

What are called minor operations of war are often equal in importance to what are considered important battles. Indeed neglects of little ordinary precautions sometimes lead to terrible disasters, such as that at Isandlilana. Every duty should be equal in the conscience of a soldier; he cannot judge what is important and what is trivial. Upon the vigilance of a solitary sentinel or vedette may depend the safety of an army.

Marches, therefore, should habitually be conducted with caution, and apparently useless formalities have to be carried out in time of peace, in order to teach the precautions that would be essential in war.

Marches are of two kinds. 1st. direct to the front; 2nd. flank marches.

For various reasons a flank march is a dangerous operation in the face of an enemy, and yet when an army is making a flank march it is dangerous for a smaller force to strike it in the middle of its length, as by simply facing in the new direction towards its assailant it becomes a deployed line. This was exemplified in Gen. Burrows' disastrous attack on Yakob Khan's army at Maiwand. Trailing its length along, it was like a snake struck in the middle, both ends turned in and encircled the General's force.

If struck on the head of the line of march, it takes an army a long time to deploy, longer still if struck in rear. A snake held firmly by the tail can rarely injure its assailant. The same with an army.

The order of march is regulated with reference to readiness in forming the order of battle.

A *corps d'armé* may advance by one or more roads. This is generally advisable when roads are sufficiently near to maintain frequent communication.

The order of march may be divided into four parts:

1st. The *advanced cavalry*, generally about two days in advance of the main body, the distance depending upon the enemy and the character of the country. The cavalry flankers form part of the advance cavalry.

2nd. *Advanced guard*.

3rd. *Main body*.

4th. *Rear guards*.

The advanced cavalry are the *eyes, ears, feelers* or *fingers* and *screen* of an army. They advance in the form of an opened fan, or the extended fingers of the hand. The first advanced parties being only a non-com. officer and three men.

These parties are stretched across the front within sight of each other, and may be represented by the nails of the fingers, their supports by the knuckles and the massed cavalry reserve, by the back of the hand. (See Fig. 2).

The advanced parties should be selected from the best men, intelligent, daring, yet cautious. In an advance or retreat they should always keep touch of the enemy without allowing themselves to be compromised by the enemy's cavalry, with whom they would be in continual contact.

If the enemy retires they follow and harass him; if he advances overwhelmingly they retire slowly, remembering that as they fall back on their supports they become stronger, but that it is difficult to recover ground that has once been abandoned.

They keep up a continuous system of reports to their supports, who transmit them to the officer commanding the main body of cavalry. This system of reports is as if the advanced piquets or nails reported to the supports or knuckles along the fingers, and these again report to the central support or hand.

Such reports should be written (even with pencil,) when possible, being particular about date, place, hour of the day or night, and corps of the sender. Writers of such reports should bear in mind the natural tendency to exaggeration, and be careful to state what comes under their own observation, and what is report or statement from civilians or natives of the country.

This system of reports carried by side patrols along lines converging to the main body of cavalry advance carry information as to the movements of the enemy, which is the *first* duty of advanced cavalry. The *second* is like unto it, to prevent an enemy from knowing what is done in your own army, or gaining information by penetrating between your advanced vedettes or piquets, so they would then cease to be the eyes, ears and screens of their comrades of the army.

To prevent this penetration by the enemy a system of cross patrols is carried on from one support to another across nails and the knuckles in order to intercept parties of the enemy and keep up communication. The *third* duty of the advanced cavalry is to slip between the enemy's vedettes, sentries, and even piquets and to find out what the enemy is doing. This requires a rare amount of caution, daring and cunning, combined with a good bump of locality in the individual. When he is an educated man, and can be furnished with a map of the enemy's country on a large scale, his service may be invaluable, as in the case of the young one-year sub-lieutenants of Uhlans Cavalry.

The flanks of the line of march are also protected by cavalry.

The best formation to afford such flank protection is a wedge echelon of small parties consisting of a non-commissioned officer and three men, the right flanking party extends from its left, and the left flanking party from its right, in such a manner that the leading party keeps sight of the main body, and each of the following sections of that in its front. They report to cavalry supports near the main body. (See Fig. 3).

The echelon movements allow, (in case of pressure from either flank,) of the parties wheeling outwards and presenting a front to an enemy while they fall back on their supports.

I have spoken of the duties of advanced cavalry as of the *eyes, ears and feelers* of an army, their lines of support and communication resembling the fingers of an extended hand. That hand can be closed if needs be to grasp an important position, such as a bridge or defile, and to enable it to be held, *Fire* has to be added to the *arme blanche* of the cavalry. Our cavalry at present have carbines, but they are not accurate enough for long ranges, nor do the men carry sufficient ammunition. Mounted riflemen are required, but in their absence the