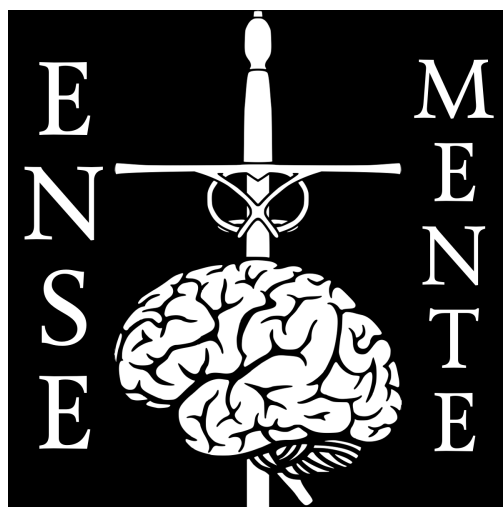


Regulation Fencing Exercises in the Dutch
Navy (1910)

Section III

**EXERCISES WITH THE
CUTLASS**



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About this document.

In this document, a translation of section three of the 1910 *Voorschrift Schermoeeningen bij de Koninklijke Marine* (Regulation Fencing Exercises in the Royal Navy). This third section treats fencing with the (practice version of the) *scheepssabel* – navy cutlass (also known as the *entersabel* – boarding sabre). Sections one and two of the Regulation discuss the instruction in bayonet fencing. Section four deals with fencing with the short stick. After the translation of section three presented here, translations of those parts of the first section that are referred to in section three are also presented.

The Dutch Navy Cutlass

What the Dutch Navy Cutlass looked like is not specified in the Regulation. Therefore, a very brief discussion on this weapon is given here.

The Royal Dutch Navy used the same model cutlass from the early 1800s until well into the 20th century (possibly as late as 1930). It was designated the M1818, and directly based on an earlier French design. Two different versions of the cutlass were in use: no. 1 with a steel cup guard painted black; and no. 2 with a brass briquet hilt. Both versions had a short, stout blade, which was generally curved though straight bladed cutlasses also existed, and which had wide fullers on both sides. Typically, the full length of the cutlass was about 80 cm, with a blade length between 65 and 70cm. The blade width was about 3-3.5 cm.

In 1898, the M1898 klewang was introduced to the Dutch troops in Indonesia. In 1911, the klewang reached its final form (M1911). This klewang was very similar to the Navy cutlass, and was even used as the basis for the M1917 US Navy cutlass. The klewang was probably also used in the Royal Dutch Navy.

Some examples of M1818 *scheepssabels* can be found through the following links:

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/NG-MC-741/catalogue-entry>

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-MC-740/catalogue-entry>

<https://www.nmm.nl/zoeken-in-de-collectie/detail/292706/>

<https://www.nmm.nl/zoeken-in-de-collectie/detail/292734/>

[http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl/index.cfm?
event=search.getdetail&id=107003662](http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl/index.cfm?event=search.getdetail&id=107003662)

[http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl/index.cfm?
event=search.getdetail&id=107009882](http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl/index.cfm?event=search.getdetail&id=107009882)

[http://sabels.net/index.php?
option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=18](http://sabels.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=18)

[http://sabels.net/index.php?
option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=18](http://sabels.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=18)

<http://haffmansantiek.nl/scheepssabel-marine-sabel-model-1818.html>

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III. THE EXERCISES WITH THE MODEL CUTLASS.¹⁾

FIRST DIVISION.

The preparatory exercises without and with weapon.

First lesson.

Simple movements without weapon.

1. Opening and closing of the class.

Com^d. and execution in accordance with the First Lesson, First Division of the Bayonet fencing.

2. Assuming the posture and resetting to the front.

Assuming the posture.

Com^d.

Right forward in posture = One,

Execution (initially in two movements):

1. Turn half to the left on the heel of the left foot, and at the same time raise the right leg extended forwards and set the right foot down approximately two foot lengths forward, depending on one's stature, so that the feet stand at a right angle, such that the heel of the back foot stands about one hand width to the right of the line that is drawn lengthwise through the middle of the front

1 The exercises recorded in this chapter are only practiced for as much as they occur here without opponent, or for as much as the opponent can be replaced by a dummy.

foot, the hands on the hips with the thumb backwards, the remaining fingers together and to the front.²⁾

2. Bend the knees and turn them outwards, bend the upper body forward somewhat, the left shoulder backward as much as possible, the head straight forward, the weight of the body resting equally on both legs (fig. 1).

Resetting to the front.

Com^d.

Front = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

Reassume the position through opposite movements.

3. Making an appèl.

Com^d.

Appèl = One.

Execution: Raise the front foot and audibly set it down on the ground with the entire sole.

The pupil has the opportunity to correct his posture if needed.

4. Passes for- and backward.

Com^d.

Pass forward (backward) = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

1. Shift the front (back) foot approximately one foot length forward (backward) closely along the ground.

2. Let the other foot quickly follow the movement.

In the execution of the passes for- and backward, extend the front (back) leg quickly, and after the foot has been moved, bend it again.

5. Jumps for- and backward.

Com^d.

Jump forward (backward) = One.

2 In the posture with the sabre, to keep the left shoulder pulled back well, the left hand is often placed on the hip with the thumb to the front.

Execution: While the posture is maintained as much as possible, a jump of a couple of foot lengths forward (backward) is made by pushing off from the knees and on the balls of the feet.

6. *Lunging.*

Com^d.

Lunge = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

1. Extend the back leg and at the same time shift the front foot forward as far as possible closely along the ground; at the same time bend the upper body forward in the direction of the front foot, such that the backside of the upper body almost forms a straight line with the extended leg; the back foot remains standing flat on the ground. The weight of the body rests on the front leg. (fig. 2).

2. Pushing off strongly with the front foot and reassuming the posture.

Remark: If the instructor wants the pupils to remain in the lunging position, then he gives an instruction thereto. The *Com^d* for reassuming the posture again from the lunging position is:

Recover = One.

7. *Pass forward in the lunge.*

Com^d.

Lunge (remaining in the lunge position) = One.

Pass forward = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

1. While drawing in the back foot, bend the back leg and shift the foot forward approximately one foot length. (During this movement the torso must not be raised).

2. Lunging again.

Second lesson.

Compound movements without weapon.

The purpose of these movements is to practice the pupils in moving quickly in the posture, and to always maintain the correct pose with that. They are first executed on counts and then on the Comd. "March". (See Gen. Prov.).

1. Pass forward, lunge and appel.
2. Pass forward, lunge, (remaining in the lunge position) recover and jump backward.
3. Pass backward, lunge and appel.
4. Pass forward, lunge (remaining in the lunge position) pass forward in the lunge and recover.
5. Pass forward, jump backward and lunge.

Remark: The instructor is not bound to the order of these exercises. They are only examples of compound movements, and thus he is free to insert even more variety. Later, they can also be utilized as introduction to a lesson.

Third lesson.

Simple movements with weapon.

1. *Assuming the position and standing at ease.*

1. *Atten-* = TION.
2. *Stand at* = EASE.

Execution:

1. assume the position, the sabre down and straight forward, the edge to the right and the point of the sabre just above the ground.
2. bring the right (left) foot forward and let the point of the sabre rest on the ground.

Remark: Gripping the sabre is done in the following manner:

The foremost phalanx of the thumb on the back of the hilt and against the guard, the index finger is placed with its two foremost phalanges against the guard, the remaining fingers firmly grasping the grip.

2. Assuming the posture and resetting to the front.

Assuming the posture.

Com^d.

Posture = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

1. As without weapon, though now at the same time raising the sabre to shoulder height with an extended arm, the right hand in front of the right shoulder, the edge to the right and a little upwards, with this the blade horizontal with the point in front of the outer edge of the left shoulder.

2. As without weapon. (fig. 3 and fig. 3a).

Resetting to the front.

Com^d.

Front = One.

Execution (initially in two movements):

Reassume the posture through opposite movements.

3. Making an appèl.

Command and execution as without weapon.

4. Passes for- and backward.

Command and execution as without weapon.

5. Jumps for- and backward.

Command and execution as without weapon.

6. Lunging.

Command and execution as without weapon. (fig. 4).

7. Pass forward in the lunge.
Command and execution as without weapon.

Fourth lesson.

Compound movements with weapon.

Repetition of the Second Lesson with weapon.

SECOND DIVISION.

The simple cuts and parries.

General provisions.

Before commencing with the cuts and parries, the instructor will first give the pupils an explanation of that which is understood by *normal posture opposite one another*, *centre line*, *centre plane*, *engagement*, *uncovered openings*, and *closing the line*, as well as of how the cuts and parries are distinguished.

Normal posture opposite one another.

The pupils are drawn up in the normal posture opposite one another when the sabres are crossed with the right sides against one another at approximately the middle of the blade; the points are as much as possible aimed at the chest of the opponent, while the distance between two pupils must be such that they can hit one another on the head or the torso by means of a lunge. The back feet of the two pupils must stand perpendicular to the centre line, and the right hands must be located in the centre plane. This posture is called normal, because from it the movements of attack and defense can be performed the fastest in all directions.

Centre line and *centre plane*, in accordance with the bayonet fencing.

Engagement. With engagement the two weapons being in light contact is understood.

Uncovered openings and closing the line, in accordance with the bayonet fencing.

Target area. The entire body is indicated as target area. Cuts to the legs must be avoided as much as possible.

For drawing up the pupils opposite one another, one is referred to the bayonet fencing.

Naming of the cuts and parries.

Depending on the place where they hit the opponent, the cuts are distinguished in:

1st. *above*; this cut can be delivered onto the head or the shoulders of the opponent.

2nd. *right*; this cut can be delivered to the right cheek or right flank of the opponent.

3rd. *left*; this cut can be delivered to the left cheek or left flank of the opponent.

The right arm of the opponent can be hit by the above-mentioned cuts as well as by

4th. The cut *below*.

Against the cuts above, right, left and below stand the parries of the same names.

Both the cuts and the parries, as will become apparent later, are further divided into: long and short cuts and long and short parries.

First lesson.

The four different cuts and the thrust.

General provisions.

Each cut consists of the bringing around of the sabre, in order to give force to the cut, and the actual cut, which, as a rule, is combined with a lunge.

All cuts must be delivered with a loose wrist, and with the edge of the blade, extending the arm forcefully and somewhat drawing back the sabre at the moment of contact. In bringing it around, the arm must not bend more than is strictly necessary; to prevent the rotating of the sabre in the hand, the thumb must always be kept on the backside of the grip.

Before letting the cuts be performed by the pupils, who are drawn up opposite one another, to enhance the muscle strength of the arms of the pupils and to provide them with the necessary

looseness of the wrist, the instructor will first let them practice the bringing around of the sabre in the four directions for some time both in each of the different directions separately, and in opposite and also in crosswise directions successively.

In order to let the pupils acquire the right feeling in their fists, which is required for turning the blade with the edge to the target in time, in practicing the cuts, the instructor will initially not let the bringing around be performed too swiftly. Only later must one also be taught how to perform *short cuts*.

With the short cuts, the weapon is already located in the direction in which the cut must be delivered, so that the cut must be given the required force through only a short and powerful movement from the wrist and elbow joints, in the direction of thumb to little finger.

With all cuts, arm and blade must be located in the directional plane of the cut.

From the onset, the bringing it around to the cut is taught in one movement with the cut, though the instructor initially lets the pupil remain in the lunge to be able to correct it if the direction of the cut is insufficient.

In the recovery he lets beginners return the blade into the posture with the opposite movement with all cuts. However, later the recovery must swiftly follow the lunge.

Description of the long cuts.

1. *The cuts above.*

Lower the point of the blade, and with it describe an arc that climbs up from below along the left or inner side of the body, around to the direction in which the cut must arrive; now turn knuckle-bow and edge forward, lunge, and hit the opponent on the head, foremost shoulder or arm straight down from above. In the cut, the fist is turned with the thumb above. After the cut quickly reassume the posture.

2. The cut below.

Raise the point of the sabre, and with it describe an arc that descends down from above along the left or inner side of the body, around to the direction in which the cut must arrive; now turn knuckle-bow and edge forward, lunge, and deliver a cut straight up from below to the opponent, to under his foremost arm. In the cut, the fist is turned with the thumb down. After the cut recover quickly.

3. The cut right.

Describe an arc over the head from right to left around to the direction of the cut; turn knuckle-bow and edge forward, lunge, and hit the opponent on his right or outer side in horizontal direction from left to right. Here, as well as with the following cut, the height at which the cut is delivered depends on circumstances. The cut can as well be aimed at the right cheek as at the right thigh. In the cut, the fist is turned with the thumb to the left. After the cut recover quickly.

4. The cut left.

Describe an arc over the head from left to right around to the direction of the cut; turn knuckle-bow and edge forward, lunge and deliver a cut to the left or inner side of the opponent in horizontal direction from right to left. The cut can as well be aimed at the left cheek as at the belly. In the cut, the fist is turned with the thumb to the right. After the cut recover quickly.

5. The thrust.

Lunge with the point of the sabre aimed at the point on the body of the opponent (dummy) that is to be hit. The thrust can be delivered to the face, the chest or the belly. After the thrust recover quickly.

Execution of the short cuts from the posture.

To perform the short cuts from the posture, first the blade is brought with the edge in the direction of the cut by turning the arm and by assuming the position of the fist for the normal cut. With this, arm and blade are located in a straight line.

Next, you let the point of the blade describe approximately a half circle backward by bending the wrist and elbow joints, so that through a short and powerful movement from the wrist and elbow joints, in the direction of thumb and little finger, the cut can be given the required force.

Initially in four movements:

one: orienting fist and blade;

two: bending the wrist and elbow joints;

three: the actual cut;

four: reassuming the posture.

N.B. The short cut “above” can be delivered both from the left or inner side and from the right or outer side.

Commands and order for practicing the cuts.

1. Make continuous circles without lunge: above, below, right, left = March! Halt!
2. Bring around: above-below, (right-left) without lunging.
3. Bring around: above, below, right, left, without lunging.
4. Cut above (below, right, left) with or without movements.³⁾
5. Short cut above (below, right, left) with or without movements.

3 **With movements** means: lunge in two movements;
without movements: immediately after the lunge reassume the posture.

Second lesson.

The long and short parries.

General provisions.

When you hold off a cut or cover yourself against one, then the position of the blade that effectuates that is called the parry.

With every parry the enemy weapon must meet the edge and the knuckle-bow of our blade, and thus the flat of that blade must always be turned more or less toward the opponent. From this follows naturally that in parrying the fist must also always be bent more or less backward or forward.

Every parry must meet two requirements, namely that the opponent does not strike around it or through it.

The obtuse angle that the arm and blade make when in posture, is sufficient for all parries to prevent that the opponent delivers a cut around the weapon.

To prevent the opponent from striking through the parry, you must try to catch the approaching cut with the stronger part of the blade, at half a straight angle, so that it glides along the parrying weapon, and hits against the guard.

The closer to the fist that you receive the cut, and the more you go towards the enemy weapon at the moment that the cut arrives with that, the least exertion is required to stop it. Going towards the enemy weapon in parrying must only consist of a short and powerful movement of the sabre in the direction of the enemy cut, and must not degenerate into a beating with the blade. Also, it must not be done too widely, and right at that moment that the opponent truly performs the cut, as otherwise you expose yourself.

The parries are divided into *long* and *short parries*. They are only named thus to distinguish them from each other. Of both parries against the same cut one is always a long parry and the other a short parry.

Description of the parries.

1. *The parry above.*

Long: edge of the blade as in the posture, the fist a little higher and a little more to the right; the blade in the direction high left.

Short: by turning the fist to the right and bending it forward, turn it with the nails toward the body, and bring it to the left of the plane in which the cut arrives; blade in the direction high right (fig. 6).

2. *The parry below.*

Long: by bending the fist forward, turn it with the nails toward the body and direct the point of the blade downward in front, such that the blade is in the direction low left. (See fig. 7).

Short: turn the bent-backward fist to the right and bring the point of the blade downward in front on the right in the direction low right; fist to the left of the plane in which the cut arrives (fig. 8).

3. *The parry right.*

Long: bring the blade in the direction low right with the point so far downward in front on the right that to the eye it extends approximately a hand width outside the edge of the body, knuckle-bow and edge turned to the right; fist bent forward (fig. 9).

If the opponent strikes high, for example horizontally to the head, then raise the fist, without changing the angle of arm and blade.

Short: bring the blade in the direction high right, with the point turned upward in front on the right; knuckle-bow and edge to the right; fist bent backward (fig. 10).

4. *The parry left.*

Long: bring the blade in the direction low left with the point so far downward in front on the left that to the eye it extends

approximately a hand width outside the edge of the body, knuckle-bow and edge turned to the left as much as possible, fist bent backward (fig. 11).

The height of the fist is to be adjusted according to the height at which the opponent strikes.

Short: bring the blade in the direction high left, with the point turned upward in front on the left; knuckle-bow and edge to the left: fist bent forward. From the posture you come into this parry by letting the blade make over half a rotation around its long axis so that the edge comes to the left (fig. 12).

Order for practicing the parries.

Before commencing with the practice of the parries, the instructor will first give the pupils a clear explanation of the usual parries, so that the pupils more easily learn to find the parries themselves.

With the first instruction of the parries it is to be recommended to let the opened class make a turn to the right or to the left, so that the instructor can more easily assess the various parries.

1. Instruct the long parries one by one, with or without recovery into the posture after each parry, in the order: above, below, left, right.

2. Instruct the short parries as before.

3. Instruct the long and short parries for each cut successively in the order as sub. 1. After each short parry the posture is reassumed.

THIRD DIVISION.

The compound cuts and the parries against them.

General provisions.

A compound cut is one that consists of more than one movement, since it is preceded by feinted cuts, by making an *appel* with a feint, or by a breaking of the measure.

First lesson.

The feinted cuts and the parries against them.

General provisions.

With the sabre the feints are likewise a means for provoke the opponent to untimely parries. However, it must be observed if the bringing around is done with a great arc, or if the directions of it diverge considerably, feinted cuts are often dangerous against an opponent who is well-practiced and knows how quickly to profit from an uncovered opening. Therefore, the feinted cut is performed as has been described for the short cuts, while the cut may not diverge more than 90° from the feinted cut.

Double feinted cuts therefore have even less chance of succeeding. Applying these fruitfully against a practiced fencer requires too much effort and dexterity. Furthermore, a frequent use of feinted cuts, especially double feinted cuts, causes cuts repeatedly not to arrive cleanly. Therefore, double feinted cuts are not taught.

With a good feinted cut the blade must not be brought back further than to just in the direction of the cut, since this is sufficient to make the opponent believe that the cut will arrive, and it is necessary to proceed to the parry. But the feinted cut

must be performed clearly marked, and the cut itself with the greatest possible speed.

In the feinted cut the arm must move as little as possible from its place, and you must especially keep in mind not to expose yourself in it.

The lunge must take place with the actual cut.

Practice of the feinted cuts.

1. above – left; left – above;
2. above – right; right – above;
3. (below – left); (left – below);
4. below – right; right – below;
5. right flank – right cheek; right cheek – right flank;
7. (belly – left cheek; left cheek – belly).

Beforehand, the instructor determines whether the first will be parried long and the second short, or the first short and the second long, or both long or short.

Remarks.

Among these feinted cuts, those that are placed between brackets are excellent for exercise, yet very unsuited for application.

The instructor must make the pupil aware of the most usual, the less important and the dangerous feinted cuts.

FOURTH DIVISION.

The ripostes and parries against them.

General provisions.

A *riposte* is a cut that is delivered after a cut by the opponent, so from a parry, as fast as possible, and, if along the shortest path, there where the opponent is still uncovered.

The ripostes are divided into *long* and *short*; and are performed with or without lunge depending on whether the opponent recovers or remains standing in the lunge.

The first cut or attack, which precedes the riposte, must be done firmly and powerfully and must always be combined with a lunge.

Those exercises that have the purpose of acquiring firmness of hand and sharpness of sight, as are required to deliver a quick and secure riposte directly from the various parries, and to immediately be ready with the parry against the riposte of the opponent directly from the various cuts are of great importance and must therefore take place with the utmost care.

Although with the sabre the choice of direction in which you will riposte after having parried a cut from the opponent is great, yet one riposte is more obvious than another when the bringing around can be done more by a natural rotation of the fist and blade.

First lesson.

a. A long riposte.

The most common long ripostes are those from the long parries above and left, wherefore they must thus be practiced more than the others.

FIFTH DIVISION.

“Application of the cuts, thrusts and parries”.

“With the application the cuts and thrusts must also repeatedly be done without lunge..

Order of the application.

1st. Predetermined cuts or thrusts from the posture on one dummy.

2nd. Predetermined cuts or thrusts preceded by parries, feinted cuts, passes and jumps, on one dummy.

3rd. Several predetermined cuts or thrusts in succession on one dummy, recording the time, or by several men at the same time.

4th. Random or predetermined cuts and thrusts on two or more dummies by a scattered group.

III. THE EXERCISES WITH THE MODEL CUTLASS.

III. DE OEFENINGEN MET DE MODEL SCHEEPSSABEL.

Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 3a.

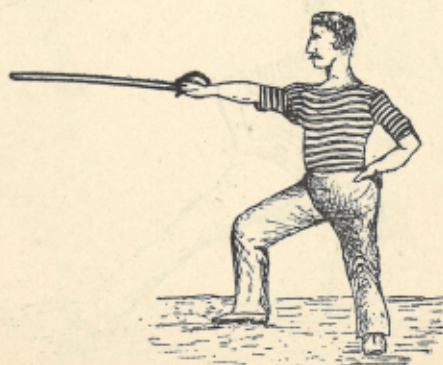


Fig. 4.

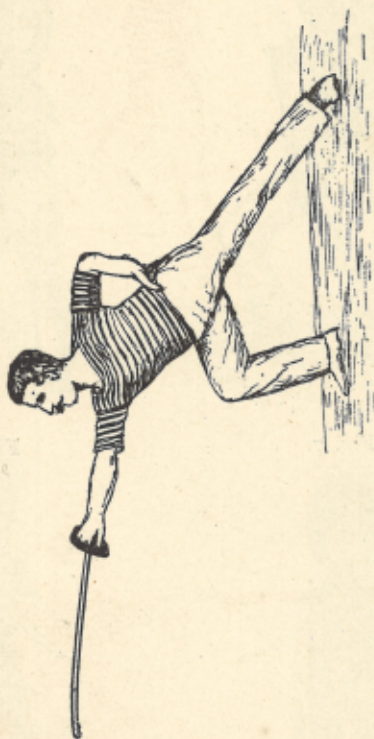


Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



In de figuur 5 tot 12 moeten de dekkingsmiddelen weg gedacht worden.

In figures 5 to 12 the protecting equipment must be ignored.

Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



APPENDIX
REFERRED TO PARTS OF THE BAYONET FENCING

1. *Opening and closing of the class.*

The opening.

Com^{d's}.

1. *At ... passes open left = March.*
2. *Stand.*

Execution:

1. The right wingman of the front rank stands still, the remaining men of this rank march to the left and open the ordered interval on their right. The men of the hind rank move along the shortest path to the called number of paces (of 75 cm) behind and opposite the middle of the interval of the front rank, each man to the left of his front man. Arrived at their place, the men turn the head to the right and position themselves on one line per rank.

2. Assume the position.

The closing.

Com^{d's}.

Close right = March.

Execution:

Along the shortest path, reform the original ranks upon the right wingman of the front rank.

Centre line and centre plane.

The line that connects the heels of the back feet is called the centre line. The vertical plane imagined on that is called the centre plane.

Uncovered openings.

An uncovered opening is a part of the body that is not covered by the rifle against a thrust from the opponent.

In the normal posture you are uncovered on all sides, yet you can make the uncovered openings on one side disappear through a very small displacement of the rifle, by closing the line.

Closing the line.

Closing the line is assuming such a posture with the rifle that a hit on that side where the line is closed is made impossible.

To draw up the pupils at the normal distance opposite one another, after having opened his class, the instructor will command:

1. *Front rank to the right* = Turn.
2. *Front (hind) rank take distance* = March.

Execution.

1. The front rank turns to the right.
2. By sideways passes, the men of the called rank place themselves opposite those of the other rank, then if needed make a pass backwards, after which both ranks assume the posture and the men of the called rank approach those of the other, or distance themselves from them, so far that the fencers stand in the normal posture opposite one another.

Once the distance has been taken, then, without command, both ranks take front again.
