

Load in six times.

A loading procedure for (rifled) musket
in American Civil War re-enactment
adapted for firing blanks without using the rammer from
W. J. Hardee: *Rifle and Infantry Tactics*, S.H. Goetzel & Co., Mobile (1861).

Loading in six times starts with the soldier in the *Position of the Soldier* and at *Shouldered Arms*. These positions are explained first, quoting Hardee. Next is his text of *Load in nine times* with adaptations for re-enactment, in which only blank cartridges and percussion caps are used while avoiding the ramrod. Finally, a clean version of the adapted text of the procedure is given with an overview of the commands.

The original text of Hardee's tactics as adapted to musket can be consulted freely online at <https://archive.org/details/rifleinfantrytac11hard> (Vol. I, from which all quotations in this work are taken) and <https://archive.org/details/rifleinfantrytac21hard/> (Vol. II).

Position of the Soldier.

78. Heels on the same line, as near each other as the conformation of the man will permit ;

The feet turned out equally, and forming with each other something less than a right angle ;

The knees straight without stiffness ;

The body erect on the hips, inclining a little forward ;

The shoulders square and falling equally ;

The arms hanging naturally ;

The elbows near the body ;

The palm of the hand turned a little to the front, the little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons ;

The head erect and square to the front, without constraint ;

The chin near the stock, without covering it ;

The eyes fixed straight to the front, and striking the ground about the distance of fifteen paces.

Remarks on the position of the Soldier.

Heels on the same line ;

79. Because, if one were in the rear of the other, the shoulder on that side would be thrown back, or the position of the soldier would be constrained.

Heels more or less closed ;

Because, men who are knock-kneed, or who have legs with large calves, cannot, without constraint, make their heels touch while standing.

The feet equally turned out, and not forming too large an angle ;

Because, if one foot were turned out more than the other, a shoulder would be deranged, and if both feet be too much turned out, it would not be practicable to incline the upper part of the body forward without rendering the whole position unsteady.

Knees extended without stiffness ;

Because, if stiffened, constraint and fatigue would be unavoidable.

The body erect on the hips ;

Because, it gives equilibrium to the position. The instructor will observe that many recruits have the bad habit of dropping a shoulder, of drawing in a side, or of advancing a hip, particularly the right, when under arms. These are defects he will labor to correct.

The upper part of the body inclining forward ;

Because, commonly, recruits are disposed to do the reverse, to project the belly and to throw back the shoulders, when they wish to hold themselves erect, from which result great inconveniences in marching. The habit of inclining forward the upper part of the body is so important to contract, that the instructor must enforce it at the beginning, particularly with recruits who have naturally the opposite habit.

Shoulders square ;

Because if the shoulders be advanced beyond the line of the breast, and the back arched (the defect called *round-shouldered*, not uncommon with recruits,) the man cannot align himself, nor use his piece with address. It is important, then, to correct this defect, and necessary to that end that the coat should set easy about the shoulders and arm pits ; but in correcting this defect, the instructor should take care that the shoulders be not thrown too much to the rear, which would cause the belly to project, and the small of the back to be curved.

The arms hanging naturally, elbows near the body, the palm of the hand a little turned to the front, the little finger behind the seam of the pantaloons ;

Because these positions are equally important to the shoulder arms, and to prevent the man from occupying more space in a rank than is necessary to it free use of the piece ; they have, moreover, the advantage of keeping in the shoulders.

The face straight to the front, and without constraint ;

Because, if there be stiffness in the latter position, it would communicate itself to the whole of the upper part of the body, embarrass its movements and give pain and fatigue.

Eyes direct to the front ;

Because, this is the surest means of maintaining the shoulders in line—an essential object, to be insisted on and attained.

Principles of Shouldered Arms.

120. The recruit being placed as explained in the first lesson of the first part [*i.e.* the Position of the Soldier, RXR], the Instructor will cause him to bend the right arm slightly, and place the piece in it, in the following manner :

121. The piece in the right hand—the barrel nearly vertical and resting in the hollow of the shoulder—the guard to the front, the arm hanging nearly at its full length near the body ; the thumb, and fore-finger embracing the guard, the remaining fingers closed together, and grasping the swell of the stock just under the cock, which rests on the little finger.

122. Recruits are frequently seen with natural defects in the conformation of the shoulders, breast and hips. These the instructor will labor to correct in the lessons without arms, and afterwards, by steady endeavors, so that the appearance of the pieces, in the same line, may be uniform, and this without constraint to the men in their positions.

123. The instructor will have occasion to remark that recruits, on first bearing arms, are liable to derange their position by lowering the right shoulder and the right hand, or by sinking the hip and spreading out the elbows.

124. He will be careful to correct all these faults by continually rectifying the position ; he will sometimes take away the piece to replace it the better ; he will avoid fatiguing the recruits too much in the beginning, but labor by degrees to render this position so natural and easy that they may remain in it a long time without fatigue.

125. Finally, the instructor will take great care that the piece, at a shoulder, be not carried too high nor too low ; if too high, the right elbow would spread out, the soldier would occupy too much space in his rank, and the piece be made to waver ; if too low, the files would be too much closed, the soldier not have the necessary space to handle his piece with facility, the right arm would become too much fatigued, and would draw down the shoulder.

Adapted loading procedure for re-enactment
with **additions** and ~~deletions~~ indicated in Hardee's text

*Load in **six** ~~nine~~ times.*

1. LOAD-*

~~*Whenever the loadings and firing are to be executed, the instructor will cause the cartridge boxes to be brought to the front.~~¹

One time and three motions.

156. (*First motion.*) ~~Same as the first position of present arms No. 143.~~ **With the right hand bring the piece erect before the centre of the body, the rammer to the front ; at the same time seize the piece with the left hand half-way between the guide sight and lower band, the thumb extended along the barrel and against the stock, the fore-arm horizontal and resting against the body, the hand as high as the elbow.**²

(*Second motion.*) Carry the piece to the left side with the left hand—butt upon the ground—barrel to the front—piece inclined to the right and front resting upon the left thigh, muzzle six inches in front of the centre of the body—right hand grasping the piece just below the upper band, and left hand extended upon the piece.

(*Third motion.*) Seize the piece with the left hand at the muzzle and carry the right hand to the cartridge box.

2. *Handle*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

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

3. *Tear*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

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

¹ Hardee maintained this instruction from the French *Ordonnance du Roi du 22 Juillet 1845 sur l'Exercice et les Manoeuvres des Bataillons de Chasseurs d'Orléans* (free digital copy available at Google Books), on which he based his work. The engravings show that this instruction assumes that the cartridge box is carried on a hip belt (e.g. opposite page 36 of Hardee Vol. I), rather than on a sling as in the American army. When carried on a sling, there is no need to bring the cartridge box to the front. The instruction is therefore removed.

² Quoting from No. 143 of Vol. I where Present Arms is explained.

4. *Charge*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

159. Empty the powder into the barrel ; **stow away the paper on your person**³ disengage the ball from the paper with the right hand and the thumb and first two fingers of the left ; ~~insert it into the bore, the pointed end uppermost, and press it down with the right thumb ;~~ seize the **piece with the right hand at the upper band**⁴ head of the rammer with the thumb and fore finger of the right hand, the other fingers closed, the elbows near the body.

5. *Draw*—RAMMER.

One time and three motions.

160. (*First motion.*) ~~Half draw the rammer by extending, the right arm ; steady it in this position with the left thumb ; seize the rammer between the thumb and fore finger of the right hand the thumb under and the finger over the rammer ; fingers extended, palm of the hand to the front.~~

161. (*Second motion.*) ~~Clear the rammer from the pipes by extending the arm ; the rammer in prolongation of the pipes, palm of the hand to the front.~~

162. (*Third motion.*) ~~Turn the rammer by closing the fingers, the little end passing near the left shoulder, turning the back of the hand to the front ; steady it by extending the forefinger of the right hand ; place the head of the rammer on the ball, the rammer in prolongation of the barrel.~~

6. *Ram*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

163. Insert the rammer as far as the right, and steady it in this position with the thumb of the left hand ; ~~seize the rammer at the small end with the thumb and fore finger on the right hand, the back of the hand to the front ;~~ press the ball home, the elbows near the body.

7. *Return*—RAMMER.

One time and three motions.

164 (*First motion.*) ~~Draw the rammer half way out, and steady it in this position with the left thumb ; grasp it near the muzzle with the right hand, the thumb under and fore finger above the rammer, the fingers extended ; clear the rammer from the bore by extending the arm, the palm to the front, the rammer in the prolongation of the bore.~~

165. (*Second motion.*) ~~Turn the rammer, the head passing near the left shoulder, the fingers closed, the rammer held between the thumb and fore finger, nails to the front ; insert the rammer, until the hand reaches the muzzle.~~

166. (*Third motion.*) ~~Force the rammer home by placing the little finger of the right~~

³ Discarding the paper on the spot is usually not permitted.

⁴ The position of the right hand is chosen to be the same as in the fourth motion of Unfix Bayonet (No. 202 of Vol. I) and the third motion of Inspection Arms (No. 227 of Vol. I) for consistency.

hand on the head of the rammer ; and extend the left hand down the piece without depressing the shoulder.

5. 8. PRIME.*

* If Maynard's primer be used, the command will be, *load in eight times*, and the eighth command will be, *shoulder arms*, and executed from *return rammer*, in one time and two motions, as follows :

(*First motion.*) Raise the piece with the left hand, and take the position of shoulder arms, as indicated No. 145.

(*Second motion.*) Drop the left hand quickly by the side.

167. (*First motion.*) With the left hand raise the piece till the hand is as high as the eye, knock the barrel with the right hand to make the powder drop down in the barrel⁵, grasp the small of the stock with the right hand ; half face to the right ; place, at the same time, the right foot behind and at right angles with the left ; the hollow of the right foot against the left heel. Slip the left hand down to the lower band, the thumb along the stock, the left elbow against the body ; bring the piece to the right side, the butt below the right fore-arm—the small of the stock against the body and two inches below the right breast, the barrel upwards, the muzzle on a level with the eye.

168. (*Second motion.*) Half cock with the thumb of the right hand the fingers supported against the guard and the small of the stock—remove the old cap with one of the fingers of the right hand, and with the thumb and fore-finger of the same hand take a cap from the pouch, place it on the nipple and press it down with the thumb ; seize the small of the stock with the right hand.

6. 9. Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

169. (*First motion.*) Bring the piece to the right shoulder and support it there with the left hand, face to the front ; bring the right heel to the side of and on a line with the left ; grasp the piece with the right hand as indicated in the position of *shoulder arms*. The piece in the right hand—the barrel nearly vertical and resting in the hollow of the shoulder—the guard to the front, the arm hanging nearly at its full length near the body ; the thumb, and fore-finger embracing the guard, the remaining fingers closed together, and grasping the swell of the stock just under the cock, which rests on the little finger.⁶

170. (*Second motion.*) Drop the left hand quickly by the side.

⁵ Especially after a few rounds, black powder tends to stick to the inside of the barrel and requires some encouragement to drop all the way down. This method is preferred over hitting the butt of the piece on the ground.

⁶ Quoting from No. 121 of Vol. I where Shoulder Arms is explained.

Clean text of adapted loading procedure

Load in six times.

1. LOAD.

One time and three motions.

156. (*First motion.*) With the right hand bring the piece erect before the centre of the body, the rammer to the front ; at the same time seize the piece with the left hand half-way between the guide sight and lower band, the thumb extended along the barrel and against the stock, the fore-arm horizontal and resting against the body, the hand as high as the elbow.

(*Second motion.*) Carry the piece to the left side with the left hand—butt upon the ground—barrel to the front—piece inclined to the right and front resting upon the left thigh, muzzle six inches in front of the centre of the body—right hand grasping the piece just below the upper band, and left hand extended upon the piece.

(*Third motion.*) Seize the piece with the left hand at the muzzle and carry the right hand to the cartridge box.

2. *Handle*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

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

3. *Tear*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

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

4. *Charge*—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

159. Empty the powder into the barrel ; stow away the paper on your person ; seize the piece with the right hand at the upper band and extend the left hand down the piece without depressing the shoulder.

5. PRIME.

One time and two motions.

167. (*First motion.*) With the left hand raise the piece till the hand is as high as the eye, knock the barrel with the right hand to make the powder drop down in the

barrel, grasp the small of the stock with the right hand ; half face to the right ; place, at the same time, the right foot behind and at right angles with the left ; the hollow of the right foot against the left heel. Slip the left hand down to the lower band, the thumb along the stock, the left elbow against the body ; bring the piece to the right side, the butt below the right fore-arm—the small of the stock against the body and two inches below the right breast, the barrel upwards, the muzzle on a level with the eye.

168. (*Second motion.*) Half cock with the thumb of the right hand the fingers supported against the guard and the small of the stock—remove the old cap with one of the fingers of the right hand, and with the thumb and fore-finger of the same hand take a cap from the pouch, place it on the nipple and press it down with the thumb ; seize the small of the stock with the right hand.

6. *Shoulder*—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

169. (*First motion.*) Bring the piece to the right shoulder and support it there with the left hand, face to the front ; bring the right heel to the side of and on a line with the left ; grasp the piece with the right hand—the barrel nearly vertical and resting in the hollow of the shoulder—the guard to the front, the arm hanging nearly at its full length near the body ; the thumb, and fore-finger embracing the guard, the remaining fingers closed together, and grasping the swell of the stock just under the cock, which rests on the little finger.

170. (*Second motion.*) Drop the left hand quickly by the side.

Summary of commands

Load in ~~six~~ ~~nine~~ times.

LOAD. [TWO]⁷ [THREE]

Handle—CARTRIDGE.

Tear—CARTRIDGE.

Charge—CARTRIDGE.

~~*Draw*—RAMMER.~~

~~*Ram*—CARTRIDGE.~~

~~*Return*—RAMMER. [TWO] [THREE]~~

PRIME. [TWO]

Shoulder—ARMS. [TWO]

Load in six times.

LOAD. [TWO] [THREE]

Handle—CARTRIDGE.

Tear—CARTRIDGE.

Charge—CARTRIDGE.

PRIME. [TWO]

Shoulder—ARMS. [TWO]

⁷ Conform No. 131 of Vol. I, the commands [TWO] or [THREE] decide the brisk execution of the second or third motion of each time.