

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Military Science

THE TRAINING OF SOLDIERS

BY ARLINGTON B. CONWAY

DRILL, at which the soldier spends so many of the hours devoted to his training, is primarily intended to make it possible to move large bodies of men rapidly and with precision from one place to another, and to get them into formations suitable for the use of their weapons. Simultaneous movements of men in the mass are spectacular, and the proprietors of armies have always gratified their vanity by making their soldiers show off their paces before them and the populace. Hence the cancerous growth of ceremonial drill, which every military reformer has found to take up much time which should be devoted to rational training.

But drill generally, even such excrescences as the goose-step, has also an important psychological effect on the soldier. He becomes accustomed to move as a unit in a mass, and knows that when certain commands are given every other unit of the mass will move in a definite way, and that he can count on this happening. He knows that all the individuals who compose his battalion will act in common to achieve some desired result. Accustomed to this phenomenon on the parade-ground, the men of the battalion will cooperate to a common end on the battlefield. Thus well-drilled infantry are always superior in cohesion to others not so well drilled, irrespective of the quality of the men. As an officer in the Federal Army once observed, in explaining the difference in conduct of the regulars and the militia after the first battle of Bull Run, "the trained soldier feels himself safe in the ranks, and unsafe out of them." Unfortunately, now that soldiers do not fight in closed ranks, the

habit of mind formed by barrack-square drill is not so useful as it was formerly, though the effect is still considerable.

The soldier's life is minutely regulated from the time he is roused by the woeful notes of reveille until the bugle blows "Lights Out." It is only grudgingly that he is allowed out of barracks, to such freedom as the obligation to wear uniform leaves him, for it is generally considered that he will be sure to utilize his liberty in rendering himself militarily inefficient by excess in stimulants, or by dalliance with insanitary females. Severe punishments are provided to convince him that the mass of regulations under which he lives are made to be obeyed. He is made to salute every officer he sees, in acknowledgment of the fact that the officer has been placed in authority over him.

As an offset to these disadvantages, he used to be given a gaudy uniform (since the war khaki has replaced it) and taught to wear it in a jaunty way, and he was furthermore informed, by popular lore, that this would make him highly desirable in the eyes of many women, and envied by other, drabber, men. Also, in return for docilely obeying orders, he was and is entirely freed from the necessity of taking thought for the morrow: his superiors do his thinking for him.

This traditional training of the soldier produced men notoriously helpless in the absence of orders or leaders, and has always aroused indignation among democrats and others who take an exalted view of the importance of the individual. In the past the general officers responsible for it took no notice of these complaints, beyond an occasional fit of apoplexy, but now military necessity has forced on them the conviction that something must supplement

the old system. They say that while the soldier must still be disciplined, initiative is also necessary. When there is anyone to give orders, the soldier must never think of questioning them, but when, as in the crisis of a battle, leaders have been killed off, or are too far away to direct him, then he must be capable of acting reasonably by himself.

The regimental officer, whose principal occupation in peace is supposed to be the training of his men, is thus faced with the problem of producing a type of warrior who will measure up to the general's idea of what a disciplined soldier should be, and is yet as full of initiative and the offensive spirit as an automobile salesman or a book agent. Now, most regimental officers, as average human beings, are incapable of original thought. They know the traditional method of training for discipline, but no one has ever told them how to go about training for initiative, so it is not astonishing that they take the easier way, and spend most of their time in teaching their troops how to march in line, salute smartly, and hit a bullseye. Meanwhile, superior officers often work on the generalization that a unit which is good at close-order drill and smart in turn-out will be good and smart at other duties, and so, at inspection time, they judge by this criterion. And so the private soldier's initiative is neglected.

As a matter of fact, the mental characteristics of the average man in the ranks seem likely to doom to failure any attempt to develop initiative wholesale. The majority of private soldiers, whether conscripts or such volunteers as appear in peace time in the American or British armies, come from the classes that are unaccustomed to lead, or even to plan their own acts. How many of these men in civil life need to make independent decisions? The mechanic, laborer or factory hand does as his foreman tells him; the farmer follows a routine sanctified by the practice of his forebears. Hardly any of the lower orders of mankind do their work without an overseer, and, in

civil life, as that overseer is not likely to be suddenly removed by wounds or death, it is unnecessary to train them to carry on without him.

If, say, 75% of intelligent men could be recruited, would they make ideal infantry soldiers, and carry all before them? The answer, I think, is no, for an intelligent man condemned to fight as the infantryman of today is expected to fight would soon be driven to mutiny or despair. All the survivors of the Great War who have turned scribe spend their ink raging against their officers, the higher command, the army system, the governments which unleashed war, and almost anything but the enemy. Why? Because their heroic efforts and sacrifices brought no apparent result. (I am speaking, of course, of the immediate result of tactical success.) They knew that they were being used stupidly. This, it appears to me, must inevitably be the reaction of any intelligent man who has the misfortune to serve in the lower grades of the infantry—grist to be ground in the mills of war.

"Infantry alone," say the Field Service Regulations, "possesses the power to close with the enemy, and enforce the decision of battle. Its forward movement is the indispensable condition of victory." Very well. But if the enemy is resisting with any determination—and two or three machine-guns will often hold up an attacking battalion—the soldier's natural inclination is to lie down in such cover as he can find, and a very powerful effort of the will is necessary to counter this inclination. As staff officers say, the morale of the troops must be high if they are to be successful in attack. Let us consider what emotions and sentiments can combine to form this high morale—that is, to provide the driving force which will evoke the effort of will that the isolated man must make to get up from his shell-hole, or from behind his rock, and face death among the machine-gun bullets.

Patriotism is supposed to be the sentiment which the soldier cherishes above all

others, but that idea is held only by those who have never actually fought. Patriotism, or some simulacrum of it, probably induces the soldier to enlist, and it may help him to endure and to resist defeatist propaganda, but the notion that "by rising and rushing on the enemy I will help to make my country great and preserve her liberties" simply does not occur to him in his shell-hole. The Fatherland is a conception altogether too vague and distant, and the machine-gun bullets are too near and real.

A lesser variety of patriotism, *esprit de corps*, is more likely to influence his actions, but for it to be fully effective he should be able to feel the force of example, or to have the assurance that his example, if he sets a good one, will be noticed by his comrades. But this assurance is commonly wanting: the soldier under heavy fire seldom knows where the rest of his unit is, sees little of its actions, and does not reckon on its seeing his. It is a very common thing for wounded men, returning from a hot corner, to report that their platoon or company has been wiped out, when actually all that has happened is that on suffering heavy casualties, probably including the leader, the remainder have temporarily gone to ground.

Ambition and the hope of glory, which in the past have led soldiers to do great deeds, are now less powerful motives than they used to be. The soldier in the shell-hole knows that even if he plays the hero—and escapes death—it is improbable that his valor will be observed. Equally he knows that skulking may be unobserved. I believe that the thought of personal distinction is scarcely ever present in the mind of the soldier when he is accomplishing a brave militarily useful act in the face of the enemy. On the other hand, after he has been decorated, it often has an important effect on him, in that he feels that he must show an example to his comrades who have not been so distinguished.

Hatred is a powerful emotion, but it is one which, as the range lengthens, loses a

great deal of its strength. It is difficult to hate a person you do not see, and have never seen. Civilians are usually very much surprised that front-line soldiers seldom evince any hatred of the enemy. All the war books make out that the soldier may hate his sergeant, his lieutenant, and, very violently, the staff and high command, but that he generally feels very tolerant towards his equal in the trenches opposite.

But once the soldier can see his enemy, and realizes that his life is being threatened by that enemy, then hatred is quickly aroused in any man of sound primitive instincts. Perhaps rage is a better term. At any rate, if troops can be stimulated to rage, it is no longer necessary to worry about their anxiety to close with the enemy. But the difficulty is to work them up to the requisite heat. Long range small-arms fire or shelling does not do it—it is too impersonal.

One would like the soldier to have a spirit of simple ferocity, like that of a bull-terrier who perceives a strange dog in his master's garden. Elements of this ferocity persist in nearly all men, but it is usually so weak as to be readily damped by danger. Many men will stone a domestic cat, but few would stone a lynx, and none at all in their senses would stone a tiger. The ferocity which enabled a handful of Spaniards to conquer Mexico and Peru and a handful of British to conquer India is not favored in its growth by the conditions of modern civilization. A little was done in the late war to stimulate it by suggestion, as in training with the bayonet, but the results were not great. For a time, in the British Army, when the theory of a war of attrition held sway, propaganda was instituted to develop ferocity. Little questionnaires were given to the men in the trenches, which inquired, "Do I take every opportunity to harass the enemy? . . . How many Huns have I killed today? . . . Am I as offensive as I might be?", etc. But the men for the most part only laughed at it, and at the brass hats who originated the scheme.

I suppose it is theoretically possible to train up ferocious soldiers, by catching them young, keeping them segregated from women, dieting them suitably, indulging them in dangerous sports, and educating them to ideals of death and glory—the other fellow's death and their own glory. But apart from other difficulties, such a body of men would constitute a grave menace to the civil population—it would be a rude and licentious soldiery indeed, though a soldiery which, in battle, would be worth several times its weight of the modern Y. M. C. A.-haunting style of troops. The experiment, I fear, will never be carried out. Governments generally are a good deal more frightened by the possibility of the troops becoming mutinous and flouting their authority than they are by the possibility that they may not defeat their enemies.

So far the discussion has been restricted to the qualities which the infantry must have, if it is to be successful in battle at the present day. The other arms have their problems too, of the same nature, but none so difficult as those of the infantry, for none of the other arms must rely to the same extent on its own sinew and spirit to close with the enemy. Even the cavalry has its horses, which, once set in motion towards the objective, generally keep going: a renewed and violent effort of will is not required for every few paces' advance. The soldier in the other arms usually has to operate some more or less complicated machine, a task less foreign to the modern man than the work of the infantry, which is the personal, visible slaughter of other human beings, sometimes by tools as barbarous as the pikes of antiquity.

Let us, now, summarize the argument. First, if armies are to take the offensive successfully, using the tactics which are standard at present, very high morale and considerable initiative is required in the individual infantry soldier. Secondly, infantry soldiers who are naturally endowed with initiative will not be forthcoming in sufficient numbers in either professional or

conscript armies. Thirdly, it is improbable that any method of training which will produce initiative in the infantryman will be instituted. And fourthly, if the ranks of the infantry were filled with intelligent men, it is unlikely that they would long submit willingly to being used as it is intended to use infantry.

These conclusions, if correct, can mean one of two things: either that the offensive in modern war is impracticable and that the defensive is definitely the stronger form, or that the principle on which offensive tactics are based, *i.e.*, that the advance of infantry is necessary in order to confirm the victory, is incorrect. My own opinion is that the day of infantry as the Queen of Battles is over. The machine-gun has proved too strong for the foot soldier; to overcome it another machine is necessary.

Many military conservatives make play with the phrase, "The machine can never replace the man," but that is not the question: the question is whether a man relying on his own muscles can effect as much as a man controlling a machine. The tank is simply a machine to remedy the deficiencies of the infantry soldier. The latter cannot move fast or far enough, he cannot carry armor to protect himself from bullets, he cannot carry a weapon more efficient than a rifle, with the necessary ammunition for it: the tank is a machine to enable him to do all these things.

The man, when he controls a machine, becomes more important than ever. It is obvious that he will need high morale and initiative, as the infantryman does. But such great numbers of men will not be required, and this will afford better opportunity for selection. In the British Army it is found that the Tank Corps easily recruits a better class of men than the line infantry can get. It is also pretty certain that fighting in a tank does not make the almost impossible demands on the courage of the soldier that fighting as an infantryman does. The tankist is in a machine moving forward; if danger threatens, cover is very hard to find, and the tendency will be

to keep going—as the average driver of a motor car does when he perceives himself to be in danger.

Lastly, with the introduction of machines, new tactics will be invented, and training must be made to suit the new tac-

tics. During all these changes, perhaps the thick crust of tradition will be broken up, the débris of obsolete methods be cleared away, and the training of the soldier redesigned on more rational lines. At all events, let us hope so.

Business

THE SECRETARY

BY WILLIAM FEATHER

WHEN an American business man says, "My secretary will attend to that," he may mean that she will sew a button on his coat, order a bottle of gin, replenish his cigarette-case, telephone his wife that he's left for New York, order dinner for six at his club, call his chauffeur, draw a check, write a speech, type a letter, fill his fountain pen, dust his desk, remind him it's his wedding anniversary, give him the title of a good book, buy a birthday present for his partner, match a sample of silk, tell him his suit needs a pressing, criticize his necktie, notify him that he needs a haircut, or beat off a book-agent. Without a secretary a modern high-powered executive would be helpless. He couldn't get through the day.

No one has accurately defined the difference between a stenographer and a secretary. A stenographer may be subject to the orders of several, but a secretary has but one boss. Perhaps that's the essential variation. To be a secretary is to be distinguished. A wife is rather proud to speak of "My husband's secretary." A woman who is smart enough to become a secretary is assumed, even by members of her own sex, to be too smart to indulge in anything even remotely fragrant of vulgarity. A man may speak of his secretary with the impunity that a woman speaks of "My physician." The relationship is strictly professional, and by popular assent absolutely virtuous. Women barbers, nurses, manicurists, waitresses, and night-club hostesses have never achieved anything like it.

You never know an American business man until you have seen his secretary. You

can learn more about him from looking at his secretary than from observing his wife. Divorce is attended with unpleasantness, and so men struggle along with their wives even though they don't like them. But there's no reason to keep a secretary if she doesn't suit. Her employer can terminate the contract any day. The fact that he keeps her means that she is satisfactory. Whereas his wife merely knows that he can't abide one-minute eggs and that he sleeps in a nightgown, except when traveling, the secretary is aware that he is speculating in oil stocks and that he corresponds with a woman in Toledo.

A man who might be expected to have the most luscious secretary may employ an owlish female in corsets and petticoats. An old duffer, with a gruff voice, a gimlet eye and a porcupine mustache, may have a liking for sweet high-school graduates. Old boys, who have made their pile and have retired from active participation in affairs, become extremely particular about the type of woman who is to share their society and knowledge. An employment agent told of one capitalist who interviewed twenty-five women, paying each a day's wages for her trouble, and is still unsatisfied, and has a standing order for new applicants. His motives would be suspect were he not a man of known integrity, a deacon of his church, and a prominent Rotarian.

As I have said, a secretary knows far more about a man than his wife. She is likely to know all about his business affairs. She knows whether he is making money or losing it. If he is an employé she knows how he rates with the head of the corporation. She often writes checks for his household accounts, and so has a line on