

During the Napoleonic Wars each sergeant (light infantry sergeants excepted) were issued from Board of Ordnance stores with a pattern pike. A separate drill for the pike was developed in line with the words of command used for the musket drill of the other ranks. The below drill is reproduced from *A Treatise on the British Drill and Exercise of the Company; with an Introduction to the Field Exercise of the Battalion; Explaining the Different Posts and Situations of Every Individual in the Battalion During the Performance of its Movements.* By an Infantry Officer (London: 1814).

Exercise of the Pike

Position.- The pike is held in the right hand, the right arm being extended at full length; fore-finger under the shoe, which rests on it; the thumb to the front, and the pike kept in a perpendicular position against the hollow of the right shoulder.

Order Arms; 3 Motions.

1st. Seize the pike with the left hand at the right shoulder.

2d. Allow the shaft to slide through the fingers of both hands till it is within four inches of the ground.

3d. Drop the pike on the ground; withdraw immediately the left hand, and place the right hand in front of the shaft; fingers pointed downwards.

Shoulder Arms; 2 Motions

1st. At the word Shoulder, place the thumb of the right hand as quickly as possible behind the shaft.

2d. At the last word, Arms, the pike is thrown in the position described for Shoulder Arms, the left hand being brought across the body to assist the motion, and instantly withdrawn when it is placed on the right shoulder, the right hand seizing it at the same time and at once under the shoe, as already explained.

Port Arms; 1 Motion.

In one motion throw the pike from the shoulder across the body into a diagonal position, the shaft crossing opposite the point of the left shoulder, the right hand grasping the pike at the shoe, and the left at the height of the left shoulder, both thumbs pointing upwards; elbows close to the body.

Charge Bayonets.

Make a half face to the right; and, in doing so, bring down the pike to nearly a horizontal position, the blade a little upwards, the right wrist resting against the hollow of the thigh, against the hip.

Shoulder Arms; 2 Motions.

1st. In coming to the front throw the pike in its proper position on the right shoulder, the right hand holding it at the shoe in the manner directed, and the left hand opposite the right shoulder.

2d. Quit the left hand smartly, and bring it down to the left side.

Recover Arms; 1 Motion.

Throw the pike to the front in a perpendicular position opposite to the left eye, the right hand grasping it at the shoe, which touches the body slightly, and the left hand supporting the shaft by holding it opposite the left eye between the thumb and the forefinger; the left elbow is in this position bent, and risen as high as the left shoulder.

Shoulder Arms; 2 Motions.

1st. The pike is thrown into its position, the left hand assisting the motion by placing it in the right shoulder.

2d. Drop the left hand smartly, and bring it down the right side.

Trail (from Shoulder) Arms; 2 Motions.

1st. Seize the shaft with the left hand, at the height of the right shoulder.

2d. Lower the pike with the left hand, and lay hold of it with the right so as to place it to the trail; the upper part being somewhat advanced to the front, and the shoe a few inches from the ground; the left hand being withdrawn the instant the pike is placed.

Shoulder Arms; 1 Motion.

With the assistance of the left hand throw the pike at once into its proper position on the right shoulder; the left hand being immediately dropped along the left side as soon as it is placed.

Trail (from Order) Arms; 2 Motions.

1st. At the first word Trail place the thumb of the right hand behind the shaft.

2d. As soon as the command is fully given slide the shaft through the fingers of the right hand, so as to situate the pike in the position of the trail, the upper part being a little advanced to the front, and the shoe a few inches from the ground.

Order (from the Trail) Arms; 1 Motion.

Drop the pike at once to the ground, to the position described for the Order, placing the right hand in front of the shaft; fingers pointed downwards.

Pile Arms.

In piling arms, after the firelocks are properly fixed, the pikes are generally placed across the muzzles.