

## Modern Tactics.

[By Capt. H. R. Call—From Illustrated Naval and Military Magazine.]

(Continued from Page 429.)

FOR raiding purposes a combined force of cavalry and horse artillery is admirably adapted. Cavalry and horse artillery can render good service on the battle-field by hovering round the enemy and giving opportunities for their own infantry to creep up and develop its fire.

No precise formation can ever be laid down for cavalry to attack in; so much depends upon the ground and on the character of the enemy and his dispositions.

The ground over which a charge is imminent should be reconnoitred, and for this purpose cavalry should always, when moving over unknown ground, be preceded by ground scouts, and its front and flanks secured by reconnoitring groups.

The best general formation for cavalry to charge in is line, followed on the flanks by a second line (called supports), consisting of squadrons echeloned at least 200 yards behind each other. The supporting squadrons, whether in line or in echelon, should lie from 50 to 100 yards from the outside flank of the first line. No charge should ever be delivered without a reserve, varying in strength from one half to two thirds of the force employed, placed about 400 yards from the charging squadrons and echeloned on them, usually on the protected flank.

Every charge of cavalry versus cavalry consists of a series of operations directed against each others flanks, and resolves itself into a *mélee* in which both sides become mixed up.

When at its height the skilful introduction into the combat of a fresh body of formed squadrons on one side or the other, will quickly decide the issue; hence the absolute necessity for a reserve, (1) to meet fresh attacks, (2) to confirm and follow up success, (3) in the event of a sudden overthrow to protect the retreat of beaten squadrons, or possibly to achieve success after their failure, a feat often rendered possible by the disorganization of the victors, if their reserves are not up. The reserve in cavalry charges, as in infantry attacks, must be handled so as to be up just before the fighting squadrons or line begin to waver. If it only arrives when the first line is already in retreat it is too late, the attack has failed through being made with only a portion instead of the whole available force at the disposal of the commander, and a new attack has to be made over the same ground scattered over with the dead and wounded of the previous failure. This has a demoralizing effect and shows bad direction in its worst form.

### *Rules for the Employment of Cavalry on the Field of Battle.*

- I. Never await an attack, either advance to meet it or retire.
- II. Never attack infantry, unless demoralized, surprised, run out of ammunition, or when a necessary sacrifice has to be made.
- III. Never charge without supports and a reserve.
- IV. In order to take advantage of cover and ground, manœuvre in column out of rifle-range of the enemy.
- V. Attack cavalry escorts of artillery simultaneously with the guns. Charge the former in line and the latter in open order, and endeavour to attack both in flank, if possible in rear.
- VI. Increase the pace gradually from a brisk trot till full gallop is attained about 50 yards from the enemy, and so regulate it as not to sacrifice cohesion and the mutual support of squadrons acting in concert.
- VII. Remember that just after even a successful charge, squadrons issuing from a *mélee* are very liable to be worsted by a body of fresh troops in compact order launched against them.
- VIII. If cavalry is called upon to charge infantry, the best formation is successive lines of squadrons with intervals of not less than twelve yards between the squadrons. The distance between the lines must be regulated by the commanders, who should endeavour to charge "home" the moment they see an opening, after the first line has fallen back through the intervals if it has been repulsed. If the first line has broken through, the second line should charge at once obliquely before the enemy has closed up again. In open ground against infantry the gallop must commence sooner than against cavalry, to avoid the volleys taking effect.
- IX. Always remember that the flanks of cavalry are particularly vulnerable; therefore seek those of the enemy and protect your own. This is best done by having squadrons in support on the exposed flank or flanks.

X. There are five conditions essential to a well-executed charge.

1. Open ground free from obstacles.
2. Opportunity.
3. Speed.
4. Cohesion.

5. A reserve ready to be thrown into the fight just before its own squadrons begin to waver, or just after the enemy begin to look over their shoulders.

XI. In large bodies no manœuvres should take place within 500 yards of the enemy.

XII. The commander of the reserve should not put his whole force "at one time" into the *mélee*, unless absolutely certain that the enemy has charged with his last reserves.

### CHAPTER XIV.—WOODS.

Woods, like villages, are common and important features on most battle-fields, and are often the scene of desperate encounters. Their tactical importance fixed, woods when held should invariably be defended from their outer edges. The heart of the defence of a wood lies in its outside edge. Before placing a wood into a state of defence it should be carefully reconnoitred, and the following points noted:

- I. Its breadth, depth, shape, and open spaces.
- II. Roads, paths, streams, ravines, and their direction.
- III. Cover outside, undulations of ground, etc.
- IV. Flank defence afforded from other parts of position occupied, and to what extent troops detached to hold a wood can be supported.
- V. To defend a wood two men per yard of its outside or exposed edges should be considered sufficient.

#### *Steps in the Defence of a Wood.*

I. Cut down brushwood if procurable; if not, fell the smaller trees round outer edge, and throw up trenches behind the entanglement thus improvised, taking care that the entanglement does not impede the view of the men firing over it from behind the trench. Trenches, owing to the roots of the trees near the surface, are often difficult to dig, in which case small trees should be cut down and laid across the openings between the larger ones lengthways to form a barricade. The salients are especially vulnerable and should be first attended to, and afterwards the re-entering angles.

II. Place guns outside, on flanks, behind epaulments, if they can command the whole of the approaches. When introduced into the wood their lines of retreat must be amply provided for by being placed near the roads.

III. As the heart of the defence of a wood lies in its outer edge, supports and reserves should be posted so as to be quickly introduced into the fighting line.

IV. Roads leading from the enemy if not required by the defenders should be cut up; but, if wanted to issue by, defended near the entrance by lunettes (open works forming a salient angle short flanks), or by barricades placed across them rather in front of the wood.

V. If a road, stream, or ravine happens to run behind and more or less parallel to the outer edge, a second line of defence is sometimes formed along its near side. In this case, a separate garrison should be provided, as men on the run, especially in the almost hopeless confusion of a retirement through a wood in contact with a pursuing enemy, are hardly to be depended on. As a general rule, when a second line of defence is decided upon, the first line should be directed to fall back to an entrenched position about 500 yards backs from the wood, in order to be rallied, and ready to protect the withdrawal of the second line when it falls back, or to be led forward to their assistance in good order, if the enemy, which may frequently happen, has been seriously checked by the second line. In this manner a wood may sometimes be recaptured; but as a rule next to its outside edge the best line of defence is a line of entrenchments lying back about 500 yards from the wood.

VI. If the wood held is isolated, the reserves should always hold an entrenched position in rear of it to cover the withdrawal of the defenders. If held in connection with a position every available man should be near its outer edge.

VII. The withdrawal of troops through a wood is always a difficult operation, and communications are of the greatest importance, and should, if possible, be clearly marked out, and the wood, if at all extensive, be divided off into sections for defence, with non-commissioned officers posted at intervals to direct men of their own battalions, or brigades, in what direction they are to keep; otherwise, if briskly followed up, the utmost confusion is almost certain to reign.

(To be continued.)

Horse owners, possessing an aggregate of 30,000 horses, met at the offices of the London General Omnibus Company to discuss the Government proposition to allow 10s. per horse as a yearly registration fee to owners. It was resolved that the Government must consent to allow 40s. (\$10) a year registration fee before their proposal could be entertained.