

## Modern Tactics.

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

(Continued from Page 36a.)

ON debouching on the far side, the leading portion of the convoy should halt and park, while the remainder passes through and regains its position at the head, when the procession proceeds in its original order.

This arrangement, besides saving time, has the advantage of keeping the bulk of the escort concentrated and close at hand, to protect the passage of the wagons, &c.

There only remains to describe the different methods of parking.

### Parking Cattle.

Cattle, whether sheep or oxen, after a long tramp will seldom stray far, provided the last-mentioned have been watered; a stray beast will usually find its companions if left alone.

If unmolested and left alone, cattle, as a rule, quietly settle down for the night.

Horses, ponies, and mules should be picketed in rows, facing each other, with plenty of room to walk between for feeding purposes.

Camels rarely roam at night, and when once down, never stir till morning.

Animals of all descriptions, like men, are easier led than driven.

Soldiers, as a rule, are considerate to all dumb animals, and soon get to understand their ways.

Elephants are peculiar, and will only obey their own keepers.

### Convoys by Rail.

A convoy by rail is simply a train, and embarkation and disembarkation is the chief difficulty, for which suitable platforms must be provided.

A pilot engine, armour-plated, should be provided, and the escort distributed between head, tail, and centre of train.

### By Water.

A convoy by water is conducted on the same principles as on land.

Cavalry kept well in advance and on the exposed flank. Infantry in separate boats at head, centre, and tail, and only landed when an ambush is possible, or an enemy reported.

If attack be imminent, the escort must be landed, and their boats kept close at hand to retire to.

The loaded boats moving along the opposite side, with arrangements complete for sinking them if in immediate danger of being captured.

## CHAPTER XII.—INFANTRY TACTICS.

Successful as the German tactics proved themselves to be against the French in 1870, the experience gained in a more recent European campaign has shown that their adoption ought to be regarded as abnormal under circumstances when a commander, confident in the moral superiority of his troops, and calculating on the mistakes of his opponents, may discard a well-established maxim.

The wide and deep turning movements adopted by the Germans were only rendered possible by the bad generalship evinced by their opponents; and had the positions of the combatants been reversed at Spicheren, at Worth, and in front of Metz, the simple defensive checkmate to their own offensive tactics, studied in the German lecture-halls, would probably have turned the tables, and any wide and deep turning movements of the French, supposing them to have been so venturesome as to have adopted them, would have been attended with the fatal results usually entailed by a violation of one of the first principles of tactics.

In support of this conjecture, the student of military history will recall to mind the defeat of Frederick the Great's remarkable and astonishingly successful system of offensive tactics, the first time it was adopted by his opponents against himself at the battle of Rossbach, and its total collapse when opposed to Napoleon some years afterwards at Austerlitz.

As turning movements in the battle-field are most frequently executed by infantry, this preamble may not be considered out of place under the heading of the present chapter.

To pass for a moment from tactics to strategy, the next war between France and Germany will wear a different aspect. The popular notion that France is to be turned through Belgium is just what the French, by their forethought, and evident distrust of Germany, have provided against. Confident in the strength of her network of fortresses, France, if threatened from the north-east, is prepared, in the event of their violating neutral territory, to meet the invaders on a narrow front. France having taken the precaution to avoid as far as possible erecting fortresses round big cities with large populations, the next war between these two nations will probably be characterized by a succession of protracted sieges.

### Infantry Defensive Tactics

may be summed up in a few words—"Cling to the ground and dig." During the last fifteen years the defence behind hastily constructed redoubts and earth-works has gained enormously upon the attack. In a few hours a position which cannot be out-flanked, owing to the increased power of modern fire-arms, can be rendered almost impregnable against an attacking force, even though it be greatly superior in numbers. All cover for the enemy should be destroyed in front of intrenchments, and troops should never be posted where they cannot be supported.

One man per yard of intrenchment should always be kept in the firing line, with supports (one section per company) also intrenched if no natural cover exists close in

rear, to feed the firing line, and half of each battalion in local reserve to be ready to join in the hand-to-hand struggle if matters get so far that the assailants actually reach, and have to be expelled from, the trenches. The defence of woods, villages, defiles, bridges, etc., are all treated under their respective headings, but the principle in each case is the same, viz., to try and prevent the assailants reaching their goal, by overwhelming them with a steady, well-directed and constant fire, and to keep sufficient troops in hand to expel them the instant the first survivors of the attack reach it, and before they can be reinforced. The fire of the defence is effective for 2,000 yards; within 1,000 it is very destructive, and within 500 it is deadly. In order to develop this fire to its utmost, half the available troops of the first line ought to furnish the firing line and its supports, and the remainder be kept safe behind convenient natural or artificial cover, near enough to be introduced, well in hand, fresh and vigorously into the *melee* which may have to decide the final issue of the struggle. The two things most essential to a trained infantry soldier are—(1st) to be a marksman; (2nd) to be an expert in the use of his spade.

There is no reason why every soldier should not shoot at known and unknown distances as well as the Boers. If in these days of repeating breech-loading rifles, a soldier is not an expert with his weapon, he is worse than useless, for he expends so much more ammunition than formerly, all of which has to be carried for him. In every small army there might be twice the number of marksmen if men were only encouraged more. Extra pay, pension, privileges of every sort and kind, might all be made more dependent on a soldier being a good shot. It is impossible to have experts in any trade or profession without practice, and infantry are not exercised in hastily constructing field-works, and defending them, nearly enough. Twenty cool shots behind a trench are equal to 100, if not 200, excited men, hurriedly stopping to loose off their rifles outside it. To be an all-round steady shot, a man must be sober and temperate in his habits, and the good shots of a company are seldom the worthless characters.

(To be continued.)

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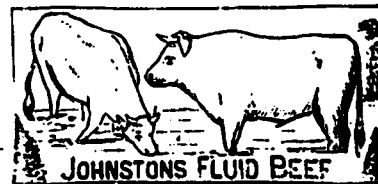


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