

Lesson 4

Forming, Inspecting, and Dismissing the Battalion



Key Terms

en route
facilitate
respective

What You Will Learn to Do

- Execute battalion drills

Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written techniques
- Take responsibility for your actions and choices

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Identify the different types of battalion formations and related specific drill commands
- Describe the correct responses to battalion drill commands
- Describe the correct responses to inspection commands
- Identify the locations of the key platoon, company, and battalion personnel in battalion formations
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

This lesson covers battalion drill formations “without arms” and inspections. Your knowledge and recall of company drill from previous lessons will be vitally important in understanding this lesson. Pay special attention to the differences between the roles of key personnel (at the platoon, company, and battalion levels) in battalion drill.

This lesson teaches you the formations and inspection procedures for battalion drill. Battalion drill provides the procedures for executing company drill in conjunction with other companies in the same formation. For drill purposes, a battalion consists of a headquarters section (or the battalion staff), Colors, and two or more companies.

Drill Tips

- The battalion has two basic formations: a line and a column. There are several ways the battalion commander or staff can arrange the separate elements within either formation.
- The right flank unit serves as base when in a line formation; the lead element is the base when in column.
- To **facilitate** the forming of a larger unit, the commander normally alerts the subordinate units of the desired formation, time, place, route, uniform, and the sequence in which the units will form.
- Unless the S-3 has previously marked the position of the right guides at the formation site, the right guards report to the site and receive instructions prior to the arrival of the cadets.
- The commissioned staff forms in one rank at normal interval and centered on the commander. The commander-of-troops normally arranges the staff members in numerical order (S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, and so on) from right to left as he or she faces the battalion.
- When enlisted staff personnel form as part of the officer staff, they form two steps to the rear of their **respective** staff officer.
- The command sergeant major forms one step to the rear of the commissioned staff and centered on the commander, or one step to the rear and centered on the Colors when in a battalion mass formation.

Key Note Term

facilitate – to ease the accomplishment of a task

Key Note Term

respective – related, belonging, or assigned

Formations

The battalion has two basic formations: a line and a column (see Figure 5.4.1).

Separate elements may be arranged in several variations within either formation: the battalion may be formed in line with the companies in line with platoons in line, or battalion in line with companies in column with platoons in line (Figure 5.4.2).

From those formations, the battalion may be positioned in a battalion in column with companies in column, or companies in mass, or companies in column with platoons in line.

This page illustrates the basic ways the battalion commander, commander-of-troops, or staff can arrange the battalion’s separate elements into a line, column, or mass formation.

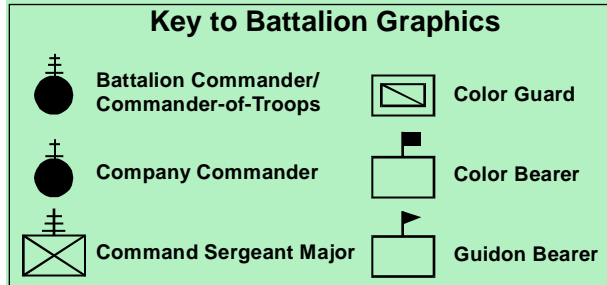


Figure 5.4.1: Key to battalion graphics.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

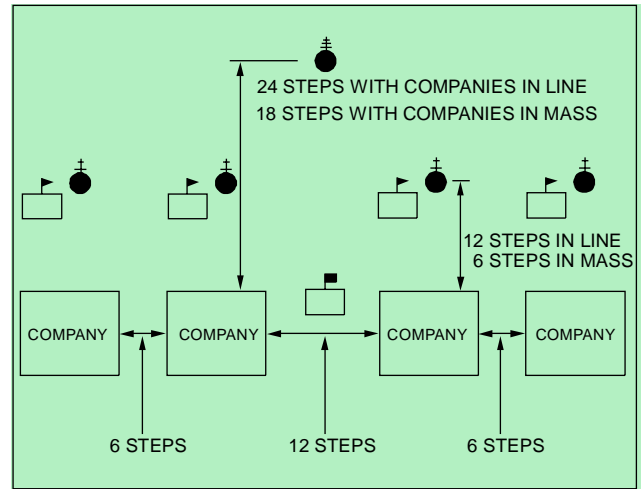


Figure 5.4.2: Battalion in line with companies in line or mass.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

The battalion may be formed in line with companies in line and platoons in line, or battalion in line with companies in column with platoons in line.

From either of those formations, we can position the battalion as follows: in a battalion in column with companies in column, or companies in mass, or companies in column with platoons in line (see Figure 5.4.3).

When the battalion participates as a separate element of a larger formation, or space is limited, the battalion can form in a mass formation (see Figure 5.4.4).

Forming and Dismissing the Battalion

To facilitate the forming of a larger unit, the commander normally alerts the component units as to the desired formation, time, place, route, uniform, and the sequence in which the units will form. Unless the right guide's position at the formation site has been previously marked, the guides report to the site and receive instructions before the arrival of the troops.

The commissioned staff forms in one rank, at normal interval and centered on the commander. Staff members are normally arranged in their numerical order from right to left. When enlisted staff personnel form as part of the officer staff, they form two steps to the rear of their respective staff officer. The command sergeant major forms one step to the rear and centered on the Colors.

Forming the Battalion

The adjutant is responsible for the formation of cadets. To do this, the adjutant takes a position at the right flank of the line on which the units are to form and faces down the line. The adjutant remains facing down the line until all units are formed and then marches to a post midway between the line of cadets and the proposed position of the battalion commander. If guides are used, the adjutant moves to a post as soon as the guides are in position and aligned.

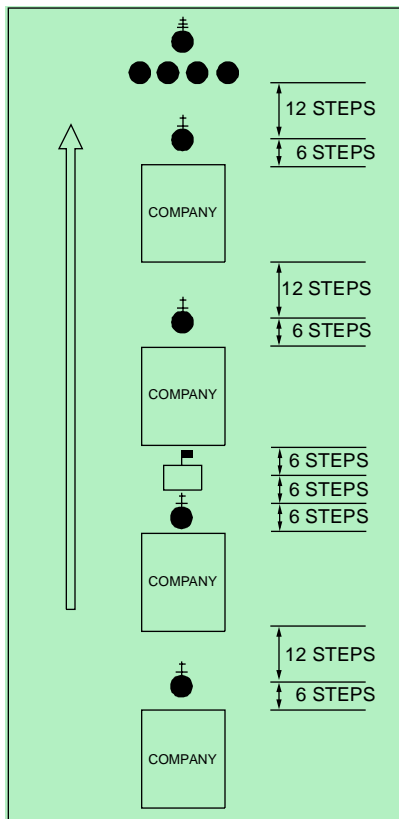


Figure 5.4.3: Battalion in column with companies in column or mass.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

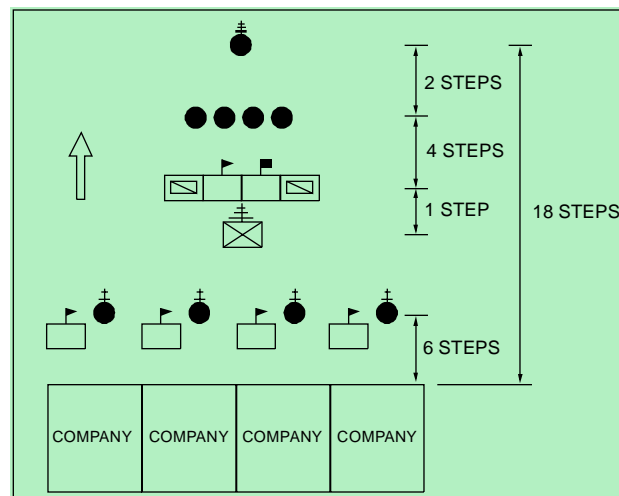


Figure 5.4.4: Battalion in mass formation.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

As the battalion commander and staff approach, the adjutant commands the units to attention, faces the commander, salutes, and reports, “Sir, the battalion is formed.”

The battalion commander returns the salute and commands “post.” The adjutant marches forward, passes to the battalion commander’s right, and takes a post as the right flank staff officer. The battalion commander then commands actions as desired.

Normally, the Colors are positioned at the center of the battalion when formed in line or column, and four steps to the rear of the staff when formed in mass.

Dismissing the Battalion

To dismiss the battalion, the battalion commander directs “take charge of your units.” The company commanders and battalion commander exchange salutes. The battalion commander returns all salutes with one salute and then dismisses the staff. In a battalion mass formation, the platoon leaders form as the first rank of cadets. The right flank platoon leader serves as the guide.

Inspecting the Battalion

When inspecting the battalion, the adjutant forms the battalion in line with companies in line and platoons in line.

The adjutant forms the cadets, reports, and takes a position with the staff as previously described. After the adjutant joins the staff, the battalion commander directs “prepare for inspection.” Unit commanders face about and give the same directive. The platoon leaders prepare their platoons for inspection in the same manner as in company drill.

When all platoons in each company have completed open ranks and dress right, the company commanders face the battalion commander. When all company commanders are again facing the battalion commander, the battalion commander commands “at ease.”

Because of the time involved in inspecting a battalion, the battalion commander normally directs the staff to inspect the companies while he or she inspects the Colors and makes a general inspection of the battalion.

As the battalion commander (or the designated staff officer) approaches a company, the company commander faces about, salutes, and reports “Sir, ___ Company is prepared for inspection.” The inspecting officer then proceeds to the first platoon to be inspected. The company commander takes a position to the left of the inspecting officer.

Conducting the Inspection

Conducting an *in-ranks inspection* of units in battalion drill uses the same procedures as in company drill. However, since we did not cover those procedures previously, the following information applies.

Forming for Inspection

The formation for inspecting personnel and equipment in ranks is company in line with platoons in line. With the company in a line formation, the company commander directs “prepare for inspection.” Platoon leaders then face about, open ranks, and align the company. When all platoon leaders are facing the front, the company commander commands “at ease.”

The company commander may direct the first sergeant and executive officer to accompany him or her during the inspection. If they do so, they take a position at normal interval (close interval if the company is at close interval) to the left of the company commander.

Inspecting the Cadets

During the inspection, the guidon bearer, officers, and noncommissioned officers who are not in ranks assume the position of attention as the inspecting officer approaches their positions. They resume the at ease position after being inspected (if armed, they do not execute inspection arms).

The company commander begins the inspection by stepping forward and inspecting the guidon bearer. The company commander then faces to the half left in marching and proceeds to the right of the line. While approaching the right flank platoon, the platoon leader commands over the right shoulder “platoon, attention.” After the company commander halts directly in front of the platoon leader, the platoon leader salutes and reports, “Sir, the platoon is prepared for inspection.” The company commander returns the salute and inspects the platoon leader.

The company commander then directs the platoon leader to lead him or her through the inspection, faces to the half left in marching, and halts directly in front of the squad leader of the first squad. As the company commander faces to the half left in marching, the platoon leader faces to the right in marching, inclines, and halts directly in front of the second cadet in the first squad and on line with and at normal interval (close interval) to the right of the company commander. The other platoon leaders execute the same actions as the company commander approaches their platoons.

As soon as the platoon leader and company commander have halted in front of the first two cadets, the platoon leader commands “second, third, and fourth squads, at ease.” When moving from cadet to cadet during the inspection, the company commander and platoon leader (as well as the executive officer and first sergeant) simultaneously face to the right in marching, take two short steps (one step if the company is at close interval), halt, and face to the left.

After the company commander has inspected the last cadet in the front rank, the platoon leader hesitates momentarily and allows the company commander to walk in front while inspecting the front rank from the rear. As the company commander inspects the rear of each rank, the platoon leader commands the next squad to attention. Then, as they begin to inspect the next rank, the platoon leader commands the last rank inspected to stand at ease.

Normally, when inspecting the rear of each rank, the company commander conducts a walking inspection. As the commander inspects the rear of the last cadet in each rank, he or she turns and halts directly in front of the squad leader of the next rank. The platoon leader turns and halts directly in front of the second cadet. The executive officer and first sergeant march past (behind) the company commander and assume their positions to the left.

Inspection with Arms

As the company commander halts directly in front of and facing the individual being inspected, the individual executes inspection arms. If the company commander wants to inspect the individual’s weapon, he or she will inspect it first, then the individual’s uniform and appearance. As soon as the company commander grasps the weapon, the individual releases it and resumes the position of attention. When the company commander finishes inspecting the weapon, he or she returns it in the same manner as receiving it.

In the event the company commander does not inspect the weapon, the cadet remains at inspection arms until the company commander moves to and is facing the next cadet. Then, the previously inspected cadet executes ready, port arms, and order arms.

Completing the Company/Platoon Inspections

When the company commander finishes inspecting the platoon sergeant, the platoon leader commands the platoon to attention and overtakes the company commander **en route** back to the front of the platoon. The platoon leader halts facing to the front (six steps in front and centered on the platoon) and exchanges salutes with the company commander. The company commander (executive officer and first sergeant) faces to the right in marching and moves to the next platoon.

Key Note Term

en route – in motion toward a destination

As soon as the company commander clears the first platoon, the platoon leader faces about, commands “close ranks, march” and “at ease,” then faces about and executes at ease. After the company commander completes the inspection of the last platoon, he or she returns to the post at the center of the company and commands the company to attention.

Note

In the event a platoon has already been inspected, or it is still waiting to be inspected, and the battalion commander arrives, invite him or her to inspect the platoon.

Completing the Battalion Inspection

When the battalion commander and staff officers have completed their inspections and are en route back to their posts, the company commanders bring their units to attention, close ranks, and put their companies at ease. When the battalion commander and staff reach the front of the formation, the inspection is complete.

Conclusion

Now that you have reviewed battalion formations and inspections, you can see how each echelon continues to build upon previously learned skills. These new skills will enable you to perform drill in larger units. Study and practice will make your drill performance outstanding. Remember, knowledge is one of the most important elements of effective leadership.

The following lesson offers a review of drill procedures.

Lesson Review

1. What are the two basic types of battalion formations?
2. What is the standard formation when commanded to “fall in”?
3. What is the correct procedure for forming the battalion for inspection?
4. What is the correct procedure for inspecting arms in ranks?