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THE NEW JAPANESE INFANTRY TRAINING (PROVISIONAL) 1ST DECEMBER, 1906.

IMPRESSIONS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAINING, GATHERED
ON READING THE ABOVE.

By Major ISHIURA KENJIRO, Imperial Japanese Infantry.

Summarised from the "Kaikosha Kiji" (Officers' Club Journal),
No. 353, by Captain E. F. CALTHROP, R.F.A.
Communicated by the General Staff.

The chief features of the new Infantry Drill Manual appear to be: simplification and clearness of methods, and regulations based on actual practice—the natural result of recent experience.

As the manual (being a provisional issue) has not received the Imperial Mandate, its contents has not become law, and discussion of them is permissible.

While all training is but a preparation for practice, there is a fear, in view of the reduced term of service, and the youth of so many of the officers, that if too practical, the training may become slack, and precision and thoroughness deteriorate.

To meet the ever-changing emergencies of war, the cultivation of intelligence and resource in the leaders is the modern aim.

The tendency of the French military instruction, adopted by our Army, was to lay down intricate and detailed regulations for every event; so that officers and men came to act like machines. To-day our military training is more after the German model; it has become simpler; the individual intelligence of officers and men has been developed, and independent initiative encouraged.

But, if simplification of procedure is accompanied by rough and ready methods of training; if, because drill has become simplified, we mistakenly assume that a less severe training is sufficient; the men so trained will not only lose exactness, uniformity, and stability, but character will remain unformed, and each man will act for himself, the troops becoming, in time of danger or stress, like a flock of crows.

In my opinion, simplification of methods and regulations, rather increases the labour and responsibilities of the instructor.

Instruction in methods of practical performance must be accompanied by detailed observations and warning, and combined with clear explanation of the object in view.

The minor regulations for interior economy, which have no direct connection with fighting, the rules for duties and conduct in barracks in peace should be laid down and maintained with the utmost rigour. As opposed to these, units should be allowed latitude, and freedom in choice of method, in the instruction of those parts of the drill book that refer to conduct in the field.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Infantry Training Manual is divided into two parts:—

Part I. deals with fundamental training, and contains the rules on which subsequent practice is to be based.

Part II. deals with fighting; and as latitude is here required, general instructions take the place of rules.

The features of the new edition of Part I. are simplification and curtailment. These are obtained by:—

The elimination of a fixed procedure for matters which can be better dealt with by the commander in accordance with the requirements of the moment.

The omission of movements, which are comparatively rare in occurrence, and instruction in which takes time and tends to obscure essentials.

The curtailment of drill in close formation.

The omission of all reference to "Ceremonial," the distinct character of which is emphasised by its publication in a separate book.

The manual, which this new issue supersedes, was compiled in 1898.

CHANGES INTRODUCED IN THE NEW MANUAL.

With the object of making clearer the intention of the present regulations, of simplification, tightening the bonds of discipline, strengthening *moral*, and also as a result of the experience gained before and during the late war, as noticed by the various units in the Army, alterations and additions have been made in the infantry training and embodied in a new provisional manual.

¹10. *Position of Attention*.—The angle between the feet to be 60° (approx.). The palm of the hand to be close to the seam of the trousers.² (This is found to be a more natural and easily maintained position.)

14. *Marching*.—(As it is unnecessary to have two styles of marching, the desiderata of a military step being that it should impart a soldierly bearing, and, at the same time, be easily maintained; one style of marching only is laid down. For these reasons the words "Cease parade step!" are cancelled.)³

O. 18. *Stepping Back*.—This paragraph is cancelled.

O. 22. *Changing Step*.—(Instruction in this as a formal drill movement being of no benefit, directions merely how it may be performed are given in paragraph 82.)

¹ The numbers refer to the paragraphs in the text of the new book. "O" indicates paragraphs in the old book. The matter contained in brackets consists of explanations and reasons for changes.

² The 1898 Manual laid down 90° (approx.), and "Palms turned outwards at an angle of 45° with the seam of the trousers."—E.F.C.

³ In the 1898 Manual the regulation step resembled the German parade step. To avoid unnecessary fatigue on the line of march, etc., it was laid down that the troops might march in a natural fashion on the command "Cease parade step!" With the exception that on raising the leg the toe is *not* pointed downwards, the new directions for marching do not differ from the old ones. The directions are, however, more or less general, and representatives from regiments are now being instructed at the School of Musketry in a compromise between the "parade step" and the natural style.—E.F.C.

34 (O. 46). *Firing Kneeling*.—(In order to maintain a steadier position, the right leg is to be placed on the ground.)¹

O. 43, 46, 47. *Firing by Word of Command at Individual Instruction*.—(This is cancelled as harmful, and not possessing any advantages.)

O. 53. *Charging Step*.—(The step immediately preceding the assault.) This is cancelled. (Practical experience in the field has shown this to be entirely unnecessary.)

44, 45, and 46. *Firing in Extended Order*. The principles governing the conduct of this, as a result of war experience, are laid down.²

SECTION TRAINING.

60 (O. 70). *Marching, Rear Rank in Front*.—(Reference to this as regards bodies larger than a section is omitted as redundant.)

61. *Distance Between Ranks*.—This is increased from 24 inches to 30 inches. (The former distance was found too short.)

Changing Ranks.—Cancelled. (The original front, as told off, will always be regarded as the proper front. This is laid down for the purpose of simplification and for facilitating the process of forming fours and files.)

63 and 64. *Dressing*.—The two methods of dressing: (a) on markers; and (b) individually by files, are now distinctly laid down.

O 89. The commands, "Fire; standing (kneeling or lying)," and "About turn! Halt! Fire standing (kneeling or lying)" when moving in extended order, are cancelled. (Found by experience to be unnecessary.)

73. *Kinds of Fire*.—"Slow" fire is abolished. (Firing in extended order will be regarded as the normal condition. There will be two regulation kinds of individual fire—"ordinary fire" and "rapid fire," the latter for special occasions. The conditions for good shooting are: steadiness, deliberation, and the choice of the right moment to fire; and although a special rate of fire, such as "slow fire," may be laid down, it will seldom happen that the opportunities for firing will coincide with the special rate of fire ordered. For these reasons "slow fire" as a special rate of fire is abolished.)³

89 (O. 107). *Change of Direction*.—The procedure for changing direction through a very small arc is abolished. (Two methods for small changes of front—through a small arc, and through a very small arc—being unnecessary; one method only is laid down.)

¹ Instead of the knee. The body now rests on the inside of the leg and foot, instead of on the heel as formerly permitted. It is an almost impossible position for Europeans.—C.V.H.

² 44 reads as follows:—"The usual attempt to gain effect by rapidity of fire is illusory. No matter what the circumstances may be, the rules for shooting must be strictly observed. Aim must be taken with care and deliberation, and every endeavour made to make the fire effective."

46 reads—"In shooting, the following points are to be desired:—Quickness in picking up a target; selection of a suitable position; use of ground; rapidity in loading; proper adjustment of sights; facility in handling the rifle in various positions and at various ranges; quickness in aiming; steadiness; experience in laying at obscure targets."—E.F.C.

³ The directions for "slow fire" were as follows:—"At the command 'Slow fire,' the soldier will fire at the slowest rate, alternately with his neighbouring file."—E.F.C.

O. 109, 110. *Forming Two-deep from Fours, and vice versa, on the Move.*—This is cancelled. (Instruction in this as a regulation procedure has no value.)

98. *March at Ease.*—In addition to marching at ease on the line of march, troops may do so on broken ground at manœuvres and on the battle-field, when the regulation step would be altogether impracticable.

103 (O. 124). The interval between skirmishers is fixed at two paces (approx.). (This is the result of practical trial.)¹

108 (O. 130). (When halting skirmishers, the command "Halt!" only will be given, when each man will adopt the most suitable position (kneeling or lying down). For the leader to order the positions is found impossible in practice.)²

Loading on the Move.—This is cancelled, loading being performed only at the halt. (Loading on the move must occasionally cause delays and be prejudicial to discipline. This change may cause a few men to arrive at the firing point with empty rifles; but with the magazine rifle there is no fear that the majority will be late in opening fire.)

108 (O. 132). *Rushes.*—These will be carried out at the fastest pace (the run). (Results of recent war experience.)³

119 (O. 142). A line of skirmishers, besides closing to line, may close to any other formation.

COMPANY TRAINING.

123 (O. 145). The words "and on ceremonial parades" are struck out from the occasions on which line formations are used (As the instructions for ceremonial parades are included in the "Military Ceremonial" Manual, their inclusion in this manual is unnecessary. The same remarks apply as regards the battalion and regiment.)

129 (O. 155). The distance between sections in company column (column of sections) is increased from 6 to 8 paces. Movements to a flank in company column are here authorised.

143. *Dressing.*—Remarks on the dressing of a section apply here (as also to the battalion). Instructions for dressing a company in column are now included.

O. 171. *Forming Square.*—This is cancelled. (As this manœuvre is performed only on very special occasions, its instruction as a drill movement is not warranted.)

BATTALION TRAINING.

156 (O. 192). *Double Column of Companies.*—Cancelled as a normal formation (The occasions on which it may be used being confined to the assembly, and to movements outside the field of fire, for which purposes battalion column is thoroughly suitable, no reasons for its retention remain. Further, its abolition tends to simplification).

¹ The former regulation fixed the interval at from "from one to two paces."—E.F.C.

² The word of command originally being "Halt, lie down," or "Halt, kneel."—E.F.C.

³ Formerly at the double. The normal length of a rush (about 100 yards) remains the same.

⁴ The normal formations of the battalion are therefore reduced to two: line of company columns, and column of sections.—E.F.C.

The intervals and distances for normal formations are increased from 6 to 8 paces, as in company column. (The intervals and distances for normal formations are fixed and any alteration is forbidden. The present increase naturally causes an increase of front when deployed. The *raison d'être* of the normal formations is their strict and exact maintenance, and no departure from them is permitted.)

159 (O. 195). *Dressing*.—Line of company columns. (As the dressing and covering of each rank and of every file throughout a battalion is a matter of great difficulty, not only wasting time but tending to disturb the arrangement of the various companies, it is now laid down that (a) the guides on the directing flank shall be correctly covered, and (b) the leading sections shall be correctly dressed on the same alignment. All other dressing is to be by companies only.)¹

Battalion column (column of sections). (The late method of dressing a battalion in column of sections by putting out guides to either flank being peculiar to this formation, it is now altered so as to conform to the general method of dressing.)

O. 205. *Changing from March Formation to Normal Formation*.—This is cancelled as a fixed procedure. (This is impossible, to perform by word of command, and is better carried out by instructions suitable to the situation. A fixed method is therefore unsuitable to this manual, and falls outside the scope of the book.)

163. Taking ground to a flank in normal formation is laid down for the first time. (This being a convenient movement, suitable to various circumstances, it is included as a means for changing direction.)

165 (O. 209). *Deployment*.—Further instructions as to the deployment of a battalion are added. General principles of the attack (such as putting one company in reserve) are inserted in Part 2. Questions of terrain and other matters affecting the mode of deployment are also considered.

166 (O. 211). *Regimental Drill*.—The regimental commander will direct his command by means of *orders*² instead of, as hitherto, by the *caution* (which is nothing but a brief order), which preceded the executive word of his subordinates.

(The movements of a regiment in assembly formation are also now clearly laid down. On service the movements of a regiment in assembly formation will, however, be very rare.)

170. The instructions regarding the deployment of a battalion apply to that of a regiment. The indication of one common objective for all the battalions of a regiment in extended order is cancelled, as practically never occurring in practice.

171. *Brigade Drill*.—The objects and principles of brigade drill are here explained and the instructions for leading a brigade laid down.

O. 218. Instructions for the movements of a brigade in assembly formation are cancelled. (A brigade will so rarely move in close formation that instruction in it is unnecessary.)

¹ While the dressing and covering off of every man throughout a battalion was not explicitly laid down, many commanders read the somewhat vague instructions in the above sense. A battalion at a review was a masterpiece of dressing.—E.F.C.

² Verbal and written orders, not words of command.