



# Officers' Fusee Exercise

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## Officer's Fusee Exercise

The fusee carried by the Grenadier and Light Infantry officers were a scaled-down version of the regular Land Service arms that were carried by the rank and file of the Army. The serjeants also carried a lighter weight weapon, but just as there was no sword exercise for the serjeants, so also there was no specific salutes for those in the flank companies either. When the rank and file were at *Shoulder*, the serjeants of the flank companies carried at the *Advance* position of the regular manual. However, the fusee carries and positions of the flank company officers, although similarly names, were quite different.

The following Fusee Exercises are taken from the Hall's *Encyclopedia* of 1795, showing a flank company officer performing his salutes with the fusee. Although this exercise position was first shown in drawings (and explanation) in this later work, the *Norfolk Discipline* and Pickering's *Discipline* both referred to a different exercise for the officers, so it must be assumed that such existed in the 1770s. To confirm this there is an order in the Orderly Book of the 10th Foot in Boston, dated 14 April 1775, with the following:

*The officers to be out with their fuzees tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock to practice Fuzee Exercise.*

Although this is assumed to be for the flank company officers, it is certain that many battalion company officers also possessed these weapons and might have practiced on that day also. [Also see various quotes on the use of fuzees that are contained in *We Were There—April 19th, 1775, The British Soldiers* showing that officers other than flank company ones employed them.]

Thomas Pickering [p.102 fn.] states:

*The officers, in marching off their companies, may carry their fuzees in any of the ways mentioned in the manual and officers' exercise;...*

Also [TP p.104]:

*In whatever manner the officers and serjeants carry their fuses on the march, when they come to the ground on which they are to form, they should carry their fuses ADVANCED.*

Although in the Norfolk Militia *Discipline* the commissioned officers and the serjeants carried their arms similarly in their version of the *Advance*, the regular Army's hand placement was somewhat different for that particular position, and the serjeants did carry their firelocks in the *Advanced Arms* (shown in the Manual Exercise as XXXIV) position. However the offices carry of *Fusee Advanced* was entirely different, and held on the left shoulder. In formation, this was the basic carry position for the officers, under the "*Fusee Salute*" as follows:

*(Assuming that the officer is in the position of order.)*

#### **Fusee Advanced**

*The first motion in the fusee salute of the officers in the granadier and light infantry, is to slip the right hand down the fusee as far as can be done with ease, at the same instant placing the right foot behind the left heel.*

*The second motion is to raise with the right hand the fusee from the ground, and bringing it with a smart motion to the left side of the body, seize it with the left at the cock, facing to the right about on both heels at the same time.*

Notes: The last line was part of the explanation of a Fusee Salute when an Inspecting General was present and the officers were to face him as he marched around the troops in the Review procedure.



*The third motion is to place the right foot in a line with the left, and throw back the right hand to the right side, letting the fusee fall against the left shoulder in the left hand, at the same time grasping the cock.*

Notes: This is the distinctive carry position of Fusee Advanced for only the officers. Incidentally, for the actual salute with the Fusee Planted position, it is not necessary to go to the Fusee Recovered (also commenced from the Order), for an officer can go directly in the Planted stance to complete the salute actions if so required.

### **The Fusee Salute—Standing**

The salute for the officers with fusees is quite different while in a standing position or on the march. The following explains the *Standing Salute*, and is given from the position of *Ordered Arms*. It will also be noted that the fusee always has the bayonet fixed for these salutes. As well, this is the first time one sees the open palm salute in a drawing. Those that wore “caps”, such as Grenadiers and Light Infantry, made the hand salute while those in the Battalion companies that wore “hats” always removed their hat during the salute. Timing for these salutes, so as to keep the officers in the company performing them in unison, can be practiced with the same ‘one’, ‘two’ method, and only the command of execution given by the senior company officer in a low voice to the other two. As such, the salutes will be performed in style and exactness.

#### **Fusee Recovered**

*With the left hand bring up the fusee to a perpendicular line: at the same time quit it with the right hand, and seize it again with the same hand at the small part of the stock below the guard, and keep it in an erect position.*



Notes: This is a poorly descriptive explanation and as can be observed by the final position of the arms, leaves much unsaid.

For example, as the officer is at *Order*, the left hand must reach across the body to grasp the fusee as low down as possible and bring it directly in front of the body, sling outwards, with the left elbow down and close to the body. The right hand releases the muzzle end and grasps the small of the stock as described, with the elbow close to the body and the forearm parallel to the ground. Thumbs and fingers are wrapped around the stock with both the hands.

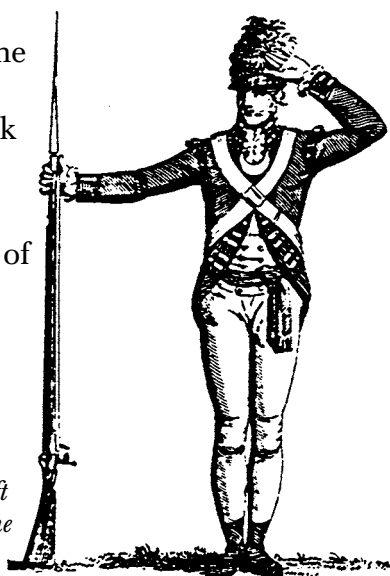
Again, although this description of the command of *Recover* is the same as for the men, the position for the officers' *Recover* is quite different.

#### **Fusee Planted**

*First motion: Remove the left hand, bringing it down to the left side, turn at the same instant to the front on both heels, with an extended arm, and plant the butt of the fusee on the ground, and in a line parallel with the right side.*

*Second motion: Raise the left hand, and, with the palm open, place it against the cap, as represented in the plate.*

*When the general has passed, the left hand is to be brought down with an easy, graceful motion, from the cap to the left side, where it was placed in the last motion of the salute.*



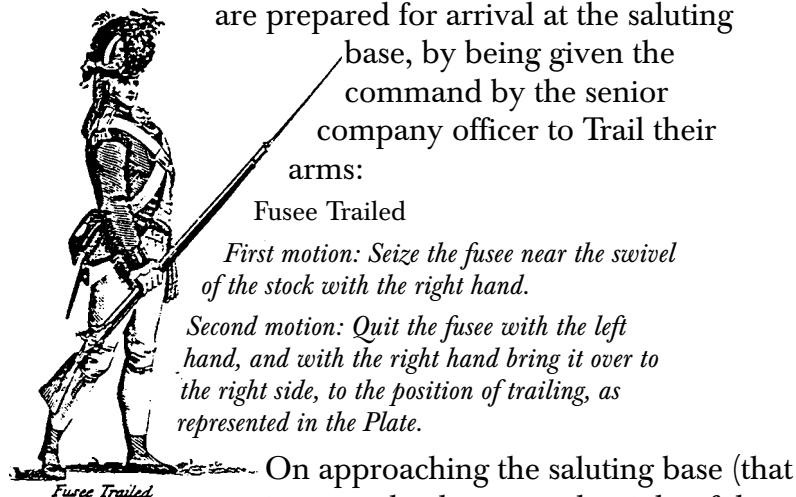
*Standing Salute. Fusee Planted*

Notes: Once more, the facings are not necessary except when a reviewing general is to be faced. This salute is to be done with grace rather than 'snap' or briskness (that

is normally required of the men in their exercises), and motions should be deliberate and rather slowly performed in complete unison of the three company officers concerned. Again, the senior company officer may give low voiced commands to the other two to achieve this attractive salute. In the second motion, the hand is not slapped up to the cap with an artificial speed as in a modern British salute, but again, with a timed and graceful motion. The same is true when the hand is returned to the side to complete the action of the saluting hand, “with an easy, graceful motion,…”

### **The Fusee Salute—Marching**

The flank officers marching with their fusees Advanced are prepared for arrival at the saluting



base, by being given the command by the senior company officer to Trail their arms:

Fusee Trailed

*First motion: Seize the fusee near the swivel of the stock with the right hand.*

*Second motion: Quit the fusee with the left hand, and with the right hand bring it over to the right side, to the position of trailing, as represented in the Plate.*

On approaching the saluting base (that is correctly always on the right of the unit), the command is given to perform the salute, which is done in the same graceful style and timing as for the standing salute along with the foot timing at the slow march tempo.

Fusee Salute

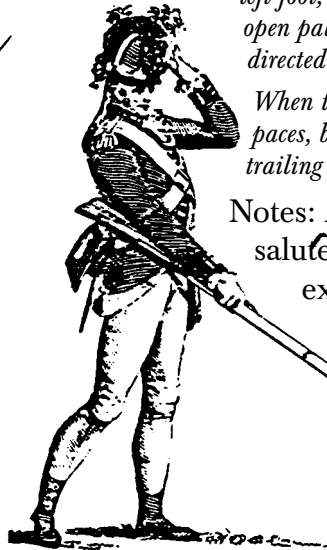
*First motion: In stepping [off] with the right foot, dart with the right hand the muzzle of the fusee forwards in a direct line, so as to bring it nearly on a level.*

*Second motion: At the next step with the left foot, turn the fusee round about in such a manner as to bring the muzzle sloping upwards towards the rear, with the lock downwards; at the same instant placing the left hand upon the small of the stock behind the guard.*

*Third motion: Salute with the fusee, at the next step with the right foot, by turning it round toward the front, so as to incline the point of the bayonet towards the ground, with the lock of the fusee upwards, and throwing the left hand to the left side, as before directed.*

*Fourth motion: At the next step with the left foot, raise the left hand, and with the open palm place it against the cap, as directed with the fusee planted.*

*When the general has passed about ten paces, bring the fusee back again to the trailing position in two motions.*



*Marching Salute*

Notes: Although the explanation of this salute is considerably clearer in expression, the last paragraph seems to imply that the troops and the general are passing each other, both on the march, but the normal manner is for the troops to pass a saluting base where the general and

his staff are 'standing' to receive or take the salute. It is when the officers have passed this saluting base about 10 paces that they then come back to *Trail*, and then return their arms to their *Advance* in a reverse of the two motions given to come to the *Trail* for the salute.