

Dismounted Duty (*Drill Regulations for the North-West Mounted Police, 1889*)

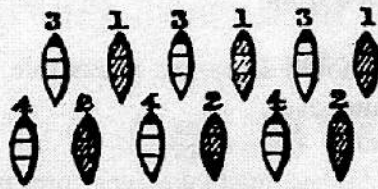
General Rules

1. It must be distinctly recognized that the Mounted Police, when required to fight, does so on foot, and that their horses are intended as a means of placing them across the prairie with rapidity in some chosen or desired position, whence they can use their carbines to advantage.
2. Horses must be taught to lead well, and this should be taught on all exercise parades, by changing lead horses from "near" to "off" side every other day. If a horse at first will not lead, he can easily be taught, if a non-commissioned officer follows with a whip.
3. In advancing to seize a position, or to come into action, men should dismount, if possible, under cover. If this is not possible, horse must be sent "about" to obtain cover.
4. The officer or non-commissioned officer in command of the horses must take every precaution to guard against surprise, and must keep up constant communication with the fighting line. If the horses are at all isolated and unsupported, care must be taken that a sufficient guard is left with them, and that precautions are taken against surprise. In such a case a reserve of from one-third to one-half of the men engaged should be kept in hand.
5. The officer or non-commissioned officer must take care that the horses of different sections do not get mixed, but that the sections are kept distinct, with the horses' heads toward the front; that No. 3 of each section is on the alert, ready to bring up the horses on the command or bugle sound "Horses Up."
6. If one man is left with the horses of each section there is no difficulty in moving the horses with rapidity from one position to another. If it is certain not to be necessary to move the horses, and if they can be placed in a secure position, all men in the division may be dismounted, and a small number of dismounted men may be left as horse guards; the horses being linked or otherwise fastened.
7. **To Dismount.**- (as per 1882 Troop/Division Organization)
On the command "**For Dismounted Duty-Dismount,**" when in line, the odd numbers will advance one horse's length; Nos. 3 will return arms at once; Nos. 1, 2 and 4, will dismount with the greatest rapidity and take their reins over their horses' heads, and hand them to No. 3 who will be ready to receive the reins of Nos. 1 and 2 on the "off" side, and No. 4 on the "near" side.

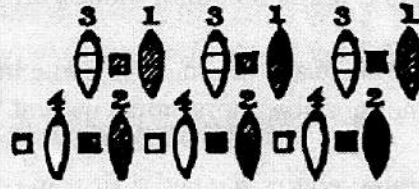
PLATE XVII.

Fig. 1.

**PREPARE TO DISMOUNT.
RIGHT FILES ONE HORSE'S LENGTH—
MARCH.**



DISMOUNT.



Immediately the above command is given, serrifiles move to the front as quickly as possible. The Division Serrifile dismounts and hands his horse to the sub-division serrifile of No. 2 sub-division, on the "off" side. The division leader and the leaders of Nos. 1, 2 and 4 sub-divisions dismount and hand their horses as follows:-

Division leader to No. 2 sub-division serrifile, on the "near" side.

The leaders of sub-divisions Nos. 1, 3 and 4, to their own serrifiles on the "near" side.

The Division serrifile takes command of the dismounted men of No. 2 sub-division.

The leader of No. 2 sub-division remains mounted and takes charge of the horses of the division.

Nos. 1, 2 and 4 will run out and form 15 paces in front of the horses, the sections keeping together. The men will then receive all further orders that may be necessary from the division leader.

The division leader should be in rear of centre of the fighting line, in a position where he can direct the movements of the whole of his division; the sub-division leaders in rear of their sub-divisions, in a position where they can direct the movements of the men of their respective sub-divisions. If the horses have to be retired, the command "*Horses About*" will be given, and the horses taken into cover or some indicated place of security, the officer or non-commissioned officer in charge superintending the whole. any non-commissioned officer without led horses, or with only one horse, will be on the lookout to assist any No. 3 who may be in difficulty with his horses.

The three men composing each section will invariably keep together, more especially in bush or open ground. No single man ought ever to be surprised by the enemy, and the men belonging to each section should have a personal responsibility that their section comrades are at no time deserted.

In thick brush the sections ought not to be more than two yards apart. In more open ground this interval may be increased according to the necessities of the case.

In rallying, the skirmishing sections should rally on the centre of their divisions, to which they should always look for the general direction of their advance.

In open ground, although the three men of a section should work together, they should on no account be close to each other, but each man should choose his own piece of cover.

If a division in **column of sections** receives the order "*For Dismounted Duty Dismount,*" Nos. 1, 2 and 4 dismount and give their horses to No. 3, who will not advance in this instance. No. 1 will ease off a little to the right, so as to allow No. 2 to do the same and to dismount. Unless otherwise ordered all the dismounted men then double to the front and form on the left of the leading dismounted section, which forms three horses' lengths in front of the column. All three men of a section must keep together.

If ordered to dismount in **columns of half sections**, the right or left man will be dismounted by the command "*Right (or left) files for dismounted duty, Dismount;*" the right or left files will when dismounted will double to the front and form as above.

When a division is in **column of sections or half sections**, if it should be required to fire at once to a flank, the command will be "*For Dismounted Duty to the Right (or Left) Dismount.*" After dismounting the right (or left) files, instead of doubling to the front, will stand one horse's length from the flank, facing right (or left).

8. **To Mount.**-When it is desired to mount in order to change position, the horses will be ordered up by the bugle sound "*Horses Up.*" The fighting line will wait the command or bugle sound "*Stand to Your Horses,*" before rising, and if firing, will keep up the fire; if necessary, being ordered to stand to their horses by alternate sub-divisions or divisions. If firing has ceased, the fighting line may be marched back to join the horses, or the horses may be brought up at a walk.

On the word "*Horses Up,*" the sections will run in as rapidly as possible on their respective horses. each man will then quickly take his horse without noise or talking, and the whole will mount independently and take their places in the ranks. Nos. 3 will either assist the men of their sections to mount restive horses, or if not thus required, moving up at once into the alignment to be out of the way of the men mounting.



A Horseholder in action (15th NRL Rutherford training camp 1940)

"Horses Up." No. 3 brings the horses of his section up in preparation for mounting, Nos. 1 and 2 horses on the off side; No.4 on the near side.

9. **Extended Order.**-It is important that divisions and sub-divisions should be able at any moment to extent *in sections*, the word of command being "**Advance in Extended Order at 5, 10,15, 20 etc., yards interval; No. __ division or sub-division extend from its right,**" "**No. __ division or sub-division extend from its left,**" "**No. __ division or sub-division, support,**" etc., etc.

This formation would be frequently used for lining rapidly an extended position, where the horses could be under cover at some little distance behind each section when dismounted.

It may be sometimes necessary to move rapidly from one position to another when under fire; the extended formation should then be used, each section riding in single file or in whatever formation affords the least mark.

On the division leader's command to extend, the sections wheel outwards if the division is in line; if in column of sections they will change direction by the section leader's order.

In extended order, whether mounted or dismounted, the section leader is at once to take command. If by inversion he finds himself No.3, he is to change places with another man of his section on the first opportunity.

It is of the utmost importance that on every occasion in which Mounted Police are brought into action the object of the movement immediately intended should be fully and carefully explained to

all the men before they are permitted to go into action. In almost every conceivable case it will be found possible to halt the division during each period of advance or retreat, and explain to them the intension of the next dismounted movement. The few moments of time lost will be more than repaid by the increased efficiency gained from intelligent action. All horses should have been taught to stand fire in the Division Menage.

Further information on extending by Sections of Fours prior to dismounted action is found in the *Manual of Drill for Mounted Rifle Volunteers, 1863*, and it extracted below in its entirety.

EXTENDING AND SKIRMISHING BY FOURS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The object of extending by *Fours* mounted instead of as infantry, is to expand the line of fire, change position, and vary the direction of attack with a rapidity calculated to confuse an enemy.

The enclosures and undulations of England afford plenty of cover for small, scattered, restless, unseen groups, whose rifles possess penetrative power to disable artillery horses at 1,000 yards. Plate XIX.

A troop acting by themselves may extend one half as skirmishers, supported by the other half in its cavalry