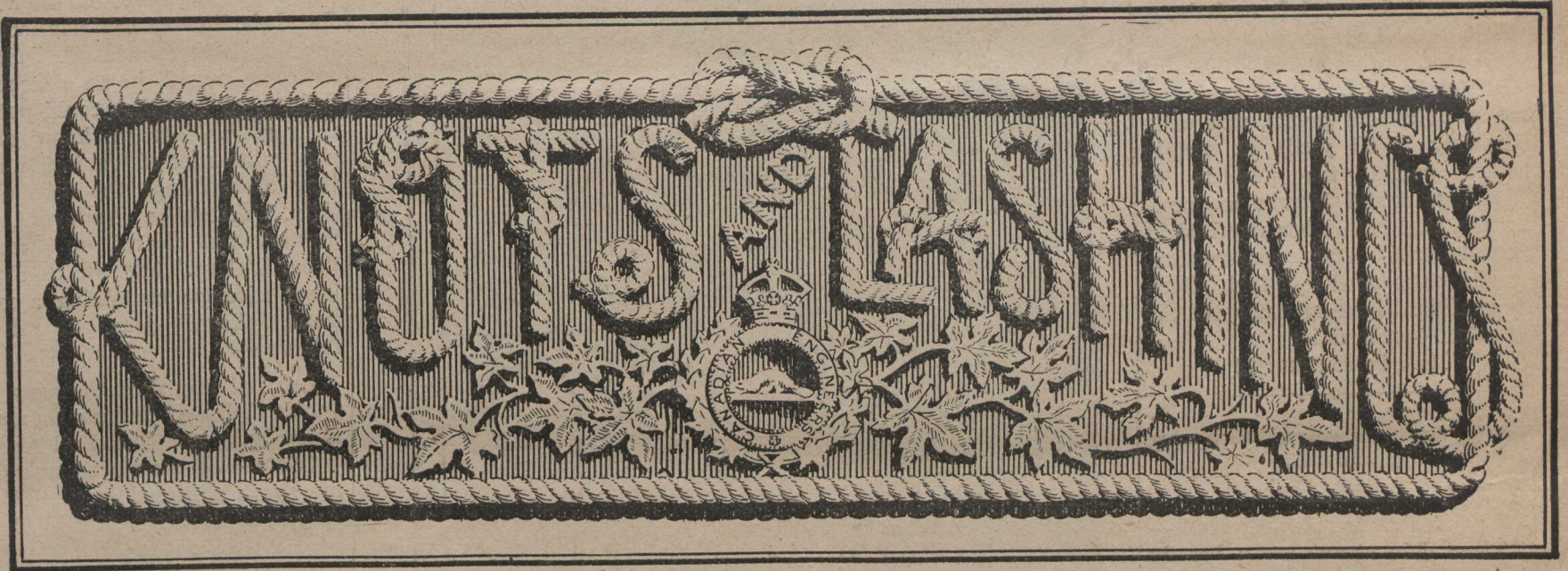


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A Weekly Newspaper, sanctioned by the Officer Commanding, and published by and for the Men of the E. T. D., St. Johns, Quebec, Canada.

Vol. 1. No. 28.

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1918

5 Cents The Copy

Notes on Principles of Trench Construction

By Capt. R. W. Powell, M.C., C.E.

(Continued from a previous issue.)

In the following article, I will discuss certain problems and conditions already outlined in Case No. 3.

Having become familiar with the distribution of troops on such a front, it will readily be seen that problems concerning materials for construction, labor, and drainage, are of primary importance. Actual designs, which will best insure efficiency and conservation of materials and labor, will be discussed later.

It will be readily appreciated, that in a quiet front, such as we are now considering, there is probably a more or less standardized arrangement or lay out of trenches, obstacles, redoubts, machine gun emplacements, etc. Until this is fully understood, it will be impossible to appreciate the various forms of construction adopted for various trenches or works, since each is designed and constructed according to the comparative location and exposure to fire.

To discuss this general layout, we will consider that part of a front known as a Brigade Area, and which has a frontage of about 1500 yards. Such a front, would normally be held by a Brigade,

usually equivalent to four Battalions of Infantry.

The disposition of these Battalions is such, that each half sector is allotted to one Battalion. A third Battalion is held under cover, at a distance of one to one and a half miles in rear of their centre, in what is termed Brigade or Mobile Reserve. This Battalion is always in readiness to assist No. 1 or No. 2 Battalion should they require reinforcements. The 4th, or remaining Battalion, as a general rule, is stationed from 5 to 7 miles in rear of the front line. Theoretically, it is at rest in Divisional Reserve, but in reality, it merely has the above additional distance to travel in reaching its work. It is true, however, that the men of this Reserve, will usually return to a good dry bed at night, and that, realizing themselves to be in a comparatively safe area, they can enjoy a relaxation from the nervous tension and reap the benefit of sleep. Moreover, they will enjoy the advantage of a permanently established cook-house and will be well fed.

To refer briefly to the trenches themselves,—and quite apart from their actual design,—it may be stated, that the point of primary importance, as regards the ultimate trench, is not usually given great consideration. I refer to the question of “siting”. For it must be

(Continued on next page)



(Courtesy of the World Wide.)

“Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them: naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.”—(King John.)
—(“Passing Show”, London).