

DRILL BITS

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Inspection of Arms

During the war it was necessary for officers to inspect the weapons of the troops under their command to insure that they are clean and in proper functional order. It is even more important for the inspection of arms at reenactments to ensure that the weapons are functioning, safe, and free of live ammunition (unloaded). Fortunately for us, Gilhams manual contains detailed instructions for this process. Here is what the manual has to say. I have included in red text some notes to translate “Gilhamese” into English.

Inspection of Arms.

The squad being at ordered arms, and having the bayonet in the scabbard, if the instructor wishes to cause an inspection of arms, he will command: “*Inspection of—ARMS.*”

One time and three motions.

- **First motion.** Face to the right once and a half on the left heel, carrying the right foot perpendicularly to the rear of the alignment, about six inches from, and at right angles with, the left foot; seize promptly the piece with the left hand a little above the middle band, incline the muzzle to the rear without displacing the heel of the butt, the rammer turned toward the body; carry at the same time the right hand to the bayonet, and seize it as has been prescribed.

Ok so what does this mean? “Face once and a half to the right???” What you do here is turn your body to the right so that your left foot is pointing to the right, in line with the company front. The right foot is point straight back to the rear of the company, stepping back about six inches. It is important to note that your musket does not move. Your body turns, but your musket stays put.

- **Second motion.** Draw the bayonet from the scabbard, carry and fix it on the muzzle; seize next the rammer, draw it as has been explained in loading it twelve times, and let it glide to the bottom of the bore.
- **Third motion.** Face promptly to the front, seize the piece with the right hand, and retake the position of ordered arms.



The instructor will then inspect in succession the piece of each man in passing along the front of the rank. Each, as the instructor reaches him, will raise smartly his piece with his right hand, seize it with the left between the tail-band and the feather-spring, the lock to the front, the left band at the height of the chin, the piece opposite to the left eye; the instructor will take it with the right hand at the handle, and, after inspecting it, will return it to the soldier, who will receive it back with the right hand, and replace it in the position of ordered arms. When the instructor shall have passed him, each soldier will retake the position prescribed at the command *inspection of arms*, and return the rammer; after which he will face to the front.



A couple notes here. After you have received your musket from the inspector and have returned to the position of order arms. You must wait until the inspector moves to the next man in line. Once he is there, you may then face to the rear as in the first bullet point above and return your rammer. Many people think that you must wait until the inspector has passed two files down before you return the rammer. This is not the case. Only when he has someone accompanying him do you wait until that person has passed to return your rammer. If the inspector is solo, then you return it right away.