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MEMORANDUM

ON

ARMY TRAINING

DURING THE

**INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PERIOD,
1912-13.**

**MEMORANDUM ON ARMY TRAINING DURING THE
INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PERIOD, 1912—1913.**

GENERAL REMARKS.

1. The Army Council are glad to be able to record their opinion that there has been a considerable improvement in the system and conduct of training during the period under review.

2. **Assistance of General Staff Officers.**—The instruction of officers would be improved if the responsibilities laid on the General Staff in paragraph 154, King's Regulations, were more fully realized.

General officers commanding-in-chief should ensure that as full a use is made of general staff officers and brigade-majors in this connection as their other duties will permit. The assistance given by general staff officers, and especially general staff officers of coast defences, should not necessarily be confined to their own formations.

3. **Exercises on the ground without troops** have been conducted in all formations and units. The schemes were, as a rule, adapted to the ranks of the officers taking part, but the value of the instruction varied greatly. The paragraphs dealing with this subject in the new edition of Training and Manœuvre Regulations shortly to be issued should be carefully studied.

When divisional, brigade and regimental exercises have failed to be instructive, it has sometimes been due to a want of preparation, to the directing staff not having gone over the ground previously with sufficient care, and to their not having considered reasonable solutions of the problems so as to be ready to give their comments—based on principles in the regulations—with conviction on the ground. The importance of thorough previous preparation cannot be too strongly insisted on. See Section 21 of the new edition of Training and Manœuvre Regulations.

It has been observed that there is a tendency to allow these exercises to become unduly expensive. Motor cars are hired too freely; long distances are travelled; and the number of nights spent in hotels is sometimes excessive. This tendency to extravagance must be checked if the best value in training is to be obtained from the funds available.

In most units and many formations much valuable instruction can be given by means of short exercises which do not involve officers sleeping away from their stations. Whenever local conditions admit, such exercises should form a regular and constant part of the training of all formations and units, and of all staffs. The constant training of all staffs in the duties they will have to perform in war when working by themselves and also when acting in conjunction with other staffs and with the Signal Service, is most important, and must be further developed.

Opportunities of including officers of all arms, both on the directing staff and among the officers taking part were not always taken advantage of.

Administrative exercises have been held in some Commands. They should be general. All staff officers and officers of administrative, technical and departmental services should be trained in their duties in connection with the maintenance of the army in the field. This can often be done by means of exercises which involve very little if any expense, most of the work being carried out at their stations.

When possible commanders and staff officers of Territorial divisions and brigades should be included among those taking part in command exercises.

4. **Conferences.**—The conferences referred to in War Office letter No. 107/Gen. No./2035 (M.T. 2) dated 2nd October, 1911, and in Section 34 of the new edition of Training and Manœuvre Regulations, have been carried out in all formations, but in some their value is not fully realized. In cases where careful consideration has been devoted to their preparation by the officers conducting them the results have been excellent. At these conferences discussion should be encouraged, and commanders should endeavour to establish a common school of thought among their subordinate

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commanders. These commanders in turn should hold conferences with their subordinates and should pass on their knowledge so that all in the formation may be imbued with a common doctrine and be ready for the closest co-operation in the ensuing training period.

5. **Forming a plan and issuing orders rapidly.**—The necessity of training all officers to decide quickly on their plan of action in a given situation, either with or without troops, and to issue rapidly, either in writing or by word of mouth, clear orders to give effect to their plans, does not yet appear to be fully grasped by all commanders. This is referred to in Sections 9, 28 and 40 of the new Training and Manœuvre Regulations. Staff officers especially require more practice both in writing and in dictating orders.

6. **Billeting schemes.**—At the beginning of the winter it was evident that practice was needed. Staff work was faulty, and the details of practical billeting laid down in Field Service Regulations, Part I, Sections 45-54, were unfamiliar to most officers. But an improvement has taken place, and the good result of the winter's work is evident in most formations; in some brigades, however, billeting exercises were not carried out.

The importance of engineer and medical officers attending these exercises is not always recognized.

The principal defects noted in the organization and conduct of these exercises are:—

- (a.) As far as the staff are concerned, the schemes are, as a rule, too cut and dried, and the staff work that should be done rapidly during the march is usually prepared beforehand in barracks.
- (b.) It is of very rare occurrence to find sufficient secrecy maintained as to the locality and details of the scheme. The value of the instruction given to the staff and to the billeting parties is therefore much reduced, and the work bears but little similarity to that which would be carried out in war.
- (c.) There is often confusion between (i) the orders for billets and outposts that are immediately necessary and that should be given out on the march, and (ii) the detailed orders that cannot be issued until after reconnaissance. The latter are frequently inadequate. See Field Service Regulations, Part I, Section 51 (1) to (3) and Section 78 (1) and (2).
- (d.) The necessity for preventing the column from being checked, or the roads being blocked, by troops waiting to receive detailed information as to their billets does not seem to be always understood. Representatives of units from the billeting party should meet the column when approaching the billeting area and should each conduct his unit to its alarm post, where it can rest if the detailed arrangements have not by then been completed.
- (e.) The train is not always met and guided to its destination, with the result that there is delay in the distribution of baggage and the issue of rations to supplement those provided in billets. See Field Service Regulations, Part I, Section 56 (3).
- (f.) The troops, as a rule, take a long time to settle into billets, usually owing to want of practice.
- (g.) The troops are sometimes turned out too early in the morning and are kept waiting for considerable periods.
- (h.) The disposal in billets of rifles carried by artillery requires attention. It has been found on enquiry that procedure varies. In the majority of cases the men responsible for the rifles take them to their billets, in other cases the rifles are left on the carriages. The former is usually the better plan.
- (i.) Care should be taken in the artillery to keep guns, horses and their drivers as close together as possible. See Field Service Regulations, Part I, Section 51, (9), ii.

7. **Packing and loading, entraining and detraining, embarkation and disembarkation of horses and vehicles.**—Packing of stores and loading of vehicles appear to be systematically carried out in conjunction with the annual mobilization test. At some stations training in entraining and detraining and of embarkation and disembarkation of horses and vehicles is most perfunctorily performed and must be improved. Where special appliances, provided by the Royal Engineers, for training in slinging horses and vehicles are not available, improvised material should be used, and men should be taught to erect derricks.

CAVALRY.

8. **System of training.**—The system of training arranged for officers is generally satisfactory, and such as to fit them to be instructors. The regimental exercises and the schemes demanding rapid solution that are becoming a feature of training are having a marked effect in forming the habit of quickly and correctly appreciating tactical situations, of rapid decision and of prompt action.

Progress has been made in the system of devolution. Non-commissioned officers are taught to instruct, and the training of individuals by their section leader is becoming the general rule. The method of teaching by demonstration in certain brigades is capable of improvement.

Elementary instruction in reconnaissance, in map reading, and in the details of outpost work should be more thorough. All ranks still require practice in the drill of repeating messages and in writing reports.

Troop commanders need guidance and help from squadron commanders to ensure that training is progressive.

9. **Resting horses.**—It is advisable that horses should have a rest after manœuvres, but they should not be thrown out of work too long. The system followed in one cavalry brigade of resting the horses till the end of October is probably the best.

10. **Rocking dummy horse.**—The rocking dummy horse has been issued to all cavalry regiments, but its full value has not yet been appreciated by everyone. Its utility in the early stages of equitation is great. Its judicious employment strengthens the riding muscles and gives confidence to the young horseman.

11. **Skill-at-arms.**—More attention is being paid to instruction in the use of the sword and lance. Improvement is noticeable in the use of the sword, and, though perfection has not yet been attained, the progress made is encouraging.

ROYAL HORSE AND ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.

12. **System of training.**—Taken as a whole, there is great improvement in the conduct of training, but brigade commanders do not yet recognize to the full that it is their duty to instruct their officers. This is specially noticeable in the case of unallotted units and reserve brigades.

13. **Regimental exercises.**—The conduct of regimental exercises in some cases is unsatisfactory, principally owing to the lack of supervision and adequate preparation. As a rule the schemes and instruction are adapted to the ranks of the officers taking part, but some are too ambitious and beyond the scope of the officers.

14. **Attachment of officers to other arms.**—This has been carried out to a considerable extent in divisional artillery, but neglected in the case of unallotted units and reserve brigades.

Artillery officers can learn much if they attend fairly regularly during company and battalion, or squadron and regimental, training, and are then attached and do duty during the training of larger formations and Army Manœuvres.

In some cases second-lieutenants or junior lieutenants were selected for attachment, but this is not sound. Junior officers should be kept with their units until efficient in the duties of their own arm. Attachment or interchange of officers should be confined to senior lieutenants and upwards. Officers of reserve brigades should not be exempted from attachment to other arms.

15. **The instruction of non-commissioned officers and of men likely to become non-commissioned officers.**—This has not been so general nor so well carried out as in the infantry.

16. **Equitation.**—There is a decided improvement in the instruction of men and training of horses and remounts, but much has yet to be done. Brigades and batteries vary, the standard attained depending upon the qualifications of the officers and, in a minor degree, of the roughrider.

17. **Physical training and marching drill.**—Some brigades do a great deal of physical training, but others do very little. This form of training should be universal. Running is a valuable form of physical exercise. It is not generally realized how physically fit an artilleryman must be in order to carry out his duties to the best advantage.

18. **Musketry.**—Beyond putting recruits and backward men through their elementary training and tests, there is little in the way of musketry done in most brigades of horse and field artillery during the winter months. Some brigades and batteries, however, make considerable use of the miniature ranges, and have attained a fair standard of efficiency in musketry. Efforts should be made to ensure that the standard of training in musketry of all batteries should be brought up to the level of the best.

19. **Eyesight, observation and judging distances.**—The importance of training the gunner's eyesight and of improving his powers of observation and of judging distance is not sufficiently appreciated. Instruction in these matters can often be combined with other training with good results. See Field Artillery Training, Sections 235, 236 and 237.

20. **Reconnaissance duties.**—The instructions as to reconnaissance contained in Field Artillery Training, Sections 234 and 238, require further attention in some brigades.

21. **Range finding.**—The instructions contained in Field Artillery Training, Section 6, paragraph 4, as to instruction in range finding, do not appear to have been understood, and in many cases this training has been carried out in batteries and not under the direct instructions of the brigade commander. Now that a one-man instrument has been introduced, training in range finding should receive even more attention than in the past. The best results appear to have been obtained in brigades in which classes have been formed under a special officer and tests made periodically.

22. **Lectures.**—A great improvement is noticeable in the lectures given both by officers and by non-commissioned officers. The best results have been obtained when commanding officers have drawn up a synopsis in amplification of the syllabus of subjects contained in Field Artillery Training, Section 6, paragraph 3, and have taken trouble to educate their subordinates in the art of expressing their views in clear language.

23. **Model ranges.**—The model ranges used by some brigades for training officers in ranging and other duties could with advantage be tried by all.

ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY, ROYAL ENGINEERS, ARMY SERVICE CORPS AND ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

24. The individual training of the Royal Garrison Artillery, Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps and Royal Army Medical Corps calls for no special comment. The General Remarks and the remarks on the other arms should be studied and applied where suitable and possible. General officers commanding-in-chief and other commanders must carefully consider how best to develop the individual training of these corps in the duties that would fall to them in war.

INFANTRY.

25. **System of training.**—The instructions for the individual training of officers, non-commissioned officers and trained soldiers contained in Infantry Training, Section 6, are generally well carried out, but greater care must be taken in the preparation of the programmes so as to ensure that the best value in training is obtained during the winter months. See new Training and Manœuvre Regulations, Section 5.

Some brigade commanders have not gone sufficiently thoroughly into the system of training of the units of their brigades. There seems to be no sufficient reason why battalions stationed in adjacent barracks and under the same command should not adopt the same system of winter training.

Infantry Training, Section 6, paragraph 3, is so clear that it might be thought to be unnecessary to call attention to the fact that leave and furlough are the primary

factors in the preparation of any scheme of winter training, and yet in several brigades it has been found that this matter has not been duly considered, with the consequent ruin of any comprehensive scheme of winter instruction. See Section 7, new Training and Manœuvre Regulations.

26. **Training of non-commissioned officers and of privates likely to become non-commissioned officers.**—This training is carried out in many different ways. Some battalions strike off companies for a period of approximately a month, and during that time carry out the individual training not only of their non-commissioned officers but also of their men; some battalions strike off their companies for one day a week; some strike off their non-commissioned officers for only a fortnight; some allot two periods of 10 days each for their non-commissioned officers' training; and some again do a great deal of the individual training of their non-commissioned officers by means of regimental courses instead of company courses.

Owing to the very varying conditions obtaining at different stations it is inadvisable to lay down that any one system is to be adopted universally, but it is probable that at most stations the continuous period of one month gives the best results and ensures the most thorough programme; it also prevents employed non-commissioned officers and men from being repeatedly relieved.

Whatever a brigadier considers best for a particular station should be adopted for all his battalions at that station after a careful consideration of every factor and a full discussion with commanding officers.

The Army Council are glad to note that non-commissioned officers are gaining considerable value from winter training.

27. **Musketry.**—There has been an all-round improvement in individual musketry. A great deal of trouble is taken to improve the indifferent shots, and for this purpose the 30-yards ranges are greatly in use. The open range should, however, be more often used, especially in a mild winter.

28. **Physical training.**—In nearly every unit physical training is receiving careful attention. Cross-country running is practised in most battalions, and the men are frequently put over the obstacle course. Undoubtedly the men are far more active and alert than they were a few years ago.

29. **Bayonet fighting.**—Bayonet fighting is a most popular feature of training. In several units every trained soldier is a skilled fighter. There are, however, battalions which do not lay sufficient stress on this invaluable exercise.

DEPÔTS.

30. **General.**—The depôts in general are in good order, and a great deal of good work is being done at them to the great advantage of the fighting efficiency of the Army, and towards ensuring the rapid mobilization of the Expeditionary Force and Special Reserve, but a closer supervision on the part of some district commanders would result in a still further improvement in the training.

31. **Lectures.**—It would be of advantage if commanding officers at depôts were to prepare précis of lectures to assist their officers in lecturing on such subjects as *moral, esprit de corps, &c.* Where this has been done, and the lectures have been well delivered, the results have been good.

32. **Regimental exercises.**—A good system exists in some commands of affiliating depôts to the battalions serving in the Command for the purpose of including officers from the depôt in the parties detailed for regimental exercises. The system enables depôt officers to meet officers of other regiments and other arms. Its adoption must not, however, relieve the district commander of the duty of himself conducting regimental exercises for the depôt officers.

33. **Supervision of training.**—The supervision of training by officers is generally satisfactory, but at some depôts the importance of allotting definite duties to each officer has not been fully recognized.

Some of the officers fail to prepare themselves to deal with the special problems of administration and training to be met with at a *depôt*, with the result that in some cases too much is left to the non-commissioned officers.

34. **Barrack-room duties.**—More should be done in all *depôts* to teach the necessity for personal cleanliness, *e.g.*, in such matters as the use of the tooth brush and care of the feet. The men should be taught to repair their socks, shirts and clothes. These matters have a considerable effect upon the efficiency of the soldier in the field.

35.—**Visual training.**—Very good work is done at many infantry *depôts* in visual training, both by means of landscape targets and in the open country, but this is not so in all. The importance of this form of training should be impressed on all *depôt* commanders.

36. **Drill.**—The importance of accurate and smart drill is sometimes overlooked. The drum and pendulum have not been in general use and the pace stick has been very rarely used. The result is that cadence and length of pace vary considerably at *depôts*. Non-commissioned officers should be trained to use the pace stick expertly.

37. **Musketry.**—There is room for further improvement in the methods of instruction at cavalry and infantry *depôts*. The positions taken up by the instructors and the size of the squads were generally satisfactory. But the importance of the instructor making free use of his rifle and illustrating every point possible during instruction was often overlooked.

In many cases the instructor had no pouches in which to carry his dummies, but illustrated the method of loading by bringing his dummies out of his trousers pocket. Similarly, the recruit carried his dummies either in his pockets or stuck inside the belt. This is a small but important point. It is essential that from the very start the recruit's hand should go automatically to his pouch for a fresh charger, and after extracting it he should automatically button up the pouch, otherwise he will develop bad habits and on the field of battle lose a large amount of ammunition.

Recruits are often exercised in firing without dummies. This teaches the vicious habit of snapping without a cartridge in the chamber, a fault frequently observed during the Japanese War.

Braces and ammunition carriers, with dummy cartridges, should almost invariably be worn at drill and musketry to teach the recruit from the commencement of his training how to load and handle his rifle expeditiously and automatically when wearing his war equipment.

There is a tendency on the part of the instructors to proceed to a second or more advanced stage without having insisted on absolute accuracy in the former or simpler stage. Instances have occurred in which recruits, during the intervals of instruction in the elementary stages of recognition of targets, have been required to aim from rests at indistinct marks on a landscape target. On being checked the aim in nearly every case was found to be faulty. Further, on their being directed to aim from the rests at an elementary bull's-eye target, the recruits were found to be incapable of taking a correct and consistent aim. In elementary musketry instruction accuracy in every stage is all important. The consequences of any attempt to hurry through the successive stages at the expense of accuracy are fatal.

The more advanced recruits sometimes betray a lack of confidence in answering questions and in assuming fire positions. The correct answer should be given without a moment's hesitation; the correct position should be assumed automatically and instinctively.

Full use is not made of the aids provided for teaching and testing, such as the "Legret" aim teacher and the portable sub-target. There seems an unaccountable tendency to keep these articles in the musketry or quartermaster's stores.

The artificial cover provided at most *depôts* for musketry instruction is far too formal in its conception and in no way resembles what would be found in the field.

The shortness of the period spent by a line recruit at the *depôt* militates against a perfect system of musketry instruction. It leads to hurry in elementary details and to a change of instructor at the important moment, with the result that the sequence of instruction is broken. This is partly remedied in some cases by forwarding to the battalion with each recruit a kind of musketry progress return.

38. **Training of regular establishment.**—At nearly all infantry *depôts* the instruction of the regular establishment is satisfactory and the musketry classification very high.

At artillery *depôts* and in reserve artillery brigades, however, this annual training of the regular establishment is not always carried out. Time for this can be found during the summer or early autumn when recruiting is slack. More use should be made of landscape targets to train non-commissioned officers of the regular establishment in fire control.

SPECIAL RESERVE.

39. **Importance of Special Reserve.**—The Special Reserve is an important part of the Regular Army and it is essential that general officers commanding-in-chief and district commanders should make all those serving under them realize this fact. Everything possible should be done to draw closer the ties between Reserve and Line units.

40. **Courses of instruction.**—It is more than doubtful whether full advantage is taken of the provisions of paragraphs 251 and 252, Special Reserve Regulations. Every endeavour should be made by general officers commanding-in-chief and district commanders to induce Special Reserve officers to avail themselves of these courses. Recent amendments to the regulations have given great elasticity in the matter of the training for which pay may be drawn.

41. **Regimental exercises.**—All district commanders should arrange to carry out regimental exercises for the instruction of Special Reserve officers at such seasons as are most convenient to these officers.

TERRITORIAL FORCE.

42. The individual training given is good, but is not reaching a sufficiently large proportion of the force. The divisional, brigade and regimental exercises are very carefully prepared, the schemes within the scope of the officers attending, and the conferences on the ground full of instruction.

In some mounted brigades and yeomanry regiments, however, little theoretical or practical training is done beyond the routine drills supervised by the adjutant. In such cases general officers commanding-in-chief should take steps to instruct the brigade and regimental commanders and staff in this important part of their duties.

51/3541 (M.T. 2).

War Office, London, S.W.
11th November, 1913.

Sir,
I am commanded by the Army Council to transmit to you the attached memorandum on the training of the troops quartered in the United Kingdom, which has been prepared under instructions from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The object of the memorandum is to review the progress of training during the Individual Training Period, 1912-13, to indicate the direction in which further progress should be sought, and to assist in the interpretation of the Field Service Regulations and the training manuals.

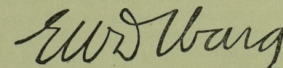
A copy of this memorandum is to be in the possession of every officer at Home, including the Regular Forces, Special Reserve and Territorial Force. The whole of the remarks contained herein should be read by all officers, and should be included among the subjects considered at the winter conferences referred to in War Office letter, No. 107/Gen. No./2035 (M.T. 2), dated 2nd October, 1911, and in Section 34 of the new edition of Training and Manœuvre Regulations, which is now in the press and will shortly be issued.

In future it is intended that the Memorandum on Army Training during the Individual Training Period shall be issued shortly after the conclusion of that period. See new edition of Training and Manœuvre Regulations, Section 6.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



To

*General Officers Commanding-in-Chief
of all Commands at Home.*