

# OVER THE TOP

English Sequence Dance, as a Mixer

Description by Richard Powers



The arranger of this dance is not known, but as the title suggests, it is acknowledged to have been created during World War I. It is still danced today.

When I taught the original non-mixer version in Samara, Russia, the dancers wished to turn this into a mixer. As a group, we agreed that the best place to progress partners was during the lady's underarm turn, on the 11th and 12 bars.

Formation: Veleta Position. Couples facing LOD, inside hands joined shoulder height. Outside hands are free, with the gent's L hand on his hip.

- 1-4 Starting outside foot, take 4 walking steps forward. Pas de Basque to M's L (W's R); pas de Basque to M's R (W's L).
- 5-8 Walk fwd L, R, turning to face partner, join both hands (M's back to center); step L to side, close R to L, pas de Basque to M's L (W's R), pas de Basque to M's R (W's L).
- 9-10 Balance forward, M's L (W's R) bringing R hips almost adjacent; balance backward M's R (W's L). Release rearward hands (M's R, W's L).

## Original version:

- 11-12 With 2 two-steps the W makes one complete turn to the R under the forward joined hands (M's L, W's R) traveling LOD, while the M steps side L, closes R to L, twice. (Crathorn's version, below just does one slow side-close.) Then do a turning two-step with your partner, progressing along LOD.

## Mixer version:

- 11-12 With 2 two-steps the W makes one complete turn to the R under the forward joined hands (M's L, W's R) traveling LOD solo, while the M stands in place (or moves as needed to meet the next W).
- 13-16 Take waltz position with next partner, dance 4 Two-Steps (two rotations) progressing along LOD.

Repeat the dance from the beginning.

**But Over the Top had already been converted into a mixer, over a half century ago.**

Nick Enge recently discovered that in 1963, almost a half-century after the original Over the Top, Charles Crathorn suggested doing the exact same thing, in his book *Old Time Dancing*. He suggested making Over the Top a 'Progressive' Dance (a mixer) by having the gent turn the lady his left arm, to the next gent ahead, during the 11th and 12 bars, just as we did in Russia.

A scan of this is on the next page. As is indicated in Crathorn's description, other sequence dances in his book had also been modified into a mixer.

## OVER THE TOP

*Music: 'Chief of Staff', by Milton Rettenburg.*

(Also very useful for many 6/8 tunes.)

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*Tempo: 50*

Another lively dance of the First World War period, hence the title. It was said that this dance was born in the trenches in France, although I am unable to ascertain its correct origin.

**Veleta Hold:** Both facing along L.O.D.

*Gentleman's steps – lady's opposite.*

	<i>Count</i>	<i>Bars</i>
Three steps forward and close (L.F., R.F., L.F., close R.)	1, 2, 1, 2	2
Boston left and right	1 & 2, 1 & 2	2
Three steps forward and close again, turning to face partner on last step and joining both hands (L.F., R.F., L.F., R.F.)	1, 2 1, 2	2 2
Boston left and right	1 & 2, 1 & 2	2
Balance towards each other, right shoulder to right shoulder, and back	1, 2 1, 2	2 2
Release R.H., and gentleman turns lady under upraised left arm, whilst he steps to side along L.O.D. L.F., and closes R.F. to L.F.	1, 2 1, 2	2 2
Adopt Waltz Hold, and Waltz, regaining commencing position on last step	1 & 2, 2 & 2, 3 & 2, 4 & 2	4 4
	Total	16

This, too, makes an excellent 'Progressive' Dance by gentleman turning lady under left arm and passing her on to next gentleman, i.e. on 11th and 12th bars.