

**National Regiment
Officer and NCO School
March 2, 2014**

Grand Guard and Police Guard

One of the most important duties of a soldier is Guard Duty and one time or another, every soldier in Civil War was expected to perform guard duty. Guard duty took many forms, including:

- **Grand Guard** – Protects a camp from the enemy; placed around a bivouacked camp.
- **Police Guard** - Also called camp, garrison, post or quarters guard – keeps order and discipline in the camp, prevents soldiers from deserting, keeps civilians out of camp, protects supplies and other stores, and gives the alarm in case of emergencies or other disturbances.
- **General's Guards** – Escorts general officers, and protects the camp and stores at headquarters.
- **Provost Guard** – Takes charge of prisoners, arrests stragglers and other transgressors, supervises the passes of military personnel, signs the passes of civilians, deals with citizen complaints about the men's action, and may have charge of scouts.
- **Advanced Guard** – Protects a moving column from the front
- **Flankers** – Protects a moving column from flank attacks
- **Rear Guard** – Similar to the Advanced Guard, but protects the rear of a moving column from attack

Definitions

- **Guard** – Refers to the body of soldiers assigned to that duty; guards are relieved every 24 hours.
- **Sentinel** – An individual soldier assigned to a guard; relieved every 2 hours.
- **Picket** – A sentinel.
- **Countersign** – A password, generally named after a battle, and given only to those who permitted to visit and pass the line of sentries at night (officers and NCOs on duty), and to members of the Guard. Not given to interior sentinels unless by order.
- **Parole** – Usually the name of a general and is only given to the commander of the Guard, and other officers who may visit, inspect and give orders to the Guard. Other officers include the Officer of the Day (OoD) and the Guard's parent unit Commander (Battalion, Brigade, etc.) to which the Guard belongs. The Guard belongs to the Battalion, not the Company.

Grand Guard

The role of a Grand Guard is described in paragraphs 602 through 612 in the *Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861* and in subsequent editions. The regulations discuss the duties of the Grand Guard but don't address how to deploy the Guard in the field. *General Order No. 69, Head-Quarters, Army of the Potomac, February 25, 1862* was issued to give a clear explanation of the duty. Copies of the Order can be found in Kautz's *Customs of Service for Officer of the Army (para. 74)*; Butterfield's *Camp and Outpost Duty for Infantry (Article XIX)*; and in Dom Dal Bello's *Instructions for Guards and Pickets*.

Purpose and Components of the Grand Guard

When in the presence of the enemy, and on campaign, in addition to Camp Guards, there are Grand Guards, outposts, pickets, and reconnaissances. **The purpose of the Grand Guard is to watch for the enemy.**

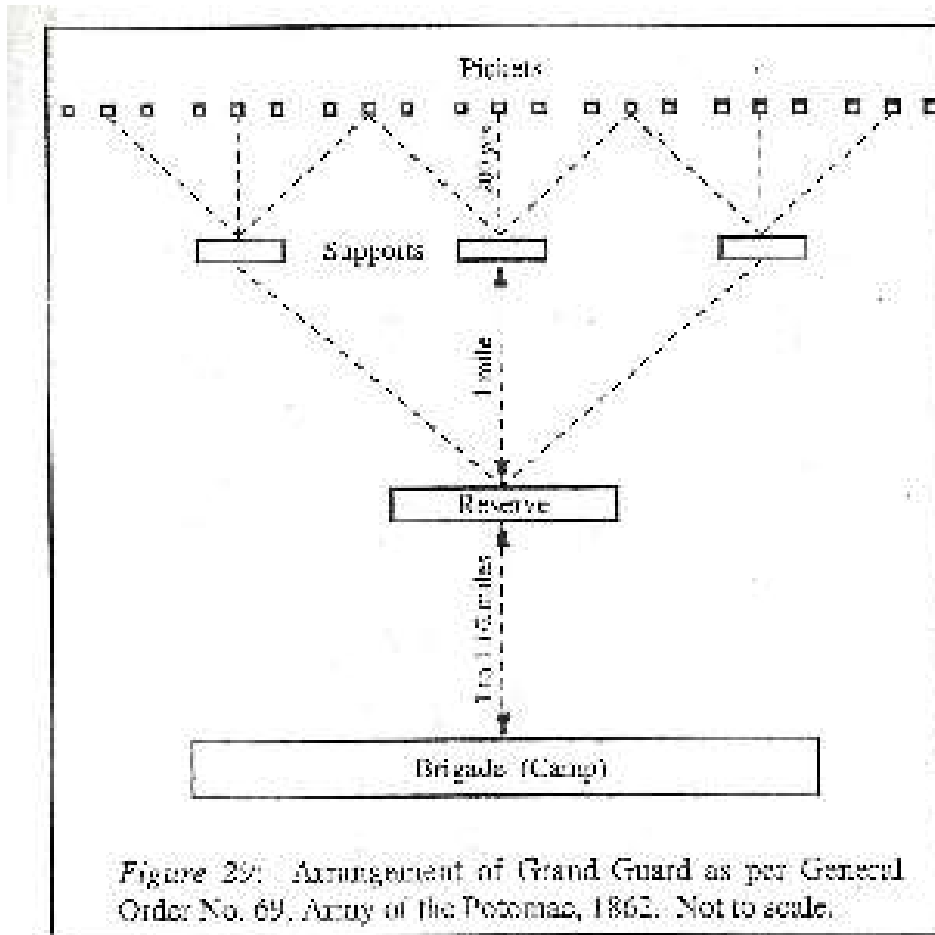
Grand Guards are detailed from each Brigade in a Division to protect the main body when it is at rest. The Grand Guard of a Brigade is generally commanded by a Captain under the general supervision of the Field Officer of the Day (FOoD) to be detailed at Brigade Headquarters. The FOoD is usually a Major or Lieutenant-Colonel, but the rosters of field officers for FOoD may include Senior Captains. The guards of each Division will be under the supervision of a General Officer of the Day (GOoD) selected from a roster of colonels. The GOoD receives orders directly from the Division commander.

GRAND GUARDS are posted in the direction of the enemy to cover the approaches to the camp. They are placed close enough to the Brigade camp to quickly report to the main body of an enemy advance yet far enough away to delay the enemy and give the main body time to form up. The distance from camp depends on the command's strength, the nature of the terrain, and the proximity of the enemy.

Each GUARD consists of:

- A RESERVE, occupying a commanding position stationed a mile or mile-and-a-half in front of the main body of the Brigade. The RESERVE may not be required when the main body is under arms, or the lines are close as when the armies are entrenched.
- A line of two or three SUPPORTS from which the sentinels are furnished, stationed a mile in front of the RESERVE. The SUPPORTS should be placed so that they easily communicate with each other and the RESERVE.

- A line of SENTINELS called PICKETS positioned 200 yards in front of the SUPPORTS. PICKETS shall be posted in groups of three.



- A line of sentinels shall be provided by the RESERVE to communicate with the SUPPORTS as well as with the Brigade Headquarters.
- A detachment of Cavalry and Field Artillery may be attached to the RESERVE. Several mounted men are assigned to each SUPPORT to act as messengers in case of necessity. The mounted men keep their horses saddled and bridled, and are relieved every six hours.
- The GUARD may also include OUTPOSTS which are isolated advanced posts of greater or lesser strength. They are called "picket-guards" when consisting of small detachments.
- In addition to the line of SENTINELS, the RESERVE shall send out patrols between the lines and a short distance to the front of the line of PICKETS to examine such portions of the country not fully in view of the PICKETS.
- In general, the GRAND GUARD should consist of 10% of the effective strength of the Main Body. The RESERVE should comprise two-thirds of the entire GUARD, with the balance subdivided between the SUPPORTS and PICKETS.

- The GRAND GUARD usually mounts at the same time as the POLICE GUARD at the Guard Mount Parade – at the beginning of the day. If the Brigade Commander fears an early morning attack, he may double the GUARD and post it before dawn. The GRAND GUARD is assembled at the “Grand Mount Parade”, and marched to its posts in a manner similar to the POLICE GUARD.

General Instructions for the RESERVES and SUPPORTS

- When GRAND GUARD is established, it is marched to its post by the FOoD, guided by a Brigade staff officer who knows where the Brigade commander wants to place the posts. The next GRAND GUARD is led by a member of the current GRAND GUARD who is sent to FOoD by the current GUARD commander.
- The GRAND GUARD is posted to defend a pass or natural approach, or on centrally located high ground. The GUARD is to be situated so as conceal its strength and observe the front.
- Compliments are dispensed with on PICKET duty, unlike POLICE GUARD.
- As defined in the *U. S. Army Regulations*, GRAND GUARDS shall:
 - inform the nearest posts and the FOoD, or General of the Brigade, of the march and movements of the enemy, and of the attacks they receive or fear;
 - examine every person passing near the post, particularly those coming from without;
 - arrest suspicious persons, and all soldiers and camp-followers who try to pass out without permission; pickets are authorized to shoot all persons deserting to the enemy;
 - send to the General, unless otherwise directed, all country people who may come into the lines.
- Brigade GUARDS will maintain communications with the GUARDS of adjacent Brigades.
- The RESERVE may also send out patrols between the lines and a short distance to the front of the line of PICKETS to examine such portions of the country as are not fully in view of the PICKETS. At night men are sent forward to guard key approaches and shall move about to better observe and for their safety. They use signals or retreats along predetermined routes if the enemy approaches.
- All GUARDS (members of the SUPPORTS and RESERVE) take arms at the approach of any party at night.
- The RESERVE shall be sufficient strength to check the advance of the enemy, thus affording the main body of the army ample time to form and prepare for attack. It will give a rallying point for the PICKETS and their SUPPORTS. At least one commissioned officer and one-third of the men of the RESERVE must be on alert at all hours.
- At nights, half the men of the RESERVE are under arms, the rest with arms. Fires may be built on the line of RESERVES and must be screened from the view in front by nature of the ground.

- A RESERVE may not be required when the main body is under arms, or when the lines are close as when the armies are entrenched.
- SUPPORTS will hold themselves in readiness to receive the PICKETS and repel an attack, retiring in good order upon the RESERVE when unable any longer to hold their ground.
- One relief of the SUPPORTS are allowed to sleep and one relief must constantly be on alert. No fires are allowed along the line of the SUPPORTS or outside the line of RESERVES.
- The SUPPORTS shall be relieved every six hours and the PICKETS every two hours.

General Instructions for the PICKETS

- PICKETS should be posted:
 - Where they can see the furthest.
 - Where they are out of sight of the enemy.
 - Where they are in communication with each other and their SUPPORTS.
- It is often better not to be seen than to see far.
- During the day the line of SENTINELS should pass over the highest points, and post in front of such ground as covered by timber or brushwood. The SENTINELS shall carefully observe the nature of the ground, and to select such places of protection for themselves as their post will afford, to occupy in case the enemy appears within range.
- At night they move to low ground so they can see silhouettes against the sky, and so that they themselves are not seen. The line of SENTINELS should withdraw to lower ground, and just within the front of any timber or brush.
- PICKETS are posted in groups of three posted every 150 yards. In each group the SENTINELS shall take posts 50 yards apart, and the two outer sentinels in each group shall continually patrol to meet the SENTINELS of adjacent groups.
- A PICKET should:
 - Be well instructed on his duties, primarily watching a certain area to his front for enemy movements.
 - Keep unauthorized persons from passing his line.
 - Always be ready to fire.
 - Fire on all persons deserting to the enemy.
 - Be sure of the presence of the enemy before firing.
 - Fire even though all defense of his post be useless, as the safety of the post may depend on it.
 - Fire before withdrawing if the enemy suddenly advances in order to warn the other PICKETS and SUPPORTS.
 - PICKETS act as a line of skirmishers when firing. When forced to withdraw they shall move to the flanks of the SUPPORT, enabling the SUPPORT to fire.
 - Challenge all parties approaching his line. At night he shall order all parties to HALT. If the party halts, the SENTINEL call “who goes there?”

If the party answers friends the SENTINEL will call “Advance, friend with the countersign.”

- If the approaching party does not halt, if they advance more than one person, or do not give the correct *countersign*, the SENTINEL shall fire and fall back to the GUARD.
- Bearers of flags of truce are not allowed to pass the outer PICKETS, and are made to face away from the lines. If they must pass between lines they must be blindfolded and escorted by an NCO. Deserters coming into the lines are to be disarmed, and let in a few at a time if they appear at night. Parties leaving the lines must prove they are authorized to do so.
- A system of silent signals should be established to warn the SUPPORTS.
- PICKETS should not fire unless an advance is intended. Discharging a weapon should always mean an attack.
- PICKETS should not communicate with the enemy unless ordered to by an officer to gain information or another objective.
- “Courage and commons sense are the requisites for a PICKET”. (Kautz)

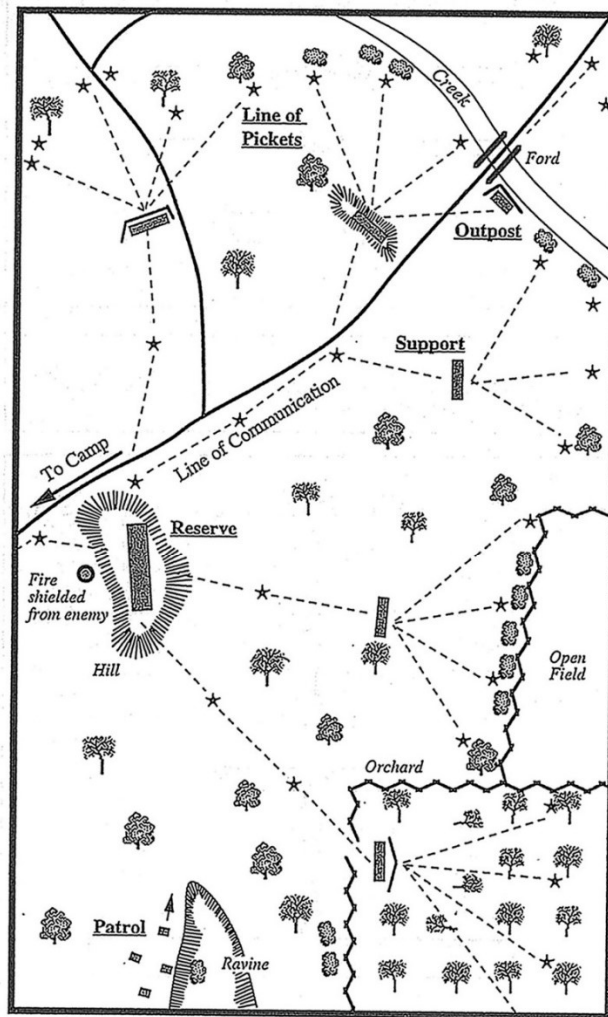


Figure 30: Schematic of Grand Guard. The line of Pickets is represented by the stars. Not to scale.

Police Guard

Police (Camp) Guard was a 24-hour duty with personnel drawn from each company in the battalion. The Guard is under the command of the Officer of the Guard (OoG), who in turn reports to the Officer of the Day (OoD). The OoD determines how many soldiers will be required for the Guard and send instructions to each company the night before the guard details are to report. After morning roll call, the guards are escorted to the battalion or garrison parade ground where they are turned over to the Adjutant in a ceremony similar to a dress parade. During the Guard Mount Parade three reliefs would be organized by the Adjutant and the sentinels would receive their post assignments

which would remain constant throughout the 24-hour duty period. After the ceremony sergeants return to their companies and the OoG marches the new guard to the guard house/tent and relieves the old guard.

The guard is composed of a Lieutenant (OoG), a sergeant, and three corporals who each command a relief. The most important duty of a Corporal was Corporal of the Guard who escort their reliefs to their posts. Reliefs would be rotated every two hours and members of the guard were to stay accoutered at all times. The number of posts would vary with the layout of the camp but would generally include: one at the guard house (Post No. 1); one the camp/garrison commander's tent; three on the color line, including one posted directly on the colors; three posted 50 paces to the rear of the field officer's tents and one posted on each flank of the camp; and other locations deemed important.

The OoG would remain constantly with their guard except when visiting the sentinels or necessarily engaged elsewhere in their proper duty. OoGs leaving their posts are to mention their intention, and the probable time of return, to the next in command. The OoG must make sure that all sentinels understand the duties of the sentinel:

Sentinels are responsible to know, understand and obey GENERAL orders and SPECIAL orders.

GENERAL ORDERS apply to all posts and are as follows:

1. To take charge of this post and all public property within view.
2. Keep alert and observe everything which takes place within sight or hearing.
3. Report all violations of "Articles, Regulations or Orders."
4. Repeat all calls from all posts more distant from the guardhouse than my own.
5. Salute all officers passing, according to rank.
6. Give the alarm in case of fire or disorders.
7. Obey orders from the Commanding Officer, Officer of the Day, and officers & non-commissioned officers of the guard, ONLY.
8. Quit my post only when ordered to do so.
9. At night, to challenge all persons approaching my post, and allow no one to pass without the countersign until an NCO or officer of the guard examines them.

SPECIAL ORDERS apply to a specific post. Examples may include:

1. Stationary or walking post.
2. Boundaries of the post.
3. Challenging post or not.
4. Special orders to be rendered...i.e. call out the guard for the Brigade Commander.
5. Messages to be passed on.

Sentinels pass on to their relief all SPECIAL ORDERS received regarding their particular post.

While posted, sentinels carry their arms at shoulder arms, support arms or right shoulder shift at all times. In wet weather they carry their arms at secure arms if there is no sentry box or shelter. Sentinels do not take orders or allow themselves to be relieved, except by an officer or NCO of their Guard, the OoD or the Commanding Officer. Sentinels will repeat all calls made from posts more distant from the main body of the guard than his own.

During daylight hours sentinels will present arms to all general and field officers, to the OoD and to the Commanding Officer of the post. To all other officers they will come to shoulder arms. After sunset and before dark, sentinels will come to shoulder arms for all officers. After dark, challenges are made.

CHALLENGES AND COUNTERSIGNS

The countersign is given to persons entitled to pass during the night and to the officers, NCOs and sentinels of the guard. The OoG is responsible for seeing that the countersign is communicated to the sentinels before twilight.

After retreat (or at an hour by the Commanding Officer), until broad daylight, a sentinel challenges every person who approaches him, taking at the same time the position of *Arms Port*. He will allow no person to come nearer than the reach of his bayonet, until the person has given the countersign.

A sentinel, in challenging, will call out "*Who comes there?*" If answered "*Friend, with the countersign*", and he being instructed to pass persons with the countersign, he will reply "*Advance friend with the countersign*". If answered "*Friends*" he will reply "*Halt friends! Advance one with the countersign!*" If answered "*Relief!*", "*Patrol*", or "*Grand rounds*", he will reply "*Halt! Advance Sergeant (or Corporal) with the countersign!*" and satisfy himself that the party is what it represents itself to be. If he has no authority to pass persons with the countersign, if the wrong countersign be given, or if the persons have not the countersign, he will cause them to stand and call "*Corporal of the Guard, Post #--*".

When any person approaches a post of the guard at night, the sentinel before the post, after challenging, causes him to halt until examined by a noncommissioned officer of the guard.

POSTING GUARDS

Once the soldiers in the first relief have been named, they are marched two paces to the front and their Corporal of the guard will take charge and go to relieve the sentinels. The first relief is accompanied by the third relief Corporal of the old guard, who knows where the sentinel posts are and will take command of the old sentinels, when the old relief has been relieved.

The relief marches at in two ranks at Support Arms, conducted by the Corporal on the side of the leading front-rank man; and the sentinels will be numbered alternately in the front and rear rank, the man on the right of the front rank being designated as "No. 1." Should an officer approach, the Corporal will command the relief to Shoulder Arms, and resume Support Arms when the officer has been passed.

The sentinels at the guard-house, or guard-tent, are the first to be relieved, and are left behind (e.g., they do not have to march all the way around the posts with the rest of the relief). Each numbered post is relieved in succession. It is best to relieve the farthest post next, and then relieve each post in succession as the relief works its way back toward the guard-house.

When a sentinel sees the relief approach, he will halt and face to it, and bring his weapon to Shoulder Arms. At six paces, the Corporal will command,

1, Relief, 2. HALT!

when the relief will halt and carry arms. The corporal will then add, "No.1," or "No.2," or "No.3," according to the number of the post,

Arms - PORT!

The two sentinels will, with arms at port, then approach each other when the old sentinel, under the correction of the corporal, will whisper the instructions to the new sentinel. This done, the two sentinels will Shoulder Arms, and the old sentinel will march, in quick time, to take his place in rear of the relief. The corporal will then command:

1. Support – ARMS! 2. Forward. 3. MARCH!

and the relief proceeds to the next post in the same manner until the entire shift has been relieved.