

The Western Scot.

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IN THE INTERESTS OF

THE 67th PIONEER BATTALION

"WESTERN SCOTS," OF CANADA,

4th Canadian Division, B.E.F.

(By kind permission of Lt.-Col. Lorne Ross, C.O.)

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C. L. ARMSTRONG, Lieut.	Editor.
A. A. GRAY, Lieut.	Assistant Editor.
Sergeant R. L. CONDY	Business Manager.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 1916.

POINTS WORTH PASTING IN YOUR HAT.

Colonel Ironsides, D.S.O., our G.S.O.—One, delivered another of his practical and interesting talks to the officers and non-commissioned officers of this battalion on Thursday evening last, just prior to the beginning of our final field training. It is a pity that every man in the battalion could not have heard it, because it covered points that to all of us now are of primary import, and it emanated from a thorough theoretic knowledge, sharpened and tempered by keen personal experience.

It is not our hope to be able to reproduce here, even in small part, Colonel Ironsides' remarks and the many apt illustrations he produced. But there are points which he emphasised that may well be given here for the benefit of all hands.

Troops when moving up to the assault of an enemy position first come under artillery fire, and their first rough experience is met with when they have to cross the artillery zone. This zone may be encountered at a range from the enemy position of from 6,000 to 12,000 yards, and within it all calibres of shells are pitching. To attempt to cross such a zone in an orderly line would be fatal. It must be crossed as quickly as possible in formed bodies on an irregular frontage, thus affording the enemy gunners as poor a mark as possible on which to range.

From approximately 3,000 yards up it should be possible to advance with a margin of safety in platoon columns in, say, diamond formation, with *not less* than 200 yards distance between platoons and 50 yards interval. When the advance has carried to less than 3,000 yards, the formations will again have to be reduced to columns of sections in fours, with interval and distance to correspond.

The difficulty in an advance under fire is most marked when the troops reach the enemy machine guns' effective range, 1,200 yards, because an artillery formation is more or less "pie" for the M.G.; and yet to change formation here is to invite disaster at the hands of the artilleryman, who is able to land shells as close as 500 yards from his own line. The decision as to whether or not to change, and when, rests with the section commander, who is guided by the character and intensity of the fire directed against his particular section. Did he find his section suffering heavily from machine-gun fire he would be justified in opening into line, but he should *not* do so merely because other sections do so.

At approximately 800 yards from the enemy it is necessary to begin to form a line in order to be able to develop a volume of fire. Fire should *not* be opened until further advance is impossible without it. As a rule, it will be found that fire will have to be opened at about 600 yards.

It must be borne in mind that the object in view is to reach the enemy with the bayonet. The length of the final rush should not be greater than 100 yards; otherwise the troops engaged will be winded by the time the enemy line is reached. The intervening ground between the opening of fire at 600 yards and the beginning of the charge at

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100 yards must be covered in short rushes. Sections must rush rapidly from cover to cover, independently and irregularly, and men must spring up and flop down, regardless of bruises or sprains. Bayonets should be fixed at the last cover prior to the charge.

The order for the final charge does not come from the rear—it cannot. As a rule the charge is started by some man in the firing line spontaneously, who, sensing the psychological moment, goes forward with a yell. When this occurs, *it is the duty of every other man to go with him.* The right time to charge is the moment the enemy begins, in ones and twos, to evacuate and fall back.

These are mere skeleton points from Colonel Ironsides' talk, but they will be worth more than fine gold to the man who bears them in mind in the weeks just ahead.

C.L.A.

A SNAPPY PAPER.

A recent arrival on our Exchange Table is the newest copy of "The Brazier," originally published in the interests of the 16th Battalion the Canadian Scottish, whence come our C.O. and Majors Armour and Sutton. With this edition "The Brazier" becomes a brigade medium, speaking for the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Battalions of the First Division. It is published by permission of Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Leckie, D.S.O., and Fritz the Hun. The publishers apologise for the lateness of the edition and explain that the Huns "played us a nasty trick as the last formes were going to press." It may have been late but it sure is *some* paper; it reeks of the trenches and has a distinction that few battalion papers will ever equal. "The Braziers" manager is Percy Godenraith, well ken' by many o' us yins frae the Coast. Guid luck tae the whale jing bang!

C.L.A.