



The Volunteer Review

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. V.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1871.

No. 9.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

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From the *U. S. Army and Navy Journal*.

V.—STAFF CORPS.

THE direction of military affairs of course is entrusted to the War Department. The Secretary of War is always a general of the army, though he is one of the constitutional responsible ministers of the crown. Should political questions occasion his resignation, he may be returned to such command in the army as his rank and the opinion of the king entitle him to. The War Department is divided into two great departments and some minor branches. The first or General War Department has the sub-departments for infantry and cavalry service, the sub-department of artillery, including what is called here the ordnance department, and that of engineers. The administrative department contains the sub-departments of clothing, subsistence, and pay. Separate departments are those of invalids and pensions, of military justice, and of persons, the latter directed by an adjutant-general of the King. The general staff forms a separate corps of captains and field officers, under the direction of the chief of staff. The greater part of the officers of the general staff are assigned to duty with the generals in command of the troops, and these essentially perform the duties which in the United States Army are assigned to the adjutant-generals. Each army corps has a chief of staff—colonel—one field officer, and one captain; each division one major. Brigadier-generals have one, in war two aids, but no general staff officer.

The other officers are stationed at Berlin, and there especially cultivate and represent military science. They have to collect all intelligence in regard to organization and tactics of foreign armies, topography, military statistics, and the resources of their own country in any way connected with military matters. They form a sub-department for historical matters, and officers of trigonometrical and topographical engineers, who attend to the providing of war maps and plans. Officers of the line who have passed through the military academy are detailed to these departments of the general staff, for the purpose of surveying; and mostly from these vacancies in the general staff are filled. One particular feature ought to be mentioned.

The French army carefully educates her staff officers; but once transferred to that corps, they remain members thereof until they advance to be generals. Most other armies follow a similar routine. As a general thing, a Prussian first lieutenant promoted to a captaincy in the general staff remains there for two years only, and is then transferred to the line again as commander of a company or troop; and if after two more years he has given as good satisfaction in that position as in the general staff, he is promoted major in the staff; and a few years after he may find himself in command of a battalion of the line again, preparatory to going into the staff again as a chief.

Likewise the officers on duty with the generals commanding corps or divisions are frequently transferred to the general staff in Berlin. Nobody would consider himself to be a good line officer in every grade through which he has passed. Stagnation is to be avoided, the capacity for practical service is never permitted to be stifled by scientific pursuits and studies, and the widest propagation of military knowledge desired. The chief of the general staff, at present General von Moltke, has, in peace time especially, the direction of the so called great general staff in Berlin, and he introduces his subordinates to the study of strategy, to the art of moving great bodies of troops, of issuing orders and dispositions, in a theoretical, and, as much as possible, in a practical way. Every year the great general staff, after the fall manoeuvres, makes a military excursion, on horseback of course, where a short campaign is gone through without the troops, like a skeleton drill, the officers performing the duties as if in the field. Reconnoissances, issuing of orders for marches, battles, with such sketches as are necessary, are the exercises, in accordance with a supposition supplied by the chief. Such excursions on a smaller scale take place yearly at each army corps, when a detail of junior officers, under the supervision of the chief of staff of the corps, are introduced into the secrets of beating an imaginary enemy with imaginary troops, but on the actual ground over which they travel.

Officers of the general staff have a chance for a somewhat quicker promotion in peace time, but no higher pay whatever.

The third staff corps are engineers. There must naturally be a much greater number of engineers than what would be indispensable to furnish the officers of the thirteen engineer battalions of the North German armies. But here also the practical duty with these battalions alternates with duties connected with estimating, building, repairing of fortifications, and the study of

the art. The Prussian engineers had even before the Crimean war adapted their ideas to the visible increase of power and range of artillery, and had accordingly modified the two leading systems represented by the names of Vauban and Montalambert. Having been confirmed by the siege of Sebastopol, the principle not to show any masonry and to protect the defence by a work in the ditch called "caponiere," inaccessible during the first stages of the siege, is now almost universally acknowledged to be well founded.

There is an inspector general of military education, with a few assistant officers, who has charge and command of all military schools the corps of cadets, military academy, and others.

An inspector-general's department does not exist. Each commander is inspector of his troops, and is responsible for their condition to his superior.

VI.—ADMINISTRATIVE CORPS.

The principle feature of the administrative corps is that they are not composed of officers of the army, but of civil officers. With the exception of the chief of the department in the War Office (whom we would name quartermaster-general) and a few assistants of this officer, all purchasing, forwarding, and issuing officers are, to all intents and purposes, civilians. They wear uniform, and that markedly distinct, in war only, and exercise no military authority. The chief quartermaster of an army corps (corps intendant), with his assistants and clerks, is under the orders of his commanding general. Should the latter issue orders which conflict with the regulations and instructions from the War Department, the "intendant" has to call the attention of the general to the fact; but if the general does not repeal his order, it is executed upon his responsibility; and so with every assistant post quartermaster. The officers of this corps are civilians, who enter upon this branch of military administration as young men, like others who engage in civil administration, and they are trained, and pass rigid professional examinations, like other civil officers of the government. Of course the army looks upon them as an indispensable nuisance, to be abused if anything goes wrong, to be thanked for nothing, and by way of a joke they call them "meat-worms." In fact, their thorough training, their perfect knowledge of their business, and the very strict control to which they are subjected, make them an exceedingly able body. The duties of quartermaster and commissary are jointly taken care of by this corps, with the assistance of the train-battalions, a strictly