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U2C2L6

Squad Drill

Key Words:

Column

Close interval

Double interval

File

Flank

Formations

Line

Normal interval

Pivot

Rank

What You Will Learn to Do

Demonstrate correct response to squad drill commands

Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, non-verbal, visual, and written techniques
- Do your share as a good citizen in your school, community, country and the world

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe how to respond to commands when forming and marching the squad
- Identify the different types of squad formations and their related drill commands
- Identify the locations of key squad personnel in squad formation

Introduction

This lesson introduces you to the basics of practicing squad drill. It covers squad formations and teaches you how to march the squad, with tips for conducting a proper drill.

To execute squad drill, you must first know how a squad forms and what your responsibilities are when it forms, such as knowing how to fall in, line up, and align yourself. Once you have mastered these techniques, learning how to march in uniformity with others is important in being part of a sharp drill squad. The following drill tips will help you better understand some general information about squad drill.

Drill Tips

- Perform individual drill movements as described in the last lesson while executing drill as a squad member.
- The squad has two prescribed **formations**: **line** (or **rank**) and column (or **file**); however, your squad leader may form the squad in a column of twos from a column formation.
- When a squad forms in a line, its members are numbered from right to left; when in a column, from front to rear.
- When the squad drills as a separate unit and is in a line formation, the squad leader takes a position three steps in front of, and centered on, the squad.
- When it drills as a separate unit and is in a column or column of twos, the squad leader's position is three steps to the left, and centered on, the squad.
- When the squad drills as part of a larger formation, the squad leader occupies the number one (base) position of the squad.

Squad Formations

There are two prescribed **formations** – line and column. The squad may be formed into a column of twos from a column formation. When the squad is in line, squad members are numbered from right to left. When in column, the squad members form front to rear. The squad normally marches in column, but it may march in line for short distances.

Falling In

In squad drill, falling in is the process of forming up in a line formation. However, it may re-form in a column formation when each member can identify his or her exact position.

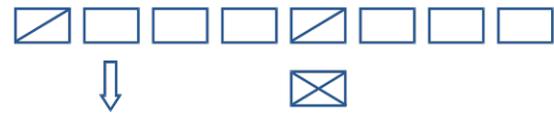
When the squad leader comes to the position of attention and commands “fall in,” the squad normally forms at **normal interval**.

On the command of “fall in,” the following actions occur simultaneously by all members of the squad:

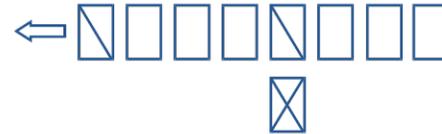
1. Double time to your position in the formation.
2. If you are the cadet on the right **flank**, position yourself so that when the squad forms, it is centered and three steps in front of the leader.
3. If you are the cadet on the right flank, come to attention and raise your left arm sideways to shoulder level, keeping it in line with your body. Keep your elbow locked, fingers and thumb extended and together, and palm facing down.

4. Cadets to the immediate left of the right-flank cadet come to attention, turn their heads and eyes to the right, and raise their left arms in the same manner as the right-flank cadet — except the cadet on the left flank does not raise the left arm. Cadets align themselves by stepping forward or backward until they are in line with the right-flank cadet. Cadets then obtain exact interval by taking short steps left or right, ensuring their fingertips touch the shoulder of the person to their right. As soon as each cadet is at normal interval, lower your arms to your sides, sharply turn your heads to the front, and assume the position of attention.

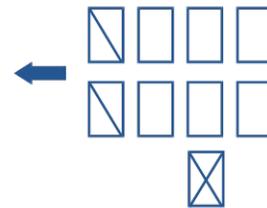
5. The right-flank cadet then sharply returns to the position of attention.



SQUAD LINE (RANK)



SQUAD COLUMN (FILE)



COLUMN OF TWOS

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NOTES:

- An arrow indicates the direction the squad is facing and/or moving.
- A boxed “X” is the *squad leader*; boxed slashes are *team leaders*.
- Squad sizes may vary with each unit.

Note:

The right-flank cadet raises their arm and looks straight to the front unless the squad is to align on an element to its right. If they align on an element to the right, they turn their head and eyes to the right and align themselves with that element.

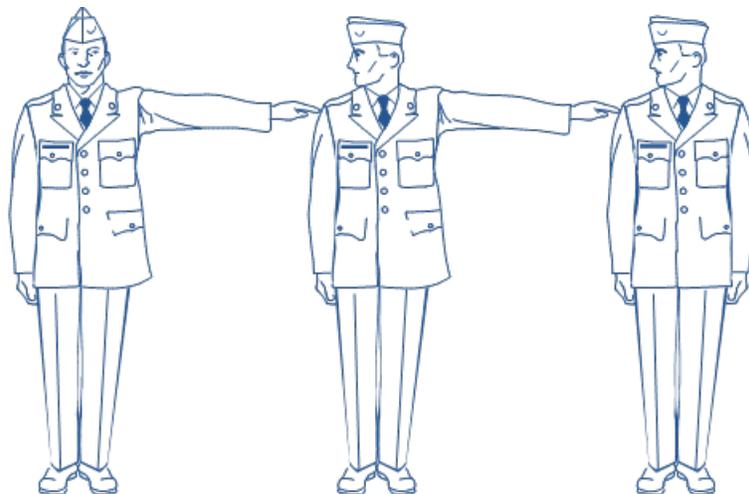
Intervals

When the squad 'falls in' for formation, it may be commanded to assume different spacing intervals between troops. Interval types include normal, close, and double.

Normal Interval

When the leader commands "dress right, dress" and "ready, front," the right-flank cadet stands fast. On the command of execution "dress," all cadets except the right-flank cadet turn their heads and eyes to the right and align themselves on the cadet to their right.

Cadets, except the left-flank cadet, extend their left arms out to the side at shoulder level with elbows locked, fingers together, and palms down. They position themselves with short steps so that the fingertips touch the shoulder of the cadet to their right. On the command of execution "front," each cadet sharply returns to the position of attention.



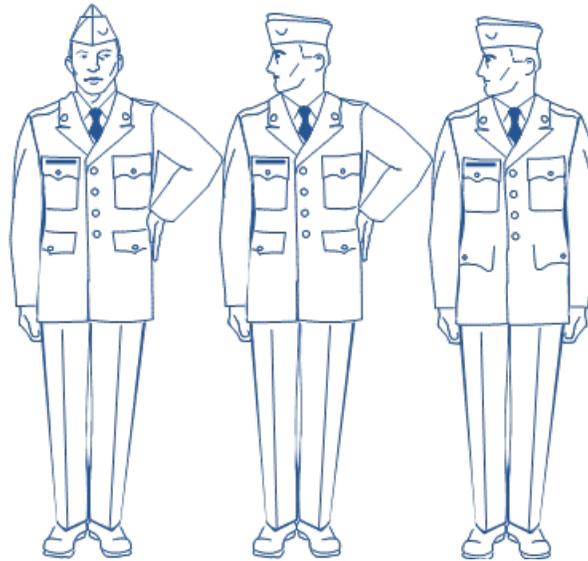
Aligning in normal interval. Courtesy of the Army JROTC.

If the squad leader wants to check the alignment, that leader moves to the right of the right-flank cadet and looks down the line of cadets to see that they are aligned. If the cadets are out of alignment, the leader speaks to them, giving direction as to how they can properly align themselves.

Close Interval

To have a squad form at **close interval**, the command is “at close interval, fall in.” To obtain close interval, place the heel of your left hand on your left hip even with your waist, your fingers and thumb together and extended downward. Keep your elbow in line with your body, touching the right arm of the cadet to your left.

To align the squad at close interval, the leader commands “at close interval, dress right, dress” and “ready, front.” The procedure is the same for aligning at normal interval, except align yourself closely, as directed above.



Aligning in close interval. Courtesy of the Army JROTC.

Double Interval

To have a squad form at a **double interval**, the leader commands “at double interval, dress right, dress” and “ready, front.” To obtain double interval, the right-flank cadet raises his or her left arm out to shoulder level. All other cadets raise both arms out to their sides at shoulder level so that their fingertips touch the fingertips of the cadets next to them. The left-flank cadet only raises the right arm to shoulder level.

Counting Off

Your squad may count off in line or column formation. The command is “count off.” When in a line formation, the squad counts from right to left. On the command of execution “off,” all cadets except the right-flank cadet turn their heads and eyes to the right. The right-flank cadet counts “one,” the next cadet to the left turns his or her head and eyes to the front and counts “two.” Each remaining cadet follows in the same manner, counting with the next higher number.

When in a column formation, execute counting off from front to rear. Then, on the command of execution “off,” the cadet at the head of the column turns his or her head and eyes to the right, counts “one” over the right shoulder, and sharply returns to the position of attention. Each remaining cadet in the column counts off in the same manner, using the next higher number each time. The last cadet in the column does not turn his or her head and eyes to the right.

Changing Intervals

To ensure that each squad member understands the number of steps to take, the squad leader should command “count, off” prior to changing intervals. Additionally, squad members do not raise their arms to measure distance (as they did to fall in) when changing intervals.

To change from normal interval to close interval, the command is “close interval, march.” On the command of execution “march,” the right-flank cadet stands fast. All cadets to that cadet’s left execute “right step, march,” take one step less than the number of their position in line, and halt. For example, the fourth cadet in line would take three steps then halt.

To change from close interval to normal interval, the leader gives the command “normal interval, march.” The right-flank cadet stands fast on the command of execution “march.” All cadets to the left of the right-flank cadet execute “left step, march,” take one step less than their position in line, and halt.

To change from normal to double interval, the command is “double interval, march.” On the command of execution “march,” the right-flank cadet stands fast. The cadets to the left of that cadet face to the left as in marching, take one 30-inch step less than the number of their position in line, halt, and execute a right face.

To change from double to normal interval, the command is “normal interval, march.” On the command of execution “march,” the right-flank cadet stands fast. The remaining cadets face to the right as in marching, take one 30-inch step less than the number of their position in line, halt, and execute a left face.

Rest and Dismissal

Rest movements are the same for a squad as they are for individuals. Your squad leader may command “fall out” if a more relaxed position than rest is appropriate. If the squad leader commands “fall out,” you may move out of the formation, but you must stay in the immediate area.

Your drill leader dismisses the squad from the position of attention. The command is “dismissed.” Upon hearing that command, all members of the squad may then leave the area.

Marching the Squad

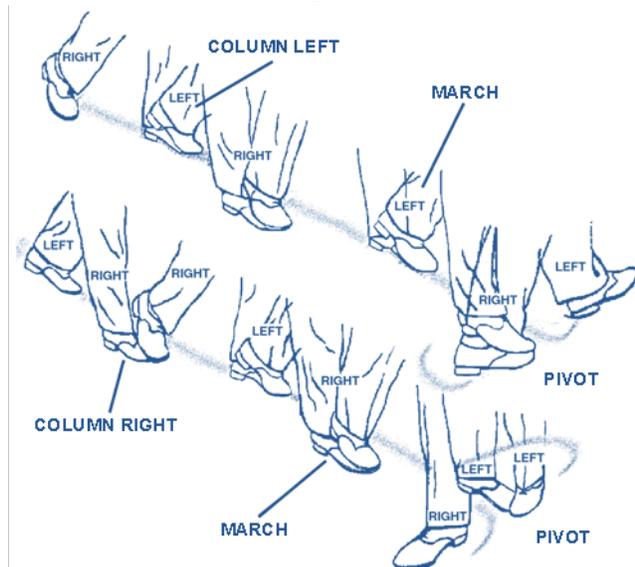
To march the squad, use the following procedures:

- For short distances only, the squad may be marched forward while in a line formation.
- When marching long distances, the squad is marched in column.
- To form a column formation from a line formation, the command is “right, face.”
- When a column formation is originated from a line formation at close interval, the squad may be marched for short distances at the half step with less than correct distance.
- To obtain correct distance while marching with less than correct distance, the command is “extend, march.” On the command of execution, “march,” the number one man takes one more 15-inch step and then steps off with a 30-inch step. Each squad member begins marching with a 30-inch step at the approximate point where the number one man stepped off, or as soon as correct distance has been obtained.

Changing Direction

From the halt, the command to start the squad in motion, and simultaneously change the direction of march 90 or 45 degrees, is “column right (left), march” or “column half right (half left), march.” On the command of execution “march,” the lead cadet faces in the commanded direction and steps off as in marching. All other cadets march forward and **pivot** on the ball of their lead foot in the commanded direction and step off with their trailing foot. As you approach the pivot point, shorten or lengthen your steps as necessary to pivot at the approximate point of the lead cadet.

To change the direction of march 90 or 45 degrees when marching, the squad leader gives the preparatory command “column right (left)” or “column half right (half left)” as the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface. The squad leader then gives the command “march” the next time that foot strikes the marching surface. On “march,” the lead cadet takes one additional step, pivots in the commanded direction as the pivot foot strikes the surface, and continues to march in the new direction. Other cadets continue to march forward and execute the pivot as described above.



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To march in the opposite direction, the command is “rear, march.” The squad leader gives the preparatory command as the right foot strikes the marching surface and

commands “march” the next time the right foot strikes the surface. On “march,” all cadets take one more step with their left foot, pivot on the balls of both feet, turn 180 degrees to the right, and step off in the new direction. Do not swing your arms when you make the pivot.

To avoid an obstacle in the line of march, the squad leader commands, “incline around.” The lead cadet inclines around the obstacle and resumes the original direction. All other cadets follow the lead cadet.

Marching to the Flank

When your squad marches to the flank, it does so only for short distances, and always in a column formation. The command is “right (left) flank, march.” Your squad leader gives the preparatory command “right (left) flank” when the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface, Then he/she gives the command of execution “march” when that foot strikes the marching surface the next time.

Then, on the command “march,” all cadets take one more step, pivot 90 degrees in the indicated direction on the ball of the lead foot, and step off in the new direction with the trailing foot. As your squad begins marching in the new direction, they should glance out of the corner of their right eye and dress to the right.

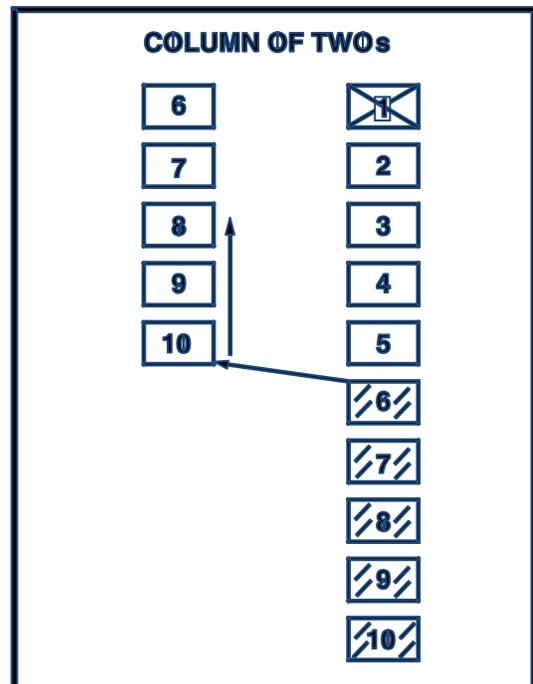
Forming a Column of Twos and Re-forming

When marching in a squad, you march in a **column** (one long line) most of the time. A variation of this formation is the column of twos. The column of twos is always formed from a file formation when the squad is at the halt. The command is “column of twos to the right (left), march.” On the preparatory command by the squad leader, the lead team leader commands “stand fast.”

The trailing team leader commands “column half right (half left), march.” On the command of execution “march,” the trailing team leader executes a column half right (half left) and inclines to the right (left) around the lead column. The cadets in the trailing team follow their leader.

When the trailing team leader reaches a point even with the lead team leader, he or she commands “mark time, march.” As the cadets behind the trailing team leader align themselves with the cadets in the lead column, they continue to march in place. When they are in position, the trailing team leader commands, “team, halt.”

Re-forming a single file from a column of twos is only done from the halt. The command is “file



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from the left (right), march.” On the preparatory command by the squad leader, the lead team leader commands, “forward” and the trailing team leader commands “stand fast.”

On the command of execution “march,” the lead team begins marching forward. When the second cadet from the rear of the lead team is abreast of the trailing team leader, that team leader commands, “column half left (half right).”

Then, when the last cadet of the lead team is abreast (of the trailing team leader) and the last cadet’s right foot strikes the marching surface, the trailing team leader commands “march.” The trailing team leader then inclines right (left) to follow the lead team at the appropriate distance.

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have learned the basics to begin practicing squad drill. It takes concentration and diligence to master the squad drill techniques. Properly executed, a smooth squad march reflects on the professionalism of your JROTC team.



Lesson Check-up

1. What is the difference between “falling out” and being “dismissed?”
2. What is the difference between a flanking movement and a column movement?

