

Preparatory Instruction of the Recruit

(Regulations for the Instruction, Formations and Movements of the Cavalry, 1865)

When recruits shall have been practised in the elementary exercises of Marching, Facing, &c., on foot, and shall have attained a knowledge of the usual military terms and commands, they will commence their lessons in riding.

They may be instructed in small squads of eight or ten, on Trained Horses with stripped Saddles and Bridoons.

Their lessons at first should be short, and at all times gentle. With patience and mild treatment on the part of the Instructor, and with a proper explanation of the use and object of the different Aids, they will make more progress than by harshness and severity.

The recruits are to be taught to saddle and bridle their horses; and also the proper manner of leading them.

Saddling

The saddle is to be placed in the middle of the horse's back; the front of it about the breadth of a hand behind the play of the shoulder.

The crupper should admit the breadth of the hand between it and the horses back.

The Numnah to be raised well into the fork over the withers, by putting an arm under it.

Girth—to admit a finger between it and the horse's belly. With a young horse it must be tightened gradually, and not with violence.

Surcingle—to lie flat over, and not tighter than, the girth; the upper rings in line with the edge of the flap.

Breast-plate. The upper edge of the rosette, or leather, three fingers above the sharp breast-bone. The breadth of the hand between it and the flat of the shoulder, and also between the martingale (when used) and the horse's chest.

Bridling

The bridoon is to touch the corners of the mouth, but low enough not to wrinkle them.

The bit is to be placed in the horse's mouth, so that the mouth-piece be one inch above the lower tusk, and two inches above the corner tooth, in mares.

The head-stall parallel to, and , behind the cheek bone.

The curb to be laid flat and smooth under the jaw, to admit one finger between it and the jawbone, and never tighter or looser, with a view to ease the horse's mouth.

The nose-band beneath the bridoon head-stall, one finger to play between it and the nose.

The bridoon-rein of such length, that, when held up by the middle, in the full of the left hand, with a light feeling of the horse's mouth, it will touch the riders waist.

Fitting of the Stirrups

The lower edge of the bar is to be two inches above the upper edge of the heel of the boot, for the Hussar saddle; and one inch higher for the Heavy Cavalry saddle.

The position with stirrups, is the same as without, the heels well stretched down and lower than the toes. The foot kept in place by the play of the ankle and instep, the stirrup being under the ball of the foot.

Leading the Horse

The reins of the bridoon being taken over the head, are to be held with the right hand, the forefinger between them, near the rings of the bridoon; the end of the reins in the left hand, which hangs easy behind the thigh.

When leading through a doorway, the man placing himself in front of his horse, and taking one rein in each hand, close to the rings of the bridoon, steps backwards; taking care that the horse's hips and appointments clear the posts of the door. When the horse is through, he places himself on the near side, as before.

In passing an officer on his left, he looks towards him; if the officer is on the off side, the man steps to that side, leading with the left hand, till he has passed about four yards, when he comes to the near side again.

The squad having led their horses into the riding-school, and formed in line, with a horse lengths interval between each file, will receive the word...

"Stand at Ease." Each man opposite the near shoulder of the horse, the right arm passed through the bridoon rein, which has been put over the horse's head and hangs on the neck.

"Attention." The position of the man as in foot drill, but holding the left bridoon rein near the ring of the bit, with the right hand raised as high as the man's shoulder; toes in a line with the horse's fore-feet; left hand hanging down by the thigh.

"In Front of Your Horses." A full step forward with the right (sic-left) foot turning to the right-about, on the ball of it, taking the bridoon reins in each hand near the rings of the bit, raising the horse's head to the height of the mans shoulder, six inches from his breast, and making the horse

