

Lesson 8

The Saber and the Scabbard



Key Terms

cant
guard
pistol belt
port
saber
scabbard

What You Will Learn to Do

- Execute the manual of arms with the saber and the scabbard

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

- Describe the parts of a saber and a sword
- Explain the proper way to wear the saber
- Describe the correct responses to commands for “inspection of arms”
- Describe the correct responses to commands for the “standing manual of arms”
- Describe the correct responses to commands for the “marching manual of arms”
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

This lesson introduces you to the manual of arms for the saber. After you have mastered these procedures, you will have added another important skill to your knowledge as a drill leaders and as a cadet officer in JROTC. You will be able to demonstrate this skill during ceremonies or competitions for your cadet battalion.

The Saber

Cadet officers who participate in ceremonies with cadets under arms may be able to wear the saber. The **saber**, shown in Figure 5.8.1, is carried on the left side of the body and attached to the **pistol belt** by the **scabbard** chain with the **guard** of the saber to the rear. When using a saber, remember that precise execution of it enhances the status of the wearer. Poor or inexact execution, however, is particularly obvious at ceremonies.

The infantry, revolutionary saber is slightly different than the infantry sword (Figure 5.8.2) carried by platoon sergeants and first sergeants during ceremonies with cadets under arms. Although the manual of arms for the saber and sword are the same, we will refer only to the saber for the remainder of this lesson.

Standing Manual of Arms

Execute standing with the saber (sword) using the procedures described in the following sections.

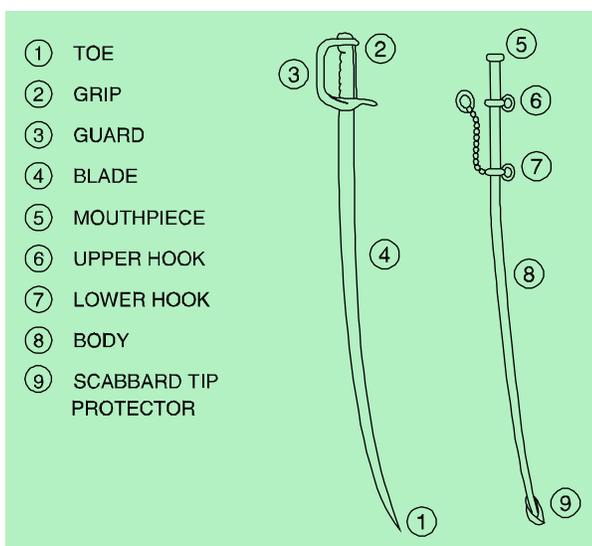


Figure 5.8.1: Saber and scabbard.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

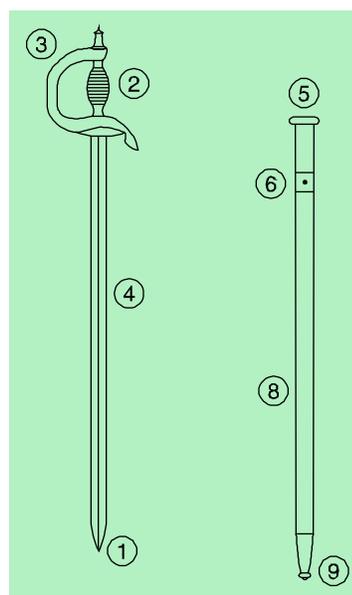


Figure 5.8.2: Sword and scabbard.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Key Note Terms

saber – a heavy cavalry sword with a one-edged, slightly curved blade

pistol belt – heavy duty belt for attaching and weapons and ammunition at the waist

scabbard – sheath for a sword, dagger, or bayonet

guard – protective handle cover

Attention

When in formation, assume the position of attention before the command “draw, saber” and after the command “return, saber.” Place your hands behind the trouser seams with the thumbs touching the first joint of the forefingers (see Figure 5.8.3).

Draw Saber

On the preparatory command “draw,” grasp the scabbard with the left hand and turn it clockwise 180 degrees, tilting it forward to form an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. Take the saber grip in the right hand and pull the saber about six inches from the scabbard. The right forearm should now be roughly parallel to the ground (see Figure 5.8.4).

On the command of execution “saber,” pull the saber out of the scabbard and hold it in a *carry saber* position. Hold the saber with the inner blade-edge riding in a vertical position along the forward tip of the right shoulder (see Figure 5.8.5).

Carry Saber

To execute *carry saber*, the cadet officer must first be at the position of *attention*. Hold the saber in the right hand keeping the wrist as straight as possible with the thumb along the seam of the trouser leg. Ensure that the point of the blade rests inside the point of the shoulder and not along the arm. Hold the saber in this position with the thumb and forefinger grasping the grip. Steady the saber with the second finger behind the grip.

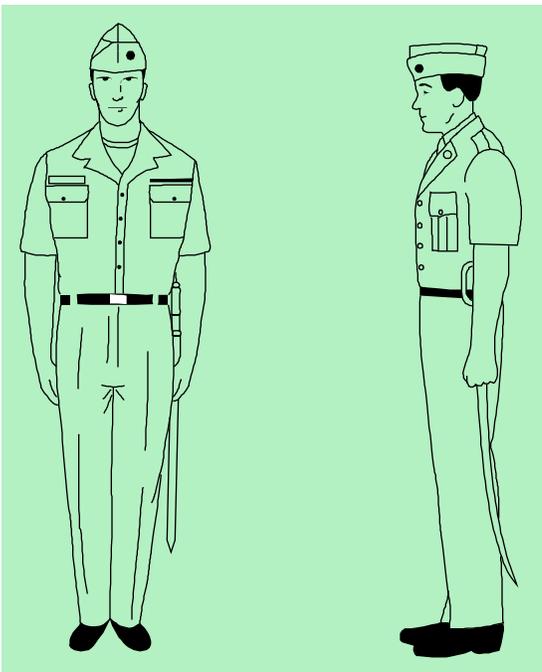


Figure 5.8.3: Standing at attention.
Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

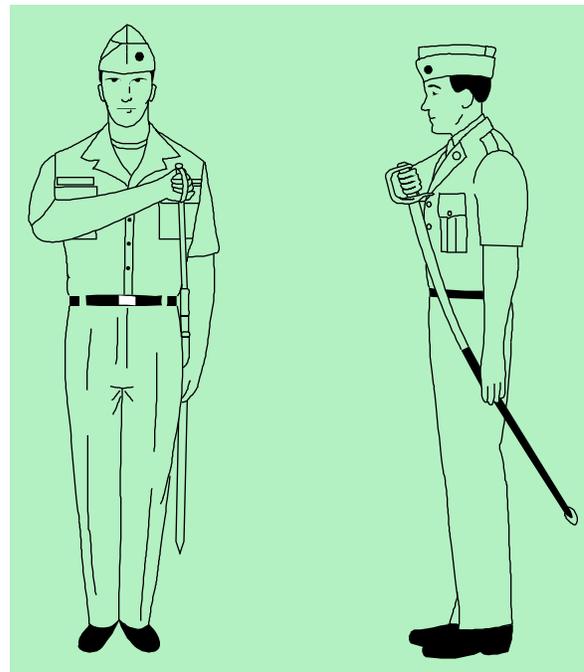


Figure 5.8.4: Draw saber.
Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

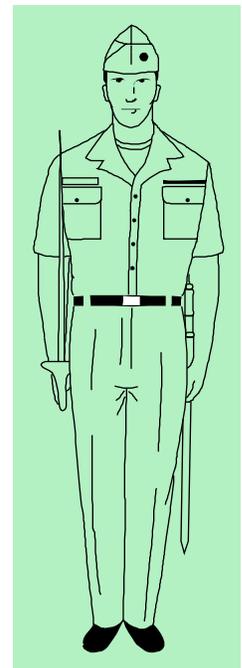


Figure 5.8.5: Carry saber position.
Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

You will want to assume the *carry saber* position under the following situations:

- When giving commands
- When changing positions
- When officially addressing (or when officially addressed by) another officer, if the saber is drawn
- Before returning the saber to the scabbard
- When giving the preparatory command for—and while marching at—*quick time*.

Present Arms

Execute *present saber* from the *carry* position when serving in the capacity of commander-of-troops or in a command that is not a part of a larger unit. On the preparatory command of “present,” or the command “present, arms,” bring the grip of the saber to a position approximately four inches from the nose (at the rate of two counts). Hold the saber outward so that the toe is approximately six inches from the vertical (see 1, Figure 5.8.6).

On the command of execution “arms,” lower the right hand (at the rate of two counts) with the flat of the blade upward, the thumb extended on the left side of the grip, and the toe of the saber about six inches from the marching surface (see 2, Figure 5.8.6).

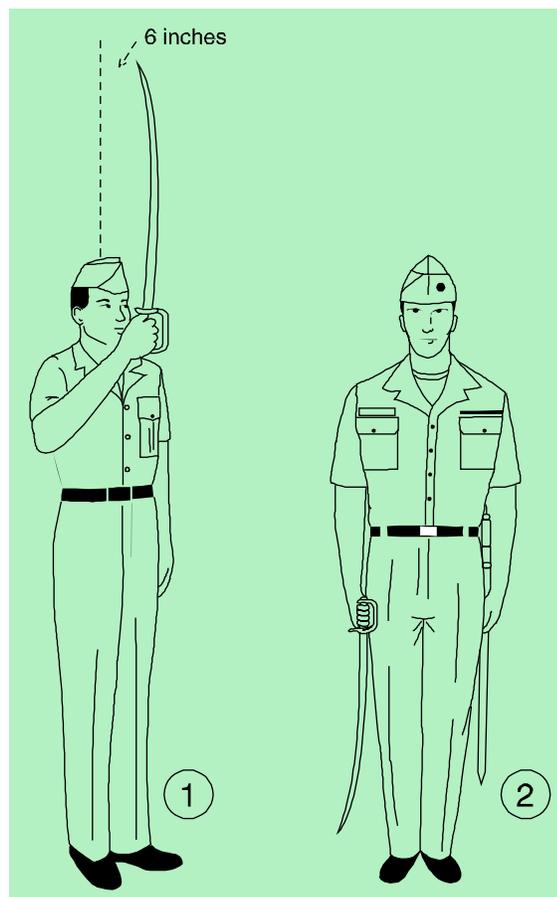


Figure 5.8.6: Present saber.
Courtesy of CACI and the
US Army.

On the command “order, arms” return the saber to the *carry saber* position. Ensure that whenever the saber is at the *order arms* position, it is straight and not at an angle inward or outward in relationship to the body.

Note

When not in formation, keep the saber in its scabbard and use the hand salute.

Parade Rest

Assume this position without moving the saber from the *order arms* position. At the command of execution, move the left foot about 10 inches to the left of the right foot, and place the left hand in the small of the back, fingers extended and joined, palm to the rear (see Figure 5.8.7). On the command of execution “attention,” return the left hand and foot to the position of *attention*.

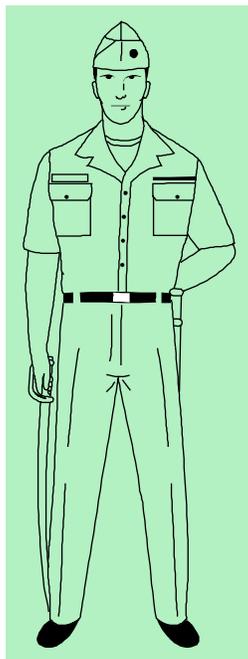
Return Saber

Execute “return, saber” from *carry saber* in three counts.

1. On the preparatory command “return” of the command “Officers, return, saber,” bring the saber to a vertical position (see 1, Figure 5.8.8). Hold the forearm (wrist) parallel to the marching surface about three inches from the body with the guard pointed to the left.
2. On the command of execution “saber,” three actions take place simultaneously:
 - Pivot the saber downward toward the guard.
 - At the same time, grasp the scabbard with the left hand just above the upper hook.

Figure 5.8.7: Parade rest.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



- Tilt it forward and turn it clockwise 180 degrees.
 - The scabbard should form a 45-degree angle with the ground, and the saber bearer turns his or her head to the left and looks down to observe the mouth-piece of the scabbard (the shoulders remain squared to the front and level). As smoothly and as quickly as possible, insert the saber in the scabbard and stop so that about 12 inches of the blade is showing. The right forearm (wrist) should be horizontal to the marching surface and three inches from the body. (See 2, Figure 5.8.8.)
3. At the command of execution “cut” of the command “ready, cut,” thrust the saber smartly into the scabbard. Rotate the scabbard so that its tip protector is forward; then come to attention (see 3, Figure 5.8.8).

Marching Manual of Arms

While marching, carry the saber with the inner blade-edge riding in a vertical position along the forward tip of the right shoulder, as shown in Figure 5.8.9.

Eyes Right While Marching

Execute the command “eyes, right” while marching at carry saber as follows (see Figure 5.8.10). Give the command “ready” as the right foot strikes the marching surface (no action is taken).

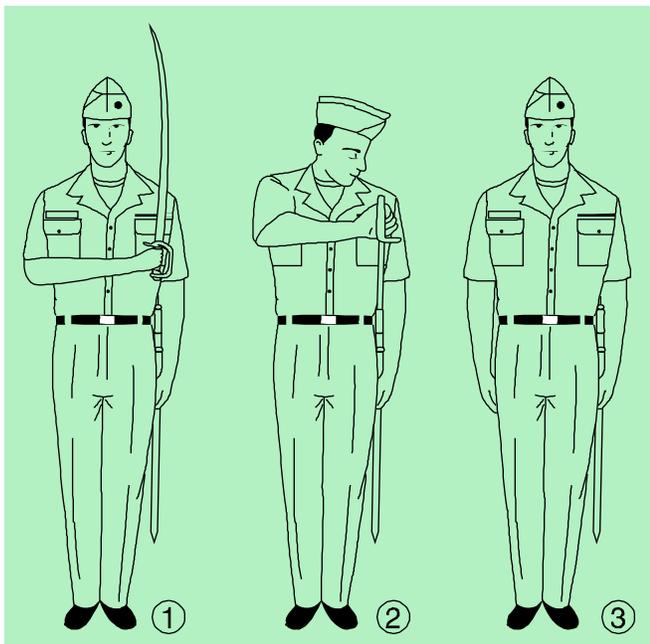


Figure 5.8.8: Return saber.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

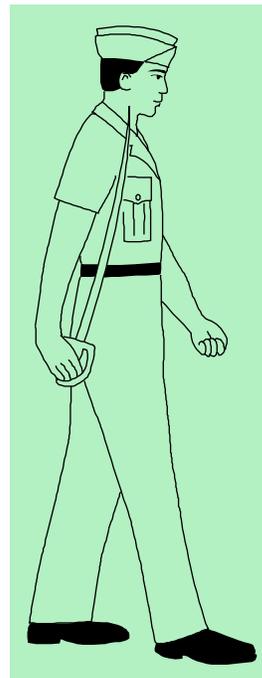


Figure 5.8.9: Carry saber position—marching.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

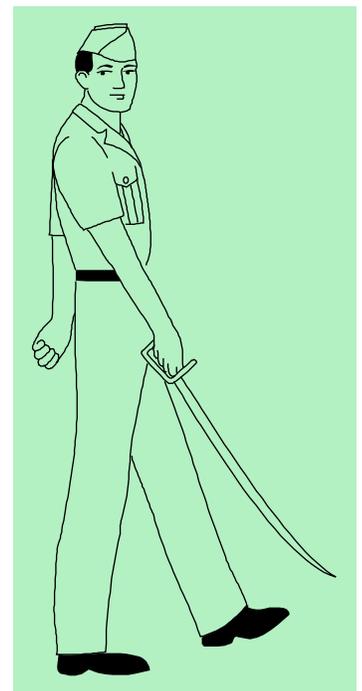


Figure 5.8.10: Eyes right while marching.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

Note

You only use the initial preparatory command “ready” when marching with a guidon bearer.

The second time the right foot strikes the marching surface, give the command “eyes” and bring the saber to the count one position of *present arms* (or *present saber*). No action is taken the third time the right foot strikes the marching surface. The fourth time the right foot strikes the marching surface, give the command “right.” As that foot strikes the surface, turn your head sharply to the right at a 45-degree angle and bring the saber downward.

While marching at *present saber*, swing the right arm naturally (nine inches to the front and six inches to the rear) in a vertical plane, flexing the wrist to keep the toe of the blade level (about six inches) above the marching surface. This requires extending the wrist on the forward movement and elevating the wrist on the rearward movement.

Ready Front While Marching

Execute “*ready, front*” by first giving the command “ready” as the right foot strikes the marching surface (no action is taken). The second time the right foot strikes the marching surface, give the command “ready” a second time (again, no action is taken). Return the saber to the order position while maintaining a natural arm swing as the right foot strikes the marching surface the third time. The fourth time the right foot strikes the marching surface, give the command “front.” Turn your head sharply to the front as the right foot strikes the surface and return the saber to the *carry* position the next time the left foot strikes the marching surface.

Port Arms

Execute “**port, arms**” on the preparatory command “double time” of the command “double time, march.” Assume this position only from the *carry saber* position. Swing the right arm naturally across and six inches in front of the body. **Cant** the saber 45 degrees from the vertical with the guard pointed to the left. The left hand grasps the scabbard (see Figure 5.8.11).

Exercise extreme caution when double timing with the saber in the *port arms* position. To end the double-time cadence, command “quick time, march,” and return the saber to the *carry* position.

Conclusion

Saber drill distinguishes the key positions within a formation, enhances the leadership status of the saber bearer, and increases the showmanship of drill. It is important to correctly drill with the saber since poor or inexact execution is particularly obvious at ceremonies.

Key Note Terms

port – to turn or put to the left

cant – to tilt or angle

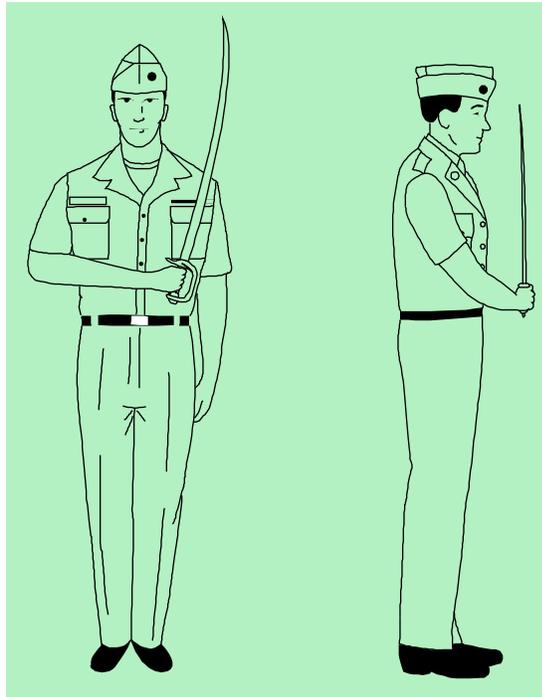


Figure 5.8.11: Port arms.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

This lesson concludes the chapter, “Leading Others.” At any time, refer back to these lessons if you need a refresher about platoon drills, company formations and movements, and more.

Lesson Review

1. Describe the correct movements to “draw saber.”
2. What are the correct movements to “present arms?”
3. What are the correct movements to “return saber?”
4. What is the correct position to carry a saber while marching?