squad leaders command **STAND FAST**. On the command of execution **MARCH** (given by the platoon sergeant), the lead squad marches forward. The squad leader next to the lead element (or as designated) looks over the shoulder nearest the moving element and commands *Column Half Left (Right)* when the second from the last man is abreast of him and his right foot strikes the marching surface. The *squad leader* gives the command of execution **MARCH** as the right foot of the last man strikes the marching surface when abreast of him. On the command of execution, the squad leader executes the *Column Half Left (Right)*, then inclines without command to the right (left), and follows the last man of the preceding squad at correct distance. Other members of the squad march forward and execute the same movements as the squad leader. The remaining squads form the file in the same manner as the squad immediately behind the lead element.

b. The platoon may form a file and execute a column movement simultaneously from a column formation. The command for this movement is *File from the left (right)*, *Column Left (Right)*, **MARCH**. Following the platoon sergeant's preparatory command, the squad leader of the lead element commands *Column Left (Right)*, instead of *Forward*. The other squad leaders command **STAND FAST**. On the platoon leader's command of execution **MARCH**, the lead squad executes the *Column Left (Right)*. The other squad leaders command *Column Left (Right)* at the appropriate time.

NOTES: 1. At this point the platoon is executing platoon drill. The platoon sergeant will not release control of the squads to the squad leaders. The platoon

sergeant will rest personnel on an as needed basis; for example, when filing into a building.

2. The squad leaders give the command of execution **MARCH** as the right foot of the last man strikes the marching surface at the pivot (*Column Left*), or the first time the last man's right foot strikes the marching surface after the pivot (*Column Right*).

c. The platoon re-forms to the original column formation only from the *Halt*. The command is ***Column of fours to the right (left), MARCH.***

NOTE: To re-form the platoon to its original column formation when the file was formed on the command ***In sequence _____, MARCH,*** the commands **FALL OUT** and **FALL IN** must be given.

(1) On the preparatory command, the squad leader of the base squad commands **STAND FAST**. All other squad leaders command ***Column Half Right (Left)***. On the platoon sergeant's command of execution **MARCH**, the base squad stands fast; all other squads execute the *Column Half Right (Left)* simultaneously.

(2) As each of the moving squad leaders reach a point (line) that ensures correct interval on the element to their left (right), they automatically incline to the left (right) and command ***Mark Time, MARCH*** and ***Squad, HALT*** so that their squad is abreast of the base (other) squad when halted.

7-14. FORMING A COLUMN OF TWOS AND RE-FORMING

The platoon forms a column of twos from the right or left when in a column of fours at the *Halt*. The command is ***Column of twos from the left (right), MARCH.***

a. On the preparatory command, the squad leaders of the two lead squads command ***Forward.*** The other squad leaders command **STAND FAST**.

(1) On the platoon sergeant's command of execution **MARCH**, the two lead squads march forward. The squad leader (second or third) next to the lead element gives the command to start both of the remaining squads in motion. Looking over the shoulder nearest the moving elements, the squad leader gives the preparatory command ***Column Half Left (Right)*** (when the second from the last man is abreast of him) and then gives the command of execution **MARCH** as the right foot of the last man strikes the marching surface abreast of him.

(2) On the platoon sergeant's command of execution, both squad leaders execute the *Column Half Left (Right)*, incline to the right (left) without command, and follow the last men of the preceding squads at correct distance (do not close the space if the files of the two leading squads are not even). Other members of the remaining squads march forward and execute the same movements as their squad leaders.

b. The platoon may form a column of twos and execute a column movement simultaneously from a column formation. The command for this movement is ***Column of twos from the left (right), Column left (right), MARCH.***

(1) The squad leaders of the lead squads command ***Column Left (Right)*** instead of ***Forward.*** The squad leader of the second (third) squad gives the command ***Column Left (Right)***; however, he executes *Column Half Left (Right)*. The remaining two squad leaders command **STAND FAST**.

(2) On the platoon sergeant's command of execution **MARCH**, the lead squads execute the *Column Left (Right)*. The squad leader (second or third) next to the lead elements gives the command to start both squads in motion. Looking over the shoulder nearest the moving elements, the squad leader gives the preparatory command **Column Left (Right)** when the second from the last man is abreast of him. Then he gives the command of execution **MARCH** as the right foot of the last man strikes the marching surface at the pivot (*Column Left*) or the first time the last man's right foot strikes the marching surface after the pivot (*Column Right*). Although the command is **Column Left (Right)**, the outside squads (fourth or first) execute *Column Half Left (Right)*.

c. The platoon re-forms to the original column formation only from the *Halt*. The command is **Column of fours to the right (left), MARCH**.

(1) When re-forming into a column of fours *without the platoon leader present*, the platoon sergeant remains at his post centered on the platoon. When re-forming into a column of fours *with the platoon leader present*, the platoon leader faces as in marching and resumes his original position in the column. The platoon sergeant follows the rear element and resumes his post in the formation when the element has halted.

(2) On the preparatory command, the squad leaders of the base squads command **STAND FAST**. The trailing squad leaders command **Column Half Right (Left)**. On the platoon sergeant's command of execution **MARCH**, the base squads stand fast. The trailing squad leaders execute slightly more than the *Column Half Right (Left)* simultaneously. As the trailing squad leaders reach a point (line) that will ensure correct interval on the element to their left (right), they automatically incline to the left (right). The squad leader nearest the stationary squads (second or third) commands **Mark Time, MARCH** and **Squads, HALT**.

Section III. INSPECTIONS

Inspections at platoon level are typically conducted by the platoon sergeant. If the platoon leader wants to inspect, he conducts the inspection from his post. For continuity purposes, this section will address the platoon sergeant's actions only.

7-15. BASIC INFORMATION

Consider the following when conducting inspections.

a. The platoon has one prescribed formation for inspecting personnel and equipment in ranks—the line formation. When inspecting crew-served weapons and vehicles, the personnel are normally positioned to the rear of the formation with the operator (gunner) standing by his vehicle (weapon).

b. The platoon leader or platoon sergeant may conduct an in-quarters (barracks) inspection to include personal appearance, individual weapons, field equipment, displays, maintenance, and sanitary conditions. The platoon leader or platoon sergeant will follow local guidelines.

c. When field equipment is to be inspected, it should be displayed as shown in Chapter 8, Figure 8-5 (as a guide). Additional equipment not shown or different models of the equipment should be arranged in a uniform manner established by the local commander. The squad leaders may carry and use materials to record deficiencies if the local chain of command authorizes it.

7-16. IN-RANKS INSPECTION

To conduct in-ranks inspections, use the following procedures:

a. With the platoon in line formation, the platoon sergeant commands **Count, OFF**. On the command of execution **OFF**, all personnel with the exception of the right flank personnel turn their head and eyes to the right and the right flank personnel count off with “**ONE.**” After the right flank soldiers have counted their number, the soldiers to their left count off with the next higher number and simultaneously turn their head and eyes to the front. All other members of the formation count off in the same manner until the entire formation has counted off.

b. After the platoon has counted off, the platoon sergeant commands **Open Ranks, MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the front rank takes two steps forward, the second rank takes one step forward, the third rank stands fast, and the fourth rank takes two steps backward. If additional ranks are present, the fifth rank takes four steps backward, and the sixth rank takes six steps backward.

NOTE: After taking the prescribed number of steps, the men do not raise their arms. If the platoon leader wants exact interval or alignment, he commands **At Close Interval (At Double Interval), Dress Right, DRESS**. (See paragraph 7-6 for more information on aligning the platoon.)

c. At this point, the platoon is ready to be inspected. Typically, the squads are inspected by the squad leaders; however they may be inspected by the platoon sergeant or platoon leader. (See paragraphs 7-17 and 7-18.)

7-17. SQUAD LEADERS’ INSPECTION

If the platoon sergeant wants the squad leaders to inspect their squads, he will direct **INSPECT YOUR SQUADS**. *Salutes* are not exchanged.

a. The squad leader marches forward and to the left, inclines as necessary until he is at a point 15 inches in front of and centered on the first man.

NOTE: If the members of the platoon are armed, the squad leaders will sling their weapons diagonally across the back with the muzzle down and to the right. This movement will be executed without command and prior to the squad leader stepping off. (For more information on how to inspect personnel with weapons and how to manipulate the weapon, see paragraph 7-17, c-f.)

b. The squad leader remains at a modified *Position of Attention* moving his head and eyes only. After inspecting at the center position, he takes a short step forward and to the left and inspects, returns to the center and steps forward and to the right and inspects, and returns to the center position.

c. Having inspected the first man, the squad leader faces to the right as in marching and takes one (two if at normal interval) step, halts, and faces the next man at the appropriate distance. The squad leader conducts the inspection for the rest of the soldiers in the squad.

d. After inspecting the last soldier in the squad, the squad leader faces to the right as in marching and marches around behind the squad, inclining as necessary. While the squad leader marches back to his post, he inspects the squad from the rear.

e. After resuming his post, the squad leader turns his head and eyes over his left shoulder and commands his squad to assume *At Ease*.

f. The platoon sergeant remains at his post (inspects the guidon bearer if appropriate). After the last squad has been inspected and is at *At Ease*, the platoon sergeant commands the platoon to *Attention*.

g. After commanding the platoon to *Attention*, the platoon sergeant commands **Close Ranks, MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the first rank takes four steps backward, the second rank takes two steps backward, the third rank stands fast, and the fourth rank takes one step forward. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant take the appropriate number of steps to maintain their posts.

h. If the platoon is being inspected as part of a larger formation and control of the platoon has not been turned over to the platoon sergeant, he faces about, executes *At Ease*, and awaits further instructions from the first sergeant.

7-18. PLATOON SERGEANT'S/PLATOON LEADER'S INSPECTION

If the platoon sergeant is not going to inspect the entire platoon, he directs the squad leaders of the appropriate squads to inspect their squads. All others will be inspected by the platoon sergeant. When armed, the platoon sergeant slings his weapon in the same manner as the squad leaders.

a. The platoon sergeant faces to the *Half Left* as in marching and marches by the most direct route to a point 15 inches in front of and centered on the first squad leader (or the squad leader of the squad to be inspected). As soon as the platoon sergeant halts in front of the squad leader, he commands the other squads to *At Ease* and inspects the squad leader.

b. The platoon sergeant remains at a modified *Position of Attention* moving his head and eyes only. After inspecting at the center position, he takes a short step forward and to the left and inspects, returns to the center and steps forward and to the right and inspects, and returns to the center position.

c. Having inspected the squad leader, the platoon sergeant faces to the right as in marching and takes one (two if at normal interval) steps, halts, and faces the next man at the appropriate distance. After the platoon sergeant steps off, the squad leader takes a half step forward and faces about. When moving from man to man, the squad leader and platoon sergeant move simultaneously.

d. Having inspected the last soldier in the squad, the platoon sergeant faces to the right as in marching and marches around behind the squad, inclining as necessary, and inspects the squad from the rear.

e. As the platoon sergeant begins to inspect the first squad from the rear, he commands the next squad to *Attention*. The squad leader returns to his post. After the platoon sergeant arrives in front of the next squad leader, he commands the first squad to *At Ease* over the right shoulder.

f. The platoon sergeant and squad leader execute in the same manner as in inspecting the first squad until the entire platoon has been inspected. After inspecting the

rear of the last squad, the platoon sergeant marches by the most direct route to his post, halts, faces to the left and commands the platoon to *Attention*.

g. After commanding the platoon to *Attention*, the platoon sergeant commands **Close Ranks, MARCH**. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the first rank takes four steps backward, the second rank takes two steps backward, the third rank stands fast, and the fourth rank takes one step forward. On the command of execution **MARCH**, the platoon leader and platoon sergeant take the appropriate number of steps to maintain their posts.

h. If the platoon is being inspected as part of a larger formation and control of the platoon has been not been turned over to the platoon sergeant, he faces about, executes *At Ease*, and awaits further instructions from the first sergeant.

7-19. IN-QUARTERS (STAND BY) INSPECTION

When the platoon sergeant wants to conduct an in-quarters inspection, he uses the following procedures:

a. The squad members are positioned on line with their equipment or as near it as possible. The squad leader positions himself in the path of the inspector at a point near his area of responsibility. At the approach of the inspector, the squad leader commands, **Squad, ATTENTION**, and reports, **“Sergeant, the platoon is prepared for inspection.”**

NOTE: When the situation dictates, the squad leader may report to the inspector outside of the quarters. A designated individual commands the members to **ATTENTION** as the inspector enters the area.

b. The squad leader then guides the inspector along a route dictated by the physical arrangement of the personnel and equipment. Upon entering the area, the highest ranking soldier present commands **AT EASE**. As the inspector approaches each individual or his equipment, the individual automatically assumes the *Position of Attention*. When the inspector has moved to the next man, the last man inspected resumes the position of *At Ease*. As the inspector begins to exit the area after completing the inspection, **CARRY ON** is commanded.

NOTE: When inspecting soldiers’ rooms, *Attention* is not commanded. The individuals automatically assume the *Position of Attention* as the inspector enters the room. The inspector then commands **AT EASE**. As the inspector approaches each soldier, the soldier assumes the *Position of Attention* and resumes *At Ease* after he has been inspected.