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MOUNTED INFANTRY PATROLS THE NECESSARY RESULTS OF OUR PRESENT SYSTEM OF FIGHTING.

By Major CARL REGENSPURSKY, Vienna.

SMOKELESS powder, combined with the invisible, far-reaching, and accurate bullet universally in use, have of late years considerably altered the opinions held by military writers as to the tactics necessary on the battle-fields of the future.

The penetrative powers of the small-arms lately introduced into the armies of all the Great Powers is very considerable.

The minimum thickness of ordinary soil affording protection is 30 inches, single brick walls, after being struck a few times, no longer afford any cover.

The new German rifle ranges up to 4,000 yards, and at 900 yards the bullet will penetrate 10 inches of fir or pine, and 14 inches of sand.

At 450 yards the bullet can pierce three or four ranks, and at 1,300 yards a man may no longer consider himself safe, even if the bullet has already penetrated two of his comrades.

With regard to the so-called smokeless powder, though the report of the rifles when fired is heard, it is very difficult to see whence the rifles are fired. Under certain conditions no trace of smoke can be distinguished. Minor acts of surprise will be more frequent in the future, and will often partake of the nature of ambushes. Very small bodies of cavalry, intimately connected with infantry, forming in action patrols to the latter, will, therefore, be necessary. It will no longer be possible to discover well posted batteries.

An Officer who was present at some manœuvres a couple of years ago relates that some batteries in action, and bodies of cavalry which thought they were well under cover, and perfectly safe, received an umpire's decision that they had been placed out of action by infantry, with the remark that no infantry had been firing at them.

They had never noticed some infantry about 600 yards off, concealed from view by some high-growing Indian corn. They had been under the fire of this infantry for a considerable time.

Had ball ammunition been used in this case instead of blank, it would have been no easy matter for the artillery and cavalry to escape without severe loss, from the effects of this surprise.

Similar surprises might frequently occur.

Only a war can absolutely decide what the effects of the improvement in small-arms will be. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, the difficulty of leading troops has considerably increased.

Infantry, a slow moving arm, has to get over a fire-swept zone,

over 3,000 yards in depth, in attacking an enemy's position. The difficulty of this task is considerably increased, unless the infantry has accurate and precise information as to what is proceeding in its immediate front.

Various suggestions have been made as to the means whereby this additional information may be procured, but none of them would appear to adapt themselves to our organization so well as the project set forth by Major Regenspursky, of the Austrian Service, from whose pamphlet we propose making the following extracts :—

An infantry regiment of four battalions has over 3,000 men in the ranks. This body of men occupies about 1 mile on the line of march. In action it will occupy a parallelogram of about 800 yards by 1,800 yards.—(Infantry Drill, 1890, Plate XXXVII.)

Acting independently or on a flank, the space thus occupied may easily be considerably increased.

We know, from experience, that in action it is impossible to avoid the intermingling of the smaller tactical units. Other bodies of troops appear on the portion of the ground originally allotted to the brigade; the action waving to and fro separates individual units from each other—some of these advance close to the enemy's position, others the course of the fight forces back.

The duties the Austrian regimental Colonel (corresponding to our Brigadier), as laid down in their drill-book, has to perform in action, are numerous. He has to ensure the co-operation of the different battalions to obtain the general object in view. He must make dispositions for the proper supply of ammunition, issue orders for the transport and non-combatants, is responsible for the maintenance of touch with his neighbouring troops, must send reports to senior Officers and receive their instructions, must without delay correct any deviation made from the direction of attack, &c. After a victorious issue, the Austrian regimental Colonel has to ensure the following duties being performed on his command reaching the enemy's position. Disengage and form up the various units, maintain touch with the enemy, replenish ammunition, see to the wounded, &c. This means that orders have to reach all those under his command, however scattered they may be; should the fight terminate unfavourably, and a retirement be necessary, the (Austrian) Colonel must be the first at the probable rallying place, and must at the same time send directions to his subordinates, to ensure the rapid restoration of order.

Under our present organization the regimental Colonel has practically no means of communicating his orders to his subordinates. His regimental Adjutant is not intended to act as galloper. His position is too important to permit of his constantly galloping about in action, conveying orders of, comparatively speaking, minor importance; and during the fight he should invariably remain near his chief.

We do not know whether or not, under former conditions, the Colonel of a regiment was able to manage with no one else as galloper besides his regimental Adjutant. Every field day, on a fairly

large scale, proves that under modern conditions the regimental Adjutant cannot fulfil all his duties in action, no matter how well or how smartly he may ride. Owing to the distances and intervals separating the different battalions being so great, the imparting of orders causes repeated riding to and fro. Under the regulations now in force, a proportion of this duty must be done by the regimental Commander himself, whether he likes it or not.

At present it frequently happens that the influence of the regimental Commander ceases to be felt soon after the entry of the regiment into action, and a number of subordinate commanders lead different portions of the regiment according to their own individual ideas. This is especially liable to occur should the Colonel himself be not only exceedingly well mounted, but also as good a rider as a cavalry Colonel.

If we add to the already-existing difficulties the difficulties caused by conditions which hamper our sight, or our means of locating ourselves, such as close country, rain, or failing light, the command of a Colonel over his regiment ceases entirely. He becomes a leader without troops. *His responsibility, however, remains.* We shall give a couple of instances, drawn from the campaigns of 1870 and 1877, to show that our statements have been in no way exaggerated.

The cases which we are about to quote cannot be considered solitary instances of the facts to which they relate, for they are but types of the manner in which infantry regiments entered into action in the campaigns of 1870 and 1877.

We know of no sound reason for expecting that in future wars there will be any material difference in the way in which our infantry will come into action.

The increased power of fire-arms would rather tend to a still earlier loosening or dissolving of tactical formations.

Bearing the above considerations in mind, we will endeavour to show the importance of the examples we have selected. They will further assist us in arriving at the conclusions to be set forth in this pamphlet.

On the 6th August, 1870, at the battle of Spicheren, the 77th Prussian Regiment was following the 53rd Regiment in column of route. These two regiments formed the 28th Brigade, and were advancing towards the battle-field in a south-westerly direction, after crossing the Saar at Malstatt.

The 28th Brigade had been directed to outflank the left wing of the enemy near Stiring Wendel. With this object in view, the 53rd advanced rapidly through the Communal wood. The battalions of this regiment soon lost touch, both with each other and with the 77th Regiment following in rear. The 2nd and 3rd companies of this latter regiment entered the Communal wood near the Shanzenberg, and followed the 53rd. The 1st and 4th companies advanced along the railway and the Drahtzug pond, and appeared, about a couple of hours later, at the south-west corner of the Stiring copse. The second and third battalions also took the same direction.

However, one of the Adjutants of the 74th happened to be return-

ing, slightly wounded, from the front, in order to obtain fresh horses, both for himself and for his chief. This regiment had been in action some little time, and, in accordance with instructions received from his Colonel, he requested these two battalions of the 77th, which he found at the German mill, first to turn the enemy out of the Stiring copse, still held by them, and then to incline to the left and advance towards the western slopes of the Spicheren heights.

In order to comply with this request, the 2nd battalion of the 77th entered the above-mentioned copse some time before 3 p.m. The 3rd battalion, which was originally following the 2nd, quitted the railway at Drahtzug, and crossed the north-east corner of the copse, then, advancing over the open country, changed its objective, attacking the farm-houses Goldene Bremm and Barracke Mouton, situated on the high road. Thus, shortly after 3 p.m., the 77th were split up into four groups, and occupied a space of about 1,800 yards in breadth and 1,700 yards in depth. We hear nothing further of the movements of the 77th as a regiment. It fought till dusk, split up among portions of other regiments, in four separate groups, which were never near each other. The official account is silent as to the action of the Colonel. Perfectly helpless, he and his Adjutant could, in all probability, only look on, while his regiment was being gradually split up.

The action of Colonel Tjubowitzki, commanding the Life Grenadier Regiment, of the 2nd Division of the Guard Corps, at the battle of Gornyi Dubnjak, on the 24th October, 1877, is equally instructive. This Officer's 2nd and 4th battalions had captured a small redoubt, situated close in front of the main work of the Turks at Gornyi Dubnjak; but it appeared impossible for them to maintain their position under the exceedingly heavy fire of the enemy.

Colonel Tjubowitzki looked to see if there was any support at hand, but he only saw his 3rd battalion, badly beaten, in the act of seeking shelter in a wood to their rear; the 1st battalion, which was intended to act as a general reserve, was nowhere to be seen. There being no one else available, Colonel Tjubowitzki, although wounded himself, started off to find his reserve. The first troops he found were a battalion of the Pawlov Regiment, which was on his left, and he requested this battalion to afford him the necessary support. His own first battalion he only found after a considerable search, for some other authority had, in the meanwhile, directed it to act as escort to some artillery.

This latter battalion was now ordered by Colonel Tjubowitzki to support the other portions of his regiment. It did so; its losses were, however, so heavy, that no material relief was afforded to the battalions in the firing line. The 2nd and 4th battalions had, in the meantime, lost their leaders and two-thirds of their Officers. They had remained in the above-mentioned small redoubt, but all unity of command was lost, and the different units were hopelessly mixed up. The Colonel, however, wished to make an endeavour to lead the whole of this body of men to an assault against the big redoubt, and directed the drummer to beat the charge. But the latter was shot dead while

In the act of raising his drum-sticks. Tjabowitzki now seized the drum himself, but it was useless. The overwhelming fire of the enemy absolutely prohibited any attempt of the men even to rise.

In order to accomplish his object by means of fresh reserves, the Colonel again hurried off in search of fresh troops, and was again wounded.

It was only on reaching the dressing station that Colonel Tjabowitzki found an opportunity of sending his regimental Adjutant to General Gourko to report the capture of the small redoubt, and also to request support for his regiment.

The ingenuous and heroic manner in which this Russian Officer himself sought assistance for his regiment brings very forcibly before us the dilemmas in which a Colonel may find himself when in action. These difficulties and dilemmas are caused by the want of means at the Colonel's disposal for the conveyance of orders.

An important tactical consequence of long-ranging rifle bullets, propelled by smokeless powder, is the possibility of a *surprise by fire at long ranges from some direction and position difficult to locate.*

We now propose giving a supposititious case of such a surprise, one, however, which is in no way far-fetched, and from it and the two cases already given we intend basing our conclusions.

Let us assume that an infantry regiment is marching in double column, and that it forms the Divisional Reserve (or third line). It is on the left wing of the division, and has sent out patrols to the front, as well as flanking patrols, towards a wood, about 2,000 yards distant, on the left of the line of march of the regiment, and running parallel to it.

The Colonel is aware that the divisional cavalry is some distance out in front, and on the left of the first line of the attack. The enemy is in position on some high ground which closes the horizon, some 3,000 yards from the head of the regiment.

A shower of bullets suddenly strikes the columns; their fall is continuous, and somewhat dense. In a few minutes a goodly number of men are either mortally hit or wounded; and the effect of these losses is increased by the fact of their being so unexpected. The impression formed by the Colonel is that his regiment is suffering from the bullets intended for the first line, but which strike him owing to the enemy having over-estimated the range. He consequently determines to deploy into line of battalion columns, and take ground to the left, in order to get out of the line of fire of these shots. One of the battalions forming the left of the column is expected to reach nearly as far as the above-mentioned wood, which the left flanking party has just reached.

The movements consequent on this order are quietly executed, in spite of ever continuing losses; but as the battalions on the left approach the wood their losses steadily increase.

Some minutes, however, elapse before the Major of the left battalion is able to decide with any certainty, from the noise and from other signs, that the fire must be coming from the wood.

At this instant, a couple of men arrive in a breathless condition

from the left flanking party, and report that several hundred of the enemy are marching through the wood, and have probably reached its edge by this time.

A Staff Officer of the division also arrives about the same time, and informs the Colonel that the divisional cavalry have reported the occupation of the wood in question by a hostile column of infantry. In the meantime, however, the regiment has already approached to within about 900 yards of the wood, and during the last few minutes the hostile fire has been very heavy. The Officers are struck, the men lose their formations, and the regiment becomes practically useless for the remainder of the day.

It is true that the scouts from the left flanking party were too late with their report, but the fault lay neither with them nor with the party. As soon as the pointers of this guard heard the enemy approaching through the wood, they fired a couple of shots, and a couple of men doubled towards the company furnishing the party, and a couple more towards the nearest battalion of the regiment. The shots were, however, unheard, and it took close on twenty minutes for the men in heavy marching order to get over the 2,000 yards of deep plough between the wood and the regiment, hence their information was too late.

Neither can any blame be attributed to the divisional cavalry. It had left the extensive wood in its rear, had, in addition, sent patrols towards its left, and was attentively observing both the hostile position and the hostile cavalry, which, being superior to it in numbers, was seeking for an opportunity to attack. The wood in their rear had been traversed by several patrols of the divisional cavalry; but they had just come in with the information that it was unoccupied. About the same time that the regiment in the third line was beginning its advance, a cavalry patrol from the left flank brought in the report that a hostile infantry detachment, a few hundred strong, and which had probably lost its way, had entered the wood in rear of the divisional cavalry. This news was sent as rapidly as possible to the General Officer Commanding the division, and to the nearest body of infantry by the Officer Commanding the divisional cavalry, before even making his own arrangements to meet this danger. The General Officer Commanding, immediately on the receipt of this important report, sent his best-mounted Staff Officer to the Commander of the divisional reserve, to acquaint him of the threatening danger, but, as we have already seen, this Officer came too late.

Unless we are prepared to blame the General Officer Commanding the division, for only allowing the regiment in question two troopers from the divisional cavalry as orderlies, we cannot hold him responsible for the defeat of the regiment.

The reason that only two troopers were detailed was to avoid any further weakening of the divisional cavalry. It originally only consisted of three squadrons, and their effective strength had been already considerably reduced by the numerous men necessarily detached on various employs. Of the two troopers allotted to him as orderlies,

the Colonel had sent one with a message to the regimental ammunition column; the other was with him.

Had there been twelve mounted men at the Colonel's disposal instead of two, the wood might have been reconnoitred *immediately previous to his advance*, a few mounted men being apportioned to the flanking party. One mounted man might also have accompanied the divisional cavalry, to bring in news of the state of affairs on their part of the field. The surprise by long-range fire from the wood would then have been impossible.

The conclusions from the three above-mentioned examples are easily drawn; they are as follows:—

Under the present conditions of warfare, infantry require—

1. Some trustworthy means for the communication of orders.
2. Owing to the improvement in small arms, and consequent liability to surprise, increased means of security, both before and during an action.

These two conditions can be satisfied by *permanently detaching a number of intelligent and well-mounted men, to every body of infantry.*

During the course of the action, it is the constant duty of the divisional or corps cavalry to reconnoitre on the flanks of the division or corps. In accordance with the Drill Book (Austrian), a certain number of men belonging to the divisional cavalry are told off at manœuvres as orderlies to the different infantry units. As a rule, they are only told off on days on which an action is expected. Sometimes a large number are told off, sometimes a few, sometimes none at all.

The system is, however, at variance with the principle that our organization should be so framed that each man and each horse should serve where they are permanently required.

The allotting of cavalry orderlies to the infantry semi-permanently in the above-mentioned manner is a half-measure, the advantages of which are outweighed by the perplexities and disadvantages which are felt by both branches of the service.

The cavalry orderlies cannot fulfil the duties which the infantry Commanders require of them, because the same orderlies are not permanently detailed.

2. These mounted men are dependent on their squadron in regard to rations, equipment, clothing, shoeing, quarters, &c., and are constantly wanting to return to it.

3. These ever-changing troopers know nothing about the men composing the regiment, nor its little peculiarities. One can fully realize that in peace manœuvres the General Officer Commanding very often considers it unnecessary for the infantry to have any cavalry orderlies, or forgets about it, or considers it more important to maintain the squadrons at their full strength than support the infantry, by giving the latter increased means of communicating orders, and increased means of security.

A leader is in a very different position if he knows that at every

hour of the day and night he can rely on the assistance of some mounted men, instead of only receiving them now and again as a matter of chance. The study of certain battles in recent campaigns shows us at once that many disasters would have been avoided, the troops spared many hardships, and, above all, it shows us that different regiments would, in action, have served with more unison had mounted men been permanently told off to the infantry. In order to perform the above-mentioned duties correctly, the mounted men must, undoubtedly, be permanently attached to the infantry, and in every respect belong to it. From the infantry they must receive their pay and ammunition, rations for themselves and forage for their horses, clothing, &c. It must be from infantry Officers that they receive any recognition of any special performance on their part, and to whom they must look for rewards; otherwise any advantageous and continuous activity on their part is barely possible.

It must be a considerable disadvantage for infantry to have its reports and minor reconnaissances done, and orders communicated by cavalrymen ignorant of the functions and characteristics of infantry, and who do not know the Officer to whom they are attached. This disadvantage will only be fully apparent when once the infantry mounted patrols which we are advocating have accompanied an infantry regiment right through a campaign, and under all conditions of service.

The advantage that will accrue from having mounted men, thoroughly knowing the regiment and its Officers, and being equally well known by them, will be so apparent that we shall then wonder how we delayed introducing so simple a measure.

We repeat that infantry, in order to fulfil the duties required of it in action, must have a number of intelligent, well-mounted men, exclusively and permanently at its disposal. These men will reconnoitre the country and the enemy, with the eyes of infantrymen, and with a view to the requirements of infantry soldiers.

On the march they will supplement the troops performing the duties of security, maintain communication with neighbouring columns, assist in communicating orders and reports, accompany the regimental transport, and rapidly obtain assistance in the event of any mishap occurring to it; and, when possible, precede the columns and assist in ascertaining suitable spots for camps or cantonments at the night halts.

In camp or cantonments they complete the service of security, maintain connection among the separated groups of their own infantry, bring in orders from superior authorities, collect requisitions—in a word, they relieve the infantry permanently of a portion of those duties which now, on the completion of a day's march, fall so heavily on it.

In the immediate vicinity of the enemy and during the action, these mounted men invariably scout at a suitable distance on the flanks of their own infantry, and also to their front if possible, convey intelligence from the cavalry pushed out further to the front, or from the troops already in action. They will further give timely warning

of any obstacles in the way of the infantry, assist in communicating orders, &c., among the different units, guide the ammunition columns and regimental transport to the places selected for them by the Colonel, and under exceptional circumstances will themselves bring ammunition closer up to the firing line in haversacks. After a success, they re-establish touch with the enemy, and, in the event of the regiment being scattered, they assist in the speedy rallying of the different portions.

These men, even when mounted, must, however, always be treated as infantrymen, and the men to be selected should be strong and intelligent, have good eye-sight, and a special aptitude and love for mounted work.

On a war-footing, each regimental staff and each battalion should have three mounted infantrymen; consequently each regiment of four battalions would have fifteen.

On a peace-footing, two in place of three would suffice, reducing the number per regiment to ten.

The mounted infantry of each corps would be assembled together and trained annually for eight months, from October to the end of May. They should be exercised in all weathers, as only men of extreme physical endurance would be suitable, and extensive reconnaissances in snow and frost should be made.

In the beginning of June they would rejoin their battalions, and take part in all battalion and regimental manoeuvres, and would be used as already suggested.

We believe that if this idea were properly worked, it would be an object of ambition for every active and smart lad to become one of these mounted infantrymen.

When they have completed their course, half of them should be made corporals, the others lance-corporals without pay. They should all, however, groom their own horses.

Let us return to our example of Spicheren, and examine the influence which some mounted infantry patrols might have exercised on the course of the action. If the Colonel of the 77th had had twelve mounted infantrymen at his disposal, it is probable that there would have been one with each battalion Commander, one with the regimental ammunition column, and one with the transport, leaving seven still available.

After passing the Saar at the railway bridge, three men might have been gradually sent off to maintain communication with the 53rd (the leading regiment of the brigade) which was rapidly advancing. A couple of men would also be sent to the heights on the left flank—the drill ground and the west side of the Galgenberg.

Had such an arrangement prevailed, it is probable that the two regiments of the 28th Brigade would not have been totally separated

from each other. The splitting up and separation of the leading battalion of the 77th would have been still more difficult, while the total disappearance of the two half battalions in question would have been nearly impossible.

Let us, however, accept the facts as they occurred up to the period when the wounded Adjutant of the 74th, in accordance with instructions received from his Colonel, requested the second and fusilier battalions of the 77th first to eject the enemy from the Stiring copse, and then move towards the Spicheren heights.

At this period the 77th had already lost touch with the 53rd, with the General Officer commanding the 28th Brigade, and even with its own 1st battalion.

In deciding to comply with the request of the wounded Adjutant, the Colonel quitted his position in the order of march of his brigade, and his regiment no longer formed the rearmost regiment of the brigade. Then his immediate duty would be a careful preparation for the entry of his regiment into the action, in which it was shortly to take part.

This preparation would have been as follows:—

1. Recall the separated portions of his regiment.
2. Reconnoitre to the front, in the direction of the Stiring copse.
3. Reconnoitre to the left, towards the Folster heights and the Galgenberg. This was necessary to obtain information from the neighbouring troops as to the state of affairs. It was also necessary to know the positions of the German artillery, so as to avoid clashing with it, while advancing with the regiment.

Of less pressing importance, but still necessary, were—

4. Orders to the ammunition column and transport.
5. A report to the brigade Commander.

There could be no two opinions as to the necessity of these steps.

To recall the 1st battalion, two, or better still, three mounted men, could be sent, on account of the difficulty of finding it in the wood.

On entering the Communal wood these mounted orderlies would at first watch and listen for some familiar object or sound, such as a conspicuous figure in the battalion, or colour of a horse, for the shoulder-cords of any possible straggler, for some familiar voices or faces, &c., until they succeeded in reaching some portion of the battalion.

Having some knowledge of the people they questioned, they would be correctly, and without delay, informed as to the whereabouts of the senior Officer, whom they themselves would equally well know.

It would be necessary to send at least a couple, if not three, of the sharpest men through Drahtzug towards the Stiring copse. This was the important direction for them to take, for the fighting was occurring in the copse, and it was the immediate objective of the regiment.

A couple of mounted men would also be sent to the Folster heights to obtain information from the troops there, about the fight, and also to examine the ground with a view to the advance of the regiment

under cover, as near as possible to the copse. One of these men could return with the report, the other remain out in front.

It would be sufficient if one mounted orderly were sent towards the Galgenberg.

It would be desirable to send an orderly with orders for the ammunition wagons to close up, and follow the regiment, and to direct the regimental transport to halt north of the bridge.

The eleventh orderly would be sent with either a written or a verbal report to the Brigadier, informing him of the contemplated action of the regiment.

The Colonel, after handing over his regiment to the second in command, could now ascend the western slopes of the Galgenberg, accompanied by his Adjutant and the last available orderly. This would enable him to obtain a rapid glance of the surrounding country, and also of the course of the action.

It is probable that if ten or twelve orderlies had been employed in the above suggested manner, the 77th Regiment would not have come into action a minute later on the 6th August; and it would, in addition, have come into action as a compact body, and with some knowledge of what was occurring, and its action would have been more effective.

The Colonel would, at least, have retained command of his regiment for a longer period.

Turning to the battle of Gornyi Dubnjak, on the 24th October, 1877, we find, from the account of the battle as given by Pusyrewsky, that the advance of the 2nd and 4th battalions of the Life Grenadiers, against the Turks, was made with an insufficient and faulty knowledge of the enemy's position and of the ground.

The 3rd battalion attacked the enemy's redoubts without any previous reconnaissance. Had there been fifteen mounted men at the disposal of this regiment, this could barely have occurred; and it is, at least, probable that the mounted men of the 1st battalion, which was in reserve, would, of their own accord, have maintained connection with the battalions in the firing line.

The wounded Colonel would have been spared his painful rides in search of support. Some of the mounted Grenadiers would have been at his disposal. From time to time they would inform him of the positions of both neighbouring regiments.

He might also have used his mounted men to inform General Gourko of his success immediately on the capture of the small redoubt, and impress the necessity of immediate reinforcement on his chief.

Colonel Tjubowitzki's action in wandering to and fro on the field of battle, looking for "support of any sort," was very necessary and resolute; but it was not the duty of the Colonel commanding a regiment. Colonel Tjubowitzki should have been better employed, establishing his leading battalions in their position, which could have been done by directing the whole of the firing line to entrench itself where it lay.

He should have been on the spot to stop the senseless assaults of individual companies against the main work of the enemy, and make the fire of his men tell, until the arrival of supports, thereby materially lessening the losses. There should have been no occasion for him to perform the duties of galloper.

This regiment, so gallantly holding its own in front of the Turkish entrenchments, suffered heavy loss through being shelled by the Russian artillery. This error would have been stopped sooner than it actually was checked, had an orderly immediately been sent to the artillery to inform them of their error.

We have a few remarks to make about the regiment in divisional reserve in the third case which we have introduced. We will assume that the mounted men were distributed as follows, before the regiment advanced :—

A couple straight to their front, to receive information from the left flank of the combatants, and to report the approach of the regiment.

One orderly with the divisional cavalry, collecting information both as to the nature of the ground and the course of the fight on the left flank.

Three men reconnoitring the wood on the regiment's left flank ; two with the left flank guard, one with the ammunition column, one with the intrenching tool carts, and another with the Colonel commanding the regiment.

The Colonel with these mounted men available is compelled to send some of them to reconnoitre the wood. The patrols of the divisional cavalry have admittedly reconnoitred the wood, but the advantage of this second reconnaissance lies in the fact that it occurs at the very time that the regiment is approaching the vicinity of the dangerous spot. A reconnaissance half-an-hour old can, under certain circumstances, be absolutely valueless. The reports which come in from the cavalry from the beginning of the action may be of the highest value to the Staff, but they may not be always applicable when the infantry makes its appearance about an hour or two later. The infantry, owing to the long-ranging and invisible weapons of modern warfare, is compelled to make a fresh reconnaissance of the large expanse of ground in which its sphere of action will lie at the time which appears most suitable to its arm. We will assume that when the shower of bullets strikes the regiment some 3,000 yards from the assumed position of the enemy no reports have been received from the mounted infantry scouts. We will further assume that the mounted scouts reconnoitring the wood do not reach it any sooner than the dismounted ones are supposed to have done. As soon as the presence of the enemy in the wood is established, one of the scouts gallops back to the regiment, another back to the flanking guard. The former should reach the regiment within about six minutes ; and his signals "enemy in position" would probably be perceived by some Officer of the regiment within two or three minutes of his galloping back. The difference in time between the receipt of the report from the mounted scouts and the one received from the dismounted ones would be about fifteen minutes, a difference of the highest import-

ance in this case. The regiment is informed that the enemy is firing at them from the wood while still some 1,600 yards away from it. It is consequently able to form up to meet this new danger, and reply to it.

The remaining scouts remain a few minutes in the wood, so as further to observe both the strength and direction of advance of the enemy. Pursued by a hostile fire which drops a couple of them, the survivor reports that there are about 500 men in the wood.

This report is confirmed by the scout who was attached to the divisional cavalry, the latter having discovered that a hostile detachment of about two companies had entered the wood half an hour previously.

The Colonel now knows the danger which is threatening him, he can meet it, and still come into action on the left of the division, as he was intended to do.

We think we have now sufficiently shown what we mean by advocating mounted infantry scouts.

We will admit that there are many difficulties in the way of training these men, and that in a short time they may all be lost to the regiment to which they belong; but in spite of this, we believe the advantages of having these men considerably outweigh any disadvantages which may exist.

The following advantages are self-evident:—

1. Misunderstandings are much less liable to occur among men who personally know and are known by those with whom they come in contact.
2. The Colonel is able to retain control for a longer period over his command, and regiments are consequently able to work better together.
3. The cavalry is not weakened by the constant detaching of orderlies.

As far back as 1870, severe losses occurring in a small space of time destroyed all cohesion among regiments. Since the magazine rifle possesses the power of destroying cohesion to a still larger extent than any of the old breech-loaders, in the next war it will become still more difficult to prevent dispersion among the different companies and battalions of regiments.

For some time past, foreseeing Officers have recognized that the necessary means for circulating orders in action have been insufficient. The demand for cavalry orderlies in war has been a constantly increasing one. The meeting of this demand materially diminishes the number of sabres available in action, and hitches and friction are apt to occur owing to the difficulty of rationing, clothing, and foraging the men and horses, all of which duties under the present system devolve on squadron leaders. Mounted infantry orderlies will obviate all these difficulties.

We trust we have made out a good case for mounted infantry scouts, and hope that our ideas will meet with general approval.