



An Overview of Military Drill Design

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DRILL DESIGN

In the beginning of 6 to 5 style, there was little connection between music and drill. It was somewhat like watching a band in a parade.

Today, we recognize the drill must fit the music. The music dictates the drill and should include formations that compliment moments in the music. You will have impact moments, as well as quieter moments. As we have a mission to entertain, you should consider the audience in your drill design.

Military marching is a style – with an option to branch out musically as long as the formations and marching remain in the military scheme.

At Texas A&M, we include a traditional march in every halftime, but have used the following with great success:

<i>Ballad of the Green Berets</i>	<i>March from "1941"</i>
<i>Battle Hymn of the Republic</i>	<i>March from "Midway"</i>
<i>Cathedral Chorus (Slavonic Folk Suite)</i>	<i>Marche Slave</i>
<i>God Bless America</i>	<i>Parade of the Charioteers (Ben Hur)</i>
<i>Great Gate of Kiev (Pictures at an Exhibition)</i>	<i>Service Medley</i>
<i>Hill Country Theme</i>	<i>The Sinfonians</i>
<i>March America (My Country Tis of Thee)</i>	<i>Theme from Patton</i>
	<i>When Johnny Comes Marching Home</i>
	<i>Yellow Rose of Texas</i>

Most of the above were custom arrangements that I created specifically for the Aggie Band to compliment our instrumentation and marching style.

*Dee Hood – Pine Tree High School in the 1970's & 1980's
Moorside March, Firebird, Beethoven #9

*Larry Ward – Kingwood & Atascocita High Schools
Victory at Sea, Light Cavalry Overture, Armed Forces Salute

Avoid excessive "chopping" of the music when designing your drill (play a strain – 8 counts of drums – another strain – 16 counts of drums – followed by music in a totally different key – for the sake of musicality, you must use complimentary key signatures). The drill should basically fit the music.

SUGGESTED MARCH LITERATURE FOR THE FIELD

COFFMAN, JAMES

Cyrus the Great – Karl King
Garland Entrée – Karl King
Glorious America – Karl King
Golden Bear – J. J. Richards
Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
Lt. Commander – Karl King
Men in Gray – N.K. Brahmstedt
Neddermeyer Triumphal – Karl King
Northwind – Paris Chambers
Purple Pageant – Karl King
Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
Radio Waves – Fred Jewell
Robinson's Grand Entrée – Karl King
Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
Santiago – Karl King
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford

DURHAM, HARVEY

Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
Drum Major – J.S. Taylor
E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
Gladiator's Farewell – Hermann Blankenburg
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
St. Julien – A.W. Hughes

GRANT, NEIL

Alford, Kenneth	Army of the Nile
	Standard of St. George
	The Vanished Army
Bagley, E.E.	National Emblem
Barnhouse, C.L.	Battle of Shiloh
Blankenburg, H.L.	The Gladiator's Farewell
Boyer, T.B.	Joyce's 71 st New York Regiment
Chambers, W. Paris	Boys of the Old Brigade
	Northwind
	Trombone Section
Cupero, E.V.	Honey Boys on Parade
Duble, C.E.	Battle of the Winds
	Bravura
English, W.P.	Royal Decree
Fillmore, Henry	Rolling Thunder
Grafulla, Claudio	Washington Grays
Heed, J.C.	In Storm & Sunshine
Huffines, J.F.	Them Basses
Jewell, Fred	Battle Royal
	Quality Plus
King, Karl	Attorney General
	Barnum & Bailey's Favorite

	Cyrus the Great
	Emblem of Freedom
	Melody Shop
	Purple Pageant
	Robinson's Grand Entrée
Ord Hume, J.	BB & CF
Seitz, Roland	Grandioso
Sousa, John Philip	George Washington Bicentennial
	Stars & Stripes Forever
	Rifle Regiment
Wagner	Under the Double Eagle
Ventre	Our United States

HAGOOD, JIM

All Marches by Karl King
 American Red Cross – Frank Panella
 Anchors Aweigh - Zimmerman
 Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
 Battle of Shiloh – Charles Barnhouse
 Battle of the Winds – Charles Duble
 Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
 BB & CF – J. Ord Hume
 Billboard – John Klohr
 Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
 Bravura – Charles Duble
 British Eighth – Zo Elliott
 E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
 Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
 Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
 Hail to the Fleet – Richard Maltby
 Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
 Independentia – R. B. Hall
 Invercargill – Alex Lithgow
 Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
 Mad Major – Kenneth Alford
 Marine's Hymn – Phillips
 National Emblem – E.E. Bagley
 Northwind – Paris Chambers
 Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
 Our United States – Ventre
 Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
 Purple Carnival – Harry Alford
 Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
 Rifle Regiment – John P. Sousa
 Royal Bridesmaid – John Casto
 Royal Decree – William English
 Semper Paratus – Van Boskerck
 Soaring Eagle – John Klohr
 Standard of St. George – Kenneth Alford
 Tent City – William English
 Tenth Regiment – R.B. Hall
 Tripoli Temple – Charles Barnhouse
 U.S. Air Force – Crawford/Bennett
 U.S. Field Artillery – Sousa

Under the Double Eagle – J.F. Wagner
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford
Wellington – Wilhelm Zehle

JOHNSON, BARRY

American Red Cross – Frank Panella
Barnum & Bailey's Favorite – Karl King
Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Chicago World's Fair – Carl Mader
Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
Northwind – Paris Chambers
Robinson's Grand Entrée – Karl King
Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
Viking – Karl King
Woody Van's – Karl King

KUNKEL, PETE

Marches in Eb, Ab, and Db are favorites. Db is best – you get a darker sound.
Stays away from 6/8 marches – don't really drive, they swing

Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Independientia – R.B. Hall
Trombone Section – Paris Chambers
Trooper's Tribunal – Henry Fillmore
Under the Double Eagle – J.F. Wagner

LAWLER, DON

Karl King marches are great for young students.
Battle of the Winds – Charles Duble
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Chicago Tribune – Paris Chambers
Northwind – Paris Chambers

RHEA, TIMOTHY

MORE DIFFICULT

Action Front – H.L. Blankenburg
Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
Attorney General – Karl King
Barnum & Bailey's Favorite – Karl King
Battle of Shiloh – Charles Barnhouse
Battle of the Winds – Charles Duble
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Bolivar – Karl King
Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Bravura – Charles Duble
Burr's Triumphal – Russell Alexander
Canto Aero Club – Karl King
Caravan Club – Karl King
Carrollton – Karl King
Circus Bee – Henry Fillmore
Colonel Bogey – Kenneth Alford
Colossus of Columbia – Russell Alexander

Cyrus the Great – Karl King
 Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
 Emblem of Freedom – Karl King
 Entry of the Gladiators – Julius Fucik
 Flag of Victory – Frank von Blon
 Flying Eagles – H.L. Blankenburg
 French National Defile – Rauski/Seredy
 Front Section – E.E. Bagley
 Garland Entrée – Karl King
 Gentry's Triumphal – Fred Jewell
 Gladiator's Farewell – H.L. Blankenburg
 Golden Bear – J.J. Richards
 Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
 Hostrouser's – Paris Chambers
 Idaho – Charles Barnhouse
 Invictus – Karl King
 Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
 Melody Shop – Karl King
 Mystic Call – Karl King
 National Emblem – E.E. Bagley
 Neddermeyer Triumphal – Karl King
 Northwind – Paris Chambers
 Our Gallant Infantry – Austyn Edwards
 Our United States – Frank Ventre
 Ponderoso – Karl King
 Porter's Catalina Band – Dwight McCaughey
 Pride of the Illini – Karl King
 Purple Pageant – Karl King
 Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
 Radio Waves – Fred Jewell
 Robinson's Grand Entrée – Karl King
 Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
 Royal Decree – William English
 Samson – Karl King
 Screamer – Fred Jewell
 Standard of St. George – Kenneth Alford
 Tent City – William English
 Tripoli Temple – Charles Barnhouse
 Trombone Section – Paris Chambers
 Trooper's Tribunal – Henry Fillmore
 Under the Double Eagle – Joseph Wagner
 Viking- Karl King
 Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford
 Woody Van's – Karl King
LESS DIFFICULT
 America First – Frank Losey
 American Legion – Charles Parker
 American Red Cross – Louis Panella
 Americans We – Henry Fillmore
 Big Four – Karl King
 Billboard – John Klohr
 Black Jack – Fred Huffer
 Bombasto – O.R. Farrar
 British Eighth – Zo Elliott
 Brooke's Chicago Marine Band – Roland Seitz

Chicago World's Fair – Carl Mader
Columbian – Karl King
Crosley – Henry Fillmore
Days of Glory – John Cacavas
Drum Major – J.S. Taylor
E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
Gloria – Frank Losey
Glorious America – Karl King
Grandioso – Roland Seitz
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Henderson Field – Karl King
Home Town Boy – Karl King
Imperial – Karl King
Independentia – R.B. Hall
Invercargill – Alex Lithgow
Kiefer's Special – William Kiefer
Klaxon – Henry Fillmore
Little Champ – Ted Mesang
Lt. Commander – Karl King
Men in Gray – N.K. Brahmstedt
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
New Colonial – R.B. Hall
Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
On the Square – Frank Panella
Our Glorious Emblem – Joseph DeLuca
Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
Peacemaker – Karl King
Queen City – W.H. Boorn
Royal Bridesmaid – John Casto
Salute to Washington – William Kiefer
Sells-Floto Triumphal – Karl King
Shriner's Parade – Joseph DeLuca
St. Julien – A.W. Hughes
Strategic Air Command – Clifton Williams
Them Basses – G.H. Huffine
Trombone King – Karl King
United Nations – Karl King
University of North Dakota – Karl King
Zacatecas – Genaro Codina

ROSE, VAL

Aces of the Air – Karl King
American Legion – Charles Parker
Attorney General – Karl King
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Carrollton – Karl King
Colossus of Columbia – Russell Alexander
Crimson Flush – Russell Alexander
Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
Emblem of Freedom – Karl King
From Tropic to Tropic – Russell Alexander
Gloria – Frank Losey
Golden Bear – J.J. Richards
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
In Storm & Sunshine – Charles Heed

Invictus – Karl King
Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
Lt. Commander – Karl King
Melody Shop – Karl King
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
Rifle Regiment – John P. Sousa
Screamer – Fred Jewell
The Southerner – Russell Alexander
True Blue – Karl King
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford

DRILL DESIGN BASICS

- Never design a drill that compromises the playing of your band – incorporate some interesting things, but consistency of band sound is always the most important factor.
- Percussion should remain near the middle of formations – the closer to the low voices, the better.
- Try to keep the brass and percussion centered, spreading woodwinds out on the ends.
- Try to keep instrumental sections together as much as possible – mixing instrumentation for the sake of a formation is not smart. Consider charting your drill in colored pencils to assist in keeping track of instrumentation. Always keep in mind the position of your stronger players.
- Always keep in mind the direction instruments are facing from an acoustical standpoint. Multi directional movements tend to have a detrimental impact on ensemble sound.
- The smaller the band, the more important to keep things close together – both for security and ensemble sound. Block band drills tend to provide greater security for smaller bands, while larger bands lend themselves to more company front marching.
- When marches require a great deal of technique, try to keep the band close together.
- Use the hash marks for reference at all times. Consider their importance when designing your drill. Take advantage of any reference point on the field that can be identified.

DRILL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- When making initial choices regarding both music and drill, keep in mind the total time of your show. With the Aggie Band, we generally begin with a base of 500 counts for a seven-minute drill (not including T at the end or beginning/end zone traditions), expanding if we have more time. I always make a flow chart of both music and drill before I ever begin charting.
- Consider block band or company front and how instrumentation is set in each. Perhaps a combination – ie. brass/percussion more stationary with woodwind movement in front.
- Correct multiple – 64, 96, 128 – those that can be divided by eight work best due to length of musical phrases.
- Movement vs. stationary - not too much standing still, but useful if used sparingly.
- Two types of movement in drill – instantaneous and sequential. Instantaneous provides a quick change in patterns and tends to be more exciting. Flanks tend to be more effective than columns. You have to be very careful with columns due to the individual sounds they tend to project. To the rears tend to be more effective than countermarches. You might consider flanks and to the rears if you do not want to wait for something to develop. Instantaneous movement tends to be better at keeping all instruments facing the same direction.
- Follow the leader (countermarch, delayed countermarch, obliques, column movements, etc.)
Individual assignments (geometric figures, boxes, blockbusters, etc.)
 Sequence (step 2's, step 4's, flip flops)
Full band movements
Pinwheels (gate turns)
- More difficult followed by simple – flip flop to a geometric pattern (diamonds), then follow with a follow the leader countermarch of the formation – appears difficult to audience
- 6 to 5 can make it difficult to work with musical phrases, but it can be done through well-crafted drill design.
- Begin and end facing the stands – let the audience hear the sound. Consider facing the stands at impact moments.

- Sudden change in music = sudden change in drill.
- For opening fanfares – 2-step side to side/4-step front to back interval is good for sound production.
- Experiment with concert type formations.
- A good technique for designing a drill is determining what you want at the end and working your way backwards.
- Marching to the backfield (especially empty stands at marching contest) produces a great sound and allows players to open up the sound.
- Consider featuring a group, such as the woodwinds, during your drill. If you do, make sure you design a drill that has them in a featured position.
- Try never to cross the 50-yard line twice in the same formation – always look for a way to change the picture.
- Two approaches to drill -- go somewhere, then a different place OR go somewhere and come back to the same place (not as effective)
- Symmetry tends to be very pleasing to the eye – audience can easily relate.
- Keeping in mind the fundamental changes of direction. Your major choices in drill design are variation of interval by rank, file, or individual.
- With the Aggie Band, we have found that the use of short silence within a drill is a very effective drill design option.

Always three places that are “shock and awe” when designing a drill - something that grabs attention.

Pete Kunkel

It is important to consider the role of auxiliaries (percussion, twirlers, flags) in your drill design. This is very much an individual decision.

SOLUTIONS

Can't get the drill to line up with the music where you need it to

- 2 STEP COUNTERMARCH!
- Follow the leader moves do not have to be on lines or start on phrases.
- Simultaneous moves do not have to happen on a line. 2/3s of the band won't be on one anyway.
- Add a strain and go a little further before a turn.
- Take out a strain and go a little shorter before a turn.
- Add drum clicks, roll-off, or cadence between marches or even strains.

Avoiding precision problems in spread or divided formations

- Spread formations = block type marches; block type drill = more technical marches
- Get creative with the "Illinois Entry" to keep drums together in company fronts.
- If drums must be sent in opposite directions, only one side should play.
- Keep the bass drum as centered in the spread formations as possible.
- If using more than one bass drum, do not send them to opposite sides or ends of the field
- If separation can't be avoided, only one bass drum should play while they are divided.
- Be very careful about how far you spread apart small bands. Closer is better.

Maximizing effectiveness while minimizing chance of error

- Simultaneous moves should always be done on obvious phrases. Don't worry where the front line is hitting a yard line.
- Company front halts and countermarches should be done on lines whenever possible, especially if it is between the 30s. Keep in mind that if the move is simultaneous for the entire band, it should also fit the music. Make adjustment as listed above prior to that point.
- With young bands or when rehearsal time is short, make formations such as diamond formations using 2 STEP COUNTER MARCH from the front rather than to-the-rears from the back. With advanced bands and with adequate rehearsal time, to-the-rears from the back can be very effective.
- Stepping off from a halt into the formation is also an option but is often not as effective as keeping the motion going.

Random tools for getting yourself out of a corner

- The 2 STEP COUNTER MARCH is also great for "hook-ons", continuous countermarches, creating or making up a two-step interval, and as a substitute for to-the-rears.
- Do countermarches in the opposite direction from your norm. This can be helpful in getting things to fit back together properly after a to-the-rear segment or in repositioning the band.

- Do an Illinois entry “from the back” that begins with a to-the-rear for most. This can be helpful if after a series of moves, your company fronts are positioned where your block band front rank is in the back of the company fronts.
- Watch your rehearsals from the end zone if you are having diagonal problems. diagonal problems are almost always caused by files not being in line or inconsistent intervals between files.

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