Manual of Arms
for the
Rifle Musket

with Other Useful Instruction
for troops portraying the

Fifteenth Iowa Regiment of Infantry

at 150th Shiloh

— a faithful reproduction of text from —

U.S. Infantry Tactics (1861)
authorized by Sec’y of War Simon Cameron

supplemented by

Scott’s U.S. Infantry Tactics (1857),
Ellsworth’s Manual of Arms Adapted to the Rifled Musket (1861),
Casey’s U.S. Infantry Tactics (1862),
Kelton’s New Manual of the Bayonet (1862), and
Upton’s Infantry Tactics (1871)

As Compiled by
Col. Silas Tackitt,
Hon. Order of Kentucky Colonels
Lesson 1: Principles of Shoulder Arms

U.S. Tactics 120. The recruit being placed as explained in the first lesson of the first part, the instructor will cause him to bend the right arm slightly, and place the piece in it, in the following manner:

121. The piece in the right hand—the barrel nearly vertical and resting in the hollow of the shoulder—the guard to the front, the arm hanging nearly at its full length near the body; the thumb and fore-finger embracing the guard, the remaining fingers closed together, and grasping the swell of the stock just under the cock, which rests on the little finger.

122. Recruits are frequently seen with natural defects in the conformation of the shoulders, breast and hips. These the instructor will labor to correct in the lessons without arms, and afterwards, by steady endeavors, so that the appearance of the pieces, in the same line, may be uniform, and this without constraint to the men in their positions.

123. The instructor will have occasion to remark that recruits, on first bearing arms, are liable to derange their position by lowering the right shoulder and the right hand, or by sinking the hip and spreading out the elbows.

124. He will be careful to correct all these faults by continually rectifying the position; he will sometimes take away the piece to replace it the better; he will avoid fatiguing the recruits too much in the beginning, but labor by degrees to render this position so natural and easy that they may remain in it a long time without fatigue.

125. Finally, the instructor will take great care that the piece, at a shoulder, be not carried too high nor too low. If too high, the right elbow would spread out, the soldier would occupy too much space in his rank, and the piece be made to waver; if too low, the files would be too much closed, the soldier would not have the
as prescribed, Scott No. 413 or 416.

842. At the command *battalion*, the ranks will fix their attention, and remain immovable.

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**TITLE THIRD.**

**SCHOOL OF THE COMPANY.**

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**Manner of Forming the Company.**

Scott SoC 419. The whole company being assembled on its ground, the sergeants, by the command, FALL IN, will cause the rank and file (corporals and privates) to form in one rank, faced to the right, and in the order of height from right to left, the tallest man on the right, (now head of the rank,) the next tallest man immediately covering the first, and so on, to the left or rear of the rank, in which position will be placed the shortest man.

420. This being promptly effected by the sergeants, the first sergeant will command:

*Front—FACE.*

421. The left guide (second sergeant) will now place himself on the left of the rank, and the first sergeant will promptly command:

1. *In two ranks, form company.*
2. *By the left flank.* 3. *Left—FACE.* 4. *MARCH.*

422. At the third command, the whole rank will face to the left, except the guide and man on the left, who stand fast.

423 / 424. At the command *march*, the whole of the men who have faced to the left, will step off together; the second men, counting from the left, will place themselves in the rear rank, behind the man next to the guide, and face to the front; the two following men will, in like manner, on closing up, form the next file, and all the other men will come successively to form files, two deep, to the right of those already established.

Scott SoC 425 / U.S. Tactics, SoC 4. The rank and file being over, either of the motions.

132. The manual of arms will be taught in the following progression; the instructor will command:

*Support—ARMS.*

*One time and three motions.*

133. *(First motion.)* Bring the piece, with the right hand, perpendicularly to the front and between the eyes, the barrel to the rear; seize the piece with the left hand at the lower band, raise this hand as high as the chin, and seize the piece at the same time with the right hand four inches below the cock.

134. *(Second motion.)* Turn the piece with the right hand, the barrel to the front; carry the piece to the left shoulder, and pass the fore-arm extended on the breast between the right hand and the cock; support the cock against the left fore-arm, the left hand resting on the right breast.

135. *(Third motion.)* Drop the right hand by the side.

136. When the instructor may wish to give repose in this position, he will command:

*REST.*

137. At this command, the recruits will bring up smartly the right hand to the handle of the piece (small of the stock), when they will not be required to preserve silence, or steadiness of position.

138. When the instructor may wish the recruits to pass from this position to that of silence and steadiness, he will command:
(First motion.) Grasp the small of the stock with the right hand, back to the right; carry the piece with the right hand opposite the right shoulder, barrel to the front and vertical, forearm horizontal; grasp the piece at the lower band with the left hand, back to the left, the thumb pointing downward; bring the right foot by the side of the left.

(Second motion.) Reverse the piece with both hands, the butt passing between the breast and right forearm; resume the carry with the right hand.

(Third motion.) Drop the left hand by the side.

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To Stack Arms.

Casey SoS 424. If the rifle musket be used and it is required to stack arms with the bayonets fixed, the following will be the method.

Scott SoS 415. At the command: Stack—ARMS, the front-rank man of every even-numbered tile will pass his piece before him, seizing it with the left hand above the middle band, and place the butt behind and near the right foot of the man next on the left, the barrel turned to the front. At the same time the front-rank man of every odd-numbered file will pass his piece before him, seizing it with the left hand below the middle band, and hand it to the man next on the left; the latter will receive it with the right hand two inches above the middle band, throw the butt about thirty-two inches to the front, opposite to his right shoulder, inclining the muzzle toward him, and lock the shanks of the two bayonets: the lock of this second piece toward the right, and its shank above that of the first piece. The rear-rank man of every even file will project his bayonet forward, and introduce it (using both hands) between and under the shanks of the two other bayonets. He will then abandon the piece to his file leader, who will receive it with the right hand under the middle band, bring the butt to the front, holding up his own piece and the stack with the left hand, and place the butt of this third piece between the feet of band, the thumb extended along the barrel and against the stock, the forearm horizontal and resting against the body, the hand as high as the elbow.

144. (Second motion.) Grasp the small of the stock with the right hand, back to the right; carry the piece with the right hand opposite the right shoulder, barrel to the front and vertical, forearm horizontal; grasp the piece at the lower band with the left hand, back to the left, the thumb pointing downward; bring the right foot by the side of the left.

145. (First motion.) Bring the piece to the right shoulder, at the same time change, the position of the right hand so as to embrace the guard with the thumb and fore-finger, slip up the left hand to the height of the shoulder, the fingers extended and joined, the right arm nearly straight.

146. (Second motion.) Drop the left hand quickly by the side.

Order—ARMS.

One time and two motions.

147. (First motion.) Seize the piece briskly with the left hand near the upper band, and detach it slightly from the shoulder with the right hand: loosen the grasp of the right hand, lower the piece with the left, reseize the piece with the right hand above the lower band, the little finger in the rear of the barrel, the butt about four inches from the ground, the right hand supported against the hip, drop the left hand by the side. Casey SoS 154. If the rifle musket
arms, salute with the right hand; if at shoulder, salute with the left.

Reverse Arms.

1. Reverse. 2. ARMS.

Upton 89. (First motion.) Being at shouldered arms (or a carry), raise the piece vertically with the right hand, advancing it slightly; grasp it with the left hand at the lower band, the forearm horizontal; at the same time grasp the small of the stock with the right hand.

(Second motion.) Reverse the piece, the muzzle dropping to the front, the butt passing between the breast and right forearm; the right hand grasping the small of the stock at the height of the shoulder, the barrel to the front and vertical; the fingers of the left hand extended, and joined in front of the barrel, the little finger at the lower band.

(Third motion.) Press the muzzle to the rear with the left hand, the piece inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees; steady it in this position by pressure of the right elbow against the body; carry the left hand behind the back and grasp the piece between the bands.

1. Shoulder (or Carry.) 2. ARMS.

(First motion.) Let go the piece with the left hand, and re-grasp it in front at the lower band, back of the hand to the left, the thumb pointing downward, the right forearm horizontal, the barrel vertical.

(Second motion.) Reverse the piece with both hands, the butt passing between the breast and right forearm; resume the carry with the right hand.

piece at the swell of the stock, the thumb and fore-finger embracing the guard; press the piece against the shoulder with the loft hand) the right arm nearly straight.

155. (Second motion.) Drop the left hand quickly by the side.

Load in nine times.¹

1. LOAD.

One time and two motions.

156. Grasp the piece with the left hand as high as the right elbow, and bring it vertically opposite the middle of the body, shift the right hand to the upper band, place the butt between the feet, the barrel to the front; seize it with the left hand near the muzzle, which should be three inches from the body; carry the right hand to the cartridge box.

2. Handle—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

157. Seize the cartridge with the thumb and next two fingers, and place it between the teeth.

3. Tear—CARTRIDGE.

One time and one motion.

158. Tear the paper to the powder,

¹U.S.Tactics 156. Whenever the loadings and firings are to be executed, the instructor will cause the cartridge boxes to be brought to the front.
MANUAL FOR RELIEVING SENTINELS.

Arms—PORT.
One time and one motion.

U.S. Tactics. 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 towards the muzzle, the barrel sloping upwards and crossing opposite to the point of the left shoulder, the butt proportionally 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 right shoulder, placing the right hand as in the position of shoulder arms, slip the left hand to the height of the shoulder, the fingers extended.

(Second motion.) Drop the left hand smartly by the side.

Being on parade and at order arms, if it be wished to give the men rest, the command, will be:

Parade—REST.

At the command rest, turn the piece on the heel of the butt, the barrel to the left, the muzzle in front of the centre of the body; seize it at the same time

7. Return—RAMMER.
One time and three motions.

164. (First motion.) Draw the rammer half-way out, and steady it in this position with the left thumb; grasp it near the muzzle with the right hand, the little finger uppermost, the nails to the front, the thumb along the rammer; clear the rammer from the bore by extending the arm, the nails to the front, the rammer in the prolongation of the bore.

165. (Second motion.) Turn the rammer, the head of the rammer passing near the left shoulder, and insert it in the pipes until the right hand reaches the muzzle, the nails to the front.

166. (Third motion.) Force the rammer home by placing the little finger of the right hand on the head of the rammer; pass the left hand down the barrel to the extent of the arm, without depressing the shoulder.

8. PRIME.²
One time and two motions.

167. (First motion.) With the left

²U.S. Tactics 167. “If the Maynard’s primer be used, the command will be, load in eight times, and the eighth command will be, shoulder arms, and executed from return rammer, in one time and two motions, as follows:

(First motion.) “Raise the piece with the left hand, and take the position of shoulder arms, as indicated, No. 145.

(Second motion.) “Drop the left hand quickly by the side.”
1. *Guard against Infantry.* 2. *GUARD.*

*One time and two motions.*

305. (*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.

306. (*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.*

307. 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.

171. (*First motion.*) Raise the piece slightly with the right hand, making a half face to the right on the left heel; carry the right foot to the rear, and place it at right angles to the left, the hollow of it opposite to, and against the left heel; grasp the piece with the left hand at the lower band and detach it slightly from the shoulder.

172. (*Second motion.*) Bring down the piece with both hands, the barrel upwards, the left thumb extended along the stock, the butt below the right fore-arm, the small of the stock against the body and two inches below the right breast, the muzzle as high as the eye, the left elbow against the side; place at the same time the right thumb on the head of the cock, the other fingers wider and against the guard.

173. (*Third motion.*) Cock, and seize the piece at the small of the stock without deranging the position of the butt.

*AIM.*

*One time and one motion.*

174. Raise the piece with both hands, and support the butt against the right shoulder; the left, elbow down, the right as high as the shoulder; incline the head upon the butt, so that the right eye may perceive quickly the notch of the hausse, the front sight, and the object aimed at; the left eye closed, the right thumb extended along the stock, the fore-finger on the trigger.

175. When recruits are formed in two ranks to execute the firings, the front rank men will raise it, little less the right elbow, in order to facilitate the aim of the rear rank men.

176. The rear rank men, in aiming, will each carry the right foot about eight inches to the right, and towards the left heel of the
TO LOAD ON THE MARCH OR RUNNING.

Ellsworth 240 and 57. (First motion.) Carry the piece across the body to the left, and seize it at the middle band with the left hand.

Piece—in front of the body, barrel to the right.

Right hand—clasping the trigger guard as in shouldered arms.

Left hand—at the middle band, opposite the centre of the breast.

58. (Second motion.) Disengage the right hand, carry it to the cartridge box, and bring the piece gently toward the ground with the left hand.

Position of the piece—Resting against the left thigh, held by the left hand at the middle band; rammer to the rear; butt against the outside hollow of the left foot; muzzle three inches from the left breast.

Ellsworth 240. Holding the piece in this position, take out a cartridge—tear it with the teeth, and halt a moment to pour the powder in the barrel—draw rammer and ram cartridge, and if necessary, halting a moment to insert rammer—return the rammer—bring up the piece with the left hand to position of arms port, (in this position, prime, if caps are used)—come to the ready, and fire when occasion offers.

THE CHARGE.

Kelton 103. The squad (platoon, or company) being in two ranks and at "carry arms," and supposed to be about forty or fifty yards from the enemy, the instructor will command:

1. Prepare to charge. 2. Double quick—MARCH!

At the first command, seize the piece with the left hand at the height of the right breast, and bring it diagonally across the middle of the body, the bayonet slightly advanced, the right hand

182. Throw up the piece briskly with the left hand and resume the position of shoulder arms, at the same time face to the front, turning on the left heel, and bring the right heel on a line with the left.

183. To accustom the recruits to wait for the command fire, the instructor, when they are in the position of aim, will command:

Recover—ARMS.
One, time and one, motion.

184. At the first part of the command, withdraw the finger from the trigger; at the command arms, retake the position of the third motion of ready.

185. The recruits being in the position of the third motion of ready, if the instructor should wish to bring them to a shoulder, he will command:

Shoulder—ARMS.
One time and one motion.

186. At the command shoulder, place the thumb upon the cock, the fore-finger on the trigger, half cock, and seize the small of the stock with the right hand. At the command arms, bring up the piece briskly to the right shoulder, and retake the position of shoulder arms.

187. The recruits being at shoulder arms, when the instructor shall wish to fix bayonets, he will command:

Fix—BAYONET.
One time and three motions.

188. (First motion.) Grasp the piece with the left hand at the height of the shoulder, and detach it slightly from the shoulder with the right hand.

189. (Second motion.) Quit the piece with the right hand, lower it with the left hand, opposite the middle of the body, and
for placing the right knee upon the ground in bending the left leg; place the right knee upon the ground; lower the piece, the left fore-arm supported upon the thigh on the same side, the right hand on the small of the stock, the butt resting on the right thigh, the left hand supporting the piece near the lower band.

293. He will next move the right leg to the left around the knee supported on the ground, until this leg is nearly perpendicular to the direction of the left foot, and thus seat himself comfortably on the right heel.

294. Raise the piece with the right hand and support it with the left, holding it near the lower band, the left elbow resting on the left thigh near the knee; seize the hammer with the thumb, the fore-finger under the guard, cock and seize the piece at the small of the stock; bring the piece to the shoulder, aim and fire.

295. Bring the piece down as soon as it is fired, and support it with the left hand, the butt resting against the right thigh; carry the piece to the rear rising on the knee, the barrel downwards, the butt resting on the ground; in this position support the piece with the left hand at the upper band, draw cartridge with the right and load the piece, ramming the ball, if necessary, with both hands.

296. When loaded bring the piece to the front with the left hand, which holds it at the upper band; seize it at the same time with the right hand at the small of the stock; turn the piece, the barrel uppermost and nearly horizontal, the left elbow resting on the left thigh; half-cock, remove the old cap and prime, rise, and return to the ranks.

297. The second man will then be taught what has just been prescribed for the first, and so on through the remainder of the squad.

Bring down the piece with both hands, the barrel uppermost, the left elbow against the body; seize the small of the stock, at the same time, with the right hand, which will be supported against the hip; the point of the bayonet as high as the eye.

Shoulder—ARMS.
One time and two motions.

195. (First motion.) Throw up the piece briskly with the left band in facing to the front, place it against the right shoulder, the rammer to the front; turn the right hand so as to embrace the guard, slide the left hand to the height of the shoulder, the right hand nearly extended.

196. (Second motion.) Drop the left hand smartly by the side.

Trail—ARMS.
One time and two motions.

197. If the rifle musket is used, perform the first motion of order arms per U.S. Tactics 147 and Casey SoS 154:

(First motion.) Seize the piece briskly with the left hand a little above the middle band, and detach it slightly from the shoulder with the right hand: loosen the grasp of the right hand, lower the piece with the left, reseize the piece with the right hand just above the lower band, the little finger in the rear of the barrel, the butt about four inches from the ground, the right hand supported against the hip, drop the left hand by the side.

198. (Second motion.) Incline the muzzle slightly to the front, the butt to the rear and about four inches from the ground. The right hand supported at the hip, will
and fire; rear rank man in aiming will take the position indicated, No. 176, by carrying the right foot about eight inches to the right, and towards the left heel of the man next on the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward.

277. The men of this file will load their pieces briskly and fire a second time; reload and fire again, and so on in continuation.

278. The second file will aim, at the instant the first brings down pieces to reload and will conform in all respects to that which has just been prescribed for the first file.

279. After the first fire, the front and rear rank men will not be required to fire at the same time.

280. Each man, after loading, will return to the position of ready and continue the fire.

281. When the instructor wishes the fire to cease, he will command:

Cease—FIRING.

282. At this command, the men will cease firing. If they have fired they will load their pieces and bring them to a shoulder; if at the position of ready, they will half-cock and shoulder arms. If in the position of aim, they will bring down their pieces, half-cock, and shoulder arms.

TO FIRE BY RANK.

283. The fire by rank will be executed by each entire rank, alternately.
265. At this command, the men will cease firing, but will load their pieces if unloaded, and afterwards bring them to a shoulder.

**OBLIQUE FIRINGS.**

266. The oblique firings will be executed to the right and left, and by the same commands as the direct fire, with this single difference—the command, *aim*, will always be preceded by the caution, *right or left oblique*.

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**Position of the two ranks in the Oblique Fire to the right.**

267. At the command, *ready*, the two ranks will execute what has been prescribed for the direct fire.

268. At the cautionary command, *right oblique*, the two ranks will throw back the right shoulder and look steadily at the object to be hit.

269. At the command, *aim*, each front rank man will aim to the right without deranging the feet; each rear rank man will advance the left foot about eight inches towards the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader and aim to the right, inclining the upper part of the body forward and bending a little the left knee.

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**Position of the two ranks in the Oblique Fire to the left.**

270. At the cautionary command, *left oblique*, the two ranks will throw back the left shoulder and look steadily at the object to be hit.

271. At the command, *aim*, the front rank will take aim to the left without deranging the feet; each man in the rear rank will advance the right foot about eight inches towards the right heel of the man next on the right of his file leader, and aim to the left, inclining the upper part of the body forward and bending a little the right knee.

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fingers, the other two fingers under the butt plate.

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211. (*Second motion.*) Quit the piece with the left hand, raise and place the piece on the right shoulder with the right hand, the lock plate upwards; let fall, at the same time, the left hand by the side.

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**Shoulder—ARMS.**

**One time and two motions.**

212. (*First motion.*) Raise the piece perpendicularly by extending the right arm to its full length, the rammer to the front, at the same time seize the piece with the left hand between the lower band and guide-sight.

213. (*Second motion.*) Quit the butt with the right hand, which will immediately embrace the guard, lower the piece to the position of *shoulder arms*, slide up the left hand to the height of the shoulder, the fingers extended and closed. Drop the left hand by the side.

214. The men being at support arms, the instructor will sometimes cause pieces to be brought to the right shoulder. To this effect, he will command:

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**Right shoulder shift—ARMS.**

**One time and two motions.**

215. (*First motion.*) Seize the piece with the right hand, below and near the left fore-arm, place the left hand under the butt, the heel of the butt between the first two fingers.

216. (*Second motion.*) Turn the piece with the left hand, the lock plate upwards, carry it to the right shoulder, the left hand still holding the butt, the muzzle elevated; hold the piece in this position and place the right hand upon the butt, as is prescribed, No.
252. Execute the times to include charge cartridge.
   TWO.
253. Execute the times to include ram cartridge.
   THREE.
254. Execute the times to include prime.
   FOUR.
255. Execute the time of shoulder arms.

   To load at will.

256. The instructor will next teach loading at will, which
will be executed as loading in four times, but continued, and
without resting on either of the times. He will command:

   1. Load at will.  2. LOAD.

257. The instructor will habituate the recruits, by degrees,
to load with it greatest possible promptitude, each without
regulating himself by his neighbor, and above all without waiting
for him.
258. The cadence prescribed, No. 129, is not applicable to
loading in four times, or at will.

FIRINGS.

259. The firings are direct or oblique, and will be executed
as follows:

THE DIRECT FIRE.

260. The instructor will give the following commands:

   1. Fire by squad.  2. Squad.  3. READY.
   4. AIM.  5. Fire.  6. LOAD.

222. (First motion.)
Turn the piece with the right hand, the barrel to the left,
at the same time seize the cartridge box with the left hand, bend the body,
advance the left foot, the heel opposite the lower band; lay the piece on the
ground with the right hand, the toe of the butt on a line with the
right toe, the knees slightly bent, the right heel raised.

223. (Second motion.) Rise up, bring the left foot by the
side of the right, quit the cartridge box with the left hand, and drop
the hands by the side.

   Raise—ARMS.
   One time and two motions.

224. (First motion.) Seize the cartridge box with the left
hand, bend the body, advance the left foot opposite the lower band,
and seize the piece with the right hand.

225. (Second motion.) Raise the piece, bringing the left
foot by the side of the right; turn the piece with the right hand, the
rammer to the front; at the same time quit the cartridge box with
the left hand, and drop this hand by the side.

Inspection of arms.

226. The soldiers being at ordered arms, and having the
sabre-bayonet in the scabbard, if the instructor wishes to cause an
inspection of arms, he will command:

   Inspection—ARMS.
   One time and two motions.

227. (First motion.) Seize the piece with the left hand