

It fills a man with amazement and indignation to see one of the pitiful carbines (I saw one lately in Montana) carried by Gen. Custer's 7th Cavalry in the memorable battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. The Indians not only led the companies under Custer into an ambush on that occasion, but poured a concentrating fire on them from hard-shooting long range rifles of various excellent patterns. As Sitting Bull and Chief Gall remarked when visiting the field and describing the massacre ten years afterwards, the soldiers under Custer "were shot down like pigs in a slaughter pen." It is notorious that comparatively few Indians were killed in that battle, and it is equally true that afterwards numbers of nicked pocket knives were found on the field where our soldiers fell, mute eloquent testimony of their vain efforts to extract tight shells from badly chambered carbines even as they were being shot down like sheep in the shambles. It is believed there would at least have been some white survivors of that awful field if the 7th Cavalry had been armed with good rifles instead of carbines.

Why our cavalry are not armed as dragoons should be armed, it is hard to say, unless it be the imbecile conservatism of our Army policy, always behind the age until war is at our very doors.

Of course a long rifle could not be carried in a sling as our cavalry now carry the carbine. Nor is it desirable to carry any weapon in such a senseless manner, awkwardly jostling and jumping about and embarrassing and straining the rider until he is tempted to throw it away as an intolerable nuisance.

The Russian dragoons carry their rifles hung by stout gun slings across the back, the piece depending from the left shoulder, butt of piece on right side of the horse, barrel pointing upwards just back of the left shoulder.

This method somewhat cramps the body in riding, and it is believed a better one exists in the favourite manner of carrying the rifle practiced by hunters, cowboys and mounted men generally in the far west, a method in vogue from Montana to New Mexico. Once tried, no other way will ever satisfy a man on horseback. This is, to carry the rifle in a leather scabbard or case, open at the lower or bottom end, which is fastened under the left side flap of the saddle, and, of course, under the stirrup leather.

It is a sort of "reverse arms" position under the left stirrup leather and left saddle flap. The barrel is turned down with toe of the butt and trigger guard up, and the small of the stock within easy grasp of the right hand. The rifle can thus be drawn out from its scabbard with the right hand alone almost as easily and quickly as a sword from its sheath. It is absolutely out of the rider's way when mounted, and is as fixed in its position on trot or gallop, without jingle or jostle, as if it were a part of the saddle tree itself. The left leg holds it in place without feeling it or knowing it.

It has the merit, not of being the theory of some board of officers, but of being the invention of those who through rough and continuous riding were compelled to study out the best way for a mounted man to carry his gun. It is confidently submitted that this is the manner in which the future *dragoons* of the American army will and must carry their rifles.

In writing of cavalry, much might be said about the sabre and whether dragoons should carry any at all. Certainly no sabre should be carried in campaigns against savage tribes. Sabres are never carried in the U. S. army in Indian campaigns. But this article is already longer than intended, and it is enough to say that the present sabre could be much improved on, particularly the steel scabbard, which should be lighter and should be so constructed or lined as to preserve the blade sharp. Some of the best light cavalry in the world sheathe their blades in *wooden* scabbards, thus preserving keen edges on their swords. The pistol as now carried in the U. S. army at the belt should be retained. Perhaps the sabre ought to be capable of being detached and left on the saddle when dragoons dismount to fight on foot. But there are some objections to this.

In conclusion, let it be said that the great advantage of celerity of movement, manoeuvre and march, which rests with a large corps of mounted men armed with the same, or nearly the same rifles as the infantry, far outweighs the loss of one soldier out of every four left behind the line of battle as a horse-holder; and it is confidently believed that large bodies of dragoons acting independently will be a feature of wars and campaigns in the future, especially in wild, rough and forest regions such as are found in most parts of the United States.

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner* says: "The Government has secured the patent rights of a new artillery arm which, among experts, is believed to be an advance upon any of the guns in the armament of any of the European Powers. The weapon is the invention of two officers in the American navy, Lieuts. Driggs and Schroeder, from whom the Government has purchased the patent. The trials of the new arm have been of a most satisfactory kind. The range of the gun is said to be effective up to 600 yards, while it can be discharged at three times the rate of the Armstrong gun."

Correspondence.

(This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns, the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the Militia.)

QUALIFICATIONS OF PERMANENT CORPS OFFICERS.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—In looking over the new Militia List for 1890, I perceive that although the officers on the active list of our volunteer battalions have their certificates of qualification (those who have them) marked after their names—such as "Smith, George, M. S. 1st," "Brown, John, V. B. 2nd"—I can find no such degree of qualification following the names of those gentlemen who hold commissions in our permanent corps. This seems to me to be hardly fair on the volunteers.

As it is at least as interesting to the militia and the general public to know the qualifications of our instructors on full government pay, you would greatly oblige by giving some explanation as to why they are not published.

I would also like to know if it is requisite with them as with us to obtain a first to hold field rank.

MILITAIRE.

THE ATTENDANCE AT CAMP.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—"B. M. W.'s" remarks in your last issue are good, more especially when he says we have the remedy in our own hands.

But we do not require \$150,000 more! Call out the actual men that were in camp in '88 and the actual men that were in camp in '89, and only about 18 per company would be willing to go! or even discovered near their company headquarters!

Send out these 18 men, who have had one camp already, this year, and the annual grant would be ample, for money is thrown away on men who never turn out again!

Bring the officers and n.c. officers, and say 15 men per company, out every year for their three years of presumed enlistment. *Insist upon their presence*, and we might then begin to feel that we have a somewhat efficient militia!

In my humble opinion a dozen good eggs are worth 500,000 bad ones, except, perhaps, for electioneering purposes! Yours humbly,

A YOLK.

The Rifle.

Staff-Sergt. Pink, of the 43rd Battalion, has declined the proffered place on the Canadian twenty, and Pte. E. H. Brown, 59th Battalion, now has the option of taking the twentieth place.

A Halifax rifleman writes: "I hope the executive of the D. R. A. will see their way clear to have more shooting in the matches that go to make up the grand aggregate, and less in the extra series matches, except in those at 800 and 900 yards." There seems to be a general desire for more long range shooting, if not in the grand aggregate, at least for places on the Canadian twenty.

ALLAN RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Allan Rifle Association was held Tuesday evening, 18th inst., at the Q. O. R. orderly room, in the drill shed, Toronto. The secretary-treasurer's report, received and adopted, showed the Association to be in a very flourishing condition both numerically and financially. The following officers were elected for the ensuing season: Honorary President, Lt.-Col. Allan; President, Mr. M. S. Mercer; Vice-President, Mr. Jno. H. Knifton; Secy-Treasurer, Mr. G. M. Donnelly; Auditor, Mr. W. C. Macdonald; Committee, Messrs. Jno. F. Crean, Wm. Harp and W. H. Meadows. The association have every reason to congratulate themselves on their selection of officers, as every one is a worker. They have decided to hold a spring match the first Saturday the ranges open, which will probably be about May 10th, by which time there will be a very fine prize list prepared for competition. The secretary (whose address is 68 Colborne St.) would like to correspond with secretaries of other associations, with a view to arranging telegraphic matches during the coming season.

TORONTO RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Toronto Rifle Association was held last week. There was a large attendance. The annual report and financial statement showed the association to be in a flourishing condition. The following gentlemen were elected officers for the ensuing year: President, Mr. Walter Macdonald; 1st Vice-President, Major McSpadden; 2nd Vice-President, Mr. John Agnew; Secy-Treasurer, Mr. A. D. Cartwright; Committee of Management, Messrs. Jos. Johnston, A. G. Ronan, T. Mitchell and A. Bell. The target practices will commence early in May, and be held Tuesday and Saturday afternoons during the season.