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### VOUNTEER CAVALRY.—No. XV.

THE LESSONS OF THE DECADE.

BY A VOLUNTEER CAVALRYMAN.

(From the United States Army and Navy Journal.)

#### ADVANCED PARTIES—ORDERS OF MARCH.

Scouts should travel several miles ahead of their commands, and in some cases a full day's march. But inside of their line of march a second species of guard is necessary styled advanced parties, in front of the advanced guard proper. The essentials of a good advance are celerity of transmitting intelligence and the covering of as long a stretch of ground ahead as may be. As in the case of scouts, so with the advance. Its duties are special and require special training to insure perfection. It is thus better on every account to have a permanent detail for the duty, taken equally from the regiments of a brigade, instead of the constant rotation now practised.

But brigades should take their turns at the duty by all means. They are frequently detached from the corps, and should always be able to act offensively, independent of the rest of the corps. Every regiment should have its share in the formation of the advance, and its operations should resemble those of a moving picket guard, only far more sweeping and extended in reach.

The advance of corps need not be more numerous than that of a brigade. Its essentials are the same. In front of everything an officer, or brevet on probation, with a sergeant and two men, all carrying their firearms for instant use. A chain of vedettes a hundred yards apart for a mile back, making eighteen men. The main body of the advance then follows, about thirty strong, with a second chain of vedettes for a second mile, to the advance guard proper, composed of the leading brigade with its battery.

By passing back signals the approach of the enemy can be transmitted along this line for two miles in less than two minutes, giving the main body time to prepare.

When anything suspicious appears, the officer in front should examine it with his glass. If it is only some scout of the enemy he ought to be able with his three men to shoot or capture him. If a small party of the enemy is suddenly met, a bold front and vigorous charge will often impose on them and make them believe a heavy force

is coming. A loud yell caught up by the vedettes will very often intimidate and deceive the enemy, even if in some force. The object of an advance is to find out the enemy and keep him from finding out anything about your own force; and therefore men of boldness, dash, and plenty of brass are the best for the permanent advance. The same spirits that are turbulent and trouble some in a column are the very ones to be useful in an advance.

The road being protected by the extreme advance, side roads must be supplied with their guards from the chain of vedettes. At every side road encountered a man should leave the chain, the first vedette taking a trot and riding out for a quarter of a mile, or nearer if a sufficient view is commanded from such point to prevent surprise. The next man in the chain moves up, and the gap is filled by each successively, a man from the main advance supplying one more vedette. When the whole of the advance has passed, this man is relieved from the advanced guard proper and then takes the post of the last vedette in the train.

Under this system, first introduced by General Morgan, C.S.A., a great deal of country is covered with very little labor, two miles ahead of the advanced guard. The employment of flankers and skirmishers, unless the enemy is known to be near, hardly pays for the consumption of horse-flesh occasioned by constant riding over broken ground.

Forces likely to be dangerous to a cavalry corps must move on roads, and if two miles of road are occupied by a chain of vigilant vedettes, whose whole business is to look sharp, an enemy will find it impossible to approach very near the column without being seen. Under the chain system the least amount of galloping has to be done by each member of the advance. A hundred yards by each vedette at every cross-road completes the amount. The scouts, who ride in light saddles, are better able to act as flankers.

When the enemy makes his appearance in force not to be denied, the advance must halt and form up in skirmish line to detain him as long as possible. In such case the whole of the main advance, vedettes and all, must gallop to the front and spread out into the fields to check the enemy, yelling like devils, to make him believe them three times as numerous. This is the only time when rapid firing is advisable, as a great show with slender materials has to be made. Inside of twenty minutes relief is sure to come, and then the forward movement must

be made in skirmish line with supports, in the regular style.

In countries infested with guerillas or bushwhackers flankers will have to be used, as the annoyance caused by such men to a column is often serious. In such a country a chain of vedettes, at right angles to the line of march, about two hundred feet apart, to the distance of a mile on either flank, will scour the country pretty effectually. In woody country these flankers must be much nearer, and at such times a competent staff officer should take charge of each flank, with two or three orderlies to attend him.

In the case of men detailed for flanking duty, permission should be given them to deposit their grain-sacks and food wallets with the caissons of the brigade battery as they go to the front. The work is so severe on the horses that they should be favored in every possible manner, and the men execute the duty infinitely better on horses not fagged out with heavy loads. When once a battle begins, and the general line is formed, no such favor can be shown, from the number of combatants involved; but in flanking duty, which often lasts a whole day, and does not occupy more than fifty men at the most liberal computation, the relief can be afforded with much advantage.

Under the system of advanced parties proposed, the rest of a cavalry column can move on independently, and without any formal advanced guard. The only precaution necessary will be that the first regiment of each brigade should be followed by the brigade battery. If the ground is firm as in summer time the guns and train should march in the road by sections, while in a column of fours of the regiment moves along the field on each side. This plan, when practised, reduces the length of a column of fourteen thousand cavalry with all their baggage to about five miles, allowing every horse a space of five yards in column. This length even will appall a civilian; but to those who have seen the column of a single brigade stretch for over a mile; with its pack train, the reduction will be apparent. In ordinary column of fours, a brigade with a battery and a pack train, will occupy a length of twenty-two hundred yards; and a corps of nine such brigades, with ammunition and headquarter trains, over thirteen miles. If the fields are not soft as to be trodden into mudholes, the march of a cavalry column on a raid should always be arranged in this manner. A general has his forces well in hand, every part of the column is instantly defensible, the men dismounting in fours if attacked suddenly, and the guns and train being quite safe behind a curtain of troops. But in winter cam-