

DRILL BITS

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Pictorial Description of the Gilhams Manual of Arms

Gilham's manual is designed so that each command for the manual of arms is broken down into two part; a preparatory command and an execution command. The preparatory command lets the soldier know what he is to do. The execution command tells him to when to do it. Once the preparatory command is given, do not make any movements until the execution command is given. Do not anticipate the officers! For example, the officer will command "Shoulder – Arms". Shoulder is the preparatory command that lets you know what to do. When the officer says "Arms", then you smartly go to that position. There is one exception to this in the case of going to shoulder arms from the trail arms position which is discussed below. My notes in red below will hopefully add clarity to the "Gilhamese".



Position of Order Arms

The hand low, the barrel between the thumb and forefinger extended along the stock; the other fingers extended and joined; **the muzzle about two inches from the right shoulder**; the rammer in front; the **toe of the butt against, and in a line with, the toe of the right foot**, the barrel perpendicular.

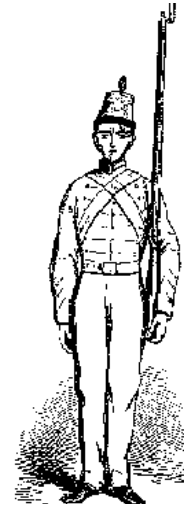
Order—ARMS.

(FROM POSITION OF SHOULDER ARMS)

One time and two motions.

First motion. Drop the piece smartly by extending the left arm, seize it at the same time with the right hand, above and near the tail band; quit the hold of the left hand, and carry the piece opposite to the right shoulder, the rammer to the front, the little finger behind the barrel, the right hand supported against the hip, the butt three inches from the ground, the piece erect, the left hand hanging by the side.

Second motion. Let the piece slip through the right hand to the ground without shock, and take the position described above.



Position of Shoulder Arms

The piece in the left hand, **the arm very slightly bent**, the **elbow back near the body**, the palm of the hand pressing on the outer flat of the butt; the outer edge of the latter on the upper joints of the fingers, the heel of the butt between the middle and forefingers, **the thumb on the front screw of the butt plate**, the remaining fingers under the butt, **the butt more or less kept back according to the conformation of the man, so that the piece, seen from the front, shall appear perpendicular** (*Note: in other words, as straight and vertical as you can get it*), and, also, that the movement of the thigh, in marching, may not raise it or cause it to waver; the stock, below the tail-band, resting against the hollow of the shoulder, just within the joint, the right arm hanging naturally, as prescribed in the *position of the soldier*.

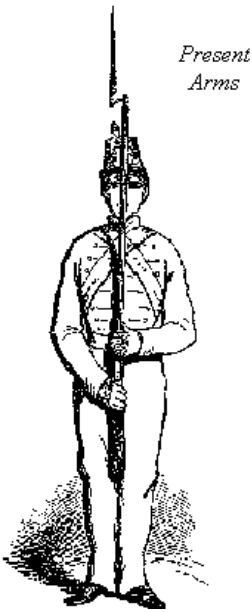
Note: It is from this position that you go to and return from all other positions. You must return to Shoulder Arms before going to any other position.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Raise slightly the piece with the right hand, carry it against the left shoulder, turning it, so as to bring the barrel to the front; at the same time place the left hand under the butt, **and slip the right hand down to the lock.**

Second motion. Let the right hand fall briskly to its position.



Present Arms

Position of Present Arms

Present—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Turn the piece with the left hand, the lock out, and seize the small of the stock at the same time with the right hand, the piece perpendicular and detached from the shoulder, the left hand remaining under the butt.

Second motion. Complete the turning inward of the piece, so as to bring it erect before the centre of the body, the **rammer to the front, the right hand under and against the guard; seize it smartly at the same time with the left hand just above the lock, the thumb extended along the barrel and on the stock**, the left forearm resting on the body without constraint, and the **hand at the height of the elbow.**

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Turn the piece with the right hand, the barrel to the front, raise and support it against the left shoulder with the right hand, drop the left under the butt, the right hand resting on, without grasping, the small of the stock.

Second motion. Drop quickly the right hand into its position.



Secure Arms

Position of Secure Arms

Secure—ARMS .

One time and two motions.

First motion. Seize quickly the piece with the right hand, the thumb on the counter plate, and the forefinger against the cock; detach the piece from the shoulder at the same instant, the barrel to the front, **seize it at the tail-band with the left hand, the thumb extended on the rammer**, the piece erect, opposite to the shoulder, the left elbow on the piece.

Second motion. Reverse the piece, pass it under the left arm, the left hand remaining at the tail-band, **the thumb on the rammer to prevent it from sliding out**, the little finger resting against the hip, and the right hand falling at the same time into, its position.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Raise the piece with the left hand, but not too suddenly, lest the rammer should fly out; seize the handle with the right hand to support it against the shoulder, quit the hold of the left hand, and place quickly this hand under the butt.

Second motion. Let fall smartly the right hand into its position; drop at the same time the piece into the position of *shouldered arms*.



Trail Arms

Position of Trail Arms

Trail—ARMS.

One time and two motions

First motion. As the first motion of *order arms*.

Second motion. Incline a little the muzzle to the front, the butt to the rear, and about three inches from the ground, the right hand, supported at the hip, will sustain the piece so that the men of the rear rank may not touch with their bayonets the men in front of them.

Shoulder—ARMS.

Two times, two motions.

First motion. At the command **shoulder**, raise the piece perpendicularly in the right hand

Note: This is to be done on the preparatory command. This is the only time you will do anything on the preparatory command.

Second motion. At the command **arms**, execute what has been prescribed for the shoulder from the position of *order arms*.



Right Shoulder Shift

To Right Shoulder Shift - Arms
One time and one motion.

Turn the piece with the left hand, the lock to the front, seize it at the same time with the right hand at the handle, place it on the right shoulder, the left hand not quitting the butt, the lock-plate upward, the muzzle up; sustain the piece in this position by **placing the right hand on the flat of the butt**; let fall the left hand by the side. *Note: both the picture and the statement in bold above say to put your hand on the flat of the butt, or in other words on the stock.*

Some reenactors are inclined to move two or three fingers under the butt for "better control". I contend that we in the 4th VA should only do this if you feel you need the extra control when on the move. When in a stationary position, please do as the manual says above.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and one motion.

Raise the piece by extending the right arm, seize it with the left hand above the lock, carry it against the left shoulder, turning the barrel to the front, the right hand being at the handle, place the left hand under the butt, and let the right fall into its position.



Position Arms Port

Arms—PORT.

One time and one motion.

Throw the piece diagonally across the body, the lock to the front, seize it smartly at the same instant with both hands, the right at the handle, the left at the tail-band, the two thumbs pointing toward the muzzle, the barrel sloping upward and crossing opposite to the point of the left shoulder, the butt proportionately lowered. The palm of the right hand will be above, and that of the left under the piece, the nails of both hands next to the body, to which the elbows will be closed.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Bring the piece smartly to the left shoulder, placing the left hand under the butt.

Second motion. Drop the right hand smartly by the side.



Position of Support Arms

Support—ARMS.

(FROM SHOULDER ARMS)

One time and three motions.

First motion. With the right hand seize the small of the stock briskly, four inches below the lock, raising the piece a little, but not turning it.

Second motion. Take the left hand from the butt; extend the left forearm upward across the body, and under the hammer, the left hand flat on the right breast.

(Notice it does not say on your right shoulder. Take special note of the picture above)

Third motion. Drop the right arm smartly to its position.

Carry—ARMS.

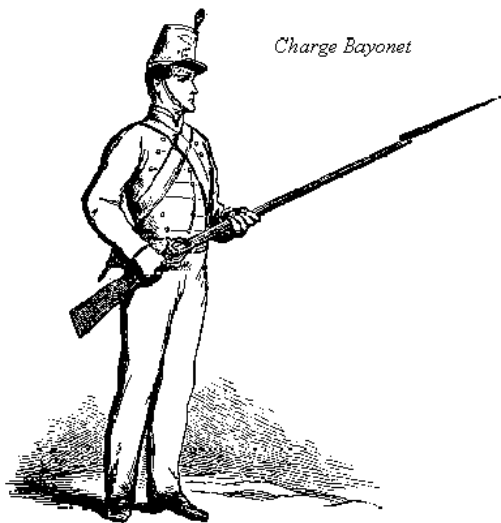
(TO GO BACK TO SHOULDER ARMS)

One time and three motions.

First motion. Carry quickly the right hand to the small of the stock.

Second motion. Place the left hand under the butt, as in the position of shoulder arms.

Third motion. Let fall smartly the right hand to its position, and drop with the left, at the same time, the piece into the position of *shoulder arms.*



Position of Charge Bayonet

Charge—BAYONET.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Make a half face to the right on the left heel, bring the left toe directly to the front, at the same time place the right foot behind, and at right angles with the left, the hollow of the right foot opposite to, and about three inches from the left heel; turn the piece with the left hand, the lock outward, and seize the small of the stock at the same time with the right hand, the musket perpendicular and detached from the shoulder, the left hand under the butt.

Second motion. Bring down the piece with the right hand, letting it fall firmly into the left, the latter seizing it a little in advance of the tail-band, the barrel up, the left elbow near the body, the right hand against the hip, the point of the bayonet as high as the eye.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Face to the front by turning on the left heel, bring up the right by the side of the left heel; at the same time bring up the piece with the right hand to the left shoulder, and place the left hand under the butt.

Second motion. Let the right hand fall promptly into its position.

Guard against Infantry. 2. GUARD.

One time and two motions.

First motion. Make a half face to the right, turning on both heels, the feet square to each other: at the same time raise the piece slightly, and seize it with the left hand above and near the lower band.

Second motion. Carry the right foot twenty inches perpendicularly to the rear, the right heel on the prolongation of the left, the knees slightly bent, the weight of the body resting equally on both legs; lower the piece with both hands, the barrel uppermost, the left elbow against the body; seize the piece at the same time with the right hand at the small of the stock, the arms falling naturally, the point of the bayonet slightly elevated.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and one motion.

Throw up the piece with the left hand, and place it against the right shoulder, at the same time bring the right heel by the side of the left, and face to the front.



Guard Against Cavalry

Guard against Cavalry. 2. GUARD.

One time and two motions.

Both motions the same as for *guard against infantry*, except that the right hand will be supported against the hip, and the bayonet held at the height of the eye, as in *charge bayonet*.

Shoulder—ARMS.

One time and one motion.

Spring up the piece with the left hand and place it against the right shoulder, at the same time bring the right heel by the side of the left, and face to the front.



