

## CHAPTER 5

### Drill of the Flight

#### The Flight as the Basic Drill Unit

The first phase of drill involves teaching the cadet the basic movements, facings, and positions, either as an individual or as a member of an element. The second phase of drill merges the individual with others to form a flight in which basic formations and marching are learned. This chapter is concerned with the flight, which is composed of at least two but not more than four elements. This formation has been found to be the most practical drill group. In flight drill, the positions of the flight commander, flight sergeant, and the guide assume importance. The drill instructor may assume any of these titles and positions for the purposes of instruction. When in column, the flight is sized according to height, with the tallest individuals to the front and right. Every effort should be made to retain individuals of highest grade in positions occupied by element leaders and guides.

For drill purposes, the drill instructor has the authority to do all of the activities listed. However, he or she will normally share these responsibilities with the flight sergeant since the flight sergeant has the permanent position and grade within the flight.

**Duties of Flight Officer and Cadet during Drill Activities.** As the title implies, each officer and cadet who make up the flight has certain duties and responsibilities when drill activities are taking place. The flight commander is the one with the highest

rank and is in command of the flight. The flight guide is considered to be an important position within the flight. The chief duties are to set the direction and the pace of the march and to establish the base element. The cadet at the head of each element, known as the element leader, must set a pattern for the element members to follow and must maintain the prescribed interval. The flight sergeant is responsible to the flight commander for the organization and general conduct of the flight.

**Flight Leaders.** The flight is the basic unit for drill, and it is the basic component of a larger organization known as the squadron. These units of drill are guided by certain leaders. The leaders for the flight will include a flight commander, a flight sergeant, a flight guide, element leaders, and assistant element leaders. Throughout this chapter, the leaders of the flight and squadron are represented by symbols. These symbols are defined and shown in figure 3-1.

#### Guide

**Rules for the Guide.** As stated earlier, the guide is considered to be an important element of the flight since he or she is responsible for the direction and cadence of the march. Being a leader for the entire flight, it is essential that all flight members know their location at all times. To accomplish this, certain rules have been established to govern the position and movements of the guide during flight drill. Here are the rules for the guide:

(1) The guide sets the direction and cadence of the march. The guide of the leading flight of a squadron marching in column sets the direction and cadence of march for the squadron.

(2) When a flight in line is given the command **Right FACE**, the guide executes right face with the flight. Then the guide immediately performs a face in marching to the right and marches to a position in front of the right file, halts, and executes a left face.

(3) When a flight marching in column is given the command **Right (Left) Flank, MARCH** or **To the Rear, MARCH**, the guide executes the movement. The relative position of the guide does not change within the flight except when the flight is halted in line in such a manner that the guide is not abreast of the front rank, then the guide moves to a position abreast of the front rank.

(4) Unless otherwise announced, the position of the guide within a flight, in line or in column, in marching or at a halt, is right. When it is desired to change the base for a movement, the new position of the guide is assigned preceding the preparatory command for the movement. The dress is always to the base element.

(5) When the flight is in column and it is desired to position the guide to the left, the command **GUIDE LEFT** is given. On this command, the guide and the flight commander exchange positions by passing right shoulder to right shoulder. To return the guide to the normal position, **GUIDE RIGHT** is given. The guide and flight commander return to their normal positions by again passing right shoulder to right shoulder. The movement can be made either at a halt or while marching.

Normally the flight is marched with the element leaders and guide at the head of the column.

## **Drill Instructor**

In addition to the flight commander, the adjutant, and the guide, another individual plays an important role and contributes much to the success of the flight drill. He is known as the drill instructor.

The commander gives all commands to the units except when command is delegated to a subordinate. Regardless of grade, when an instructor is in charge of an individual or unit, authority is derived from the commander and is the same as that of the commander. For drill instruction, movement of troops, and other formations, every effort should be made to have the senior member present assume a leadership position. Avoid placing persons of higher grade in subordinate formation positions, or activity whenever possible.

So far in this chapter, you have been asked to identify a sizable number of important military terms with which you must know in order to be able to execute properly the movements involved in drilling. It is impossible to say that any one of these is more important than another; therefore, cadets should become thoroughly familiar with all of them.

## **Flight Formation**

The forming of the flight into a marching unit includes the following steps: (1) close interval, (2) aligning the flight, (3) forming a single file and reforming, (4) the opening and closing of the ranks and related movements, and (5) leaving the ranks.

**The Formation of the Flight.** To form the flight, the flight sergeant will first take a post and face the assembly space where the flight is to be formed. A flight forms in at least two but not more than four elements in line formation (see figure 5-1). The command is **FALL IN**. Upon receiving this

command, the guide takes a position facing the flight sergeant and to the flight sergeant's left so that the first element will fall in centered on and three paces from the flight sergeant. Once halted at the position of attention, the guide performs an automatic dress right dress. When the guide feels the presence of the first element leader on his or her fingertips, the guide executes an automatic ready front. Once positioned, the guide does not move.

The first element leader falls in directly to the left of the guide, and once halted, executes an automatic dress right dress. The second, third, and fourth element leaders fall in behind the first element leader, execute an automatic dress right dress, visually establish a 40-inch distance, and align themselves directly behind the individual in front of them. The remaining cadets will fall into any open position to the left of the element leaders and execute an automatic dress right dress to establish dress and cover.

To establish interval, the leading individual in each file will obtain exact shoulder-to-fingertip contact with the individual to his or her immediate right (see figure 5-2). As soon as dress, cover, interval, and distance are established, each cadet executes an automatic ready front on an individual basis and remains at the position of attention.

Once it is formed, the flight will be squared off prior to sizing. The left flank of the formation will be squared off with extra cadets filling in from the fourth to the first element. For example, if there is one extra cadet, he or she will be positioned in the fourth element; if there are two extra cadets, one will be positioned in the third element and one will be positioned in the fourth element; and so forth. The flight sergeant

will occupy the last position in the fourth element.

**To Size the Flight.** There are many individuals of all heights throughout the formation after the execution of **FALL IN**. This looks totally unorganized and definitely not military. To remedy this, size the flight. After the flight has been executed **FALL IN**, the flight commander faces the flight to the right (from line to column formation) and sizes the files according to height and has the taller personnel (except the guide, element leaders, and flight sergeant) move to the front of the flight according to height. The flight commander then faces the flight to the right (from column to inverted line formation) and again has the taller personnel (except the flight sergeant) move to the front of the flight according to height. If the unit is still improperly sized, the flight commander faces the flight back to the left (column formation) and continues this procedure until all members are properly sized.

Each individual member of the flight has a number except the guide. Numbering of individual members of a flight is from right to left (when in line formation) and from front to rear (when in column formation). The element leader is always number one (see figure 5-3).

**To Form at Close Interval.** To form at close interval, the command is **At Close Interval, FALL IN**. Upon receiving the command **FALL IN**, the movement is executed as prescribed in the previous paragraph except that close interval is observed (figure 5-4). The only commands that may be given while the flight is in this formation are **At Close Interval, Dress Right, DRESS; Ready, FRONT; AT**

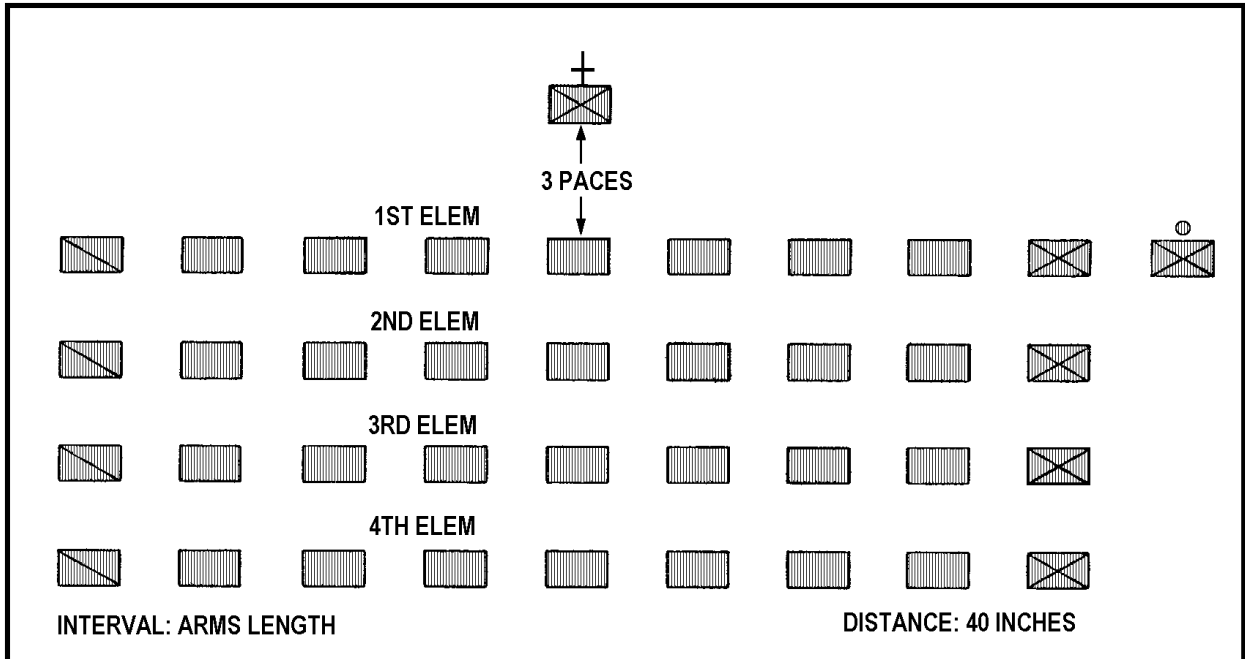


Figure 5-1. Flight in Line Formation.

**EASE; ATTENTION; FALL OUT; and DISMISSED.**

The flight is usually formed and dismissed by the drill instructor or by the flight sergeant. Upon receiving the command **DISMISSED**, cadets break ranks and leave the area.

## **Aligning the Flight**

### **Dress Right (Left) Dress (Line/Inverted Line Formation).**

For normal intervals, the commands are **Dress Right, DRESS** and **Ready, FRONT**. On the command **DRESS**, everyone except the last cadet in each element raises and extends the left arm laterally from the shoulder with snap so the arm is parallel with the ground. As the arm is raised, uncup the hand at approximately waist level, keeping the palm down. Extend and join the fingers and place the thumb along the forefinger. At the same time as the left arm is raised, each individual (except the guide and second, third, and fourth element leaders) turns head and eyes 45 degrees to the right with snap. The leading individual of each file establishes normal interval (by taking small choppy steps and aligning with the base file) and establishes exact shoulder-to-fingertip contact with the individual to the immediate right. The second, third, and fourth element leaders align themselves directly behind the person in front of them (using small choppy steps) and visually establish a 40-inch distance.

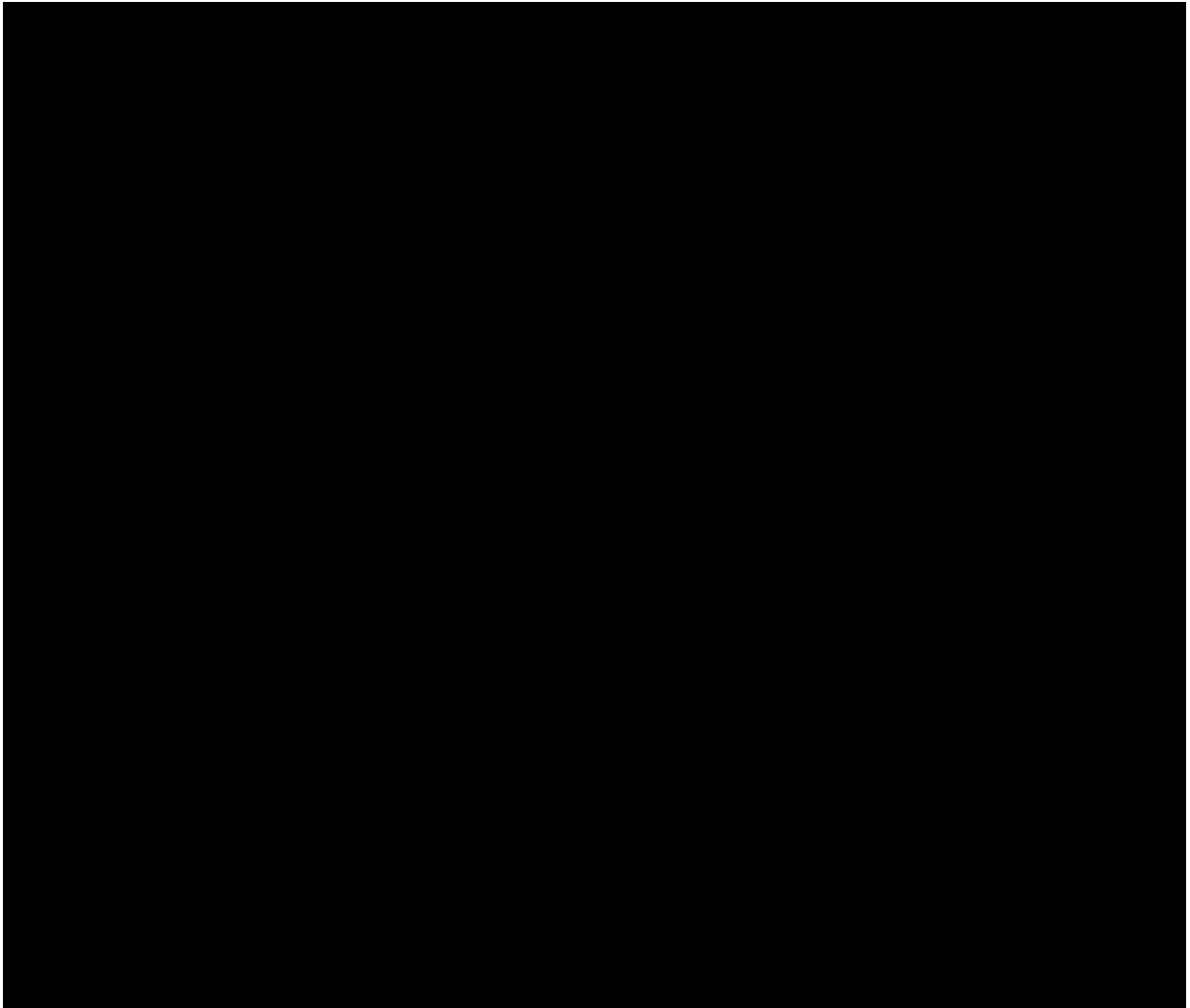
As the remaining members align themselves behind the individual in front of or to the right of them, their shoulders may or may not touch the fingertips of the individual to their right. If the arm is too long, place the extended hand behind the shoulder of the individual to the left. If the arm is too short, leave it extended towards the individual to the left and parallel to the

ground. Once dress, cover, interval, and distance have been established, the command **Ready, FRONT** will be given. On this command, the cadet whose arms are up will lower their arms with snap to their sides (without slapping their sides) and recup their hands when their arm is at approximately waist level. As the arm is lowered, the cadets whose heads are turned will return their heads to the front with snap. The body is now back to the position of attention.

**Close Interval.** The command is **At Close Interval, Dress Right, DRESS**. On this command, all cadets except the last one in each element will raise their left hand so the heel of the hand rests on the left hip, fingers are extended and joined, thumb is along the forefinger, fingertips point toward the ground, and the elbow in line with the body (see figure 5-4). At the same time the left hand is raised, all cadets except the guide and second, third, and fourth element leaders will turn their head and eyes 45 degrees to the right. First element cadets establish the interval by ensuring their upper right arm touches the extended elbow of the individual to their right. The same procedures used to establish dress, cover, interval, and distance for normal interval will be used for close interval. **At Close Interval, Dress Right (Left), DRESS** is not given to a flight at normal interval, and **Dress Right (Left), DRESS** is not given to a flight at close interval.

**Dress Left Dress.** When giving the command **Dress Left, DRESS** or **At Close Interval, Dress Left, DRESS**, use the procedures for dress right dress except the flight must be in inverted line formation, the right arm/hand raised, and the head turned left.

**Alignment Procedures.** Moving by the most direct route, the flight commander



**Figure 5-2. Normal Interval.**

takes the position on the flank of the flight toward which the dress is made, one pace from and in prolongation of the front rank, and faces down the line. From this position, the flight commander verifies the alignment of the front rank. If necessary, individuals are called to move forward or backward by name or number. Military bearing is maintained and, instead of weaving from side to side, short sidesteps are taken to verify alignment. The flight commander then faces to the left (right) in marching, halts on the propagation of each succeeding rank, executes right (left) face, and aligns the rank. After verifying the alignment of

the ranks, the flight commander faces to the right (left) in marching, moves three paces beyond the front rank, halts, faces to the left (right), and commands **Ready, FRONT**. Executing a minimum of movements, the flight commander takes the normal position by the most direct route in front of the flight.

### **Cover**

**Column Formation.** To align the flight in column the command is **COVER**. Upon receiving this command, everyone

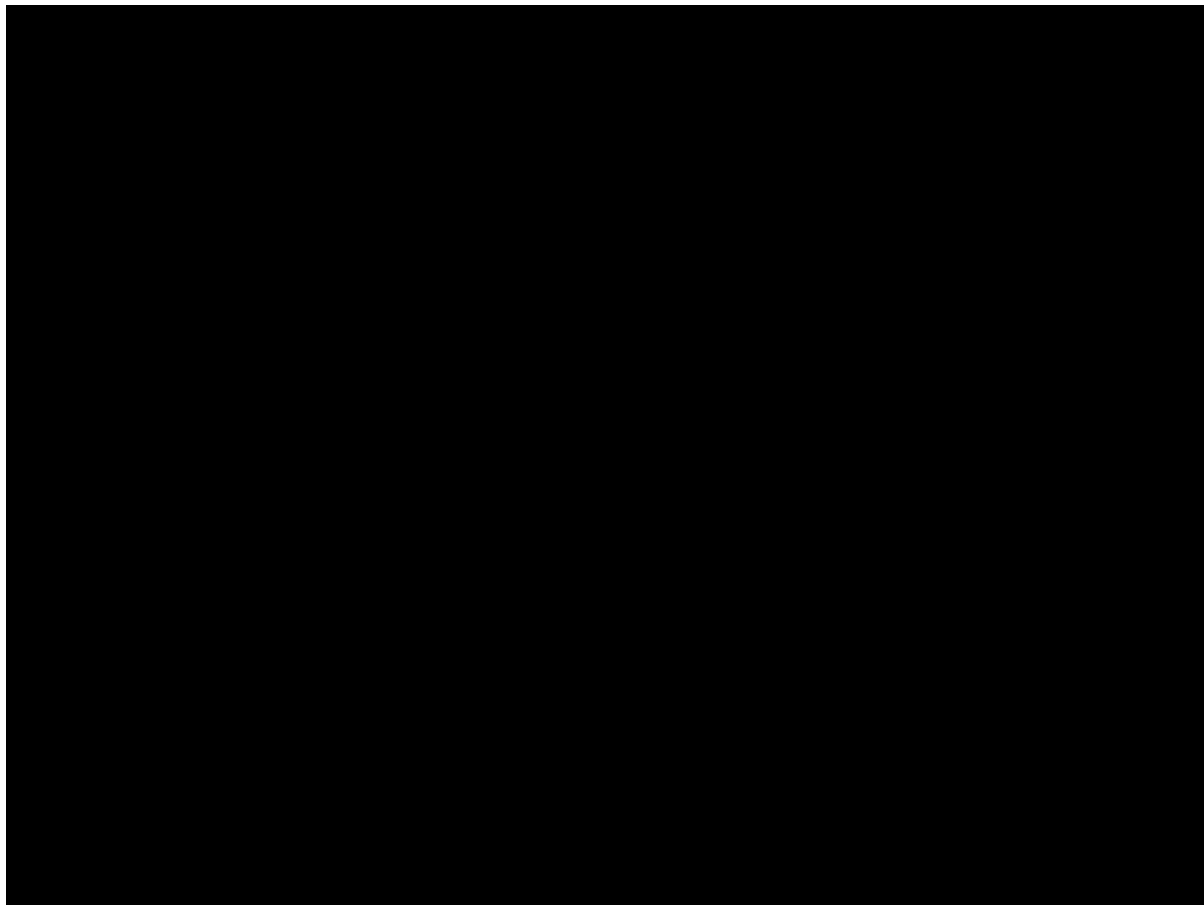
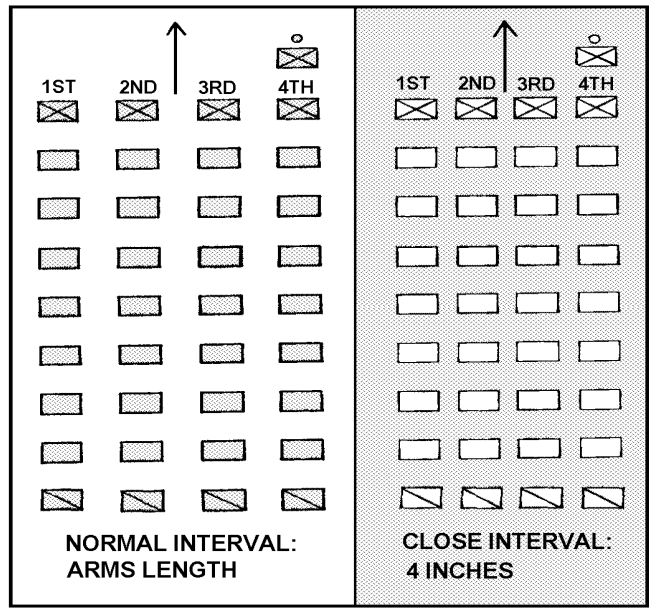
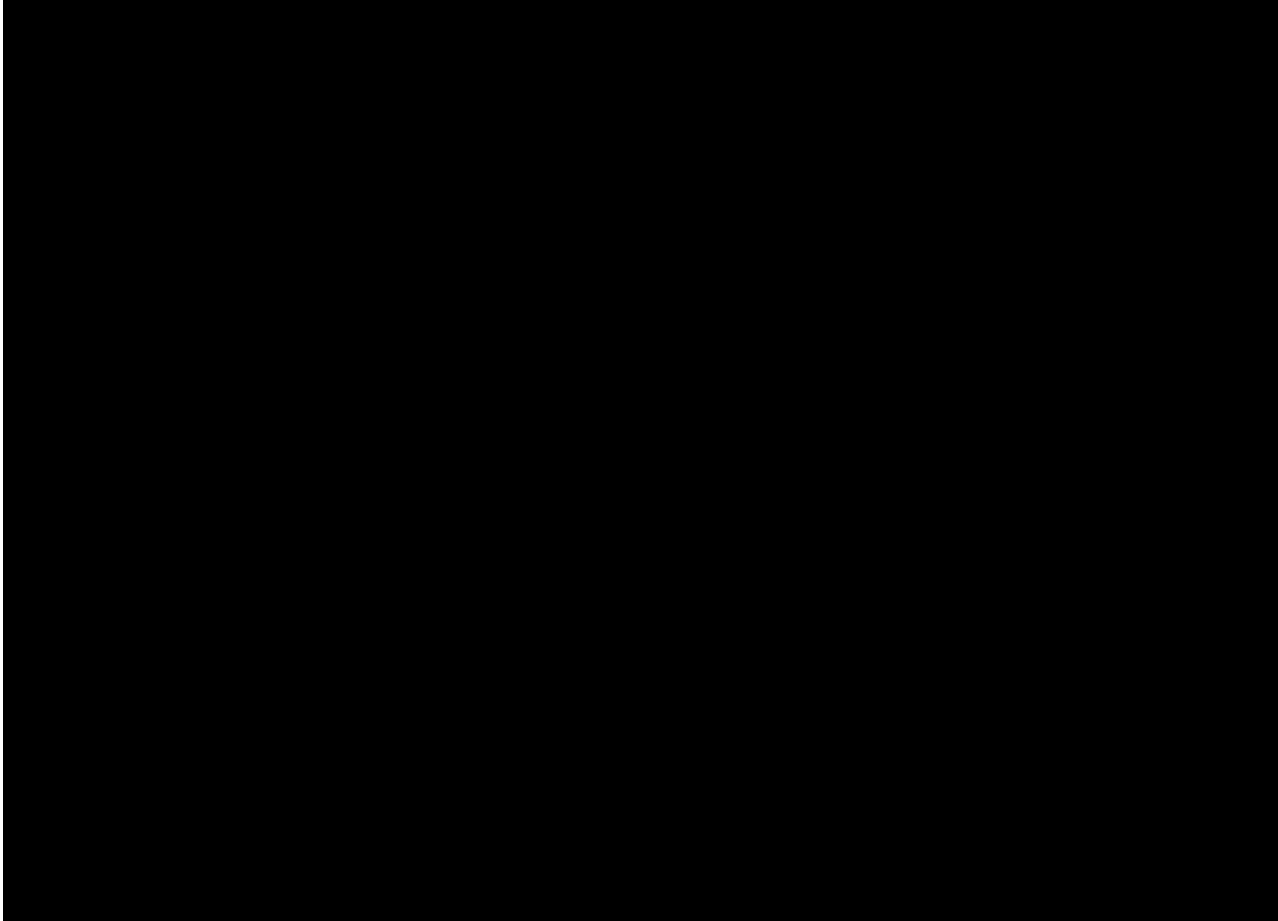


Figure 5-3. Flight in Column Formation.



**Figure 5-4. Close Interval.**

with the exception of the guide, will adjust by taking small choppy steps, if needed, and establish dress, cover, interval, and distance. The leading individual of each file (excluding the base file) obtains the proper interval (normal or close). The base file establishes and maintains a 40-inch distance. Everyone else aligns themselves beside the individual to their right and behind the individual in front of them.

**Inverted Column Formation.** The same command and procedures used to reestablish dress, cover, interval, and distance while in column formation are used in inverted column. The exception to this is that the leading individual of the base element does not move and everyone else establishes dress, cover, interval, and distance based on this individual.

## **Open Ranks**

**To Open Ranks When in Line.** To open ranks when in line, the command is **Open Ranks, MARCH**. It is only given to a formation when in line at normal interval. On the command **MARCH**, the fourth rank stands fast and automatically executes dress right dress at normal interval. Each succeeding rank in front of the fourth rank takes the required number of paces, stepping off with the left foot and a coordinated armswing, halts, and automatically executes dress right dress. The third rank takes one pace forward, the second rank takes two paces forward, and the first rank takes three paces forward. Once halted, the distance between ranks will be 70 inches.

The flight commander proceeds and aligns the flight. Once the flight is aligned, the flight commander commands **Ready, FRONT**. If the flight is to be inspected, the flight commander takes one step forward and faces to the right, in a position in front of the guide.

The flight commander salutes and reports to the inspector **Sir (Ma'am), \_\_\_\_\_ Flight is prepared for inspection**. As soon as the flight commander has been inspected, he or she is asked to accompany the inspector. The flight commander then executes a left face (down line) and commands **Second, Third, and Fourth Elements, Parade, REST**. The flight commander executes a half left in marching without armswing and halts one pace to the right and one pace to the rear of the inspector. (This causes the flight commander to precede the inspector). This position is maintained throughout the inspection of the front of each respective rank. When moving from individual to individual during the inspection, the inspector and flight commander simultaneously execute a face to the right in marching and an in-place halt.

The movement is executed by pivoting 90 degrees to the right on the ball of the right foot, simultaneously stepping over the right foot with the left foot and placing the left foot parallel to the rank being inspected. Then advance one short step with the right foot, and place the right foot pointed toward the flight. Next bring the left heel into the right heel, and once again reassume the position of attention. The upper portion of the body remains at the position of attention, and the armswing is suspended throughout when inspecting the front of each rank.

These movements should place the inspector directly in front of the next individual to be inspected, still preceded by the flight commander. After the inspector has inspected the last individual in the front

rank, the flight commander hesitates momentarily and allows the inspector to precede him or her as the inspector inspects the front rank from the rear. Normally, during the inspection of the rear of each rank, the flight commander follows the inspector approximately two paces to the rear, halting when the inspector halts. After inspecting the rear of each rank, the flight commander halts in front of the second person of each rank and faces to the right at the same time as the inspector halts in front of the first person. (These procedures are used to inspect the front and rear of subsequent ranks).

After inspecting the entire flight, the inspector marches off to the right flank (element leaders) of the flight. The flight commander proceeds directly to a position three paces beyond the front rank, halts, faces to the left (down line), and commands **Flight, ATTENTION**. The flight commander then takes one step forward with armswing and faces to the right. The inspector marches to a position directly in front of the flight commander and gives comments. After receiving comments, the flight commander salutes the inspector upon departure. The inspector executes the appropriate facing movement to depart. Before giving further commands, the flight commander faces left (down line) and commands **Close Ranks, MARCH**, gives parade rest, at ease, or rest (whichever is appropriate), and posts in front of and centered on the flight.

If inspection results are recorded, the following procedures apply. While the flight commander is inspected, the recorder; that is, first sergeant or flight sergeant, takes one step to the rear, faces to the right, and marches to a position one pace to the right and one pace to the front of the guide. He or she then faces down line and prepares to record the inspection results. The recorder follows the inspector, who is always moving

forward, in the front and rear of each rank. The flight commander follows the recorder during the inspection of the rear of each rank. Once the inspector inspects from the rear the last individual in each rank, normally the guide or element leader, the inspector turns and halts directly in front of the element leader of the next rank. The recorder marches past the inspector and reassumes the position of following the inspector. After the last element has been inspected, the inspector inspects the recorder and commands **POST**. The recorder posts. The flight commander marches three paces beyond the front rank, halts, faces to the left (down line), commands **Flight, ATTENTION**, takes one step forward with armswing, faces to the right, receives comments from the inspector, and salutes upon departure. Before giving further commands, the flight commander faces left and commands **Close Ranks, MARCH**. He or she then gives parade rest, at ease, or rest; whichever is appropriate, and posts in front of and centered on the flight.

When the inspection party finishes inspecting the first element and before the inspector halts in front of the first person of the second element, the second element leader assumes the position of attention. The element leader turns his or her head approximately 45 degrees down line and commands **Second Element, ATTENTION**. When the first element leader can see the inspector out of the corner of his or her eye, the element leader turns his or her head down line and commands **First Element, Parade, REST**. This procedure is repeated throughout the remaining elements.

## **Close Ranks**

**To Close Ranks When at Open Ranks.** To close ranks when at open ranks, the command is **Close Ranks, MARCH**. On the command **MARCH**, the first rank stands fast. The second rank takes one pace forward with coordinating armswing and halts at the position of attention. The third and fourth ranks take two and three paces forward, respectively, and halt at attention. Each person covers on the person directly in front.

**Individuals to Leave Ranks.** There are times when it becomes necessary for individuals to leave the ranks and report to a superior. In line formation, when calling individuals out of ranks, the command is **(Rank and Last Name), (pause) FRONT AND CENTER**. Upon hearing his or her name, the individual assumes the position of attention. On the command **FRONT AND CENTER**, the individual takes one step backward, (with coordinated armswing) faces to the left or right, whichever would be the shortest route, proceeds to the closest flank, and then proceeds to the front of the formation by the most direct route. Next, he or she halts one pace in front of and facing the person in command, salutes, and reports as directed.

**Individual to Return to Ranks.** To direct the individual's return, the command is **RETURN TO RANKS**. The individual salutes, faces about, and returns by the same route to the same position in the ranks.

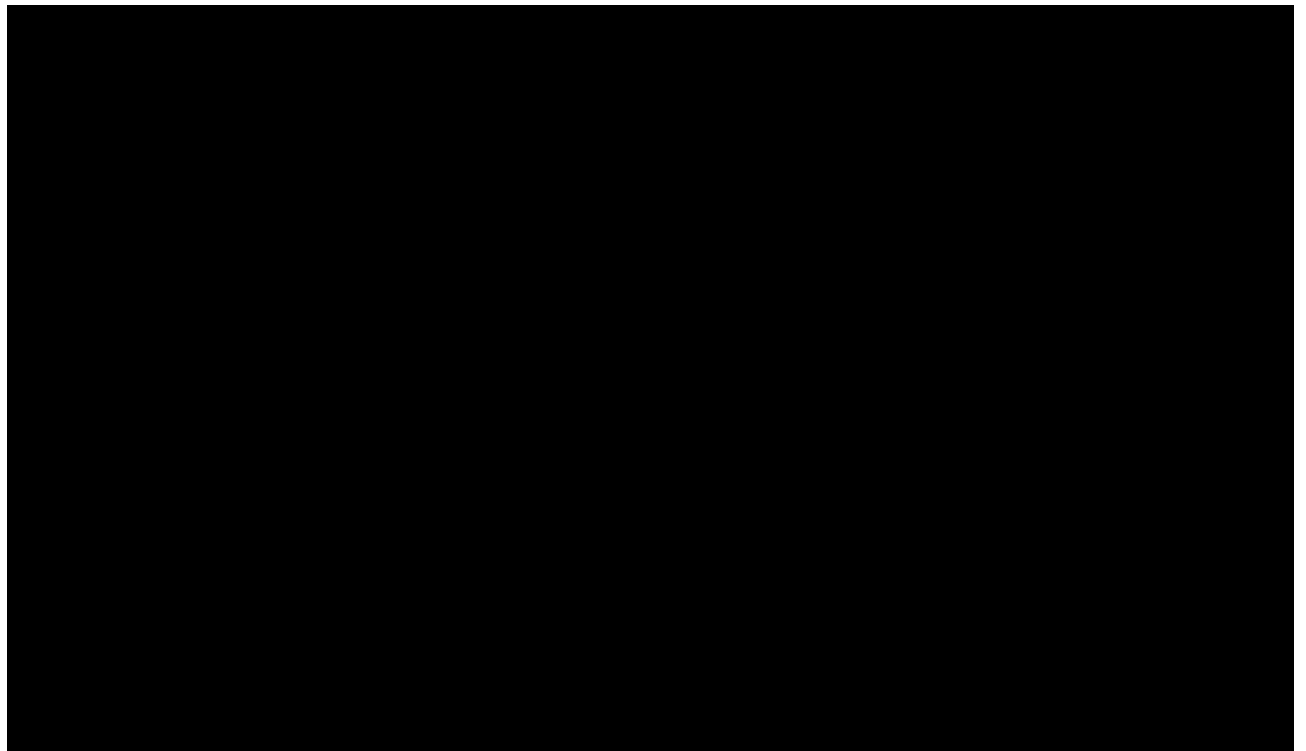
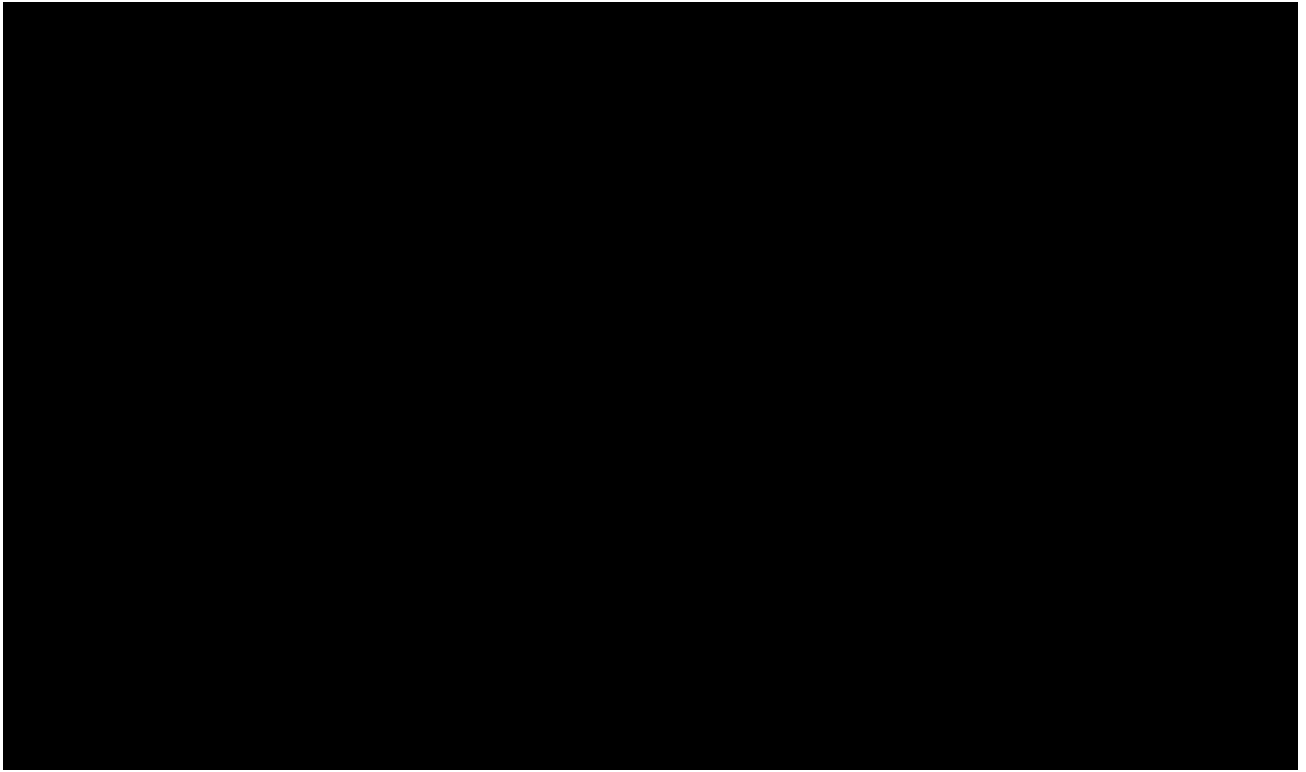
## **Count Off**

For drill purposes, count off is executed only from right to left in line and from front to rear in column or mass. Flight commanders and guides do not count off in line, column, or mass. Notice that the command for the cadets to count off is the same whether they are in line or in column, but the movements utilized in executing each command are slightly different.

**In Line.** When in line, the command is **Count, OFF**. Upon receiving the command **OFF**, all cadets except the element leaders and guide turn their heads and eyes 45 degrees to the right and the element leaders call out **ONE** in a normal speaking tone of voice. After the element leaders call out **ONE**, cadets in the next file turn their heads and eyes in unison to the front and call out **TWO**. This procedure continues in quick time until all files (full or partial) are numbered. All movements are made in a precise manner with snap.

**In Column.** In column, the command is **Count, OFF**. Upon receiving the command **OFF**, the element leaders turn their heads 45 degrees to the right and in

unison call out **ONE** over their right shoulder in a normal tone of voice. Once the number is sounded, the element leaders turn their heads back to the front as shown in figure 5-5. Once the heads of the individuals of the previous rank are turned back to the front, individuals in the next rank turn their heads 45 degrees to the right and call out the subsequent number. This procedure continues in quick time until all ranks (full or partial) have been numbered. Except when calling out their number, individuals remain at the position of attention.



**Figure 5-5. Count Off in Column.**