

each column would have its own advanced guard and set of outposts furnished from it, connection being kept up between each. If the front of the army is a narrow one, it might be covered by a division which would have its advanced guard, and from which the outposts would be furnished. Colonel Hamley, in his 'Operations of War,' says advanced guards may consist from one-twentieth to one-tenth of the whole force, according to circumstances, when an army is advancing on different roads, and in the case of a division being in advance, its advanced guard would be in the same proportion, which will give us an idea of what the strength of outposts should be. Then with regard to the distance between them and the main body, the rule is this, that they should be so far in front, that if attacked and obliged to retire, sufficient time would be given to the army in rear to form up in line of battle; so that the distance would depend on the length of time required by the force to form, or in other words, on the amount of the force. At the same time they must not be so far advanced as to be liable to be cut off, and thus completely fail in attaining their object. Good cavalry well in advance, however, ought to prevent any fear of this happening. You may remark that the nature of the ground would have a strong influence in the decision of all of the foregoing points. And now we come to the disposition. As I have already told you, outposts have three principal component parts—sentries, piquets and their supports. These are disposed in three concentric lines, at certain distances and at lateral intervals, the whole being somewhat in the shape of a fan. The outer and most extended line consists of parties of two forming a continuous chain. The next line consists of the piquets which furnish the sentries, and is less extended, and the third line of the support still less extended. Each of these lines are kept in constant communication—some times by sight but always by means of patrols, or small parties of men, under a non-commissioned officer sent out to see what is going on. It is usual to rest the flanks of outposts on impassable obstacles, natural if possible. If they cannot be obtained, we sometimes rest them upon artificial ones, such as field works; or the outposts may be thrown back to connect with the main body, or regular flank outposts may be established on the flanks of the main body. Lateral communication is kept up by the same means between each party, communications being made through walls or hedges, if any, and at night lateral communication is kept up by the sentries. Thus it ought almost be impossible for a cat to pass through these lines without being detected. Now, as the actual posting of the several component parts of the different lines: First we will take the sentries. In posting them the first rule or desideratum is that they should see and not be seen. Of course it may happen that both these points cannot be obtained, in which case the latter must be disregarded. Then as few men should be used as is compatible with the work they have to perform—viz, to leave no part of the ground unwatched, especially roads and paths leading from the enemy. It may be asked here, Why should outpost sentries be always double, as it would seem to be contrary to the rule just given? But there are several good reasons for doing so. If men were posted singly at night, they would have a tendency to close on one another, and thus leave gaps in the line, and being two and two prevents that, and gives them more confidence. Then at night, and in thick

weather, each sentry has to communicate with its neighbor, and if it was single, he would lose the spot on which he was posted, and leaving an opening; whereas, when double, one man remains on the post, looking out to his front, while the other patrols to his right, and by relieving one another, they prevent drowsiness. Then in day or night time, if anything is seen in front which must be reported, it might be necessary for the man seeing it to go back to report it to the officer, and if only one man was on the post, he would have to leave it unwatched, and might not be able to find the spot again. Then one man might go to sleep, be taken ill, have a fit, or desert; whilst it is not so likely that two men would do so at the same time. It is evident, however, that at night or in thick weather more sentries would be required than in day time, and they are generally brought back a little also. In day-time the sentries lay quiet, and do not move about, but at night they act as I have already told you. They would not fix their bayonets if there is sunshine or moonlight, as the gleaming of the bright steel is likely to betray their position. Sentries should never be posted near a wood, ravine, or spot in their front, from which a sudden rush could be made upon them. If there is an obstacle in front—such as a river, canal or marsh—the sentries as a rule, should not be placed on one side and the piquet on the other. There has been, and is, a difference of opinion about allowing a sentry to smoke. I believe the Prussians rather wink at it, especially with regard to their videttes. It certainly would tend to keep a man awake, and were it not for the first lighting, a pipe would not show so much, but on the whole, I think a man on sentry or vidette had better do without his pipe, or he might chance to have it put out in an unpleasant manner. Sentries should be relieved every two hours by day, and every hour by night or in severe weather. Sentries on outpost duties pay no compliments. This is the only case in which the strict respect to officers, most properly required from all soldiers in our service, is not demanded, and the reason is evident, that, as the soldier is employed in an important duty, which requires all his attention, even the respect due to his superior, which is inculcated in him from the first day he joins, must give way in this case. Sentries must be warned not to fire unnecessarily, especially at night time. They should pay attention to the slightest thing they see; a cloud of dust may mean a great deal, the glitter of arms, barking of dogs, rushing of cattle or game without an apparent cause, and a thousand other things may convey important matter to the mind of an intelligent man, and be of great use in obtaining information as to the position of the enemy. The necessity of being more on the alert in bad weather must be impressed strongly not only on the sentries, but on everybody on piquet, that being the time generally selected by the enemy in making an attack; Inkerman again was an instance of this. The piquets are posted about the rear of the centre of their line of sentries. The distance would depend on circumstances. They should of course, be near enough to be able to support their sentries if attacked, and out of sight of the enemy, and in sight of the sentries if possible. It is recommended that they should take advantage of a hollow or rise in the ground, if convenient, or may lay behind a house or yard, but never in a house. A piquet should never shut itself up unless distinctly ordered to do so, which would rarely be done. If it did so in case of an attack, it might be surrounded, and the enemy would then press on and

leave a few men to contain them, and the object with which they were posted would be frustrated. But a piquet may, and should, strengthen itself by means of slight trenches, obstacles, &c.; thus enabling it to hold out longer and rally its sentries. Sir William Ried mentions, in reference to this, a case of an officer of the 52nd Regiment, who, when in charge of an outpost during the operations of the Passage of the Nive, in 1813, strengthened it so well that the piquet had no occasion to retire until their sixty rounds were nearly expended, thus enabling the troops behind to assemble, for it was December, and the troops were scattered in houses. Having decided on the spot, the officer commanding takes measures to inform his sentries where it is, piles arms, and puts a single sentry on them, whose duty besides to watch for any signal from the sentries. If circumstances do not admit of that, it may be necessary to place another man in advance between him and the sentries as a communicating sentry. The officer then communicates with the piquets on each side of him and with the reserve, sending to the field officer of the outposts a sketch of his ground if possible. With regard to fires, it is always better, if the weather will admit of it, that there should be none, and that the men should bring their rations cooked. However, the field officer of the day would settle that point. If a fire is allowed, it should be concealed as much as possible, and only part of the men allowed at a time to lay near it, particularly at night. The rest, being on one side, would flank a sudden rush on the men at the fire, who would be visible to the enemy.

There should always be two or three cavalry soldiers with each infantry piquet, who should be used solely for carrying back in formation. When there happens to be a high building, or even a tree; near the spot where the piquet rests, a sharp non-commissioned officer should be sent up with glasses to reconnoitre, who could communicate by means of a string with those below. All information should be sent back in writing, and the source from which the information was received should be stated; also the number or name of the piquet, and the hour at which the messenger was sent off. A piquet should not retire hastily, unless pressed firmly by superior numbers. If the attack is not made by a large force, a piquet should not retire until it sees its flanks are being turned. If one flank only is turned, and the enemy few in number, by remaining firm, it may be able to attack them in flank, or in rear if they press on. The position of the piquet should be changed at night, or, if the army is halted for any time, the officer in command should be careful to make his men sleep by squads in the day-time as much as possible, doing the same himself; the rest remaining on the alert. By this means they will all be more able to do the night duty, which is the more important. We now come to the reserve, or support to the piquet. It is not necessary that every piquet should have its reserve or support, but generally one for every two. The same directions as to the posting of the piquet hold good as regards the reserve. It is generally posted on or near a main road, at a convenient distance, and the field officer would remain with it during the night, unless there was a main body of outposts. Piquets and their supports pay no compliments, further than when a general officer, or the field officer of the day, approaches, they fall in and stand to their arms.

The reserve or support, must connect with the piquet by means of sentries (single) and patrols, and with the neighboring reserves