

NEW DRILL AND TACTICS.

The following memoranda have been issued at Aldershot.

MEMORANDUM ON THE FORMATION OF HALF BATTALION DOUBLE COLUMNS. AT QUARTER DISTANCE.

Battalions will usually be formed first in eight companies, and then again told off into four double companies. They will be told off into double companies as follows:—1 and 2 companies.—1st double company; 3 or 4—2nd double company, and so on. When not otherwise ordered, they will form column of double companies in rear of one of the flank double companies. Thus one half-battalion will always be the front, and the other the rear half of the column. When a brigade in line of battalion of double company columns is ordered to deploy into line of half-battalion double columns, at deploying intervals to the left, the leading half-battalion of the right column will stand fast, the remainder form "fours left," and march off, and each half-battalion will on gaining its proper interval, "front turn," and "halt—dress up" on the alignment. The adjutants of the battalions will, as usual, give the points where the outer flanks of their respective battalions will rest. There will be the usual interval of thirty paces between battalions, but only deploying intervals between half-battalions, unless it is intended that the half-battalions should go on acting independently when deployed, in which case twelve paces interval in addition will be ordered. Officers commanding half-battalions will generally judge their own intervals; but when great accuracy is necessary, then foot points for each half-battalion column will be given by its base markers (in the same way as for a line of battalions column at less than deploying intervals). When half-battalions deploy into line, and no interval between them has been ordered the lieutenant colonel will assume the command, and they will become one battalion. But if twelve paces, in addition to deploying interval, has been ordered, then the majors will still continue in command of their respective half-battalions, and the lieutenant colonels will only exercise a general superintendence. When half-battalions are formed one colour will go with each. When a line of battalion quarter columns is ordered to deploy into line of half-battalion double columns, at deploying intervals, it will be done on exactly the same principle as a deployment from a line of double company columns—each half-battalion forming double companies on the march in the same way as for marching past. Half-battalion double columns deploy into line to a flank, unless otherwise specially ordered. When battalions are so weak that they cannot be formed into eight companies they will be told off into six. In this case they will usually be formed into single, not double, half-battalion columns. When, however, it is considered necessary to form them in double half-battalion columns, the following course will be adopted:—One double company will be in front with the other single company of the same half-battalion in rear of its outer flank (that is, in the right half-battalion the odd company will be in the rear of the right, in the left half-battalion in rear of the left).

MEMORANDUM ON FORMATIONS FOR ATTACK.

1.—*Of a battalion acting alone*—It will be formed either (1) in line of half-battalion single columns at deploying intervals, covered by the first half-battalion skirmishing and the second in support. Or (2) one half-battalion will extend two companies skirmishing and two in support, and be followed by the

other half-battalion in double company column or line, according to circumstances. In either case the supports will be 300 yards in front of the main body, the skirmishers 200 yards in front of the supports. The supports will be with open files, that is, with two paces between each file. The main body will always deploy when under fire.

II.—*Of a Brigade*.—Two half-battalions of the same battalion will cover the front of the brigade, each with two companies skirmishing and two in support. This battalion may be taken either from one of the flanks, or from the centre of the brigade. When the brigade consisted of an odd number of battalions, and the formation for attack is made from line or line of columns at deploying intervals, the latter course will often be found the quickest and best. When circumstances of ground render it advisable, the skirmishers may advance by ranks,—the front rank one hundred yards or so in advance of the rear rank. On any check occurring, the rear rank will at once reinforce the front rank. The supports will be with open files 200 or 300 yards in rear of the skirmishers. The remaining battalions in line of half-battalion double columns, at deploying distance, 300 or 400 yards in rear of the supports. The half-battalions will be commanded by the majors. The lieutenant colonel will take a general charge of the whole. He will not, however repeat the brigadier's words of command.

III.—*Of a brigade of four battalions acting alone*.—The same, except that one battalion will be placed as a reserve, 500 or 600 yards in rear of the centre, if possible under cover and either in battalion or half-battalion double columns.

IV.—*Of a division of three brigades*.—Two brigades in line with one another in the same formation as in No. II. The third in reserve, 500 or 600 yards in rear of the centre, in line of battalion or half-battalion double columns, at thirty paces interval, or more if required.

V.—In advancing, a half-battalion will be named to direct. The support in front of this half-battalion will be the support of direction. The skirmishers in front of it again the skirmishers of direction.

VI.—*Of the cavalry and artillery of a division*.—When a division is formed for attack in an open plain, in the order described in No. IV., there should be a battery of artillery on each flank in line with, or in any favourable position to the rear of, the main line—and such battery should have a regiment of cavalry echelon on its outer flank. If a battery cannot be spared then a half-battery. And so with the cavalry—if a regiment is not disposable then a wing, a squadron, or a troop. The remainder of the cavalry and artillery should be placed in rear of the centre—behind, or on the flanks of the reserve infantry, and whenever possible, covered both from observation and fire. When it is desirable to bring the reserve artillery and cavalry into action, they can either come up a flank, or can pass straight through the intervals between the half-battalion columns of the infantry line. It will be found that artillery can pass through the infantry most readily by moving in half-batteries. There is always room for a half-battery to pass between the half-battalion columns of the weakest line battalion. When artillery have once got into action in a good position they should be moved as seldom as possible. The advance of the infantry should always be preceded by a concentrated fire of artillery on the point selected for attack.

MEMORANDUM ON CHANGES OF FRONT.

1.—*Of a brigade acting alone with a reserve*.—To the right.—The half-battalion or the

right wheels to the right and extends from its left into a line of skirmishers and one of supports. The next half-battalion of the same corps move up on the left of the preceding and extends in the same manner from its right. Those two cover the front of the whole of the brigade. They advance until they gain the required distance from the third half-battalion. This last wheels to the right and forms the base for the formation of the new line. Its left half-battalion comes up on its left. The half-battalions of the next regiments come up by shortest line on its right. The two half-battalions which covered the front of the old line in extended order close on their left or centre (out of fire), reform half-battalions, and take post in the general line on the left. Should there be only three battalions in the brigade, then the fourth half-battalion of the original line will come up on the right of the third—the old extended half-battalions forming the left of the new line.

II.—*Of a brigade acting alone with a reserve*.—The same as the above, except that the reserve will form the right wing on the right of the half-battalion of formation. The half-battalions next on the left to the half-battalion of formation forming on its left. The old extended half-battalions become the reserve.

III.—*Of a division of three brigades*.—(1) Right brigade.—The right half-battalion of the old line wheels to the right advances, extending from its right skirmishers and furnishing the new right skirmishers and supports of the brigade. The second half-battalion moves up on its left and extends, furnishing the new left skirmishers and supports of the brigade. The third half-battalion wheels to its right and becomes the base for the new formation. The remaining half-battalions of the brigade move up on its left into line by the shortest line. The two old extended half-battalions from the two left half-battalions of the new line. (2) Left brigade: The two extended half-battalions close to their outer flank, reform half-battalion double columns, and join the remainder of the brigade, which proceeds by the shortest way to form the reserve to the new line, at the proper distance in rear of its centre, and in the usual formation. (3) Reserve: The right battalion wheels to its right and sends its two half-battalions to extend in succession to the right of the new line of skirmishers and supports. The remaining battalions if not already in half-battalion double columns, will adopt that formation, and proceed in the most direct way to form on the right of the half-battalion of formation of the new line. Should the change of the front be ordered to the left it will be executed on exactly the same principles.

IV.—*Of a division (or brigade) when in contact with the enemy*.—A change of front such as above, though necessary for purposes of drill, would rarely be required on service, and could only be executed in case of a flank attack when the front was not engaged with the enemy. In war, when there is any expectation of a flank attack, a division will always advance with a brigade or battalion kept back in echelon on its exposed flank, and on such an attack being developed, this brigade or battalion will at once change front to meet it, throwing out skirmishers and supports in the usual way. The old skirmishing battalions will hold the enemy in check on the original front, and the reserve will be at once brought up to extend and strengthen the flank now threatened. Any battalion disposable from the opposite flank of the original line will be immediately