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CONTENTS

Digests of Selected Articles and Documents	3
Review of New Books Received in the Library	18 ✓
Documents Received in Instructors' File Room	26 ✓
Magazines Received in Library	29 ✓
Index to Selected Magazine Articles, Documents and Books	36 ✓

DIGESTS OF SELECTED ARTICLES AND DOCUMENTS

THE BRITISH AND FRENCH DOCTRINES ON INFANTRY IN ATTACK

By Captain B. H. Liddell Hart. 12 pages.—*The Army Quarterly*, July, 1922, page 274.

This study is a comparison of the new training regulations in the two countries.

The sole fundamental divergence of doctrine arises from the comparative treatment of the subject of fire and movement. The French declare that of the two elements, fire and movement, which, combined, form the infantry maneuver, fire is preponderant. The British lay equal emphasis on the two elements. The French teach that enemy fire should be overcome before advance, while the British maintain infantry must be ready to advance even with only subdued enemy fire. It is essential to inspire infantry with self-reliance in their own powers and to make the men regard the support of other arms as a boon, not an inevitable buttress to be waited for.

The French teach that, in the new method of combat, everything gravitates around the automatic rifle, and the "*groupes de combat*" only exist according to whether their individual role is to move the automatic rifle, serve it, feed it, or protect it. The British teach that the Lewis gun section like all other units is responsible for its own protection. The rifle is relegated to a subsidiary role by the French which indicates undervaluation of its handiness and adaptability to fire from any spot, and its economical use of ammunition. A somewhat low standard of musketry accounts in some measure for the French lack of faith in the rifle.

If fire alone could win victory, there would be no place in modern armies for infantry; the auxiliary arms can supply a far more powerful fire. But the infantry arm

can carry its fire to close quarters and supply that tangible human threat which causes the enemy to run. The automatic arm should be treated as a weapon of mobility, and should not be employed solely in more or less distant covering fire.

The British teach that the pre-war idea of a general assault as a culmination to an attack was false to reality and led to costly failures. Assaults are better, because more quickly, delivered by groups than by battalions. The opportunity for assault is momentary and must be instantly seized. A general assault allows this moment to be lost.

Pursuit should be made by a fresh body of troops, as battalion reserves, but under the control of the commander who has captured the objective.

The frontages assigned French units are too small and prevent proper maneuvering.

The French teach that in battle it is better to adopt an accustomed formation which fits the situation approximately if not exactly, and to carry it out resolutely, than to hesitate, lose time, and fall into confusion. For this reason, model formations are given and the author considers the method a proper one.

The formations may be compared with the alternative diamond or square formations of the British. The British commit fewer men to a definite line of action, allow more scope for, and greater effect of, maneuver, because the commander is enabled to keep in hand a larger proportion of his strength.

An excellent idea in the French regulation is that extended points of direction beyond the allotted objective should be given in order to ensure the further development of the action after the rupture of the first position. This helps to avoid the danger that units may rest on too easily gained objectives, and let slip opportunities for a farther advance.

While the French lay great stress on the need for reinforcing the echelon of fire, in order to maintain the maximum fire ahead of the advancing infantry, the keynote of the British regulations is maneuver, not reinforcement,

even in the case of the platoon. The idea of maneuver while not lacking in the French regulation is placed after that of reinforcement in every case. The simple idea that all infantry fighting is conducted by a number of groups disposed checkerwise, beating the ground in front of them with fire and lending mutual support, frees the French regulation from all excessive discrimination between attack and defense. Besides, the combat is never offensive or defensive from beginning to end, but alternates between attack and defense. In either phase, the action of the group is practically the same.

A STUDY OF THE NEW FRENCH INFANTRY REGULATIONS

By Capt. B. H. Liddell Hart.—*The Royal Engineers Journal*, May, 1922, p. 233.

This study, presented in twenty-three pages of printed matter and four pages of plates, is called by the author a brief summary and is, in effect, a digest of the new French Regulations. The regulations themselves consist of three volumes; one deals with the technical preparation or training of infantry, one treats of infantry in battle, and one presents diagrams, ceremonies, and methods of instruction.

The Regulations open with an excellent general discussion put in the form of a report from the authors to the Minister of War. In this report, the following are some of the points that are brought out: the importance of moral qualities in securing victory; the role of infantry to seize and hold ground; the mobility of infantry over any kind of terrain; the necessity for support for the infantry (to which the author takes exception as an inviolable doctrine, especially in minor warfare); the greater importance of fire in "fire and movement." The report then goes on to present the doctrine that in infantry combat everything centers around the automatic weapon, even going so far as to speculate along the line that infantry combat may eventually be carried on by a number of two or three-man automatic weapon teams, protected by a mobile armored shell. The author disagrees with this doctrine and presents his reason.

Another point taken up is that there is no fundamental dissimilarity between the action of infantry in attack and in defense, and there is a distinct leaning toward a rigid rather than an elastic defense.

Following along the lines indicated by the opening report, the regulations develop the ideas there expressed more in detail.

Under the heading, "Infantry in Battle," are set down a few general remarks, followed by:

- Chapter I.—General Characteristics of Infantry.
- Chapter II.—The Offensive Combat.
 - The Battalion in Attack.
 - The Company in Attack.
 - The Section in Attack.
 - The Group (of about 12 men) in Attack.
- Chapter III. The Defense of the Ground.
 - Security Troops.
 - The Main Body.
 - The Reserve.

In the article, there are reproduced 15 plates, which show various approach and combat formations.

The article is interesting, and while the French treatment of infantry combat may not coincide altogether with our own views, it should, together with the comments by the British author, furnish food for thought.

MINOR TACTICS—EMPLOYMENT OF CAVALRY

By the Cavalry School, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1922-1923. Mimeograph, 246 pages. Instructors' File No. P.H. 140.1.

This document is a revision of the old Cavalry Service Regulations, Part II, revised and brought up to date. A few new sections, viz, those on aircraft, armored cars, and tanks, etc., have been added. It is believed that this publication will, with a few minor changes, be issued as a part of Training Regulations of the Cavalry. Attention is invited to the fact that Tactics and Technique of Cavalry, G.S.S., 1921, covers nearly all the subjects covered in this publication. In fact, some of the sections have been taken almost wholly from the book issued at these Schools.

EVOLUTION IN OFFENSIVE METHODS

Lecture by Lieut. Col. of Artillery, H. Corda, Chief Instructor in Tactics and Military History at the School of Artillery, Fontainebleau. —*The Journal of the Royal Artillery*, March (p. 497) and April (p. 50), 1922.