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Battle Drill Training



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1. This report deals with the development of modern methods of training and the evolution of Battle Drill Training with particular reference to its adoption by the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom.

2. It is necessary first to define clearly the difference between "Battle Drill" and "Battle Drill Training", as these terms are now understood. "Battle Drill", according to the manual Fieldcraft and Battle Drill, means the reduction of military tactics to bare essentials which are taught to a platoon as a team drill, with clear explanations regarding the objects to be achieved, the principles involved and the individual task of each member of the team. "Battle Drill Training", on the other hand, is more comprehensive. It consists of a high standard of weapon training, "purposeful physical training, fieldcraft, battle drills proper, battle discipline and battle inoculation".

3. Battle Drill training is founded upon the axiom that "until every soldier looks on himself as a ruthless killer, using cover with the facility of an animal, using his weapons with the practised ease of a professional hunter and covering the ground on the move with the agility of a deer-stalker, infantry battle training will be based on false foundations" (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Report on First G.H.Q. Battle Sch). Its object is, therefore, to inculcate into a body of fighting men a system of battle discipline and team spirit, and to give every man a knowledge of certain basic "team plays" which will guide him in any operation he may undertake in battle. It has the further advantage of making the men physically fit, relieving boredom in training, and inoculating the soldier and his commander against the fear and noises of battle (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4: Precis on Battle Drill, C.T.S.).

4. Owing to the romantic aura surrounding the term "Commando", newspaper writers have occasionally referred to Battle Drill Training as "Commando Training". It should be clearly understood that Battle Drill Training is not a special type of training confined to units of the Special Service Brigade, but a form of training which all Canadian infantry men are required to undergo.

5. This aggressive type of training has been developed upon the principles enunciated in the following official textbooks:

Training in Fieldcraft and Elementary Tactics. (March 1940)  
Physical and Recreational Training, 1941. (March 1941)  
Physical and Recreational Training, Amd No.1 (September 1941)  
Fieldcraft and Battle Drill. (Published in October 1942 but previously circulated as stencilled copies of 169 page book prepared by the 47th (London) Division.)



TRAINING IN FIELDORF AND ELEMENTARY TACTICS, 1940

6. The first approach to what later became Battle Drill Training was the publication in March 1940 of Military Training Pamphlet No. 33, Training in Fieldcraft and Elementary Tactics. This textbook emphasized the importance of the individual soldier being instructed in the elementary principles of war, just as the tactics of football and boxing are taught in civil life. It took as its references various sections of Infantry Training, 1937 and Infantry Section Loading 1938, and demonstrated how these could be taught to soldiers in an interesting manner. It transformed the dry, tortuous formulae of the military manual into a series of simple exercises which accentuated the basic underlying principles involved; it changed "drill" into a series of games that contained the seeds from which battle drill training emerged.

7. Various exercises, for instance, were devised which required the use of fireworks and blank ammunition as imitation artillery and small arms fire, on occasion enemy fire could be represented by umpires. Each exercise became a small tactical scheme and it was the responsibility of the instructors to explain and demonstrate it to the men and discuss it with them. There was, however, no provision made for the use of live ammunition. Nor was there any particular stress laid upon the necessity for physical fitness or a knowledge of individual assault combat.

PHYSICAL AND RECREATIONAL TRAINING, 1941

8. Callisthenics have always been a part of military training. They have usually consisted of half an hour's loosening-up exercises in the early morning. In March 1941, however, a pamphlet entitled Physical and Recreational Training was published which broadened considerably the scope of physical training. Chapter IX, of this pamphlet, dealing with Unarmed Combat (which had hitherto been considered as a means of defence in close quarter fighting when no weapons were available), advocated it as a form of attack. The pamphlet pointed out that war is a matter of life and death, that complete ruthlessness is necessary when personal survival is at stake. "Such brutal methods of attack as kicking, gouging the eyes, etc., though foreign and detestable to the Britisher, must be used without hesitation against the type of opponent we now have to face".\* The textbook covered physical training, obstacle training, cross-country running, boxing and wrestling, swimming and other sports.

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(\*) This sentence was expunged from Chapter IX in Amendment No. 1, notified in A.C.I's. dated 6 Sep 41. The reference was, however, resurrected in a statement by the German Official News Agency in July 1944, with reference to the Stalag murders:

The Foreign Minister of a country ... which in an official handbook of modern irregular warfare written for "His Majesty's Service" has ordered all British soldiers to use gangster methods - for instance, to gouge out the eyes of enemies who are lying helplessly on the ground, and to smash their skulls with stones - must be denied the moral right to speak in this matter at all, let alone make accusations against someone else (The Times, (London), 24 Jul 44).

# CANADIAN ARMY TRAINING IN 1941

9. The syllabus of the Canadian Training School in July 1941 shows that many of the principles laid down in Training in Fieldcraft and Elementary Tactics and Physical and Recreational Training had been incorporated into the new courses, but with some overlapping. For instance, the obstacle course, unarmed combat, Tank Harbour Stalking and booby traps were included in both the Weapon Wing and the Assault and Combat Course (W.D., C.T.S., Appx 63, March 1942: Syllabus, C.T.S., July-December 1941).

10. This School, the function of which was to train regimental instructors for the different formations and units of the Canadian Army, put great stress upon physical fitness and powers of endurance; and its doctrine soon permeated the entire Canadian Army. Apparently no steps had hitherto been taken to harness together in a practical manner purposeful physical training and military tactics. "Hardening" had usually meant "route marches". A report on file at C.M.H.Q. states that the training in the Canadian Army developed very good legs in the majority of cases and the men could march easily over any kind of ground, but their body from the waist up was neglected. Their lungs were not conditioned to an increased tempo of training. Their backs, arms and shoulders were almost completely forgotten, with the result that their handling of Bren guns or bayonets remained awkward and inefficient. Obstacles on the obstacle course, such as rope, bridges and cliff climbing, for which shoulders and arms are needed, tired the soldiers out at once (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2: Report No.5, Battle Wing).

## THE 47th (LONDON) DIVISION AND BATTLE DRILL

11. During 1941 the 47th (London) Division \* experimented with some success in a type of drill evolved from the textbook Training in Fieldcraft and Elementary Tactics, which it called "Battle Drill", and in which absolute physical fitness was essential.

12. Briefly the principles of this new drill were:

- (a) Take each movement and operation of war and analyse it - break it down to its bare essentials.
- (b) Then work out an ideal plan for dealing with that movement or operation in ideal conditions.
- (c) Teach that ideal plan as a drill. Every soldier understands that drill must be learned thoroughly. He will therefore really learn all the details.

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(\*) G.O.C. 47 Div was Maj-Gen. J.E. Utterson-Kelso, D.S.O., C.B.E., M.C., who had been an instructor at the Small Arms School, Netheravon (1931-32); Commander L. of C. Tps, Palestine and Transjordan; O.C., 2 Bn Dorsetshire Regt (1937); Area Commander, (1939) and Brigade Commander (1939-41). Shortly after the adoption of Battle Drill Training in the British Army he became Major-General Infantry, War Office. 47 (London) Div was the only formation in 4 Corps which had a Battle Drill School in November 1941 (W.D., 47 Div: Appx D, November 1941).



- (d) Teach a number of variations to the drill and how to adapt it to varying circumstances or different ground conditions.
- (e) Make it quite clear that the drill is a means to an end. The drill once learned must be mastered. It must not be allowed to master the pupil. Ensure that every subaltern, sergeant, corporal and private soldier has a clear idea of an ideal plan photographed on his mind. He will know what is being aimed at, what the battle is all about, what everyone is trying to do - things he seldom knows now. Then with that ideal plan in his mind (if he has imagination) he will work out such adaptations as the circumstances dictate (Fieldcraft and Battle Drill, para. 5 (e)).

13. Such projects were, however, hardly more than a development of the textbook Training in Fieldcraft and Elementary Tactics, 1940 until three other elements were introduced, (a) absolute physical fitness, (b) ruthlessness, and (c) battle inoculation.

14. Battle inoculation was a radical innovation, for there can be no doubt that the crack of a bullet close to a man's head added a flavour of excitement to the training. As soon as the men had thoroughly learned the various drills they put them into practice in the field, using live ammunition, thus giving a realism to the training that could be obtained in no other way. Enemy mortar fire and shelling were represented by thunderflashes, "69" grenades, gun cotton charges (fired electrically or by safety fuses) which were exploded close to the troops. The 47th Division obtained the authority of G.O.C.-in-C., South Eastern Command, Lieutenant-General B.L. Montgomery, for this departure from orthodox methods of training (Information obtained by the writer from Lt.-Col. H.R. Chater, 4 Aug 44).

15. It is a matter of interest to note that on 30 Jul 40 Major-General J.A.H. Gamell, G.O.C. 3rd (Brit) Division, issued a training circular "Minor Tactical Exercises with Live Ammunition" which authorised the use of live ammunition for training purposes and laid down a definite scale of issue for this purpose. The circular read in part as follows:

If full preparedness for war is to be achieved it is essential that all ranks should be able to use their weapons with confidence and without fuss. They should be "weapon conscious" and bring their weapons into play as spontaneously as the cowboy of Zane Grey's novels used his six-shooter in the past and the modern gangster uses his Tommy Gun in New York today .....

It is also most desirable that men who have not been in action should be accustomed to the noise of bomb and bullet and should also be accustomed to hear and see shells, bombs and bullets passing overhead and bursting beyond them during an advance.



## THE CALGARY HIGHLANDERS AND BATTLE DRILL

16. During the summer of 1941 the 2nd Canadian Division was associated with the 47th (London) Division as part of 4 Corps. There was, apparently, close liaison between the two formations, for, in September, The Calgary Highlanders, a unit of the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division started a school in "Battle Procedure" for the subalterns and senior N.C.Os. of the regiment and sent three officers to attend the Battle Drill Exercises at the 47th (London) Division School on 22 Oct 41.

17. The three officers returned to their unit filled with enthusiasm and secured the sanction of their Commanding Officer, Lt.-Col. J.F. Scott, M.C., to start a similar school in the Battalion. It might be noted here that Lt.-Col. Scott was subsequently appointed on 23 Apr 42 to command the Canadian Battle Drill Training Centre at COURTENAY, B.C. (C.A.R.O. 2260, 1942). The previous work of the unit in "Battle Procedure" evidently approximated "Battle Drill" for the unit War Diary of 23 Oct 41, records the following:

Col. Ralston and Party consisting of Lt.-Gen. McNaughton and Maj.-Gen. Odium and others visited the Bn. in the afternoon on a tour of 2 Div. area. A demonstration platoon commanded by Capt. Campbell put on a display of "Battle Drill". It caught the eye of Col. Ralston and Col. Scott was complimented by Col. Ralston on the work Bn. was doing.

18. On 16 Nov, Captain J. Campbell and Lieut. W.H. Buchanan, Calgary Highlanders, were posted for three weeks as instructors at the 47th Division Battle School. In the meantime the Regimental School of the Calgary Highlanders was putting each platoon of the Battalion through its course. On 6 Dec 41, Brigadier V. Whitehead, Commanding the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade, witnessed a demonstration, and on 30 Dec 41, the Calgary Highlanders demonstrated Battle Drill to all 2nd Canadian Infantry Division battalion and company commanders.

19. The Calgary Highlanders prepared stencilled copies of the 47th (London) Division "Battle Drill Bible" and distributed them to visitors who came from time to time to see demonstrations of the new methods. By 26 Jan 42 nearly all formations of the Canadian Corps had been supplied with copies.

20. The methods suggested were obviously intended to take the monotony out of training. The following excerpt from the textbook stencilled by the Calgary Highlanders will illustrate some of the training methods recommended.

### Suggested methods for hardening troops. (These have been tried with success)

1. Let them visit the local slaughterhouse a few times and watch animals killed.
2. Let them visit the local hospitals and watch one or two operations or major dressings.



3. Disguise a group of men as bad stretcher cases. This can easily be done with pig's blood, a few suits of torn battle dress and some animal bones. Let off a thunderflash and call for assistance. The results will astonish you - if your men have not done either 1 or 2.

(These exercises are absolutely indispensable in the training of men as stretcherbearers).

(W.D., Calgary Highlanders, Reverse of Part I Order No.59, February 1942).

21. That the new training was popular among the troops may be deduced from the following remarks of a War Diarist of the Calgary Highlanders. On 31 Dec 41 he wrote:

The biggest accomplishment this year is "Battle Drill". Perhaps the person reading this Diary right now has become rather fed up with my constant reference to Battle Drill but perhaps if you continue on reading this Diary and come to the day, say a year or two from now, and read "The Calgary Highlanders captured an important enemy position by a machine-like pincer movement" you will see why I have stressed so much this type of training. We are only in the infant stage of it, but rapid progress is being made and in the very near future the whole Bn. will have taken our special "Battle Drill" course. Warfare at this day is at a standstill as far as the Canadians are concerned in England. Due to this, many of our men have married and live only till they see their wives again, as a great number of the men have brought their wives to Eastbourne and have "sleeping-out" passes. Others, less fortunate in the matrimonial line, just simply hang around. Again I bring up the words "Battle Drill". These "hangers-on" I mentioned in my last sentence, previous to Battle Drill had nothing in the way of training that interested them outside of parade hours. Now they talk, eat and sleep Battle Drill. Their morale is higher than at any time in the past two and one-half years.

#### BATTLE DRILL TRAINING ADOPTED IN BRITISH ARMY

22. On the same day that the Calgary Highlanders' Diarist was eulogising Battle Drill, 31 Dec 41, the Chief of the General Staff, G.H.Q., Home Forces, (Lt-Gen. Sir H. Charles Loyd, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.) addressed a circular letter to the different British Commands stating that a G.H.Q. Central Battle School was in process of formation and that Divisional Battle Schools were to be established in each Command. He defined the objects of Divisional Battle Schools as follows:

- (a) To inoculate "Battle discipline" - to translate the discipline of the parade ground on to the battlefield.
- (b) To study "battle drill as a means of interpreting in a practical manner the doctrines laid down in the various manuals, especially in relation to fire and movement.

- (c) To carry out a system of "battle inoculation" to accustom officers to think and act under the strain and noise and distractions which will be present in battle.
- (d) To stimulate the production of new and practical ideas by encouraging all ranks to think constructively about their work.
- (e) To train sufficient instructors in minor tactics to withstand the present wastage in units. This training will be more satisfactorily carried out at a school free from the interruptions of routine duty which are inevitable in a unit.

(C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1; Circular C.G.S., dated 31 Dec 41).

23. Each course at the G.H.Q. Battle School was to be of three weeks' duration, the first course commencing on 2 Feb 42. Warning was given that all students must be absolutely physically fit as they would be required to take part in strenuous exercises whilst at the School. A number of vacancies on each course were allotted to Canadian officers and N.C.Os. (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Joining instructions, G.H.Q., Battle School).

24. The first course at the G.H.Q. Battle School revealed the need for "hardening" the troops and also for intensive weapon training. The majority of the officers taking the course lacked the physical stamina required; short high-speed movements, and crawling or running under fire were sufficient to make them stiff and exhausted. There were frequent cases of officers attempting to put Bren magazines on the gun the wrong way. Handling of all weapons was amateurish and instances of skilful handling were rarely seen. The standard of handling the 2" mortar was found to be far lower than that for other weapons. Few officers apparently knew how to fire it (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Report on first G.H.Q. course).

#### BATTLE DRILL WING AT CANADIAN TRAINING SCHOOL

25. On receipt of the circular from C.G.S. referred to in para. 22, steps were taken to form a Battle Drill Wing at the Canadian Training School (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle/Sch/1: Minute, B.G.S. to S.O., 20 Jan 42). The organization of the Wing was placed under Captain J. Campbell, Calgary Highlanders, who was granted the acting rank of Major (Supplement to C.A.R.O. 1905). He had been employed as an instructor at the 47th (London) Division School and at the G.H.Q. Battle Drill School in Scotland, and the B.G.S., C.M.H.Q., Brigadier M.H.S. Penhale, was "much impressed by his obvious fitness and keenness for the job in hand" (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Letter, B.G.S. to S.O., 10 Apr 42).

26. The Battle Drill Wing was located at first under canvas at ROWLANDS CASTLE, Hants, a well wooded area, providing ample concealment and pleasant surroundings for personnel attending the school. The locale was an important factor, since the shape and contour of the ground must be suitable for firing live ammunition over the heads or immediately in front of candidates under conditions of reasonable safety.



The main purpose of the course was to give experience under situations that might conceivably arise in battle and to accustom the candidates to the experience of being actually under fire. Rifles, machine guns, grenades and artillery were utilized for this purpose. Obviously, the development of any schemes, therefore, could only follow after a careful reconnaissance of the whole area (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Letter, B.C.S. to S.O., 10 Apr 42).

27. The attendance at the first course in Battle Drill at the Canadian Training School included 96 officers and 96 N.C.Os. The course took place during the period 30 Apr - 29 May 42 (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Letter, S.O. to 1 Cdn Corps, 21 Apr 42).

#### DEVELOPMENT OF BATTLE DRILL IN 1942

28. Battle inoculation methods were not introduced in order to frighten the soldier. The purpose behind it was to give him some idea of what real war was like, by "debunking" (rather than encouraging) any exaggerated preconceived ideas he may have had of the dangers to be encountered in battle. It was applied gradually and slowly (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1/2: Minutes, C.H.Q. Conference).

29. On 26 Jan 42, Army Training Memorandum No. 42 recommended the preparation of a "Blitz Course" in Battle Drill Training to test soldier's capabilities. Built in a manner similar to an Obstacle Course, the soldier was faced with a number of tactical situations, i.e., machine gun posts, snipers, etc., each demanding quick, decisive action. In battle the right decision would mean the death of an enemy, while the wrong one would leave the soldier a casualty. One recommendation read: "If possible, an area in which live ammunition can be used should be obtained. Blank ammunition, buried grenades fired by remote control, smoke, fire and fireworks all should be used to provide realism".

30. It was realized that there would inevitably be a few casualties in a system of training which involved the use of live ammunition and battle inoculation methods. The Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, stated in a Monthly Training Letter (February 1942) that he would take the responsibility for these, provided the Commanding Officer could show that reasonable safety precautions had been taken. (C.H.Q. Monthly Training Letter, para. 16; included as para. 12, Fieldcraft and Battle Drill). One of the early casualties in the Canadian Army from battle inoculation was A.3615, Pte H.D. Frank, R.C.R., G.S.W. left arm on 2 Feb 42 (C.M.H.Q. file 10/Frank H/1).

31. Some battle drill practices appeared to be more dangerous than was really the case. Weapon pits were dug and each man in the platoon was put in them and over-run by tanks. The average soldier regarded this with considerable misgiving in the first place and felt an almost irresistible inclination to get out of the trench. However, as soon as he found out by experience that the tank could not possibly harm him, - in other words, that the weapon pit was tank-proof, he gained confidence and on the third or fourth run was able to jump up as soon as the tank had gone by and throw a grenade or aim his rifle at the following infantry (Fieldcraft and Battle Drill, p. 45).



32. The introduction of Battle Drill with its increased tempo of training brought about certain changes in the method of wearing web equipment. For Battle Drill the small pack was merely hooked to the basic pouches without the cross straps and the bayonet worn on the left of the small pack, to be drawn by placing the left hand over the left shoulder. Respirators were also changed in their position, the "alert" being abandoned and the respirator being slung with the box resting in the small of the back below the pack. This style of wearing the equipment curtailed the body fatigue and allowed more freedom of movement for the assault training (W.D., R.C.R., 10 Jan 42).

33. By the spring of 1942, Battle Drill Training was being taught in regimental schools formed in the various Canadian battalions. In July 1942, a month before the raid on Dieppe, a Canadian War Correspondent wrote of the realistic training being carried out in the Canadian Army. He said:

Street fighting was the feature and the infantry worked in a bombed-out village, battling through wrecked buildings and adding to the damage with hand-grenades which they flung like baseballs.

Every battalion had an obstacle course over which it practised assaults deliberately rendered harder than anything it would be likely to find on an actual raid.

Speed marches were held almost daily. Wearing battle kit and carrying raiding weapons, including the new cheaply manufactured automatic Sten gun which is being produced in Canada, the troops moved ten to twenty miles, marching at top speed and descending all inclines at the double.

Along the coast the men climbed bare-faced cliffs with ropes and scaling ladders. Heavy fire was laid down near them by other Canadians manning automatic weapons on the cliff tops.

Thousands and thousands of rounds of live ammunition were used in field firing practice. Never has any Canadian force had such an opportunity to become proficient with its weapons except in actual combat.

(Ross Hurre in the Globe and Mail,  
14 Jul 42).

34. In August 1942 a number of Battalion Commanders were sent to the British G.H.Q. Battle School at BARNARD CASTLE for a course in Battle Drill. On 3 Aug 42, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade mounted a Brigade Exercise in Field Firing, in which infantry and tanks advanced behind a barrage laid down by artillery, live ammunition being used. On 17 Aug 42, the G.O.C., 1st Canadian Corps (Lt-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar) wrote:-

Much importance has been placed on the adoption of "Battle Drill" technique and procedure by formations and units of 1 Cdn Corps. This emphasis will be increased rather than diminished, for the adoption of the drill speeds up deployment



and enables a unit or subunit to develop its maximum battle power quickly. It also demands a high physical standard amongst all ranks - a demand which all units should be capable of meeting.

(C.H.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1/2).

35. During the summer of 1942 the cooperation of the Air Force was obtained to make dive bombing and machine gun attacks. Troops were taught to treat aircraft as an everyday occurrence and this was done by realistic attacks. During the R.C.R. exercise, "Independence", on 8 Aug 42, the battalion left the concentration area and during the march the troops were continually harassed by a flight of Spitfires making low-flying mock bombing and ground strafing attacks, giving the troops an opportunity of practising the new Battle Drill Training (W.D., R.C.R., 8 Aug 42. See also, Fieldcraft and Battle Drill, p. 45).

36. The success of Battle Drill Training was aided in no small measure by the opportune moment of its introduction. It was first presented to troops who had already reached a high standard of training and who were destined to enter the battlefield as fighting formations. Normal training had grown wearisome to these men who had been on the parade ground and on Exercises for the past two or more years. (The large formation Exercises, which to the officers were lessons in tactics, were to the average soldier, until the advent of Battle Drill, simply tests of endurance.) Despite training films, citizenship lectures, educational training and the welfare work of the Auxiliary Services, there was a need for something new. This thing - called Battle Drill Training - the nearest approach to actual combat, gave the troops the stimulus they needed, the antidote to boredom.

37. The opinion of the men in the ranks is well exemplified in the following extract from a letter of a soldier to his Mother:

We have just come back from Battle Camp in the mountains of Wales. No kidding, Mom, your son is almost a Commando now. I think I've had everything fired at including the kitchen sink. It really is quite a thrill to be under fire. It certainly gives you lots of confidence and that's what an officer needs in this man's war. I certainly hope I will be seeing action pretty soon. The best part of it is, Mom, I know I won't even "turn a hair" because I know I can handle myself now.

(Censorship Reports, July - August 1943).

#### BATTLE DRILL TRAINING IN CANADA

38. Certain information regarding Battle Drill Training in Canada will be found in H.Q. 6974-A-31; this file will possibly give a lead to others dealing with the same subject.



39. On 12 Feb 42, three copies of a precis on "Battle Drill" prepared by Major W.W. Mathers, Canadian Training School were despatched to Canada under C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4. Lt.-Col. J.F. Scott, M.C., Calgary Highlanders, returned to Canada and assumed command of the Canadian Battle Drill Training Centre, COURTENAY, B.C., on 23 Apr 42 (C.A.R.O. 2360) (see para. 17). The intention was that the School would train instructors who, on their return to their units, would organize Unit and Brigade courses. The scope of the course was to be similar to the one in England (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Tel TRNG 576, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 7 May 42).

40. Lt.-Col. Scott had taken to Canada a copy of the 169 page volume covering Battle Drill as evolved by the 47th (London) Division and it was proposed to reprint it in Canada, unless the War Office should produce an official pamphlet on the subject (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Tel TRNG 614, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 14 May 42). This volume was, however, in process of amendment at the War Office and H.D.H.Q. was so informed (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Tel G.S. 2000, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 12 Jun 42). It was finally published by the War Office in October 1942 under the title The Instructors Handbook on Fieldcraft and Battle Drill, (Provisional).

41. This manual intimated that Infantry Training would shortly be re-written in pamphlet form and - "The object of these notes is to enable Unit Commanders to teach Battle Drill training pending the receipt in some months time of the re-written Infantry Training". Pamphlet No.8 of the revised Infantry Training, entitled Fieldcraft and Battle Drills, Section and Platoon Tactics was finally published in March 1944.

#### SUMMARY

42. It will be observed from this Report that the methods of training have been completely revolutionized. For generations the soldier has been trained by "barrack square drill", designed for the type of fighting such as the Battle of Waterloo. This is still necessary, but it has to be supplemented by a new method, aimed at the development of team action and sound battle technique, based upon experience in modern war (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Battle Sch/1: Circular C.G.S., 1 Dec 41). Every private soldier must be something of a tactician and must understand what his commander is trying to do, for once the battle is joined the company commander has relatively little influence upon it. It is won or lost by the skill, or lack of skill, of the individual soldiers, who in small parties, sections or even singly, fight their battles alone. See Appendix "A" for comparison of training advocated in 1941 with conditions experienced in 1944.

43. As with the old "barrack square drill", so also with the rifle range practices. The object of fire on the battlefield is not only to kill the enemy troops but to force them to keep their heads down. It therefore follows that, in training, targets in the open should not be used or they will give the



soldier the impression that he will normally be able to take aim at his enemy. In order to test the accuracy of the man's shooting, screens should be hidden behind bushes, etc., in the area in which the bullets are required to fall to neutralize the enemy's fire (C.M.H.Q. file 2 /Battle Sch /1/2: Minutes C.H.Q., Conference, July 1943).

44. Certain of the exercises and schemes used in Battle Drill Training are attached as Appendix "B" to illustrate the progressive nature of the methods used, to explain the popularity of the drill and the enthusiasm of the troops for this type of training.

45. This Report was drafted by Major W. Boss, C.M.S.C.

*W. Boss major*

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## INFILTRATION

In connection with INFILTRATION it is interesting to compare the training advocated in Battle Drill in 1941 with the actual fighting in the field. The text-book prepared by 47th (London) Division and duplicated by the Calgary Highlanders reads:

In case of enemy infiltration to your flanks and rear.

1. Expect this - it is quite normal in mobile warfare where there is no front, no flanks and no rear.
2. Combat it OFFENSIVELY, send out your MOBILE FIRE UNIT to mop up any such enemy patrols.
3. Don't retreat - you have been organized to fight on where you are, with full supplies of all you need. You will not worry about being cut off.

IT IS THE ENEMY WHO WILL BE CUT OFF IF YOU STAND YOUR GROUND AND HIT BACK.

(W.D., Calg Hights Reverse of Part I Order No 50, February 1942).

Compare this with the report of a Battalion Commander in Italy in 1944:

Almost all enemy attacks on us have been by infiltration to establish Spandau (machine gun) posts in rear of, or on the flanks of, our positions. The enemy always hopes that we shall react to this infiltration and consider ourselves either outflanked or cut off, and so retire or surrender. We know the answer:-

- (a) Fight back.
- (b) Counter-attack.
- (c) Kill or capture the enemy who have infiltrated.

(Current Reports from Overseas No. 43, p. 4, 15 Jul 44).



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EXAMPLES OF EXERCISES AND SCHEMES USED AT C.T.S. IN BATTLE  
DRILL TRAINING

1. Battle Drill Training offers constant surprises to accustom the soldier to the unusual. The unexpected is bound to happen! The following small observation scheme has been used with good results:

In the middle of a lecture an Asst. Instructor dressed as an Italian prisoner bursts into the lecture hall and stops momentarily as if surprised where he is. He then bolts for the stage platform and clammers up on it. He is hotly pursued by two Asst. Instructors who catch him on the platform and a short struggle ensues. Then into the hall burst two M.P.'s. One of them fires two shots at the crowd on the platform and the lecturer appears to be shot and falls. A whistle is blown and all disappear. The students are asked a number of questions, e.g., (1) How many shots? (2) How many were in the struggle? (3) Who appeared to be shot?, etc.

This was made as realistic as possible and was particularly designed to take the students by surprise (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2; Report of C.T.S. July 1943).

2. A night scheme in Battle Drill Training involved a platoon which was assumed to have been cut off during the day's operations. The platoon commander was ordered to attempt to rejoin his unit. This necessitated a move of the platoon back to its own lines through enemy infested territory. It demanded:

- (a) Choosing of route from map and by ground observation during daylight.
- (b) Control of movement at night and maintenance of objective.
- (c) Interpretation of sounds, occurrences, etc., at night.
- (d) Pinpointing any enemy activity which is met on the way, i.e. tank harbours, patrol posts, enemy headquarters, M.G. posts, number of enemy wounded at R.A.P., etc.

The object was to demonstrate the need for initiative at night as well as by day, and the necessity for acquiring all information in an accurate form so that it can be acted upon, namely, target co-ordinates to C.B.O., areas of troop concentration, tank harbours, etc., to B.M. controlling patrol activity in that sector (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2; C.T.S. Reports, May 1943).

3. In this scheme, called "Into Battle", carriers, complete with equipment, were "gone over" by the instructors; mechanical faults were set up in the vehicles, and weapons and ammunition were tampered with. The crews were then given



an hour to be ready to go into action (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2; C.T.S. Reports, May 1943).

4. Rifle students march and fight their way across 15 miles of country to the Downs. They arrive there about dusk. Company vehicles then come up with food and great-coats. They then have to arrange all round protection, night administration, sent out patrols to locate an enemy A.F.V. harbour, then they must organize and attack it at dawn. They then march to the Assault Course, go over it and march home (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2; C.T.S. Reports, May 1943).

5. On a scheme where they were behind the enemy's lines, the students were given slips of paper telling them where they could find friends and where they could find ammunition. Out of a hundred students not one was noticed who memorized the information and destroyed the paper. As a result, the enemy - whom the students knew were operating in the area and on the lookout for them - were able to capture a few and from the information gained smash the whole plan (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Reports/4/2; C.T.S. Reports, March 1943).