MILITARY REVIEW

JULY 1947 · VOLUME XXVII · NUMBER 4

OMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

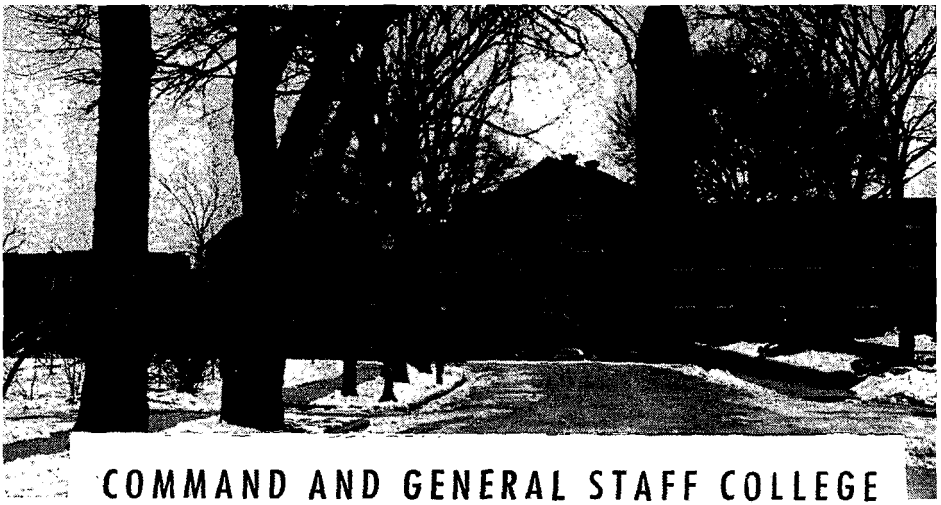
A MONTHLY REVIEW OF MILITARY LITERATURE

MILITARY REVIEW

VOLUME XXVII — JULY 1947 — NUMBER 4

CONTENTS

MILITARY REVIEW—Published monthly by the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Entered as second-class matter August 31, 1934, at the Post Office at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1897. Subscription rates: $3.00 (U.S. currency) per year for 12 issues. No extra charge for foreign postage on new or renewal subscriptions. Reprints are authorized, provided credit is given the "MILITARY REVIEW," C&GSC, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

COMMANDANT

LIEUTENANT GENERAL L. T. GEROW

ASSISTANT COMMANDANT

MAJOR GENERAL W. F. DEAN

STAFF

COLONEL E. D. POST, *General Staff Corps*—Chief of Staff
COLONEL F. S. MATTHEWS, *General Staff Corps*—A. C. of S., G-1
COLONEL P. R. KNIGHT, *General Staff Corps*—A. C. of S., G-2, G-3
COLONEL O. C. MOOD, *General Staff Corps*—A. C. of S., G-4
COLONEL R. B. PATTERSON, *Adj. Gen. Dept.*—Adjutant General

FACULTY

COLONEL D. H. HUNDLEY, *Infantry*—Commandant, School of Personnel
COLONEL H. V. WHITE, *Infantry*—Commandant, School of Intelligence
COLONEL R. N. YOUNG, *Infantry*—Commandant, School of Combined Arms
COLONEL A. W. PENCE, *Corps of Engineers*—Commandant, School of Logistics
COLONEL D. C. FAITH, *Infantry*—Director, Department of Analysis and Research
COLONEL R. J. BROWNE, *Air Corps*—Director, Air Section
CAPTAIN H. B. TEMPLE, *United States Navy*—Director, Naval Section
COLONEL S. R. OSMOND, *British Army*—Director, Allied Instructors Section
COLONEL W. A. CAMPBELL, *Field Artillery*—Director, Extension Courses Section
COLONEL W. H. HENNIG, *Coast Artillery Corps*—Director, Language Section
COLONEL W. J. BAIRD, *Infantry*—Chief, Instructor Training Section
COLONEL J. H. VAN VLIET, *Infantry*—Secretary

Regiments or Brigades?

Reprinted by the MILITARY REVIEW from an article in "The Owl" (India) December 1946.

THE organization of the British Dominion and Indian Armies differs in one respect from that of the armies of most great powers. Our active formations are composed of brigades, the three battalions of which normally come from different regiments. In other armies, the regiment consists of three battalions, and takes the place of our brigade in fighting formations. It is difficult to understand why we do not adopt this practice.

Our present system is a legacy of the Cardwell Reforms of 1871, when the Army was reorganized, the primary object being to maintain garrisons abroad under peace conditions. The linked battalion system thus came into being; this of course made the brigade rather than the regiment figure in the order of battle. To me it seems that "linked regiments" would serve the same purpose; an interchange of personnel between regiments could take place. There might be friction between these regiments for the first few years of the new organization, but this would be temporary, and bonds similar to those existing between battalions today could be forged between the sister regiments. The subaltern, transferred from one regiment to the other, might perhaps be told that he is not in the "Loamshires" now, and that things are done in a very different way in the "Chalkshires"; just as, under the present system, his new adjutant may advise him to forget what he learned in the second battalion, now that he has had the good fortune to be transferred to THE Battalion of the regiment, where a very different standard obtains.

The strongest argument against the regiment as opposed to the brigade system is, to my mind, that it causes concentration of casualties. This has a twofold effect. First, when a brigade suffers badly, its casualties are divided among three regiments; these regiments are faced with the problem of reinforcing one depleted battalion instead of three. Further, from the point of view of the "home front," casualties to a three battalion regiment, drawing its men from the same area, would lead to hardship and a drop in morale in the district affected. This was well illustrated in the last war, when the Welsh Division was badly mauled in 1944. The sudden incidence of casualties on a large scale, among families in a thickly populated and depressed area, had an extremely adverse effect on civilian morale. This factor is undoubtedly a weakness in the regimental system.

Another argument which supporters of the existing system may raise is that at present, battalions can be grouped or regrouped rapidly into brigades, to meet changing circumstances. It may be argued that this system gives greater flexibility than the alternative, but there can be no doubt that the latter will insure far greater efficiency and cooperation. In the three battalion regiment, officers and men would train and fight together, with all the gain in teamwork which this implies. The arbitrary amalgamation of three strange battalions to form a brigade would thus be the result of peculiar or desperate circumstances, rather than the normal practice.

The two main disadvantages of the regimental system, therefore, are the danger of concentration of casualties, and some loss of flexibility. I feel that the two great advantages of the system which I propose, those of enhanced *esprit de corps* and ease of administration, far outweigh those disadvantages.

We all recognize that morale is an essential quality of an army. The regi-

mental spirit and the *esprit de corps* which it produces are essential factors in the maintenance of morale. I feel, however, that *esprit de corps* should hold together as large a body of men as possible. Healthy rivalry among small bodies of men can quickly degenerate into distrust and contempt. The ideal is an army rather than a regimental spirit, such as the Eighth Army achieved and which played such a large part in its success. In peacetime, however, an army spirit is not practicable, but a regimental spirit can and must be maintained.

In war, the improved team work in a regiment going into action as a unit would be of inestimable value. As it is, battalions from three different regiments with three conflicting loyalties are brigaded together. As the belief that all other regiments are rather second rate is a natural corollary to the confidence that one's own unit is the best in the army, some friction and mutual intolerance may attend the initial composition of a brigade. It is true that after a few months of service these will, as often as not, disappear, and be replaced by mutual admiration and confidence; but should the first action produce an incident which may be construed as one of the battalions letting another down, the old narrow views will prevail, and you will hear such remarks as "we knew that the 'Mudshires' would run." These remarks will not be confined to the brigade; as remarks about a weak company will be strictly confined within a battalion, or about a weak battalion within a regiment. Even under the best circumstances it will take some months to establish firmly, the brigade spirit; and when brigades are broken up and reorganized, the process will have to start again. In this, as in so many other spheres, our present policy involves starting a war with an untried weapon, forging that weapon to perfection by the expensive method of trial and error, and throwing it aside when the immediate necessity has passed.

A regiment will be subject to none of these growing pains. Battalion spirit will be a competent part of regimental spirit, whereas in the brigade it may have to be modified if a brigade spirit is to be achieved. Bonds formed in peace will be strengthened by success in battle, and will help to stand the shock of failure. From the outset, battalions will have the greatest incentive to help each other, composed as they will be of men recruited from the same area, who know each other at home, and who may be, in many cases, related. This applies particularly to the Indian soldier with his very parochial mentality.

I feel that we will find that the regimental organization is, from the administrative point of view, particularly suited to the Indian Army. Many familiar problems would disappear were the regiment to be composed of battalions of the same race and religion whose men eat the same rations, who all do or do not smoke or drink—problems which have been part of the life of the regimental quartermaster throughout his tenure of office. This is no place to discuss the controversial question of one-class regiments versus mixed regiments, but I feel that most Indian Army officers will admit that questions of administration, including promotion, are far less complex in the one-class regiment than in the mixed. From the military standpoint, at any rate, bearing in mind the Indian soldier's outlook, I suggest that the enlargement of the one-class organization to regimental level would greatly simplify our administrative problems.

The adoption of the regimental organization would necessitate modification of the staff system. Staff officers would fall into two categories, "general" and "regimental." The regiment would be entirely staffed by the latter, and the present "G" staff officers in a brigade would be re-

placed by, say, a regimental adjutant and a regimental quartermaster. A separate staff course would be held for the training of these officers, and would be attended by candidates selected by the colonel of the regiment, under whom they would eventually serve. The advantage of having a fighting organization staffed by members of the units of which it is composed, and who have an intimate personal connection with it, are obvious. The same advantages would attend the replacement of a brigadier commanding three strange battalions, by a colonel commanding his own regiment.

This system should also produce a higher standard of general staff officer. Attendance at the regimental staff course, and the completion of a regimental staff appointment, would be compulsory qualifications for candidates for the general staff course. In the "half way house" which the regimental staff would represent, officers would become neither intensely regimental nor intensely staff minded. Knowing the difficulties both of the staff and the soldier, they would then be ideal material for general staff officers.

In the Indian Army, the nearest approach to an experiment in the direction of the regimental system was the establishment of Gurkha brigades, although these were not composed of battalions of the same regiment. These brigades won a high name for themselves in action, and the smooth running of their administration was the envy of staff officers of mixed brigades.

To sum up, there seems no doubt that the advantages of the adoption of the regimental system outweigh any possible drawbacks. It would give greater cohesion and efficiency in battle, easier administration in peace and war. Against this, the danger of concentration of casualties and some loss of flexibility do not weigh heavily. It is difficult to see what stands in the way of the adoption of the regimental organization, other than the traditional conservatism of the British and Indian races and armies.

Army-Air Organization for India's Defense

Digested by the MILITARY REVIEW from an article by Major General C. H. Boucher in "The Journal of the United Service Institution of India" October 1946.

THE tactical doctrine of the war of 1939-45 is well enough known; what we have to do is to be ready for the next war, and it is already apparent that the next war, if there is one, will be nothing like the last. The pigmy Indian Army that is emerging from the giant structure of the army of 1945 is an interim force, organized on last war lines and equipped with available—i.e., last war—weapons. It must be so in order that the immediate needs of India may be met, but already much of the equipment of the last war is obsolete.

Recently, too, in the realm of science there has occurred one of the greatest advances of the human era. For the first time, atomic energy has been harnessed to the purposes of war, and we are not yet able to say how far this discovery will lead us. Certain facts are already emerging, or have emerged sufficiently clearly to enable some deductions to be made as to our future defense requirements.

Armor

In the last war, generally speaking, tanks dominated the battlefield. Recent developments, however, have ended the dominion of the heavy tank, at any rate for the moment. He who has dominion in the air can concentrate rocket firing

fighter aircraft, in whose presence the heavy tank cannot exist. Even if bad weather or darkness prevents aircraft from operating, the recoilless gun and the improved antitank mine have robbed the tank of any superiority it may have enjoyed over the other arms.

We do not yet know what effect atomic energy may have in this matter of the efficacy of armor; it may go either way, but from what we do know it is probable that for the present the heavy tank is obsolete or at least obsolescent. Its uses are limited to those few places on the frontier where they can move, and to similar operations, where the enemy has no aircraft and no modern weapons.

In India it means that heavy armored brigades must be located in the vicinity of the place where they will fight, and this involves an accurate forecast of the battlefield and a risk of these expensive units never entering battle. It is the absolute negation of the principles on which the next war is likely to be fought—the principles of concentration and mobility. There is, therefore, a strong case for the exclusion of heavy armored formations from the Indian Army of the future, particularly as armor is probably the most expensive of the ingredients of our armed forces. Infantry, however, are still assault troops and are still soft-skinned. They still require armor in the assault to subdue the machine gun.

Owing to the distances involved, and the remote prospect of heavy enemy tanks ever covering the great mileages necessary to invade India it seems that the answer to India's armored problems lies on small, fast, light tanks which do not suffer from track troubles, which retain both strategical and tactical mobility, and and difficult targets for aircraft. The size will be limited by the limits of air transportation, and carriage of light tanks by air is already well within sight.

Supply

Supply is basic in war, and must be considered before possibilities of strategy or tactics which are dependent on it. It is the limiting factor to everything, and, therefore, the effects of the invention of the atomic bomb must be considered first. The results of an atomic bomb on a vital base such as Nagasaki have been seen. No nation will go to war unless they have an adequate supply of such missiles and the most modern means of launching them.

Our organization for the next war, therefore, must be based on numbers of small, dispersed bases in Central and Southern India, supplied mainly by transport aircraft. If this is admitted, the necessity of secrecy, of an adequate cover plan in peace, and of proper deception as to the location of these bases and their communications is of urgent importance.

The big ports of the present day are likely to be eliminated at the outset of war. This must be accepted and our supply lines from overseas organized accordingly. Dispersion will be necessary. Numbers of small ports with poor facilities will have to be used. The rail and road communications to all such ports must be established in peace, and war establishments worked out for organization of combined operations, for unloading into lighters, and by similar make-shifts.

As transport aircraft will carry an increasingly large share of the supply load, it will be necessary to establish a large number of airdromes all over India, so that they can be switched at will to alternative safe areas. We are already comparatively well off in this respect.

The Conditions of the Problem

The above are the basic facts of modern war on which our future organization must be based, and towards which our present organization, doctrine and thought must be directed. The principles to which

we must stick are mobility and speed, which involve flexibility and concentration.

There are certain other conditions or assumptions:

1. It must be assumed that India will have no possible intention of indulging in offensive action beyond her frontiers Her object is simply to repel aggression from across her borders and to maintain order within them.

2. As far as can be foreseen at present, any threat must be made from the northeast or northwest, and no nation is likely to be in a position to exert a threat of seaborne invasion.

3. There are very definite limitations to the money available for defense purposes.

4. First-class natural obstacles exist along the whole of the northern frontiers.

5. Within these natural frontiers lies a flat country of great distances, with good flying conditions, ideal for the movement of aircraft, but far too vast for the rapid movement of ground forces.

The Threat

Owing to the natural obstacles of India's northern frontiers, it is safe to assume that the first phase of any invasion of India must be airborne. Such a phase would immediately follow the destruction of all major bases by atomic bombs, and would be aimed at consolidating the moral effect of such action, paralyzing and replacing the government of India. Objectives for airborne landings are likely to be areas where the invaders can live on the country, and where there are plenty of good airfields or potential airfields and which are not atom-bomb targets. As in all airborne operations, there would be a follow-up force of ground troops, but the greater part of the build-up would have to be by air, owing to the distances and difficulties involved on the ground.

The attack would not be launched until the inevitable Fifth Column had done its work thoroughly, and it would follow a long period of subversive propaganda of the type with which the world has become familiar since Hitler's rise to power. There would, therefore, be risings within the country in favor of the invaders or liberators.

Organization for Defense

The principles to be followed, and the conditions of the problem have been stated. It remains to offer a solution.

1. *The Fifth Column Threat.*—The first threat is the Fifth Column, with its insidious propaganda. The countering of this most dangerous of all attacks is of vital importance, because unless the way has been prepared by the enemy by some such means, no other invasion is likely to follow. It is a responsibility mainly of the civil government, although the armed forces are of course vitally interested, and as far as army-air organization is concerned, a considerable intelligence commitment is involved.

2. *The Airborne Threat.*—Air superiority is the first requirement for an airborne operation, or for that matter, for any major operation. The air force, therefore, will be the predominant arm in the defense of India, and it is sound to argue that the Supreme Commander should be chosen from that service. This headquarters must certainly be fully integrated, and the defense plan mutually adjusted and combined between all services from the start.

Our first object in organizing for defense must be to win the local air battles. We can afford only a very small air force, and we have no aggressive intentions. We cannot, therefore, hope to fight beyond the frontiers. All we can hope to do is to hold off any threat until assistance can be sent from overseas. So long as the threat can be confined to airborne invasion this should be within our powers.

The great strength of air power lies in its speed and flexibility. These are

the principles which will guide Empire defense and which will bring aid to India, and these are the principles which must guide India's plan for her own defense.

The decisive points will be those where enemy airborne forces have landed. The role of the air force will be to get the airborne troops to these decisive points. The army's role will be to stamp out such landings before they can take root. All airborne battle groups within reach will be concentrated in turn on enemy landings, under air cover and in aircraft provided by the air force. The locations of these airborne battle groups will be decided by their distance from probable enemy objectives, and can be worked out on a map by compass, according to the endurance of the transport aircraft of the time.

There will be no place in the army for any combat troops who are not airborne or airtransported. Parachuting will be part of everyone's basic training, and any recruits who, for any reason, are unable to jump, will be relegated to the ground services. In fact, however, parachuting is already obsolescent, and the airborne assault troops of perhaps only a few years hence will land from helicopters, or from some other airborne vehicle which will enable a whole platoon or more to be put down with all its weapons and equipment. The cumbersome, top-heavy divisions of the last war are dead. Future organization must be by battle groups, probably about the size of a para brigade group now organized, but in fact limited by the possibilities of air lift and air cover. A complete change in outlook and in doctrine is required in the army, and here I quote Lord Tedder:

"Although the Germans had excellent integration between their air and land forces, they thought in terms of land the whole time. They were not prepared to fight an air battle; they were neither equipped nor trained for it.

"Each service must clear out old shiboleths and outworn traditions, go to the scientists and technicians for all they can possibly give in the way of speed, mobility and economy, develop the whole time with an eye on the other two members of the team in cooperation and not in competition."

The army is as yet far from being sufficiently air minded. It is still thinking in terms of land and of the last war.

3. *The Land-Borne Threat.*—Finally, there is the problem of an invasion by land. No major land operation can succeed without air superiority, nor could any land forces of the last war hope to make much progress against the flexibility and speed of the airborne type of forces envisaged above. We have to insure, however, that India's frontiers, which are naturally very formidable are in fact sufficient obstacles to force any aggressor into an airborne invasion, the defeat of which would be within our possibilities, and to prevent his ground or follow-up component from reaching him.

For this purpose, we need land forces who can make the greatest possible use of the difficult frontier country along any of the possible lines of invasion. The tribesmen who inhabit the frontier region are the best possible troops for the job.

On the north, there is no threat through the Himalayas. On the northeast frontier something similar to the Scouts of the northwest frontier may exist or could be organized. Irregular frontier corps require the backing of regular troops, and these should be for the most part ground troops of the defensive or fortress type, machine gunners, and sappers for laying mines and making demolitions. The object is to turn the northeast and northwest frontiers into fortress areas which, by reasons of their natural difficulties and their warlike inhabitants, can be held economically and securely by fortress troops.