

The purpose of this paper is to provide instruction in the simple mechanics of posting and relieving sentries, and the changing of the Guard. It was originally written as instruction for the troops involved in the *Under the Redcoat* program at Colonial Williamsburg, which is why it contains references to specific numbers, locations and buildings. The general principle and practice of Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief is the same whether in town or in Camp. When in Camp, the Guard is mounted by the Quarter Guard, and uses the Quarter Guard area as the “Guard House”.

If at least one of the ancients had published a clear and concise explanation of Guard Mount and Sentry Duty, we would not have to adapt our routine from so many sources, however, a tip of the cocked hat must go to Phil Weaver of the 2nd New York, whose papers on guard duty are the basis for most of this, Steven C. Eames of the 71st Regiment, who has provided some useful ideas in his *British Manual Exercise and Marching Maneuvers 1775-1783*, Interpreted for the Modern Reenactor second edition 1988, and Vincent J-R Kehoe of the 10th Foot, in his 1974 and 1993 versions of *A Military Guide*. Thanks also go to the author of the *Carolina Btn. Muster Workbook No. 2*. Of course we owe all debt to the ancients; Thomas Simes, Humphrey Bland, Lewis Lochée, John Williamson, George Smith, Lewis Nicola, and Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin; Baron von Steuben.

Guard duty was probably the 18th century soldier’s most common activity. Smith’s *An Universal Military Dictionary of 1779* says that during times of peace a soldier may expect to be on Guard duty on 1 day in four; but, in time of war, much more often. As such, it should be the most common portrayal that any of us do.

Von Steuben lists 3 types of guards, 1. Outpost and Piquet guards, 2. Camp and Quarter guards and, 3. General and staff Officers’ guards.

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief

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The Outpost and Piquet guards stood duty outside of camp and/or on avenues leading to the camp to protect the approaches.

Von Steuben describes the Camp Guards;

“The intention of the camp guards being to form a chain of sentinels around the camp, in order to prevent improper persons entering, or the soldiers going out of camp,…”

Von Steuben pg 95.

The various officers’ guards stood sentry duty on officer’s quarters, on buildings of importance, etc.

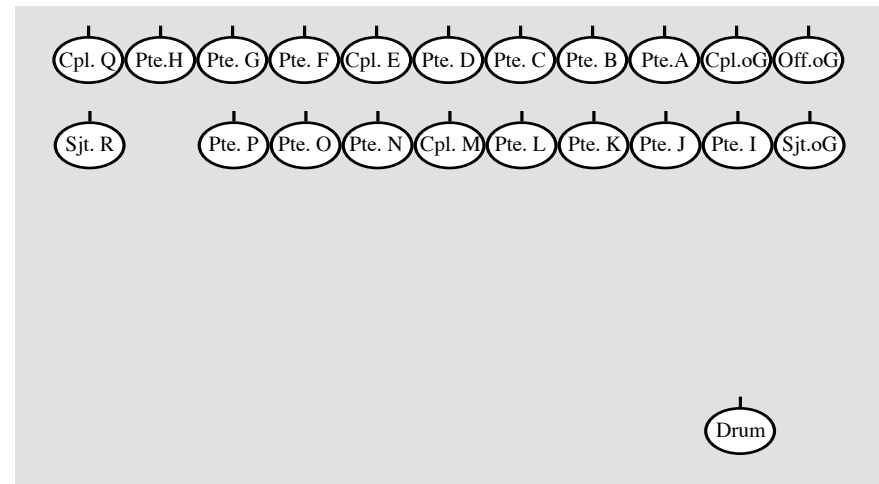
## Assembling the Guard

When planning how many soldiers you will need for your Guard, you must have at least double the number of sentries you plan to post, plus a Corporal of the Guard, a Serjeant of the Guard, an Officer of the Guard, and a Drummer. Several extra sentries will allow for “burning the parade”. In the typical conditions we deal with, posting the sentries for an hour is about the reasonable limit, and changing the entire Guard every three hours is not excessive. This schedule allows everyone at the event to have their chance at Guard Duty.

These instructions are based on the requirement to post seven sentries, plus one Corporal, on five posts. Particular attention is paid to the position of the extra Corporal in the relief- it is necessary to have him in proper position to be posted with the other sentries at the Barricade. You would not normally have an extra Corporal in your relief. Also, even though for Under the Redcoat the sentries in the Relief are placed in a very specific order, it would be much more typical period practice for the sentries to be selected and positioned at random. This would insure that an individual sentry would not be able to tell in advance where he was to be posted, and thus would be unable to conspire with anyone to commit mischief - or worse.

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief

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The sentry detail for the first posting of the day will be assembled from the unit or units detailed for Guard Duty. The Guard will assemble in closed ranks, on the ground in front of the Guard House (or the Quarter Guard), facing to the street (or the Parade). It will contain an Officer, two Serjeants, four Corporals, fourteen Privates, and a Drummer (the extra Serjeant and Corporal are so you have NCO’s to lead patrols, or provide escorts). It will form in two ranks. In the front rank, in order from right to left are:

The Officer of the Guard, the Corporal of the Guard, Pte. A, Pte. B, Pte. C, Pte. D, Cpl. E, Pte. F, Pte. G, Pte. H, and Cpl. Q. In the rear rank, from right to left are: the Serjeant of the Guard, Pte. I, Pte. J, Pte. K, Pte. L, Cpl. M, Pte. N, Pte. O, Pte. P, and Sjt. R. The Drummer is four paces behind Pte. I.

The Officer will command:

**“Rear Ranks, Take your Distance!”** - The rear rank and the Drummer face to the Right About.

**“March!”** - The Rear Rank and the Drummer march five paces.

**“To the Front, Face!”** - The Rear Rank and the Drummer face to the Right About.

**“Serjeant, take your roll.”** - whereupon the Serjeant of the Guard will either read off names from a prepared list, or take the names of the men who are present.

When the Serjeant is done, he will make his report to the Officer, after which the Officer orders:

**“Poise your Firelocks!”** - the Serjeant and the Officer go down the ranks, pulling the trigger and pressing the hammer of each musket to ensure that it is safe on half-cock.

**“Shoulder your Firelocks!”**

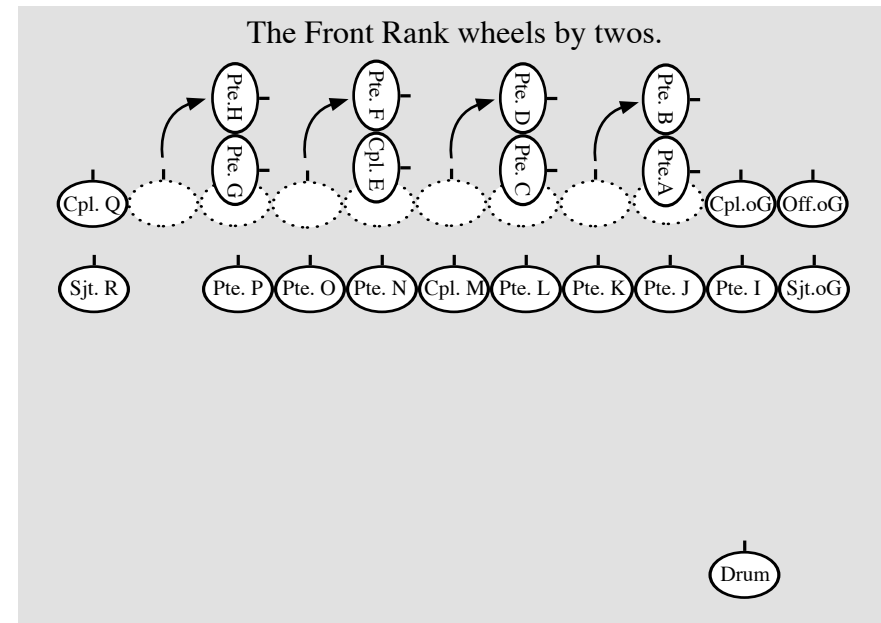
**“Search your Arms!”** - The Serjeant and the Officer go down the ranks, watching as each man springs his rammer.

During these safety inspections, the Serjeant is also inspecting the men to see that they are otherwise fit to go on guard duty.

**“Return your Rammers!”**

**“Shoulder your Firelocks!”**

**“Rear Ranks, Close to the Front!” “March”** - The Rear Rank and the Drummer march forward five paces, each halting automatically.

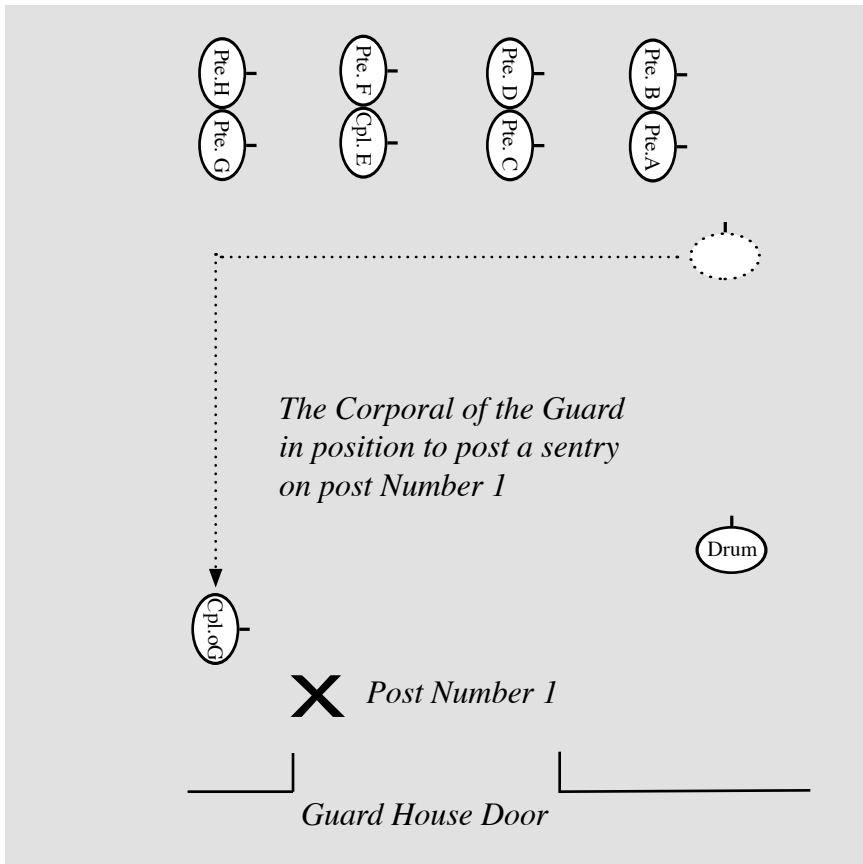


## Forming the Sentry Detail

The Officer may then tell the Corporal something like **“Form your Relief, Post your Sentries”** or even as simple as **“Carry on, Corporal.”**, at which point the Corporal of the Guard orders:

**“Front Rank, Wheel to the Right by Twos, March!”**  
**“Halt!”**

The Officer indicates to the Serjeant of the Guard for the remainder of the Guard not detailed to sentry duty to Lodge their Arms, at which point they are ordered:



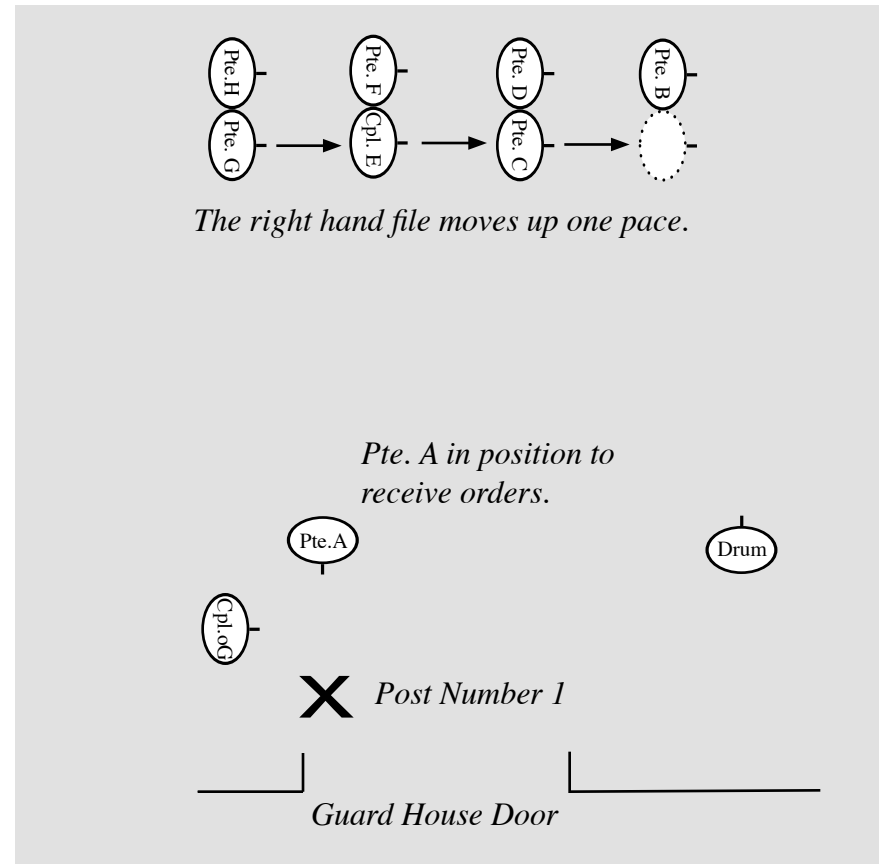
***“To the Right about, Face!”***

***“Lodge your Arms.”***

They go into the Guard House.

## Posting a Sentry

The Corporal marches the detail to within five to ten paces from the sentry post, halts the detail, then marches himself to the



position from which he will post the sentry. This will be one pace from the sentry post, at a right angle to it. The Corporal orders:

***“Rest your Firelocks!”*** The sentry detail comes to the Rest.

***“Pte. A, Advance and receive your Orders!”*** - Pte. A comes to the Recover, and marches himself smartly to the Corporal (facing toward what will become his post, at right angles to the Corporal), and comes back to the Rest.

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief

When Pte. A leaves the sentry detail, this leaves a missing man at the front right of the column. As Pte. A comes to the Rest, everyone in the right hand file of the column comes to the Recover, takes one pace forward, and comes back to the Rest. This maintains an even front to the column. When the Corporal posts Pte. B to Post Number 2, the left hand file moves forward. The Corporal will post sentries from alternate sides of the column, in order to keep things even.

The Corporal tells the sentry his orders, and asks him to repeat them.

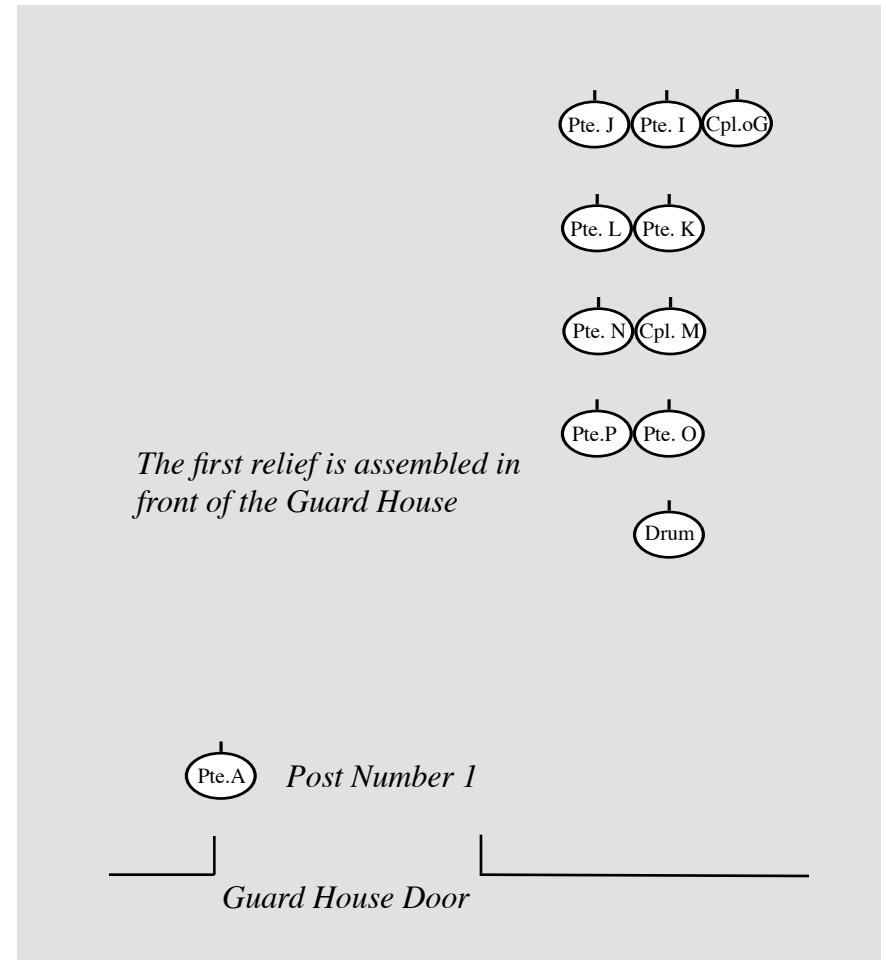
**“Repeat your orders.”** - When the Corporal gives **“Commands!”**, he should do it loud enough so that the relief and the sentries can hear them. When the Corporal is giving orders, or asking the sentry or relief to repeat their orders, it should be done quietly, just loud enough for the sentry, Corporal, and relief to hear. This prevents the wrong people from overhearing instructions and countersigns, etc. When the Corporal is satisfied that the sentry understands his orders, he commands:

**“Sentry, post!”** - The sentry comes to the Recover, takes two paces forward, and comes to the Rest.

**“Sentry, to the Right about, Face!”** - The sentry faces about.

**“Shoulder your Firelocks!”** - The sentry, and the detail, shoulder. The Corporal marches back to the detail, then marches the detail to the next post with the Drummer joining the detail four paces behind the rear man of the right hand file of the detail.

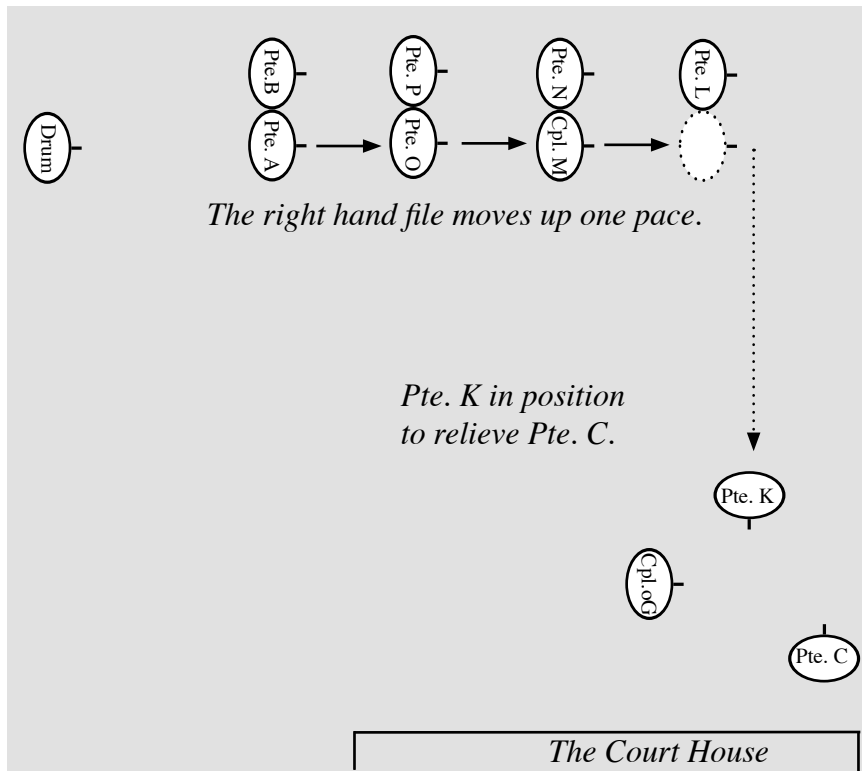
## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief



### The Relief

The essence of the Corporal’s relief is to get the relieving sentry close enough to the posted sentry so that they may quietly exchange information, then exchange places. All this happens under the watchful eye and direct command of the Corporal. The Corporal has been given a spoken command at every conceivable opportunity, in order to spare the Private soldier the necessity of remembering what to do next. This may place an added burden on the Corporal, but that’s why he makes the extra two pence a day.

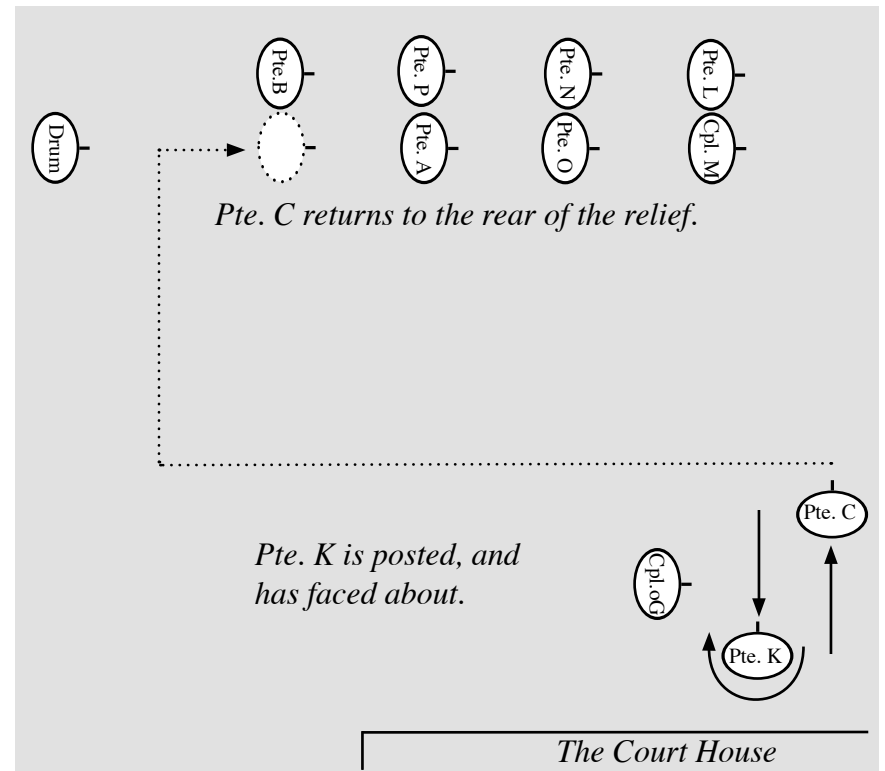
## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief



The Guard does not need to turn out to form the relief. The Corporal of the Guard will assemble the relief in front of the Guard House in a column of twos, facing to the street, using the men remaining in the Guard House.

For variety's sake, we will show the Corporal of the Guard relieving the sentry at Post Number 3, the Courthouse. Remember that he has already relieved Ptes. A and B on Posts Number 1 and 2, and replaced them with Ptes. I and J. The Corporal of the Guard marches the relief to within five to ten paces of the post to be relieved, and halts the relief. The Corporal of the Guard marches himself into position to relieve the sentry.

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief



**“Rest your Firelocks!”** - The relief and the sentry come to the Rest.

**“Pte. K, Advance to the Relief!”** - Pte. K comes to the Recover, marches to within one pace of the sentry, and comes to the Rest. As Pte. K comes to the rest, the right file moves forward as described above.

(Quietly) **“Sentry, tell your Orders.”** - The sentry tells his orders to the relief.

(Quietly) **“Relief, repeat your orders.”** - The relief repeats his orders to the sentry. During this exchange, the Corporal takes care to ensure that the orders are transmitted correctly. When the Corporal is satisfied the orders are correct, he commands:

**“Sentry, post!”** - The sentry and the relief come to the Recover, and take two paces, passing each other on their left side, and come back to the Rest.

**“Sentry, to the Right About, Face!”** - The new sentry faces about.

**“Shoulder your Firelocks!”** - the old sentry, the new sentry, and the relief come to the Shoulder. On the last motion of Shouldering, the Corporal and the old sentry step off to return to the relief column. The old sentry goes to the rear of the column, automatically unfixing his bayonet once he is in position. The Corporal re-joins the relief to the right of the right hand front man (now Cpl. M).

If an emergency happens, either genuine or “genuine”, or anything occurs that the sentry is unable to handle himself, he is to call the Corporal of the Guard to his post. Under no circumstances should a sentry quit his post without orders. If he is posted too far from the Guard for the Corporal to hear, each post in turn should relay the message, until it gets to the Corporal. Example; the sentry posted at Post Number 3 (the Court House), is surrounded by an angry crowd. He calls out:

**“Corporal of the Guard, Post number Three!”**

The sentry at Post Number 2 (the Magazine) hears the call and repeats it:

**“Corporal of the Guard, Post number Three!”**

It would be wise of the Corporal of the Guard to take a few men with him.

## Challenging

The **Taptoo** is the signal for the sentries to begin challenging (the **Reveille** is the signal for the sentries to cease challenging). The relief goes around as before, but the Drummer carries a lantern instead of beating a cadence. As the relief approaches, the sentry challenges it (as he does all parties) while they are still twenty paces away, with a lusty:

**“WHO COMES THERE?”** - He charges his bayonet.

Corporal: **“Relief, Halt!” “Relief!”**

Sentry: **“Stand Relief, Advance Corporal!”**

The sentry comes to the Rest.

The Corporal marches himself to the sentry, and proceeds with the relief as described above.

If the challenged party halts and doesn't answer that he is **“Relief!”** or **“Rounds!”**, the sentry calls for him to advance with the countersign. If he doesn't have the correct countersign, the sentry calls for the Serjeant of the Guard, **“Serjeant of the Guard, post number 3!”** (or whichever). The call for the Serjeant of the Guard is relayed to the Guard House.

Note: at no time should the sentry allow the challenged party to come close enough to grab his musket, nor should more than one party be allowed to advance if more than one is present.

On arrival of the Serjeant of the Guard (with one or more of the Guard), he takes the subject to the officer of the Guard for further interrogation. Or, he may call for the Officer of the Guard to come to the post, at which occasion, a portion of the troops not on post should accompany the officer.

Note: regimental women were generally allowed through the chain of sentries without the countersign if they were recognized by the sentry as part of the regiment. Lt. Thomas Anburey of the Crown forces was captured at Saratoga. While in captivity at Charlottesville, he watched a campfollower trying to pass the chain being harassed by a sentry. Finally she knocked the sentry down, straddled him and urinated on him. You've been warned.

## Rounds

At night, the sentry will also have to deal with Rounds. There will be three kinds of Rounds:

**Town Major's Rounds.** The Town Major is a military officer, he is in charge of the security of a garrison, and has a particular charge of guards, rounds, posts, and sentinels.

**Grand Rounds.** The Grand Round will be taken by the Commandant of a garrison.

**Visiting Rounds, or the Visit.** These Rounds are taken by the Officer of the Guard, in order to inspect the posts.

(The Town Major's, or Grand Rounds, will be escorted by a Serjeant and four men. One of the men is to carry a lantern.)

When the sentry perceives a party approaching, he challenges:

Sentry: "**WHO COMES THERE?**" - He charges his bayonet.

Escort Serjeant: "**Rounds!**"

Sentry: "**What Rounds?**"

Escort Serjeant: "**Grand (or Town Major's) Rounds!**"

The Sentry comes to the Rest.

Sentry: "**Pass, Grand (or Town Major's) Rounds! Keep clear of my Arms, all is well!**"

The sentry will be given orders to have the Visit stand.

Sentry: "**WHO COMES THERE?**" - He charges his bayonet.

Officer: "**The Visit!**"

Sentry: "**Stand Visit. Advance with the Countersign.**"  
The officer is to approach within one pace (or as close as he can, because the sentry is still pointing his bayonet at him), and quietly gives the countersign. At the correct countersign, the sentry comes to the Rest.

When the Rounds are gone, the sentry resumes his duty. The sentry should also be aware of the Patrol of the Guard.

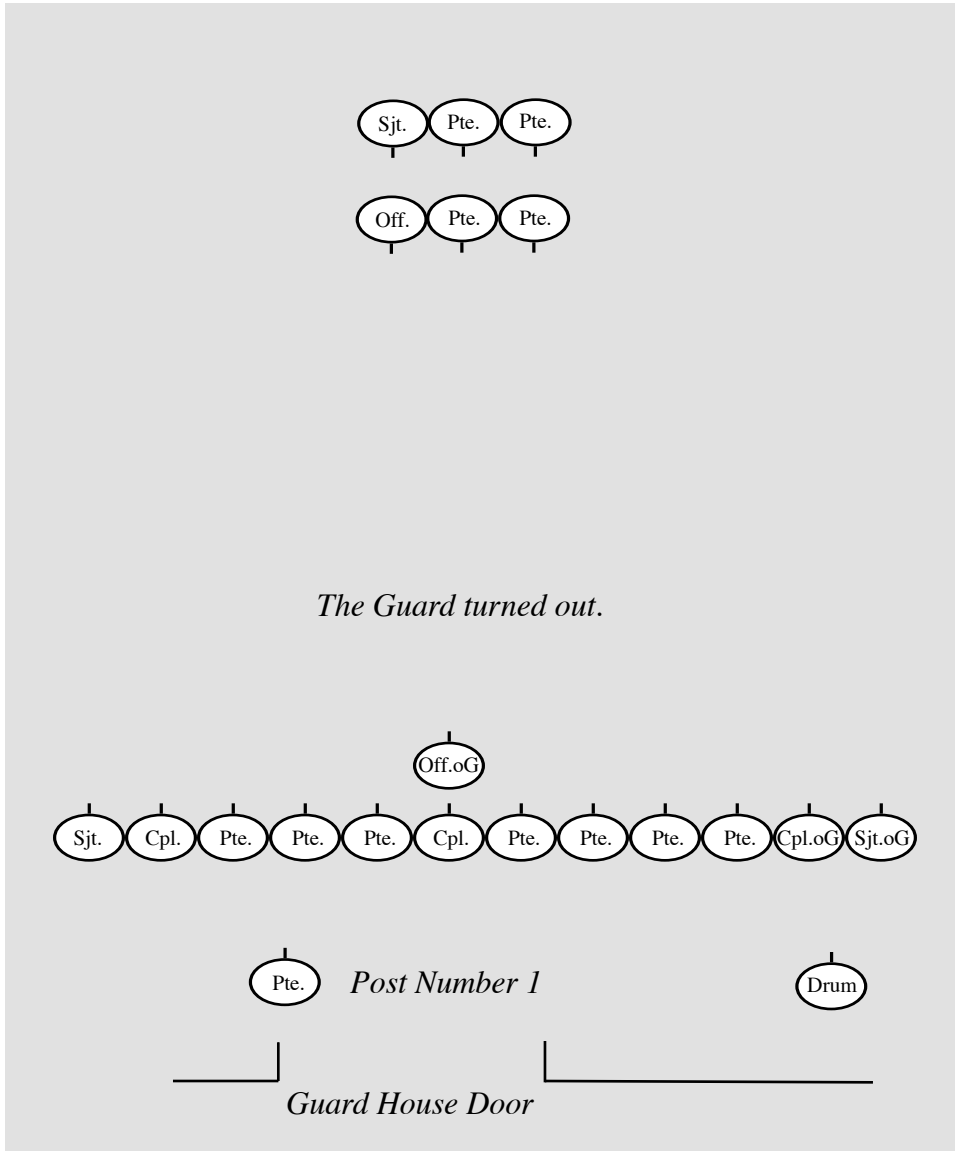
Sentry: "**WHO COMES THERE?**" - He charges his bayonet.

Serjeant: "**Patrol!**" - The sentry comes to the Rest

Sentry: "**Pass, Patrol, keep clear of my Arms, all is well!**"

The sentry may be ordered to make all parties stand and identify themselves, in which case he does not pass the Rounds or Patrol, but orders them to "**Stand!**", and "**Advance with the Countersign!**", similar to the way he did with the Visit.





## Receiving the Rounds at the Guard

The sentry at all Guard areas (the Guard House, the Quarter Guard) will have orders to make the Rounds stand.

Sentry: **“WHO COMES THERE?”** - he charges his bayonet.

Escort Serjeant: **“Rounds!”**

Sentry: **“What Rounds?”**

Escort Serjeant: **“Grand (or Town Major’s) Rounds!”**

The sentry comes to the Rest.

Sentry: **“Stand, Round! Serjeant, Turn out your Guard! Grand (or Town Major’s) Round!”**

The Serjeant of the Guard is to turn out the Guard immediately, with shouldered arms, and the Officer of the Guard is to post himself at the head of it. The Guard will turn out with its back to the Guard House, in a rank in order from right to left; the Serjeant of the Guard, the Corporal of the Guard, four Privates, the oldest Corporal, three Privates, the other Corporal, and the other Serjeant. The Drummer is four paces behind the Corporal of the Guard. The sentry is to remain at his post.

The Officer orders the Serjeant of the Guard to take four men to advance toward the Round and challenge. When the Serjeant of the Guard comes within six paces of the Serjeant who escorted the Round, he is to halt and challenge briskly:

Serjeant OTG: **“WHO COMES THERE?”**

Escort Serjeant: ***“Grand (or Town Major’s) Round!”***

Serjeant OTG: ***“Advance, Serjeant, with the Parole!”***  
***“Rest your Firelocks!”***

The four men with the Serjeant of the Guard come to the Rest. The escort Serjeant advancing alone, he is to give the Serjeant of the Guard the Parole in his ear, and while he is giving it, the former holds the point of his bayonet to the breast of the latter. When satisfied that the Parole is correct, the Serjeant of the Guard tells the escort Serjeant to return to his escort.

Leaving the four men he brought with him to prevent the Round from advancing, the Serjeant of the Guard goes to the Officer of the Guard and gives him the Parole he received from the escort Serjeant. The Officer of the Guard finding the Parole to be right, he orders his Serjeant to return to his men and says:

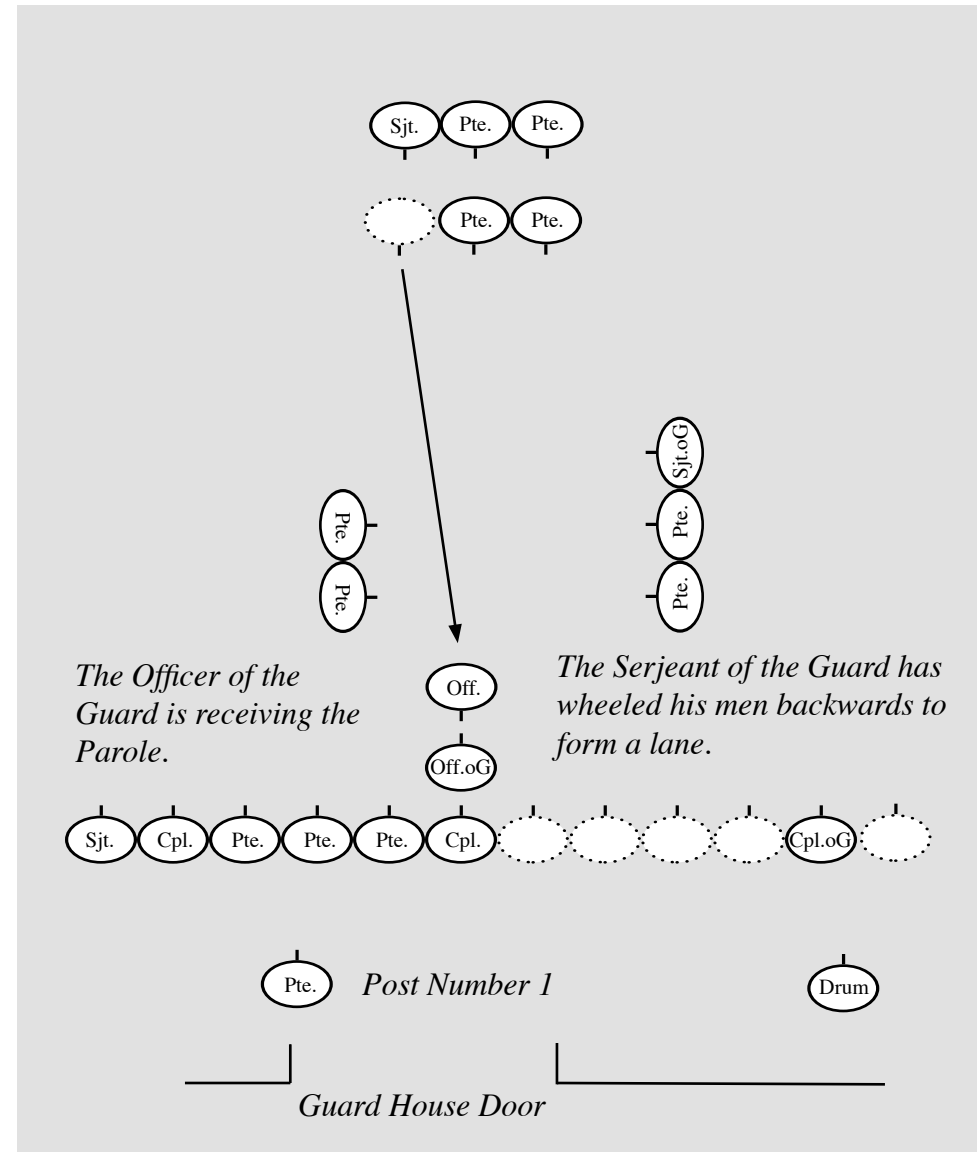
Officer OTG: ***“Advance, Grand (or Town Major’s) Round. Rest your Firelocks!”***

The remaining men of the Guard come to the Rest, while the Serjeant of the Guard orders his detail to wheel back from the center and make a lane through which the Round is to pass:

Serjeant OTG: ***“To the Right and Left, Backwards Wheel!”*** ***“March!”***

The detail comes to the Recover, wheels backwards one quarter turn, and then backs up enough to form a lane for the Round.

Serjeant OTG: ***“Halt!”*** - The men come to the Rest.



For the Town Major’s Round, the Town Major halts the Round, leaving his escort behind, goes up to the Officer of the Guard, and quietly tells him the Parole. The Officer of the Guard holds the point of his sword to the Town Major’s breast while he gives the Parole. The Town Major having given the Officer of

the Guard the Parole, he then proceeds with his inspection of the Guard. Since the Grand Round is taken by the military commander, there is one difference: The Officer of the Guard is to give the Parole *to* the Grand Round Officer. When the Round has moved on, the men are ordered to Lodge their Arms.

Countersign and Parole: While both were included in the daily orders, neither the countersign nor parole was given to the troops at large. The countersign was given to individuals who had reason to cross the chain of guards between dark and reveille, i.e. at night. The Parole was given only to officers and was used to authorize the passage of the chain of guards by a body of men under command of an officer. The parole was given by an officer to the officer of the guard, never to a sentry. The exchange of passwords was always whispered.

## Warning Shots

If the sentry, upon challenging (“**WHO COMES THERE?**”), receives no answer, and the party challenged continues to approach, the sentry is to cock his firelock and challenge a second time (“**WHO COMES THERE?**”). If the unknown party still advances without answering, the sentry is to present and challenge a third time (“**WHO COMES THERE?**”). If the challenged party doesn’t halt after three challenges the sentry is to fire on him and call out his post number: “**Post 6!**”.

On hearing the shot, the Guard Drummer beats “the Long Roll”. The Guard turns out, and marches to the post of the disturbance. Hearing the long roll from the Guard, the Duty Drummer in camp beats the long roll in camp, forming the army.

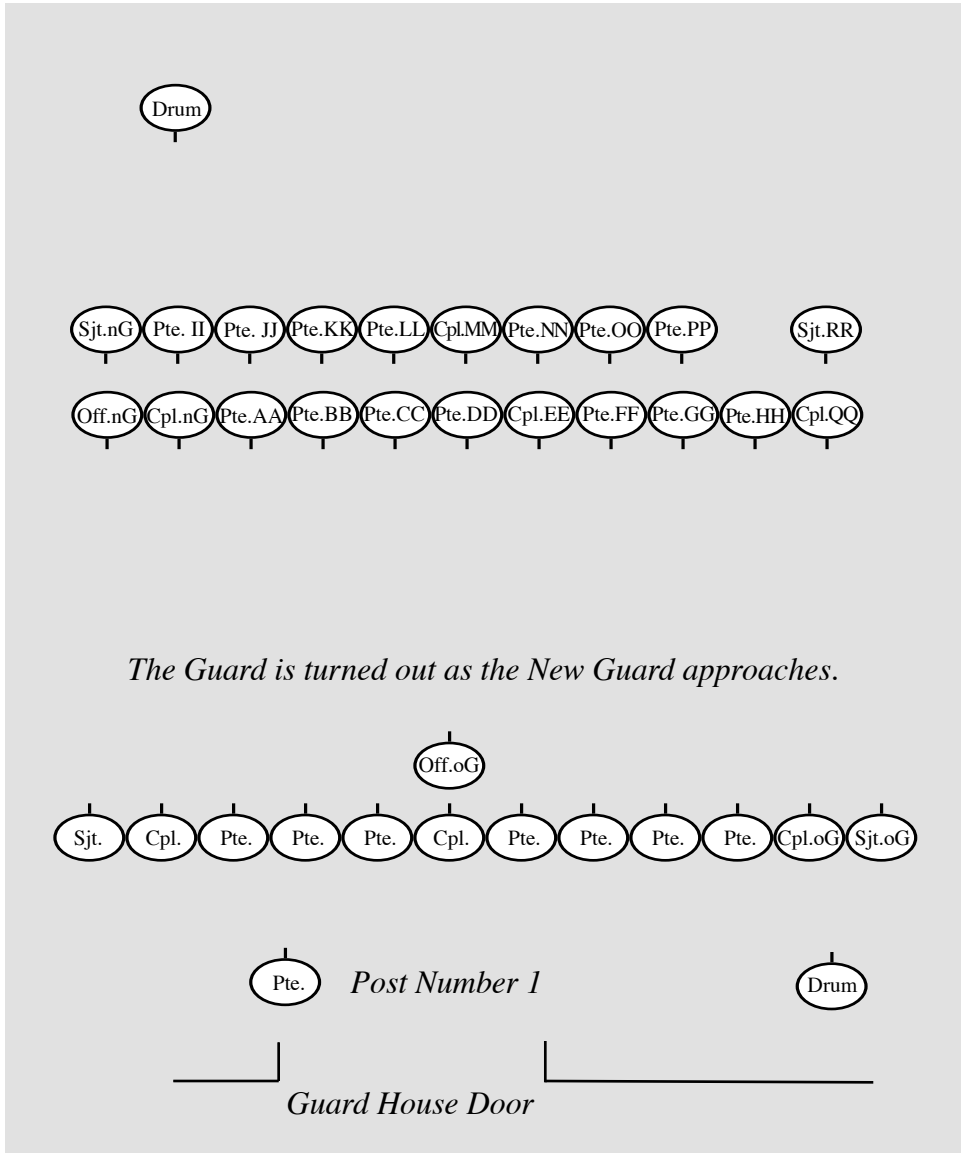
## Changing the Guard

The new Guard will assemble in closed ranks, on the Parade at least half an hour before it is to go on duty. It will contain an Officer, two Serjeants, four Corporals, fourteen Privates, and a Drummer. It will form in two ranks. In the front rank, in order from right to left are: The Officer of the new Guard, the Corporal of the new Guard, Pte. AA, Pte. BB, Pte. CC, Pte. DD, Cpl. EE, Pte. FF, Pte. GG, Pte. HH, and Cpl. QQ. In the rear rank, from right to left are: the Serjeant of the new Guard, Pte. II, Pte. JJ, Pte. KK, Pte. LL, Cpl. MM, Pte. NN, Pte. OO, Pte. PP, and Sjt. RR. The Drummer is four paces behind Pte. II.

The Officer of the new Guard will inspect the men for safety and fitness as described for the Guard above. He then marches the new Guard to the Guard House from the Parade. When the sentry at the Guard House sees the new Guard approaching, he calls out:

***“Serjeant, turn out your Guard!”***

The Serjeant of the Guard is to turn out the Guard immediately, with shouldered arms, and the Officer of the Guard is to post himself at the head of it. The Guard will turn out with its back to the Guard House, in a rank in order from right to left; the Serjeant of the Guard, the Corporal of the Guard, four Privates, the oldest Corporal, three Privates, the other Corporal, and the other Serjeant. The Drummer is four paces behind the Corporal of the Guard. The sentry is to remain at his post. The Drummer starts beating the same march that the Drummer of the new Guard is beating, and stops when the new Guard is halted opposite the old Guard. As soon as the old Guard is assembled, its Officer commands:



***“Rest your Firelocks!”***

As soon as the new Guard halts, its Officer commands:

***“Rest your Firelocks!”***

The Officer commanding the new Guard advances to that of the old, to receive the orders relative to that Guard. When the Officers are done, the Officer of the old Guard orders:

***“Order your Firelocks!”***

The old Guard comes to the Order.

The Officer of the new Guard orders:

***“Shoulder your Firelocks!”***

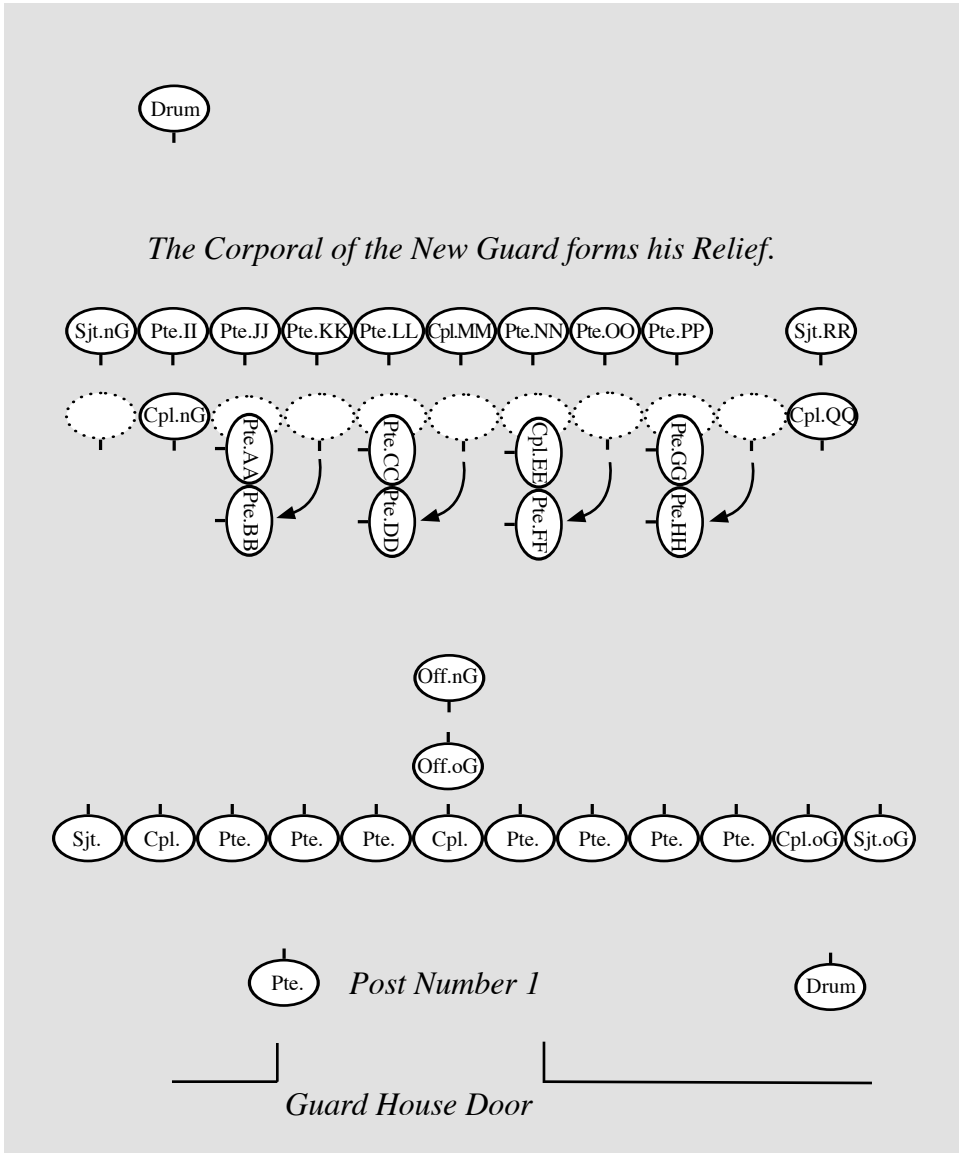
The new Guard comes to the shoulder.

The Corporal of the new Guard tells off the men for the next Relief (they have again been cleverly arranged to be in correct order in the front rank of the new Guard):

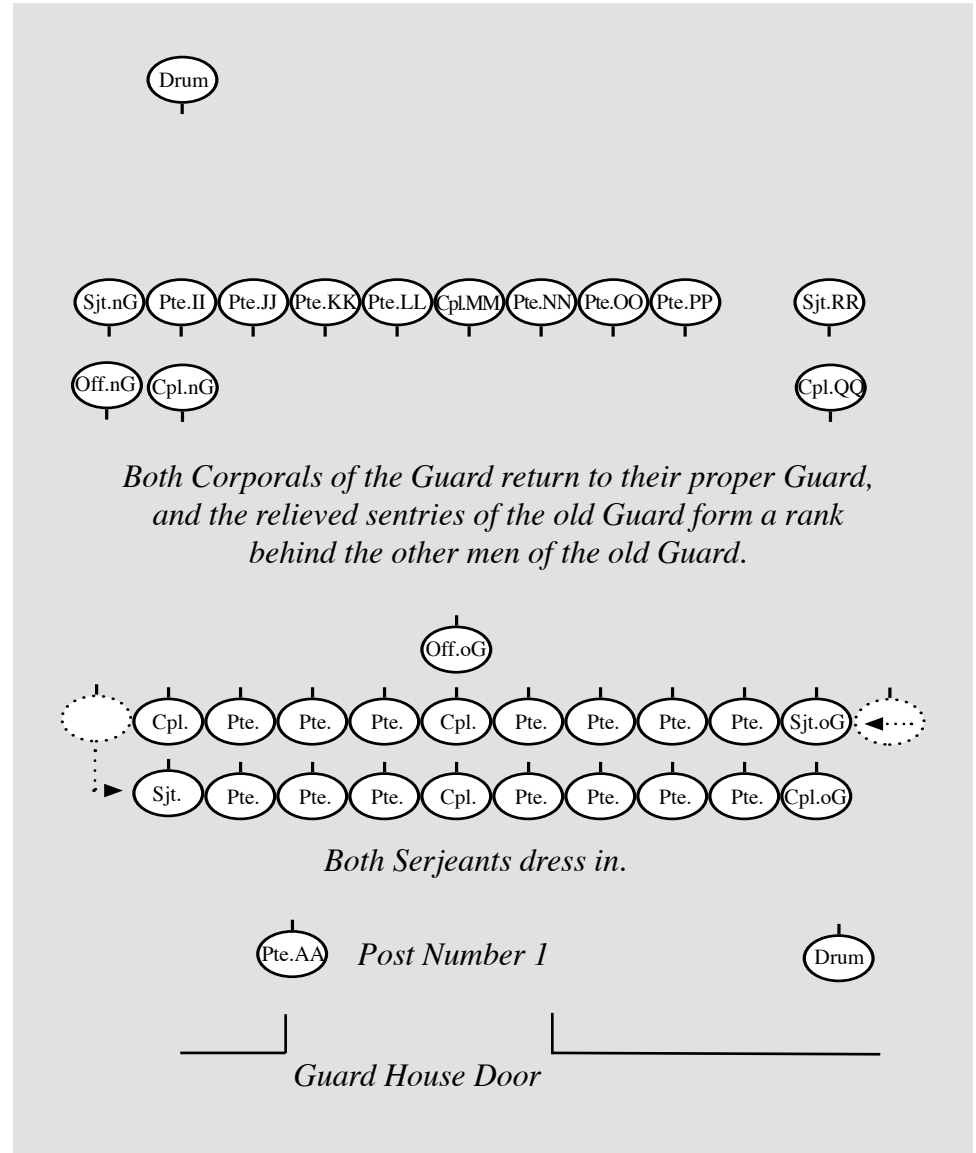
***“Front Rank, Wheel to the Right by Twos, March!”***  
***“Halt!”***

The Corporal of the old Guard joins the Corporal of the new Guard and together they take the Relief and go to relieve the sentries. When they are marched off, the Officer of the new Guard brings the new Guard to the Order. When the Corporals return with the old sentries, each Corporal returns to his proper Guard, with the sentries of the old Guard forming a rank behind the other men of the old Guard. The Corporal of the old Guard brings his men to the Order.

# Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief



# Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief



Both Serjeants of the old Guard automatically dress themselves in with the old Guard. The Officer of the old Guard orders:

***“Rest your Firelocks!”***

***“Shoulder your Firelocks!”***

The Officer of the new Guard orders:

***“Rest your Firelocks!”***

***“Shoulder your Firelocks!”***

The Officer of the old Guard marches it off to the Parade, where they are dismissed. As the old Guard marches off, the Drummer of the new Guard plays the same beat as the Drummer of the old Guard. As soon as the old Guard is at some distance, the Officer of the new Guard has his drummer cease beating, and has his men Lodge their Arms.



## **Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief Part 2**

Part 1 of Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief was intended to give you and your men a solid grounding in the mechanics of Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief. Part 2 will provide both a more general look at the function and importance of Guard Duty, and some detail on the instructions of individual sentries.

We will begin with Phil Weaver’s adaptation of Humphrey Bland’s *“Directions to the Sentries on How They are to Behave on Their Posts”* from his A TREATISE OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE:

- 1) All Sentries are to be vigilant on their posts.
- 2) They are not to fmg, fmoke tobacco, nor suffer any noife be made near them. The fentries, themselves, are to keep a profound filence.
- 3) They are not to fit down, lay their arms out of their hands, or fleep while on duty, but fould keep moving about their posts if the weather will allow it.
- 4) They’re to have a watchful eye over the things committed to their charge, and not let any of them be removed until they have orders from the Corporal of the Guard for it.
- 5) They are not to let anyone touch or handle their arms, or, in the nighttime, to let anyone come within reach of them.
- 6) The fentries, at night, fould not allow any fire or light be made near their posts.

7) No sentry is to be removed from his post, except by the Corporal of the Guard.

8) Nobody is to strike or abuse a sentry on his post, but when he has committed a crime, he is to be relieved and then punished according to the Articles of War.

9) When a sentry is taken ill on his post, or if he is physically not able to perform his duty, especially due to severe weather conditions, he is to call the Corporal of the Guard, in order that he might be relieved.

If a sentry so taken is at too great a distance to be heard by the Corporal of the Guard, the sentry next to him is to pass the word to the Corporal, and so on from one to the other, until the Corporal is so notified. This is why it is a standing rule to put all sentries within call of one another, particularly on the ramparts of a town.

10) Two sentries are always to be placed at advanced posts.

Our forebears had no sense of humor about a sentry who neglected his duties; Articles of War, Section XIV, Article VI:

Whatever Centinel shall be found sleeping upon his Post, or shall leave it before he shall be regularly relieved, shall suffer Death, or such other punishment as shall be inflicted by the Sentence of a Court-martial.

Thomas Simes offers advice to the would-be Corporal of the Guard:

A Corporal when he posts a centinel must be careful to instruct him in his duty ; and the centinel must endeavour to know those who are intitled to rested arms ; a

young recruit should be posted sentry nearest the protection of the main guards.

A Corporal posting or relieving a centinel irregular, shall be broke.

A Corporal at relieving is not to suffer a centinel to wear a watch coat, or take shelter in his sentry-box, except in very bad weather, to prevent his arms being wet ; and this indulgence is only to be given in a peaceable country.”

As you can see, the ancients were very serious about the importance of guard duty and its proper execution.

Amplification of this can be found in the excellent reference book *ADVICE TO THE OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY: WITH THE ADDITION OF SOME HINTS TO THE DRUMMER AND PRIVATE SOLDIER*, London 1783:

“When you command a guard, as soon as you have mounted, go to the next alehouse, and take a post by the window, in order to see that none of the soldiers quit their guard. Whenever you mount guard in garrison or quarters, be sure to leave it upon record on the wainscotting or ceiling of the guard-room. This practice, besides the ornament it will afford the room, will form a series of useful and authentic historical tables for the regiments that succeed you.”

(To the Corporal)

“It is your office to post the sentinels, and to see that they are properly relieved ; and a disagreeable office it is in a dark, cold, and stormy night. You may therefore in bad weather save yourself that trouble, and send the relief by themselves. This will be a means of teaching them how to perform their duty, when corporals ; and surely they must be very unfit for sentinels, if they cannot be trusted alone.”

(To the Private Soldier)

“On duty, as soon as the corporal has posted you sentry, and left you, (if he has given himself the trouble of coming out with the relief) endeavour to accommodate yourself as conveniently as you can, the health of every good soldier being of utmost consequence to the service. For this purpose, if you have a sentry-box, get some stones and make yourself a seat; or bore two large holes in the opposite side, through which you may pass your stick, or for want of it, your firelock. Thus seated, in order that you may not fall asleep, which would be rather improper and dangerous for a sentry, sing, or whistle some merry tune, as loud as possible: this will both keep you awake, and convince people that you really are so.

In camp, where you cannot have the benefit of a box, as soon as you are posted, carefully ground your arms in some dry place, a good soldier always being careful of his arms; and, wrapping yourself up in your watch-coat, sit or lie down in the lee of some officer's marquis; and, to pass the tedious hours away, whistle or sing, as before directed; and if ever you smoke, there cannot be a better time to take a pipe.

If you are sentinelled at the tent of one of the field officers, you need not challenge in the fore part of the evening, for fear of disturbing his honour, who perhaps may be reading, writing, or entertaining company. But as soon as he is gone to bed, roar out every ten minutes at least, Who comes there? though nobody is passing. This will give him a favourable idea of your alertness; and though his slumbers may be broken, yet they will be the more pleasing, when he finds that he reposes in perfect security. When the hour of relief approaches, keep constantly crying out, Relief, relief! it will prevent the guard from forgetting you, and prove that you are not asleep.”

(To the Drummer)

“Never sweep the guard-room till the guard is just going to be relieved: the unsettled dust will prove to the relieving officer, that you have not omitted that part of your duty.”

Although most of this is a definitive catalog of what *not* to do, we can at least discover from it that it is part of the Drummer's job to sweep the Guard-room.

The soldiers of the Guard who are not posted as sentries will remain at the Guard House, ready for other duties. From Simes' *THE MILITARY GUIDE FOR YOUNG OFFICERS*, 1781:

“No Officer must leave his guard during the time he is on duty.

He must not suffer above two men at a time to leave the guard, and then only for their victuals and drink; when they return, he may allow two more to go off on the same account, but he should allow them no farther time than what is absolutely necessary, that each may have his turn, which, if they transgress, he should punish them for it at their return. But lest some of the men ask leave just before it is their turn to stand sentry, in order to escape or avoid their duty, the Officer of the guard should always send for the Corporal before he gives a man leave, that he may inform him when the man will be wanted; as also to order the Serjeant or Corporal to set down his name, with the hour he went, and the time allowed him: when he returns, he is to acquaint the Officer with it, that he may know whether he is punctual or not.”

If a Guard Mount will span over a meal period, it is necessary for the Officer of the Guard to arrange for either the men to



leave the Guard House in twos to go over to camp to eat, or have food brought over from camp.

In order to spare the sentries and relief of having paragraphs of orders to state and repeat with every relief, the entire Guard can have standing orders (in addition to the ones put forth by Humphrey Bland, above) which will be understood to be known and need not be repeated. Each post will also have specific orders, which are the ones which must be exchanged at relief.

### SAMPLE STANDING ORDERS FOR GUARD DUTY as used for Under the Redcoat

- 1) All Sentries are to be vigilant on their posts.
- 2) They are not to sing, smoke tobacco, nor suffer any noise be made near them. The sentries, themselves, are to keep a profound silence.
- 3) They are not to sit down, lay their arms out of their hands, or sleep while on duty, but should keep moving about their posts if the weather will allow it.
- 4) They're to have a watchful eye over the things committed to their charge, and not let any of them be removed until they have orders from the Corporal of the Guard for it.
- 5) They are not to let anyone touch or handle their arms, or, in the nighttime, to let anyone come within reach of them.
- 6) The sentries, at night, should not allow any fire or light be made near their posts.
- 7) No sentry is to be removed from his post, except by the Corporal of the Guard.

8) Nobody is to strike or abuse a sentry on his post, but when he has committed a crime, he is to be relieved and then punished according to the Articles of War.

9) When a sentry is taken ill on his post, or if he is physically not able to perform his duty, especially due to severe weather conditions, he is to call the Corporal of the Guard, in order that he might be relieved.

10) All Citizens, Residents, Transients, and Visitors of the Town are obliged to present a Passport for entry into buildings on which a sentry is posted.

11) All Citizens, Residents, Transients, and Visitors must be possessed of a Parole, issued by authority of Lord Cornwallis, or an attested Loyalty Oath. Any sentry, or soldier on guard, may ask any person for proof of his Parole, or Loyalty. If the person is unable to present such proof, he is to be directed to apply for it at the Guard House.

12) The Rebels may be expected to employ the use of spies and smugglers. The sentries are to be particularly vigilant and aware of the character of any persons they observe, in order that those of suspicious behaviour may be detected.

13) The Corporal of the Guard is to be summoned in order to effect the arrest and detention of suspicious persons.

14) The Sentries are to Rest to the Officer of the Guard, the Commanding Officer, and the Town Major. They are to Shoulder to all other Officers.

15) In case of General Alarm, the sentries are to remain at their posts.

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief

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As an example, the posted sentries would have these specific instructions to repeat (As soon as it is dark, and not before, the sentries are given the countersign):

Post No. 1: “This is Post No. 1. The Guard House. Allow only Guards and Prisoners with escort to enter. The Countersign is:”

Post No. 2: “This is Post No. 2. The Magazine. Allow all those with passports to enter. The Countersign is:”

Post No. 3: “This is Post No. 3. The Court House. Allow all those with passports to enter. The Countersign is:”

Post No. 4: “This is Post No. 4. The Town Major’s Marquis. Announce all visitors. The Countersign is:”

Post No. 5: (Corporal at the Barricade) “This is Post No. 5. The Duke of Gloucester Street Barricade. Halt and search all wagons and carriages. The Countersign is:

(other sentries) “This is Post No. 5. The Duke of Gloucester Street Barricade. Search all wagons and carriages under the direction of the Corporal. The Countersign is: “

(The Corporal at the Barricade will have instructions (which will not be repeated as part of the relief) to pass the CW carriages giving rides to paying customers with no more than a cursory search. Wagons and carts with cargo or baggage are to be searched thoroughly, because there will be attempts to smuggle goods. Ignore toy drums and toy flags. Don’t ignore “empty” carts carrying just a passenger. The passenger himself (herself?) may be what is being smuggled! Remember, there may also be spies in town. Post and relieve the Corporal first, and then each of the other sentries at the Street Barricade in turn.)

## Guard Mount, Sentry Duty, and Relief

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**IMPORTANT! DO NOT LET TRAFFIC PASS ANY SENTRY POST DURING THE RELIEF!!** The smugglers, spies, layabouts, ne’er-do-wells, and provocateurs have found it all too easy to pass sentry posts (particularly the Barricade!) during the Relief. The Corporal of the Guard will make any potential entrants on a Guarded post wait until the Relief is completed. Then, it’s the new Sentry’s job to deal with it. At the Barricade; Relieve and Post the Corporal first, then the other Sentries. **ALWAYS LEAVE SOMEONE ON DUTY AT THE BARRICADE!!**

