



The Blew Regiment London Trayned Bandes

Part of

The Cittie of London Brigade of the Sealed Knot

Posing, Posturing & Positioning for the Perfect Pike-operative

The Pike of the Blew Regiment L T B pride themselves on turning out a smart well drilled unit that can often be found in the front line of the Parliament Army. Along with the rest of the Regiment the Pike seek to portray a company of infantry setting out for the Spring campaign of 1643 that will eventually lead them to the relief of the Siege of Gloucester and the glory of standing steadfast at the Battle of Newbury.

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Kit

Below is a breakdown on the equipment needed.

Remember, new recruits will be lent kit and will be expected to start buying their own after the first season. Most items can be picked up second hand.

Footwear

'Authenti-Boot' - Latchet or soldier's shoe or start-up. Desert boots may be used as a stop gap until a pair of authentic shoes can be afforded. They should have no metal eyelets or hooks and can easily be converted to resemble a latchet shoe. The laces should be replaced by leather thong.

Hose/socks

Thick, knee length woollen socks or sewn fabric hose in dull colours.

Breeches

Plain grey breeches which we recommend are lined. You'll soon see why.

Shirt

Preferably linen but cotton is acceptable with a small collar. Lace up shirts are not authentic and can be converted with a button or two.

Coat

Regimental issue, red, lined white

Headgear

Helmet - rain protection and stays on in strong winds

Gauntlets

Long leather cuffed gloves, brown/buff leather

Buff Coat

Sleeveless leather jerkin, protects you against rubbing armour and is a very handy raincoat or groundsheet. In short, a very desirable item - can only be worn as L T B

Armour

Back and breast, blackened

We strongly recommend that you grab an old salt in the Regiment or consult an officer if you are off shopping. There are one or two of the officers that like being grabbed rather than being consulted but I'll let you find out who for yourselves.

For a first muster try to get hold of some reasonable footwear, socks, gauntlets, a belt and a woolly hat. You will normally be able to borrow the rest from existing members in the Regiment. Look after any borrowed kit, if lost or ruined, neither you nor anyone else will be able to borrow it next time.

The Regiment also participates in living history events. If you are coming along try and bring a bowl and spoon which can be made from wood, pewter, pottery or horn. A drinking vessel is always a good idea, a pottery jug or pewter tankard. Try and keep them plain, 'darts champion' and 'best dad in the world' inscriptions tend to be a bit rare in the seventeenth century. No cans or glasses.

No watches, spectacles or cigarettes. Smokers should take a clay pipe with a small bowl.

Generally standards of dress needs tightening up. The numbers of pike wearing snapsacks on the field must be increased. Mainly we need only concentrate on trivial items to improve further.

Status

It's a dirty word to some and a Holy Grail to others. We personally hold little faith with members of the latter faction as they often forget just what it is all about. This is a voluntary organisation where people command through commitment to the hobby, length of service, but chiefly through respect. In this Army, if a commander is disliked, he has few followers and this attitude should stay with you if you are a lofty officer or a lowly pikeman. Don't forget the people standing around you, as one day they could be pulling you out of the mud or pushing you in. Which would you prefer?

Expectations

Mainly mine, but the Society gets to have a word first. If you are promoted up to any sort of position recognised by the Society, you will have various responsibilities thrust upon your broad shoulders. This means a certain code of behaviour is expected of you. If you see someone wilfully damaging someone's property or someone's actions are disturbing some other member's enjoyment, tell an officer of the Regiment, or a member of the Camp Guard who will deal with the matter. We are all ambassadors for the Society and while we are here to have fun, if the horseplay gets out of hand, pack it in.

So what do I expect? Simply a bit of commitment to the Regiment and a sense of pride for who we are and what we are

doing. This Regiment has set standards that others have had to follow and over the last decade many have fallen out of step, unable to keep pace.

Not us, we have gone through as much hardship and hair pulling as you are ever likely to see in a hobby such as this and we are still going strong.

Firstly, all NCO's, that is Sergeants, Corporals and File Leaders should have a spare coat to hand out to new recruits to keep the block in uniform. If you can stretch to supplying other kit too that is great. If you replace any piece of your kit, keep bringing the old piece as you can lend it out to a new kid in the Block. Try to obtain a second steel helmet, a pikeman without a lid is no use to anyone.

Drill

Now who said drill sessions aren't fun? Our drill sessions follow three basic principles:

Firstly, drill is always in full kit. As you have to fight the battle in it, you may as well get used to the idea and wear it for drill. If your equipment breaks, fix it as soon as you finish the battle. It won't repair itself so get the beer out, get your kit off and get down to it. You will need it for the following day and the more you take care of it the more it takes care of you.

Secondly, drill is always at 10:00 am. You should be in full kit with your lid on and pike in hand by 9:59 am ready to go. Drill generally lasts one hour unless there is a special event like practising pre-battle standing about drill. If you are late, we start late which means we finish late. If we finish late, you have less time in the middle of the day to eat, drink and do whatever else you want to do. Be Prompt, Look Smart.

Thirdly, if you do not make drill, you had better have a fool proof, stainless steel excuse lined up. Drill is important! You may miss something and if your ignorance causes an accident I will not be a happy man. You can also expect a frosty reception from the rest of the block. Why should they all do drill when they could be nursing a hangover in more sympathetic surroundings. We are a close knit team who depend on each other on the battle field and everyone knows when you are not giving 100%. Don't think they won't blame you if we get kicked about on the battle field.

Now for the real reason for this document. The rest of this page contain the drill for the Blew Regiment Pike Block, the finest fighting machine in the Sealed Knot. Some may be bigger but none better, Get it right we look great - get it wrong we will be dog dirt - so do the 3 R's

- Read it
- Remember it
- Ruddy well do it

Places of dignity in the Block

File leaders	F1	F3	F4	S	Sergeant inside the block
	P2	P2	P2	P2	
	P3	P3	P3	P3	
Half-file leaders	H	H	H	H	
	P5	P5	P5	P5	
Bringers up	C	B	B	B	Corporal rear left

The diagram above is a plan view of the pike block as used on the field of battle.

Positions in the block

The Sergeant - senior NCO - takes the front right corner position. Most positions and dressings are taken from this point. All orders are given by an officer to the sergeant, the sergeant will then make sense of them and relay them to the block - take orders from the sergeant not from the officer.

The Corporal - second NCO - takes the rear left corner position of the block. His role is to ensure that ranks and files are dressed correctly and that the block is speedily reformed.

Senior file leader takes position at the front left corner of the block. Half-file leaders and bringers up are important in doublings and countermarching, the bringers up being, historically, the next most important after the file leaders.

Commands for Basic Postures

Everyone should be familiar with the postures, these are the key words to listen out for:

Order Your Pike

The butt placed on the ground outside the right foot, the right foot should be slightly further forward than the left. The right hand should be holding the pike at about chin level. The left hand held in a loose fist behind your back at waist level. This is to simulate holding the hilt of a sword which would have been carried by a pikeman.

Advance Your Pike

Your right hand should be under the butt of the pike, the shaft of the pike should be tucked into the shoulder for support. The left hand should be held behind the back as above.

The pike should be perfectly vertical to provide you with maximum control, some of the more complex manoeuvres the block makes means you are working in close quarters with your colleagues.

For a new pikeman, the left hand can hold the pike at shoulder level for added stability. The left hand in this position can also indicate a semi-salute and even experienced pikemen resort to this hold in high winds to prevent losing control of the pike.

Shoulder Your Pike

Pike supported by right shoulder. The butt is swung out in front of the pikeman to a distance of six foot. The right hand should be grasping the pike with the forearm parallel to the ground. The left hand as above, held behind the back. The pike butt should remain six inches off the ground. This position is used on long marches. Do not bounce the pike when shouldering as you are in danger of hitting the pikeman behind you.

At stops on a march (which hardly ever happen) rest the butt of the pike on the ground.

Charge Your Pike

With your right hand behind the butt, swing the butt behind you, causing your torso to twist sideways. Your left hand holding the pike should be locked under your chin, your left forearm should be vertical with the elbow tucked into the waist to provide maximum support. The left leg should be slightly bent with the right leg braced backwards to take any strain.

When you lower the pike it should always pass to the right of the man in front. Your right hand should always be behind the butt to prevent it slipping through your hand and injuring the pikeman behind you.

The first two ranks will be at Charge the remaining ranks should be at High Port.

Charge to the Rear

The entire pike block has to do an Advance Your Pike, a Left Hand About Face and then a Charge Your Pike again, but this time to the rear of the block, then correct any dressings.

Port or High Port Your Pike

As with Charge Your Pike the left hand is under the chin supporting the weight of the pike and the right swung out behind the body. However the pike is held at 45° pointing into the sky.

This is used as a salute, as a prelude to Charge Your Pike or for going through gateways.

Low Port Your Pike

The posture you take when preparing for a push. Pick your own posture using the following criteria. Be comfortable, be in control, get tight with the block, keep the butt in your right hand with the pike sloping to your left shoulder, and keep your elbows down. But above all drop your height, by this we mean lean forwards and bend your legs. The power in a pike push is not just from the initial impact but from the continued effort to act together and push forward. This can only be done if you have the ability to push with your legs.

Shorten Your Pike or Halve Your Pike

Grip the pike about the middle, keep it balanced and hold it at waist height. Always remember the people behind you when you move it from side to side or stab with it.

When this order is given we will either be going in slow and tight together or at a run. It is important to keep your dressings and fight in pairs where possible.

Charge for Horse

Dig the pike butt into the ground and place your right foot behind it to prevent it slipping. Take a step forward with your left leg to bring you into a crouching position and with your left arm resting on your leg use your left hand to aim the pike head at the horse's chest. When this order is given the front two ranks only charge for horse, the rest of the ranks Charge Your Pike above the front two ranks heads.

This formation is normally used only when the block is flanked on both sides by friendly pike blocks as we only need to protect the front face of the block. The outer blocks would Form Circle which is explained next.

Form Circle

On this order face out from the centre and take a step back towards the centre of the block to tighten the block before digging in the butt of the pike into the ground. The pikemen on the outer edges of the block then follow the above posture, the remaining pikemen in the centre of the circle all go to Charge Your Pike and cover the gaps to prevent the cavalry gaining entry to the circle. Allow the musket and camp followers a little time to get into the body before bring the points fully down.

Trail Your Pike

A base and contemptible posture, only included for completeness. Hold the pike in your right hand about 18 inches from the point and drag the butt of the pike behind you on your right hand side. A sloppy looking stance which increases the reaction time to any order. It is normally only used for travelling through woodland or very low arches.

New recruits - don't just sit around, take any opportunity to grab an old hand and force them to show you the pike drill. If you want to fit into the block on the battlefield KNOW YOUR DRILL and plentiful practice makes the perfect pike operative

Distancing Between Individuals

Distances are an important part of the tactics we use to fight and move on the battlefield. Knowing the distances that go with the key words is the next step to learn. The following pages explain all the distances you will need to know and how they are applied while ordering the block.

Closest Order

Packed tightly together ready for the push. The most frightening order for the new boy and most exhilarating for the old hand.

Close Order

Shoulder to shoulder, just enough room to front and rear of each person to move or change facing and sufficiently close to go to closest at the last moment without the risking of losing the cohesion of the body. Also used for going through narrow gaps or getting served at the bar.

Order

Standard distance between ranks and files, which is approximately three feet in all directions.

Open Order

Six feet between each pikeman. Used to allow the doubling of the frontage, or counter marching, or other manoeuvring.

Double Distance

Twelve feet between each pikeman, rarely used.

Twice Double Distance

Twenty four feet between each pikeman, very rarely used but put in for completeness.

All distance changes are from right and front unless otherwise ordered. These distances can apply to ranks only, files only or both. So if you hear the following orders, it will affect the block in the following ways:

Bring Your Files to Open Order

Your senior file leader and his file will not move but all other files will move sideways away from the senior file leader to a distance of six feet between them and the next man to the left or right

Bring Your Files to Open Order from the Left

The senior file leader and his file will not move, but all other file leaders will move sideways away from his file to a distance of six feet. The second file leader's file moving the furthest

Bring Your Files to Open Order from the Midst

The midst or middle of the block would be the space between the second and third file leaders therefore everyone would move away from that imaginary file.

As only Files to Open Order was ordered in each of the above examples, the depth of the body would not alter. The ranks would still be three feet apart. This would make the body a wide rectangle but not alter its depth in any way. It is used to allow another unit (normally out own pike block) to interpenetrate us and pass to the front or rear of the body, as a preparation for doubling the body or for countermarching.

Bring Your Ranks to Open Order

The depth of the body is increased without widening the body. The entire front rank would not move. All ranks would fall back a distance of six feet from the man in front.

Bring Your Ranks to Open Order from the Rear

The corporal's rank would not move. All other ranks would move forward to a distance of six feet

Ranks and Files to Open Order

From the senior file leader the body would space out so that everyone is six foot from everyone else. If From the Right is added, second file leader does not move and

everyone else does. If From the Midst is added the midpoint would be between the second and third file leaders.

Facings

Facing the right way may seem an obvious point but you will be surprised how flexible you need to be when the heat of battle sets in. If you are not listening or don't understand, confusion can quickly set in and disorder beats us before the enemy get anywhere near us.

Listen for the key orders:

- Left Hand Face
- Right Hand Face
- Left Hand About Face
- Face to the Front

These four are the most common one you are liable to hear on the battlefield. The Left Hand About Face should have you turning 180 degrees to the left to face the way you just came from, this is also the way we turn when countermarching. Face to the Front is facing to where the file leaders are.

Right Hand Incline & Left Hand Incline

This manoeuver is done on the march and allows the block to move forward but moving gradually to the left or right, handy if we have to take ground not directly ahead of us or to avoid obstructions.

Face to the Front and Rear & Face to Both Flanks

In the first instance the front ranks remain as they are but from the half file leaders and behind, all pikemen Left Hand About Face. They are then ready to defend against attacks from the rear. In the second instance the right two files do a Right Hand Face and the left files do a Left Hand Face.

These manoeuvres are used in special situations such as 'bugger we are surrounded' 'let's break out of here but I'm not sure which way is out'

Learn the facings, they are important. If you feel unsure, practice them in the garden, it will give the neighbours something to look at.

Dressings

Important - whichever way the block is facing, if there is a gap in front of you always step forward and fill it

If the person is slow on the reform, you can always step back when he turns up but as everyone is super fit and makes Linford Christie look slow on a reform this rarely happens. Another occasion when it is important to remember to dress up is when facings change. On many battles some files will have more pikemen than others therefore when we change face the front rank would be uneven.

e. g. Left Hand About Face - the new front rank which would normally be the back rank would have a gap, therefore everybody in the short files would step forward to form even ranks:

front

F1	F3	F4	S	F1			S
P2	P2	P2	P2	P2	F3	F4	P2
H	H	H	H	H	P2	P2	H
P4	P4	P4	P4	P4	H	H	P4
C			B	C	P4	P4	B

front

Always keep an even frontage & keep your ranks and files in position

If we are in control of ourselves we stand a better chance of beating the enemy

Doublings

We use certain orders to double the blocks frontage which allows us to put as many fighting men in the front rank as we feel necessary. There are two main types of order and each order can be done in at least two ways. They all rely on the ranks and files being kept straight with distances and dressings being spot on.

Doubling by Half Files

The Half File Leader and his rear half file march quickly to rank even with the front rank

Half Files to the Left (or Right) Double

This is the standard form of half file doubling where the half file leader and his rear half file march to the left (or right) of their original file leader. The example below shows Half Files to the Left Double

Before

F1	F3	F4	S
P2	P2	P2	P2
P3	P3	P3	P3
H	H	H	H
P5	P5	P5	P5
C	B	B	B

After

H	F1	H	F3	H	F4	H	S
P5	P2	P5	P2	P5	P2	P5	P2
C	P3	B	P3	B	P3	B	P3

Half Files Recover

Will reverse the above order

By the Entire, Half Files to the Left / Right / Outwards Double

The key words to listen for in this order is By the Entire. This order is not in a no-Blew Regiment pikeman's universe. If you can get to grips with this one you are well on your way to being an old hand so please read on and experience an officer's delight and a pikeman's nightmare.

By the Entire, Half Files to the Left (or Right) Double

The difference here is that the half file leaders and their rear half files march out as a separate block. The diagram below shows *By the Entire, Half Files to the Left Double*.

Before

F1	F3	F4	S
P2	P2	P2	P2
P3	P3	P3	P3
H	H	H	H
P5	P5	P5	P5
C	B	B	B

After

H	H	H	H	F1	F3	F4	S
P5	P5	P5	P5	P2	P2	P2	P2
C	B	B	B	P3	P3	P3	P3

The end result is similar but imagine the effect that another musket block appearing out of thin air to out flank them has on an enemy's morale

Half Files Recover

Will reverse the above order

By the Entire, Half Files to the Outwards Double

This is a little more complicated but the effect is far more rewarding, when this order is given, the rear half files do a Face to Both Flanks and march in their respective directions to take position on each flank of the original front rank.

H	H	F1	F3	F4	S	H	H
P5	P5	P2	P2	P2	P2	P5	P5
C	B	P3	P3	P3	P3	B	B

Two musket blocks to reinforce us - the enemy will have to call for support

Doubling by Ranks

The more common method of doubling frontage is using ranks not half files because of its speed. This order relies on the even numbered ranks marching forward into the odd ranks. This should leave twice the original distance between the new ranks.

Ranks to Right (or Left) Double

This is like *Half Files to the Left (or Right) Double* but less than half the distance is covered by each pikeman - it is twice as fast. Each pikeman steps out to the left or right then steps into the space between the members of the rank in front.

Before

F1	F3	F4	S
P2	P2	P2	P2
P3	P3	P3	P3
H	H	H	H
P5	P5	P5	P5
C	B	B	B

After

F1	P2	F3	P2	F4	P2	S	P2
P3	H	P3	H	P3	H	P3	H
P5	C	P5	B	P5	B	P5	B

Ranks Recover

Will reverse the above order

The benefits of Rank over Half File are the speed in which it can be executed and that you do not rely on designated half file leaders

The benefit of Half File over Rank is that if need be the rear half files can operate as a separate block

Doubling by Bringers Up

An order that exists but will probably never be used on the battlefield. The rear rank would have been the next most experienced after the front rank, this doubling would have brought together the best of the regiment to the front. Now it just shakes the cobwebs off the corporal.

Bringers Up, Double the Frontage to the Left (or Right) Hand

The rear rank would march through the body to the left (or right) ranking even with the front, the files following successively.

C	F1	B	F3	B	F4	B	S
P5	P2	P5	P2	P5	P2	P5	P2
H	P3	H	P3	H	P3	H	P3

Bringers Up Recover

Will reverse the above order, the half file leaders moving first

By the Entire

Involves about facing and wheeling and would make your ears bleed and your brain explode so is left out on the grounds of health and safety.

Inversion /Filing On

How many times has the Army' already slow advance been delayed still further by a well-placed gate or a narrow pathway. We prefer to rise above the norm and navigate the obstacle with style in the following manner:

Files, File On

With the senior file leaders file leading and the next tagging on behind the first files last man, followed by the other files to leave the corporal bringing up the rear. The block would reform to its normal state when there is sufficient space and the order Recover the Body is given.

Double Files, File On

As above save that the senior file leader and next file, lead on together. The next two files follow, side by side. Allows a faster recovery but depends on the gap available.

Ranks, from the Left (or Right), File On

This time the front rank marches off first in single file lead(if from the left) by the senior file leader with the senior file leaders second man following the second file leader and so on.

Files to the Left Double

The senior file leader and fourth file stand, the third and second move back to create two files.

<i>Before</i>				<i>After</i>	
F1	F3	F4	S	F1	F4
P2	P2	P2	P2	F3	F2
P3	P3	P3	P3	P2	P2
H	H	H	H	P2	P2
P5	P5	P5	P5	P3	P3
C	B	B	B	P3	P3
H	H	H	H	P5	P5
P5	P5	C	B	B	B

Files to the Left Double and Ranks File On are to be preferred as a fighting front can be formed much quicker

Countermarching

This order allows us, as a block, to easily change our direction of march. The most important factor involved is the correct distancing and discipline between the ranks and files to avoid any individuals colliding with each other.

The order takes two parts - a preparative telling you what to do and the command telling you to do it.

Prepare to Countermarch Maintaining Ground

Files to the Left - Countermarch

Maintaining ground means the block turning in the same space. On the word - Countermarch the first rank Left Hand About Face and march back through the block, everybody keeps marching till they reach the spot where the man in front turns. Always keep a look out for your dressings and keep your ranks and files straight.

Prepare to Countermarch Losing Ground

Files to the Left - Countermarch

The ground lost is the ground that the block is standing on - after the, manoeuvre the block will be in a position behind where the rear rank started from. This countermarch starts from stationary and can continue into motion.

On the word - Countermarch the first rank Left Hand About Face and march back through the block. When the file leader passes the second man they also Left Hand About Face and follow on. Ranks do not move till the man in front has passed through, marching to the rear of the starting position.

Prepare to Countermarch Gaining Ground

Files to the Left - Countermarch

The ground gained is the ground in front of the musket block. The countermarch ends with the block stationary.

On the word - Countermarch the first rank Left Hand About Face and march back through the block and stands, the block marches to the right past them and Left Hand About Face to take up their dressings behind the file leader.

Wheeling

There are three basic types that we use to turn to face a threat on the battlefield or to manoeuvre

Left Hand Wheel, Right Hand Wheel, & Wheel about the Midst to the Left (or Right) Hand

The first two are fairly obvious. A wheel, like a facing change is made to change direction but unlike a facing it can only be made while the musket block is in motion. When the wheel order is given, the inside man (second file leader for Right, senior file leader for Left) stands still and acts as a pivot for the whole block. The block swings round on that point with the furthest file dictating the speed of the turn. Keep looking sideways and forwards to ensure correct dressings.

The wheel is continued until the order to March On, the block then continues in the direction the front rank is facing with the rest of the block following as normal.

Wheel about the Midst to the Left (or Right) Hand

This manoeuvre allows the block to wheel on the same patch of ground. The same rules as above apply only this time the pivot point is the centre of the block between the middle file leaders. The direction is the original flank that the new frontage will occupy. To the Right means that the right hand files will move backwards and the left hands forwards. It is a difficult manoeuvre to get perfect but if done slowly and carefully it can look very impressive.

Reforms

The present policy for the reform is to form up at Close Order and at Advance Your Pike. From this position we can either go to Closest Order and push or to Order ready to manoeuvre or to go to Charge Your Pike.

When we are fielding an Ensign, make for him- he will mark the general area of the reform. The corporal will mark the front left of the pike block.

Do not assume what you will be doing.

Do listen to orders to find what you should be doing.

Never run through the front rank of the block.

If people are missing, dress forward.

Company Structure

File Leader

Experienced and dependable member of the Regiment. First point of contact for the people allocated to the file. Finds out who is going to each muster and advises the block sergeant accordingly. Should have spare kit to lend out to new members.

Relays news of forthcoming events to the file. Responsible for ensuring that members of the file know basic drill.

Corporal

Responsible for correct dressing of ranks and files and that orders are correctly and speedily carried out. Ensures quick reforms and adjusts positions as necessary. Ready to take over duties as sergeant if needed.

Off the battlefield the corporal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that members know the correct drill and are safe to go on the field.

Sergeant

Command of the block, making sure that everything happens and that everyone is in the right place at the right time. Co-ordinator between the block and the higher command structure

Finally, Some Pearls of Wisdom

Remember - officers and sergeants are giving orders to make a more effective fighting unit and keep you relatively safe.

If you do the following you will have a fun day, a successful battle and all your body parts should be in the same place so you can enjoy the evening's delights.

- Listen to the sergeant
- Try to stay aware of what is happening
- Listen to the sergeant
- Keep chat in the block to a minimum
- Above all else - LISTEN TO THE SERGEANT

Article contributed by Sam Johnson