

Inappropriate Drill Commands

By Lieutenant Colonel Buddy McCormick, former COWG Encampment Commander

This document is one of several documents that discuss drill problems that need improvement at COWG Encampment. The official reference for all drill and ceremonies procedures is AFMAN 36-2203, also known as the D&C Manual. The new CAP Pamphlet 60-33, CAP Drill & Ceremonies is CAP's equivalent to the Air Force Manual.

Read it, Teach it, Do it! We face a major drill problem, throughout CAP. Many cadets, teaching drill, have not read the D&C Manual. A lack of understanding or lack of knowledge of correct procedures results in incorrect instruction. This leads to the perpetuation of drill mistakes.

We will not allow this to happen at COWG Encampment. The encampment flight staff must be, or become, experts. We will require that cadet line staff obtain and read the D&C Manual thoroughly, teach procedures as described in the manual using the six-step process, and execute the maneuvers correctly. This process must begin **before** encampment. We will **READ IT, TEACH IT, DO IT!**

Inappropriate Drill Commands are commands that do not exist or the use of the wrong command called when trying to accomplish a specific maneuver.

AT MY COMMAND and/or **BY MY COMMAND**

Some believe that it is necessary to state AT MY COMMAND or BY MY COMMAND when taking control of a drill unit from another cadet. This is not correct!

The term, BY MY COMMAND, **is not** in the D&C Manual! Therefore, it **is not** an appropriate command. It does not exist!

The term, **AT MY COMMAND** **is** in the D&C Manual. However, it has absolutely nothing to do with taking control of a drill unit! Drill instructors use "**AT MY COMMAND**" as part of the Mass Commands procedure. Here is the **proper use** of the command from the D&C Manual:

*2.6.3. When the instructor wants to conduct drill by mass commands, the command is **AT YOUR COMMAND**. For each exercise and cadence drill, the instructor announces the movement to be executed and commands the element **COMMAND**. Personnel then give the commands and execute them in unison.*

2.6.4. The following are examples of mass commands:

*Instructor: **AT YOUR COMMAND**, Call the Flight to Attention, **COMMAND**.*

*Mass: **Flight, ATTENTION**.*

*Instructor: Have the Flight Stand at Parade Rest, **COMMAND**.*

*Mass: **Parade, REST**.*

*Instructor: March the Flight Forward, **COMMAND**.*

*Mass: **Forward, MARCH**.*

*Instructor: Halt the Flight, **COMMAND**.*

*Mass: **Flight, HALT**.*

*2.6.5. When desiring to end mass commands, the instructor commands **AT MY COMMAND**.*

The command **AT MY COMMAND** is only appropriate when ending mass commands.

Question - If I cannot say AT MY COMMAND or BY MY COMMAND, what **do** I say to take command of a drill unit?

Answer - It is not necessary to say anything. The unit should comply with commands from whoever is giving them if the commands are directed to the unit.

“Made up” or Invented Drill Commands

Do not use “made up” drill commands. The general rule is “If it is not in the D&C manual, it does not exist!” There is a command to suit most circumstances. When you are marching, you can inform the flight of your intentions before giving what might be a new command or a command that might be confusing under the circumstances.

Some “made up” drill commands I have heard before:

These “commands” were given to flights in formation:

- “Get on the bus, March”
- “Go around that car, March”
- “Incline over in that direction” (given while in Route Step, standing behind the flight, and pointing in a direction”
- “Incline around that flight in front of you”
- “Fall out and get on that bus” (while marching in quick time)
- “Hurry up” or “Move Faster” (while marching in quick time at the proscribed rate of 100 to 120 steps per minute and proscribed 24” steps)
- “Fall out and Fall in over here” (while pointing to the ground where the flight should fall in)
- “Column of files from the right and the left, Forward, March” (you figure it out)
- “Right, Guide” (or is it “Guide Right”?)
- “Guide around that car”

Flight Sergeants: If all else fails, halt the flight and figure out what to do. In some situations, it may be better to have the flight **FALL OUT** and then tell them what you want to do. Please, please, please do not make the mistake of giving the sort of “commands” above.