

---

## **German Rifle Drill**

By Jonathan Bocek

*Edited by Obergefreiter Erik Runge*

*Special thanks to the authors and owners of the website [www.dererstezug.com](http://www.dererstezug.com) for providing excellent articles on the internet, to include the following. The information they provide and write about concerning the German soldier, German tactics and the German way of life during WW2 is unmatched.*

Below you will find the basic German rifle commands and the proper ways to execute them. Illustrations from an original German manual. Hopefully you will find this to be an easy explanation of German rifle drill. I would like to thank the [1.SS Panzer Division](#) for providing the detailed instructions for the movements involved.

### **GEWEHR, AB!** *(Rifle, Down)*

*ge-VAIR, ab!*

When ordered to "Angetren" (Fall in), always stand at "Order Arms" and at "Attention" with heels together and toes out at a slightly less than 90-degree angle. The weapon is held on the right side with butt plate on the ground next to the right foot. The lower end of the butt plate should be aligned with the right toe of your boot. Right hand fingers should be extended and joined, grasping the rifle at the top barrel band with knuckles facing the front, elbow slightly out from the side. Left arm in the "Attention" position with palm of hand on upper thigh and elbow slightly out from the side.

Note: men with weapons other than the rifle should fall in as follows:

1. **Maschinenpistole / Sturmgewehr** - Gewehr, Umhangen (sling arms, right shoulder).
2. **Machinengewehr** - Weapons grounded with bipod on right side of gunner.
3. **Granatwerfer** - Mortar is placed directly in front of the last man in the mortar team.
4. **Panzerfaust** or **Schreck** - Grounded on the right side of gunner with the front end forward.
5. **Ammunition Boxes** - Grounded to the bearer's right side with the latched end forward and the end of the box even with the muzzle end of the machine gun.

**\*DAS GEWEHR, ÜBER!** (*The Rifle, Up*)

*das ge-VAIR, oober!*

The German army shouldered the rifle to the left shoulder instead of to the right unlike many other armies of the world. From the "Ab" (order) position, the weapon is brought directly in front of the body with the right hand just below the chin and the left hand catching the rifle just below the right. The weapon is approximately one foot from the chest and in line with the tunic buttons. The bolt of the rifle is facing to the soldier's right and the left side of the weapon is toward the body. To move the weapon to the left shoulder, the right hand drops to the bolt, rotates the rifle 90 degrees counterclockwise while simultaneously moving the left hand to the butt of the stock and raising the weapon onto the left shoulder. The trigger guard should be at just about the armpit. When the weapon is correctly placed on the left shoulder, the heel of the butt is pulled in against the side of the body just below the belt of the tunic, and the left elbow is slightly out from the body. The weapon should appear nearly vertical to the body. At the moment the weapon is in place, the right hand is dropped sharply to the right side, returning to the "Attention" position.

**Note:** when this command is given, the following weapon in addition to the rifle is affected:

**1. Maschinengewehr** - Left shoulder arms with pistol grip resting on chest and left hand supporting butt stock as with the rifle.



**2.** All other weapons and boxes remain where they are positioned.

**\*ACHTUNG! PRÄSENTIERT DAS - GEWEHR!**

*akh'-tung! Pray-sen-TEERT, das ge-VAIR!\**

*(Attention! Present the, Rifle)*

---

This command was only given when the soldier was at "Left Shoulder Arms." At the command bring the right hand up to the comb of the stock with fingers extended and joined, and simultaneously rotate the butt of the weapon with the left hand 90 degrees in a clockwise motion. This will place the right side of the weapon facing away from the body and the left against the body. Rotate the weapon another 90 degrees clockwise with the right hand which was on the comb of the stock and at the same time release the butt of the stock with the left hand. Move the left hand up along the left side of the stock and grasp the weapon next to the lower sight. The left hand should have fingers extended and joined with knuckles facing away from the body and the thumb pointing up along the left side of the weapon. Simply straighten the extended and joined four fingers of the right hand just below the trigger guard, leaving the thumb up under the bolt next to the body. Weapon location should be directly over the left breast pocket parallel to the body with trigger guard facing away from the body. The top barrel band should be level with and centered on the left eye.

**DAS GEWEHR, ÜBER! from "Present Arms" (The Rifle, Up)**

*das ge-VAIR, oober!*

---

After "Present Arms," the soldier is ordered to the "Left Shoulder Arms" position. It is done in near reverse order. Release the left hand and move it back down to the butt of the stock while simultaneously rotating the weapon 180 degrees, counterclockwise, with the right hand still on the comb of the stock. With the left hand on the butt of the stock and the right hand as a guide, place the weapon back on the left shoulder. When the rifle is in place, bring the right hand sharply back to the side in the position of "Attention."

**\*GEWEHR, AB! from "Left Shoulder Arms" (Rifle, Down)**

*ge-VAIR, ab!\**

This command is given while at "Das Gewehr, Über" (Left Shoulder Arms). It enables the soldier to bring the rifle from the left shoulder and place the butt of the rifle on the ground. At the command, simultaneously drop the left arm, rotate the rifle to the right and grasp and top barrel band with the right hand. Then, release the rifle stock with the left hand and simultaneously swing the rifle to the right, with the right forearm parallel to the ground. The last movement is to place the butt of the rifle onto the ground, even with the toe of the right foot.



**Tempo 1.**



**Tempo 2—3.  
„Gewehr — ab!“**



**Tempo 3.  
(Grundstellung)**

**GEWEHR, UMHÄNGEN! (Rifle, Hang)**

*ge-VAIR, oom-haehng-en!*

**Note:** when this command is given, the following weapons in addition to the rifle are affected:

1. **Maschinengewehr** - Slung over right shoulder, barrel up, and bipod folded.



2. **Granatwerfer** - Carried on the right side of the soldier by the base plate.

This command is only given when weapons are at "Ab" (order arms). At the command, the sling is loosened and the weapon is slung over the right shoulder. The right hand should hold the sling up near the right breast pocket with the thumb running up the inside of the sling and the elbow should be pulled into the side.