

# Musket Drill

## THE MUSKET EXERCISE

The 78th Fraser Highlanders parade with the Brown Bess musket, the weapon which holds the record for being used the longest in British history, more than 150 years.

The drill sequence to load the musket was taken from a 1757 manual entitled "The New Highland Military Discipline" by George Grant, an original copy of which is in the Museum's library. It is an elegant drill which has the soldier load and fire his musket in 27 movements -opening the cartridge, filling and closing the pan, loading the barrel with the powder and ball (not used now!) and ramming the charge home with the ram rod. Once the musket is returned to the firing position, it is cocked, aimed and fired.

In the Fraser's performance, the first volley is executed to the commands of the Officer. The second volley is prepared to the beat of the drum only, and the officer gives the final commands only. The third and fourth rounds are executed by each soldier individually as fast as possible, as if in a hectic non-traditional battle situation. The loud bangs, billowing smoke, and pipes & drums give a small glimpse of what battle scenes looked like 200 years ago.

Once all firing has ceased, bayonets are placed on the muskets, and the squad performs the bayonet charge movements, in place. The fierceness of this movement would put a fright into any enemy.