



## The Volunteer Review

AND  
MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE

"Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,  
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, DEC. 29, 1874.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be *pre-paid*. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's copy" written and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

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"Major General A. Gorloff, military attaché to the Russian embassy to England, makes public the following communication, which he has received from his Government: "His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievitch, Inspector General of Russian Cavalry, recognizing the incompleteness of any existing treatise on cavalry history, and considering that so important a service merits the closest study, has determined with the sanction of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, to offer three prizes of 5,000, 3,000, and 2,000 respectively, for the three best essays on the above subject. In order to encourage international scientific intercourse, his Imperial Highness has decided to throw the Russian competition open to all foreign armies; but non-Russian competitors will have their productions translated into that language. All compelling essays must be handed in at St. Petersburg on or before the 1st (13th) of January, 1877, when they will be carefully examined by a committee nominated by his Imperial Highness, and the prizes adjudged." The instructions accompanying the above are too lengthy to be produced, but I shall be most happy to impart them to any intending competitor who will put himself in communication with me. -I feel, however, bound to indicate that the essay in question will have to be of the "completest" character; going back to the earliest times, gradually descending to our own day, and elaborately reviewing the present employment of mounted troops in all the functions of war."

The foregoing paragraph from a contemporary will doubtless produce a clear and comprehensive history of cavalry, as well as throw some light on its use in ancient and

modern warfare. It is doubtless, owing to the very contradictory opinions held by strategists and tacticians on the value of mounted troops in modern warfare that we are indebted to this effort of the Russian Grand Duke to clear up the doubts which seem to cloud the reason of military men on the most important subject connected with military organization.

The opinions of military authorities appear to be as follows: "That cavalry is still a necessary arm of all military organizations, and its efficiency as well as uses have not been impaired by modern tactics or arms.

"That it is no longer useful in line of battle but necessary as the eyes of an army, and for outpost duty.

"That it is wholly unnecessary and that its whole duties could be better discharged by mounted infantry."

The first and second divisions are characteristic of two parties in the German or Prussian service. The first is held by those officers who have had the largest experience of cavalry tactics in the field and who are of opinion that the practical experience acquired in the war of 1870 was by no means adverse to their views. The second opinion is held by most of the Infantry leaders, by a good many theorists and by some English officers, while the latter is supposed to be decided by the event of the great internecine struggle between the Northern and Southern States in 1861-65 on this continent. Whatever the result of the Russian Grand Duke's investigation may be, it is safe to say that it will not be in favor of *mounted infantry*—the sole example of the employment of such a force is so exceptional in its nature that it could in no case establish a general rule nor has it illustrated any general law. The "Mounted Infantry" of the United States were only called into existence during the last year of the struggle when the cavalry of the Confederate States (itself never thoroughly disciplined) had ceased to exist by the waste of war and could not be recruited.

The mounted infantry or irregular horse did good service during the last campaign in the operations before Richmond, there is no manner of doubt, but that it could have effectually done anything in a less wooded region there are very grave doubts indeed.

Taught only to fight on foot, and that in mere Indian style, if brought within the blows of a regular trained cavalry and compelled to retire of what advantage could their horses be to them, for it must be conceded that the animals should be out of the range of fire—in this case it should be at least 800 yds in the rear—pressed back over that distance by a trained foe what possibility would there be that a man of them would ever reach the horses, and if they did, it is easily to conceive what would happen.

Now, the historian of the civil war has shown that something like what we have at-

tempted to describe has happened more than once or twice, in a closely wooded country too, but what in an open, such as most European contests are decided on. While all due credit must be given to the great soldiers that led the United States armies to victory, for all the qualities that make good generals there is none so conspicuous as that readiness of resource characteristic of real genius that enabled them to provide *extempore* means to meet all possible contingencies of an exceptional character, and the organization of mounted infantry was one of those happy inspirations of genius for which time, conditions, and place afforded opportunities. If some enterprising soldier will give the world as complete a history, ancient and modern, of infantry, as the Russian Grand Duke proposes of cavalry, he will be doing a great work for the coming race of military students.

The following article is taken from the *United States Army and Navy Journal* of 28th November. It refers to the *torpedo* especially manufactured for the British Government, and is a valuable addition to the knowledge already current of what is supposed to be the most valuable and effective weapon of offence or defence.

"The Bureau of Ordnance has received through Rear-Admiral Case, commanding U.S. naval force on European station, from the U.S. steamer *Juniata*, Captain D. L. Braine, the report of a number of officers who witnessed the trial of the Whitcomb torpedo, from which the following account is compiled.

"The torpedo is cigar shape and made of one-eighth inch steel, nineteen feet long, the greatest diameter being fifteen inches. It is fitted with a six-bladed screw, expending pitch ten inches in diameter, and propelled by engines driven by compressed air. It has four triangle pieces running about three-fifths of its length, which are used for resting the torpedo in launching. The internal parts were not permitted to be seen. It is very sharp forward, and it is exploded by striking an object with its sharp spur, or by three triggers which are placed one above and one on each side of the spur, coming in contact with the side or bottom of a ship.

"By simple internal machinery it can be made to explode after having run a given time, or can be made to sink after its motive power is exhausted. The operation of preparing the torpedo appears rapid and simple. The torpedo is placed in an iron pipe, suspended on the surface of the water with a tackle at each end, and is held there by two bolts, while the air is pumped in from the stern. At the point or bow a small pistol is attached, which is fired by concussion. The chamber will contain sixty six pounds of powder. The torpedo has no steering apparatus, and can consequently travel only in the direction as given it by the "directing ship" at starting; but when once discharged from this tube there is no deviation. The after-part is fitted with a three-inch gas pipe, which communicates with the air chamber of the torpedo, and receives the compressed air from the reservoir on the dock. The connections being made, no more was allowed to be seen. The charging being completed it was arranged to run the