Modern Tactics.

[By Capt. H. R. Gall-From Illustrated Naval and Military Magazine.]

(Continued from Page 375.)

INFANTRY should be able to march and wheel in line, and in column, form fours and squares if necessary and skirmish without losing direction, over almost any sort of country; besides these tactical manœuvres, it is generally acknowledged that some fixed method of attack formation is required, although none has yet been established which inexperienced troops thoroughly believe in.

Attack Formations.

The writer had hoped to have furnished a comparison of formation of units, and modes of attack, as at present practised by the Austrian, French, German, Italian, Russian, and English armies; but after considerable research, and taking into consideration that important changes are now taking place, not only in our own army (where the composition of a brigade has been recently fixed by a high authority as being four, not three, battalions), but on the Continent, and especially in Germany, he has decided to wait a little longer. With the *Field Exercise* to refer to, it is needless to describe the English mode of attack, though it might be interesting to compare it in all its details with those of other countries. In Germany, as in England, a new method of attack is now being experimented on.

Fresh regulations for infantry attack have been issued to the French army this year. They are complicated, and hardly seen likely to be effective.* The English attack formation resembles very closely that adopted by the Prussians during the latter half of the Franco-German war. The experience of a more recent campaign, where the combatants were more equally matched, has led to many modifications of it, and the Germans have recognized the impossibility of delaying, for any consideration, the forward movement of battalions when once they have been committed to the attack on a position. To reach a spot near enough to develop the utmost amount of fire action is very desirable in theory, but in practice it has been found utterly hopeless to halt within short or even medium range of resolutely defended intrenchments.

General Skobeleff, a commander of great ability and courage, who never failed to carry any intrenchments he attacked, and the most experienced authority on this subject, decided that the final assault on an intrenched position in a shoulder-to-shoulder formation owing to the increased accuracy of the fire of the defence was no longer feasible in 1877. It has been recorded as his opinion that the only formation in which troops can be expected to carry resolutely defended earth-works is in successive lines of skirmishers, pressed on one after the other at all hazards, and this is the principle of the present German system of attack.

Lieutenant Greene, thus describes the two direct front assaults made by Skobeleff's troops at Plevna, September 11th, 1877, and in rear of Shipka, January 8th, 1878:—

"The troops were formed under shelter, between 2,000 and 3,000 yards from the Turkish lines, in battalion masses (double column of half companies on the centre). In the beginning of the action, the rifle company of each battalion was sent forward as a thin line of skirmishers, and one platoon (quarter company) in column of half platoon behind the line, at a distance of not more than 50 paces, and constantly replacing its losses. About 200 paces behind the skirmishers came the first battalion, which moved forward in line, not touching elbows, but with intervals of about two paces (or less) between the men—a strong skirmish line, in fact—each company having three-fourths of its strength in line, and one-fourth just behind it, in platoon column, to replace its losses. The men moved forward, preserving a general alignment, but each man taking advantage of any shelter that lay in his path, and firing from behind it, and then moving forward again. Another battalion followed in precisely the same order, at a distance of about 300 paces, so that the men could feel that there were supports coming behind them.

"The remaining battalion of the regiment was held in hand by the division commander until the fight developed itself, and it could be seen where the most resistance was met, whether the enemy was bringing any troops on the flanks, etc.; the battalion was then directed on the point where it was most needed.

"The regiments on either side were sent forward in the same manner.

"Meanwhile the reserve regiment of the division (a Russian regiment is three or four battalions, according to whether it is a line or a rifle regiment), always under the control of the division commander, was kept under shelter as near as possible to the line; as the troops already engaged, which had now merged into two lines (and at points where the resistance was greatest into one), began to move slowly, to halt, to waver, the reserve regiment, or a portion of it, was sent forward rapidly to the point where the fighting was hottest."

where the fighting was hottest."

Whatever the actual formations may be, the object of all attacks must be to get up to, and capture, a position held by an enemy, presumably intrenched, and belching forth fire from the comparative safety of their earthworks. When it is remembered that the accurately aimed infantry fire of the defence extends under favourable circumstances to 1,700 yards, and that the unaimed fire has been known to inflict severelosses up to 3,000 yards, the absolute necessity for the assailants to get over this fireswept zone as quickly and with as little loss as possible, is so openly apparent that every other consideration palls before it.

(To be continued.)

Militia General Orders (No. 11), of 1st June, 1888. (Continued from last issue).

No. 7.—CERTIFICATES GRANTED.

					Percentage of marks obtained		
Rank, Name and Corps.	Royal School	Class.	Course.	Grade.	Military engineering	Infantry.	Aggregate , Percentage.
Sergeant T. Brown, Montreal Eng	R M C	I I I I 2 2	Lysuuuu	B	·80 ·78 ·70 ·72 ·73 ·50 ·60 ·80	·68 ·62 ·62 ·71 ·65 ·52 ·62	·80 ·77 ·70 ·70 ·72 ·52 ·60 ·82
					Written.	Practical.	Aggregate.
2nd Lieut. E. F. Smith, 66th Batt. Capt. G. D. Perkins, 67th Batt. 2nd Lieut. F. W. Bourne, 67th Batt. 2nd Lieut. W. Ross, 67th Batt. 2nd Lieut. D. W. Pickett, 67th Batt. 2nd Lieut. E. H. Ward, 68th Batt. 2nd Lieut. E. H. Ward, 68th Batt. Lieut. T. G. Kelly, 71st Batt. 2nd Lieut. J. E. Sanson, 71st Batt. Lieut. O. W. Wetmore, 74th Batt. 2nd Lieut. C. W. Weyman, 74th Batt. 2nd Lieut. J. R. Allan, 82nd Batt. 2nd Lieut. J. R. Allan, 82nd Batt. 2nd Lieut. J. D. Ritchie, 66th Batt. 2nd Lieut. J. D. Ritchie, 66th Batt. 2nd Lieut. R. Gillis, 94th Batt. 2nd Lieut. R. Gillis, 94th Batt. 2nd Lieut. A. M. Ross, 75th Batt. Lieut. R. Mackenzie, 27th Batt. 2nd Lieut. D. L. Hooper, 82nd Batt. Lieut. M. H. Mackenzie, 94th Batt. 2nd Lieut. M. H. Sander, 62nd Batt. Corp. W. Bull, 67th Batt. Corp. J. Pringle, 71st Batt. Private S. McLeod, 71st Batt. Private S. McLeod, 71st Batt. Private S. McLeod, 71st Batt. Private C. H. Taylor, 67th Batt. Private C. H. Taylor, 67th Batt. Private C. H. Taylor, 67th Batt. Sergt. H. T. Campbell, 68th Batt. Sergt. A. R. MacDonald, 94th Batt. Sergt. A. R. MacDonald, 94th Batt.	40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 40 4		Sanara and and and and and and and and and an	A	· 80 · 87 · 78 · 75 · 86 · 75 · 78 · 75 · 74 · 75 · 74 · 75 · 74 · 75 · 74 · 75 · 76 · 77 · 78 · 78 · 75 · 78 · 75 · 78 · 75 · 75 · 75 · 75 · 75 · 75 · 75 · 75	-55 -65 -73 -76 -66 -66 -66 -66 -66 -66 -66 -66 -66	86 77 80 77 78 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77

Confirmation of Rank.

Captair 1. H. Tracy, R.S.I., No. 4 Co., 7th Batt.; from 14th May, 1888.

Lieut. Robert Mackenzie, R.S.I., No. 7 Co., 27th Batt.; from 24th May, 1888.

Lieut. T. G. Kelly, R.S.I., No. 5 Co., 71st Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

Lieut. O. W. Wetmore, R.S.I., No. 1 Co., 74th Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. C. W. Weyman, R.S.I., No. 1 Co., 74th Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. D. W. Pickett, R.S.I., No. 6 Co., 67th Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. J. E. Sanson, R.S.I., No. 3 Co., 71st Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

Lieut. M. H. McKenzie, R.S.I., No. 4 Co., 94th Batt.; from 11th May, 1888.

2nd Lieut. R. G. Gillis, R.S.I., No. 5 Co., 94th Batt.; from 23rd March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. E. H. Ward, R.S.I., No. 4 Co., 68th Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. J. D. Ritchie, R.S.I., 66th Batt.; from 9th April, 1888.

2nd Lieut. A. M. Ross, R.S.I., No. 6 Co., 75th Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. A. M. Ross, R.S.I., No. 6 Co., 82nd Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. John R. Allan, R.S.I., No. 6 Co., 82nd Batt.; from 31st March, 1888.

2nd Lieut. D. L. Hooper, R.S.I., No. 1 Co., 82nd Batt.; from 1st May, 1888.



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^{*}For a full description of the new French method of attack, the reader is referred to a book entitled L'Ecole Bataillon en Tableaux Synoptiques, by L. Samoin, Paris, 1887, and to a good description of it, with illustrative plates, which appeared in the Broad Arrow of February 19th, 1887.