

Lesson 6

Squad Drill



Key Terms

close interval
column
double interval
file
flank
formation
line
normal interval
pivot
rank

What You Will Learn to Do

- Demonstrate correct response to squad drill commands

Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, 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
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

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. After you have mastered these techniques, learning how to march uniformly with others is important in becoming a part of a sharp drill squad.

Key Note Terms

line – to form up in ranks, facing forward the length of the formation.

rank – to form up line abreast.

column – to form up in files, facing forward the width of the formation.

file – to form up in a column.

formation – patterned arrangement of troops

General Information about Squad Drill

- 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

The squad has two prescribed **formations**—line and column, as shown in Figure 2.6.1. The squad, however, 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, from front to rear. The squad normally marches in column, but it may march in line for short distances.

When the squad is in a line formation, the squad leader assumes a post three steps in front of and centered on the squad; when in a column or a column of twos, three steps to the left and centered on the squad. When the squad drills as part of a larger unit, the squad leader occupies the number one (base) position of the squad and carries a weapon in the same manner as prescribed for other riflemen in the squad.

Forming the Squad

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

To form at normal interval, the squad leader comes to the position of attention and commands “fall in.” On the command “fall in,” the following actions occur simultaneously.

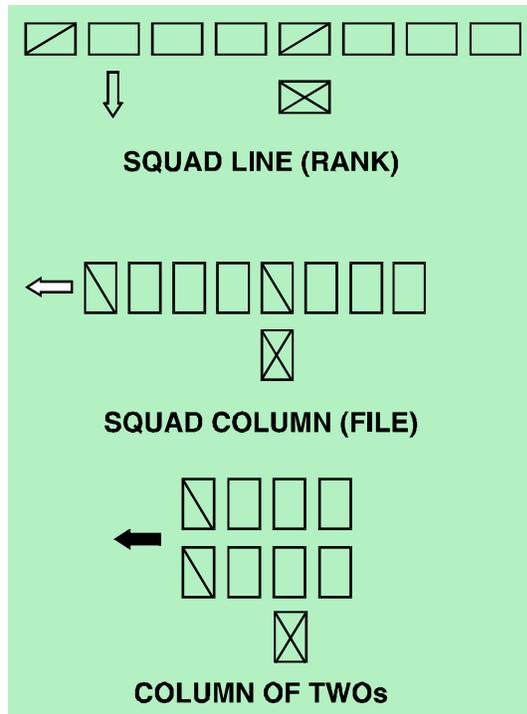


Figure 2.6.1: Squad formations.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Each cadet double-times to their position in the formation.

The right-**flank** cadet positions themselves so that when the squad is formed it is three steps in front of and centered on the squad leader.

The right-flank cadet comes to the position of attention and raises their left arm laterally at shoulder level, elbow locked, fingers and thumb extended and joined, and palm facing down. They ensure that the left arm is in line with the body.

The cadet to the immediate left of the right-flank cadet comes to the position of attention, turns their head and eyes to the right, and raises their left arm in the same manner as the right flank cadet. They obtain proper alignment by taking short steps forward or backward until they are on line with the right-flank cadet. They then obtain exact interval by taking short steps left or right until their shoulder touches the extended fingertips of the right-flank cadet. As soon as the cadet to the left has obtained normal interval, each cadet individually lowers their arm to their side, sharply turn their head and eyes to the front, and assume the position of attention.

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

All other members of the squad form in the same manner except that the left flank cadet does not raise their left arm.

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.

Key Note Term

flank – the side of the formation, either left or right

A Few Points of Interest

- 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.

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

Normal interval spacing is a single arm’s distance between troops. 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.

Each cadet, except the left-flank cadet, extends their left arms out to the side at shoulder level with elbows locked, fingers together, and palms down. They position themselves with short steps right or left so that their right shoulder touches the fingertips of the cadet to their right. On the command of execution “**FRONT**,” each cadet sharply returns to the position of attention. Proper aligning in normal interval is shown in Figure 2.6.2.

If the squad leader wants to check the alignment, on the command of execution “**DRESS**,” squad leader faces to the “half left” in marching and marches by the most direct route to a position on line with the squad, halts one step from the right flank cadet, and faces down the line. From this position, the squad leader verifies the alignment of the squad, directing the cadets to move forward or backward as necessary, calling them by name or number: “Cadet Jones, forward two inches; number eight, backward four inches.”

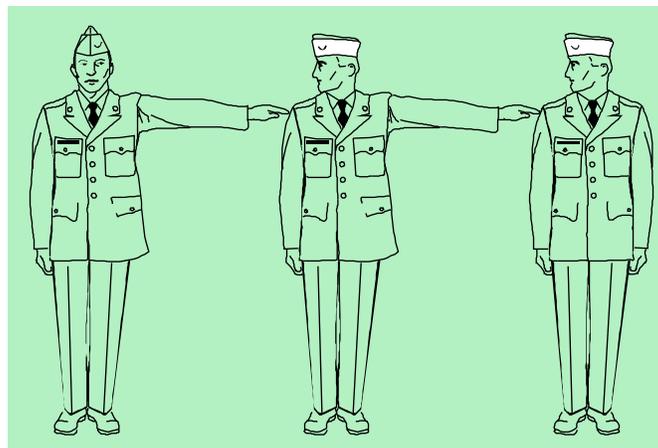
The squad leader remains at attention, taking short steps to the right or left as necessary to see down the squad. Having aligned the squad he centers himself on the

Key Note Term

normal interval – single arm’s distance between troops in rank

Figure 2.6.2: Aligning in normal interval.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



right-flank cadet by taking short steps left or right. The squad leader then faces to the half right in marching, returns to his position (center of the squad), halts perpendicular to the formation, faces to the left, and commands “Ready, **FRONT.**” These procedures also apply when aligning the squad at close or Double Interval.

Close Interval

Close interval spacing is a single elbow’s distance between troops. 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. As shown in Figure 2.6.3, keep your elbow in line with your body, touching the right arm of the cadet to your left.

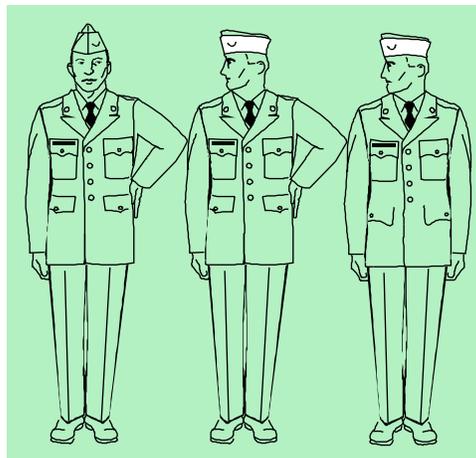
To align the squad at close interval, the leader commands “At Close Interval, Dress Right, **DRESS**” and “Ready, **FRONT.**” The procedure is the same for aligning at normal interval, except that the cadets obtain close interval.

Double Interval

Double interval spacing is two arms’ distance between troops. To have a squad form at a double interval, the leader commands “At Double Interval, Dress Right, **DRESS**” and “Ready, **FRONT.**” On the command of execution **DRESS**, each cadet (except the right flank man) turn their head and eyes to the right, align themselves on the cadet on the right. At the same time each cadet (except the right and left flank man) raises both arms out to their sides at shoulder level so that their fingertips touch the fingertips of the cadets on their right and left. 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.



Key Note Term

close interval – elbow’s distance between troops in rank formation

Key Note Term

double interval – two arms’ distance between troops in rank formation

Figure 2.6.3: Aligning in Close Interval.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

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 number of their position in line (for example number nine man takes eight steps), 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 (for example number seven takes six steps), “**HALT**,” and execute “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 “Left Face.”

Note

The squad leader takes the correct number of steps to maintain his position of three steps in front of and centered on the squad. To review the 30-inch step, refer to Chapter 2, Lesson 5.

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.

More Drill Tips

- The squad normally marches in a column, but for short distances it may march in a line formation.
- To form a column formation from a line formation, the command is “right, face.”
- When a column formation is at close interval, the squad may march for short distances at the half step.

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 (Left), MARCH.**” On the command of execution “**MARCH,**” the lead cadet faces to the right (left) as in marching by pivoting to the right (left) on the ball of the right foot and steps off in the indicated direction taking a 30-inch step with the left foot and continues to march. The number two cadet adjusts his step by lengthening or shortening as necessary to reach the approximate pivot point of the lead cadet. When he reaches the approximate pivot point of the lead cadet, he pivots to the right (left) on the ball of the lead foot taking a 30-inch step with the trail foot in the new direction. All other cadets step off with the left foot and continue to march forward taking 30-inch steps and execute in the same manner as the number two cadet in approximately the same place until the entire squad has executed the column movement.

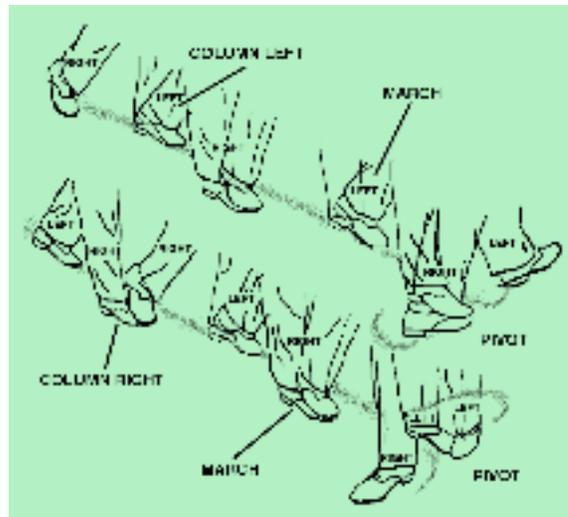
To change the direction of march 90 or 45 degrees when marching, the squad leader gives the preparatory command “**Column Right (Left) or Column Half Right (Half Left)**” as the foot in the desired direction strikes the marching surface. The squad leader then gives the command “**MARCH**” the next time 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 previously described (see Figure 2.6.4).

Key Note Term

pivot – to turn in position.

Figure 2.6.4: Changing marching direction.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



To march in the opposite direction, the command is “**(Rear, MARCH).**” The squad leader gives the preparatory command “to the Rear” 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 LEFT (RIGHT).**” 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, and the command of execution “**MARCH**” when that foot strikes the marching surface the next time.

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, as shown in Figure 2.6.5. 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.**”

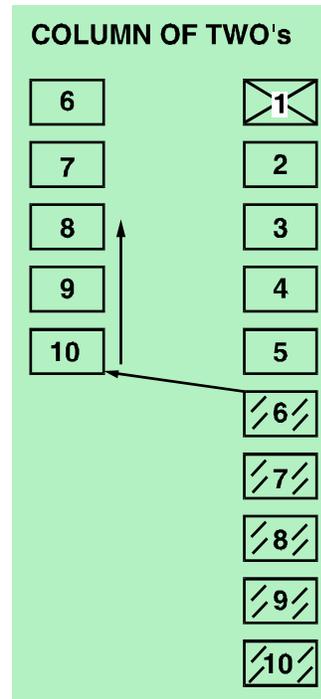


Figure 2.6.5: Forming a column of twos.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

The trailing team leader commands “Column Half Right (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 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 Right (Left).” 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

This lesson explained the basics so you can 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.

This lesson concludes Unit 2, “Leadership Theory and Application.” In the following unit, “Foundations for Success,” you will learn how to better yourself through self awareness, personal growth, sharpening your learning, study, and communication skills, and understanding what causes and how to handle conflict.

Lesson Review

1. What is standard spacing when falling into formation?
2. What is the difference between “Falling Out” and being “Dismissed?”
3. With which foot do you always begin marching?
4. What is the difference between a flanking movement and a column movement?