

CHAPTER IX. PROTECTION.

127. Introduction.

1. The principles of protection are contained in "Field Service Regulations, part I," Chapter V. It is explained in that chapter that the first line of protection of an army is provided by its mounted troops. These mounted troops, while covering the army, have at the same time to provide for their own protection. This they do when on the march by throwing out advanced, rear, and flank guards, and when at rest by outposts.

Behind the mounted troops come the main columns of the army to which a certain proportion of mounted troops is usually attached. These columns provide for their own protection, irrespective of the security furnished by the first line of mounted troops, by means of advanced, rear, and flank guards and by outposts.

It follows, therefore, that mounted rifles may be required to provide protection, both when by themselves ahead of an army and when forming part of the main columns.

2. The general duties of mounted rifles when acting as protective or as divisional mounted troops have been described in Chapter VII.

The principles and methods to be adopted by advanced, rear and flank guards, and the general principles of outposts, as described in "Field Service Regulations, Part I," Chapter V, do not require modification of mounted rifles.

There are, however, certain modifications in points of detail required in the work of outpost squadrons. The matter contained in the sections of the "Field Service Regulations, Part I," which affect outpost squadrons, is therefore repeated here with those modifications, but it is none the less necessary that the whole of Chapter V of the "Field Service Regulations, Part I," should be studied.

128. The distribution of the outposts.

1. When the commander of the force has decided on the general position of the outposts, has settled the composition of the outpost troops, and has appointed an officer as commander of the outposts, the latter will issue his orders as described in "Field Service Regulations, Part I," Chapter V.

If the force consists entirely of mounted troops, he will, in these orders, assign a definite part of the outpost position to each outpost squadron.

2. If the outpost position is extensive, it may be divided into sections, each section being allotted to a certain number of squadrons, sections being numbered from the right. The extent of a section depends upon the amount of ground which can be supervised conveniently by one commander.

The extent of frontage to be allotted to each squadron will depend largely on the defensive capabilities of the outpost position; and where they exist, on the number of approaches to be guarded.

3. Should it be necessary to divide the outpost position into sections, the commander of the outposts will appoint commanders of sections, who will, in that case, divide their sections among their outpost squadrons. The limits of ground allotted to sections of

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the outposts or to outpost squadrons should be marked by some distinctive feature, such as trees, cottages, streams, &c. A named section or squadron must always be made responsible for a road or other important avenue of approach to the outpost position, and each squadron must know what roads and other avenues of approach it is responsible for guarding and the exact limits of ground it is to patrol.

129. *The outpost squadron.*

1. Outpost squadrons provide piquets or detached posts and their supports.

2. The commander of an outpost squadron, having received his orders, will move his command with the usual precautions to the ground allotted to it, where the squadrons will be halted under cover, the covering troops holding a line a short distance in advance of the most suitable position for the piquets.

He will then examine the ground, decide on the number and position of the piquets, and on the position of the support. These will then be moved into their allotted positions, and the necessary groups and sentries posted and patrols sent out, after which the covering troops will be withdrawn.

He will send out patrols to examine the country in front and will communicate with the squadrons on the flanks of his position. He must ascertain the dispositions of those squadrons so as to ensure no ground being unprotected. If for any reason it is desired to strengthen the piquets, patrols may be found from the supports.

He will arrange for communication between the support and the piquets, with the supports on either flank, and with the reserve, if one has been formed, and will post one or more look-out men at the support, as may be necessary, to watch for signals or messengers from the piquets or from other squadrons.

He will issue orders as to off-saddling, watering, feeding and lighting of fires, in accordance with such orders as he may have received from the outpost commander. (See Sec. 134, 4.)

He will settle whether the horses of sentries are to accompany them or remain with those of the piquet. In this he will be guided by the situation and the facilities for concealment and shelter.

130. *Piquets.*

1. As soon as a piquet commander has received his orders he will examine the ground allotted to his piquet and settle the number and position of the sentries, and the number and direction of the necessary patrols. He will tell off his piquet for the various duties and reliefs required.

He will explain his orders to his piquet and will satisfy himself that every man knows the direction of the enemy, the position of the next piquets and of the support, what he is to do in case of attack by day or by night, and whether there are any mounted troops in front, that group commanders know how to deal with persons approaching or attempting to pass through the outpost lines and that sentries know in addition the position of the sentries on their right and left, the position of the piquet and of any detached posts in the neighbourhood, the ground they have to watch, how they

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are to deal with persons approaching their posts, the names of all villages, rivers, &c, in view, and the places to which roads and railways lead.

2. Sentries in the front line are usually posted in groups, which consist of from three to six men, under a non-commissioned officer or the oldest soldier; these groups should be relieved every 8 or 12 hours. In open country one man is posted as a sentry, while the remainder lie down close at hand; but if the country is close or special precautions are necessary, the sentry may be doubled. A sentry post, as a general rule, should not be more than about a quarter-of-a-mile from the piquet. Sentries should be placed so as to gain a clear view over the ground in their front, whilst concealed from the enemy's view. If it is desired to retain more men with the piquet, sentries may be desired to retain more men with the piquet, sentries may be posted in pairs, the men of each pair being close to or within speaking distance of each other according to the ground. There should be three reliefs for each double sentry, one on duty while the other two are with the piquet. This system has the disadvantage of causing more movement in the line of sentries, and of entailing more fatigue on the men.

3. A sentry will immediately warn his group of the approach of any person or party. When the nearest person is within speaking distance the sentry will call out "Halt," take cover himself, and get ready to fire. Any person not obeying the sentry, or attempting to make off after being challenged, will be fired upon without hesitation. If the order to halt is obeyed, the group commander will order the person or one of the party, to advance and give an account of himself.

4. Piquet commanders will arrange for communication with the piquets or detached posts on their flanks. They will post one or more look-out men, as may be necessary, at or near the piquet to watch for signals and messengers, and to alarm the piquet in case of attack.

5. Commanders of piquets will satisfy themselves that sentries are alert and understand their duties, but should limit, as much as possible, any movements in the line of sentries which might be visible to an enemy.

6. As soon as the sentries are posted and the patrols, if any, sent out, the remainder of the piquet should be employed in preparing the piquet position for defence. Ranges should be taken to all prominent objects.

7. The outpost commander, if he thinks it expedient, may arrange for the horses of the piquet to be kept well in the rear of the piquet line, a sufficient number for the use of messengers and patrols being retained with the piquets.

131. *Detached posts.*

1. Detached posts from an outpost squadron are sometimes unavoidable, but as there is always the danger of their being cut off, they should not be employed except in case of necessity.

2. They usually consist of from six to twelve men under a non-commissioned officer or officer, but may be stronger. Such posts may be placed in front of or outside the extreme flank of the outpost position, to watch some particular place or road by which the flank might be turned, or they may be placed in advance of the sentry line to watch

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some spot where the enemy might collect preparatory to an attack, or which he might occupy for purposes of observation. They will usually be accompanied by their horses.

3. They should act in the same manner as laid down for piquets.

132. *Traffic through the outposts.*

1. No one other than troops on duty, prisoners, deserters, and flags of truce will be allowed to pass through the outposts either from within or from without, except with the authority of the commander, who details the outposts, or of the commander-in-chief. Inhabitants with information will be blindfolded and detained at the nearest piquet pending instructions, and their information sent to the commander of the outposts.

2. No one is allowed to speak, otherwise than as directed in Sec. 133, to persons presenting themselves at the outpost line except the commander of the nearest piquet and outpost squadron, who should confine their conversation to what is essential, and the commander of the outposts. Prisoners and deserters will be blindfolded and sent at once, under escort, through the commander of the outpost squadron, to the commander of the outposts.

3. In civilised countries when, for any reason, no piquet is posted on a main line of traffic, a detached post should be posted specially to deal with traffic through the outposts. Such detached posts will be detailed by the commander of the outpost squadron in whose section the main line of traffic lies.

133. *Flags of truce.*

1. On the approach of a flag of truce, one sentry, or more if at hand, will advance and halt it at such distance as to prevent any of the party who compose it overlooking the posts; he will detain the flag of truce until instructions are received from the commander of the outpost squadron.

2. If permission is given for it to pass the outposts, the individuals bearing it must first be blind folded, and then led under escort to the commander of the outposts. No conversation, except by his permission, is to be allowed on any subject, under any pretence, with the persons bearing the flag of truce.

3. If the flag of truce is merely the bearer of a letter or parcel, the commander of the outpost squadron must receive it, and instantly forward it to headquarters. The flag of truce having taken a receipt, will be required forthwith to depart, and no one must be allowed to hold any conversation with the party.

134. *Readiness of action.*

1. The commander of the outposts will decide whether the reserve, if one is detailed, is to billet or to bivouac, and whether the supports or reserves may take off accoutrements, off-saddle, &c.

2. Piquets and detached posts will invariably be ready for action. The men must never lay aside their accoutrements, or be separated from their rifles.

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3. Men not on duty should be made to get as much rest as possible. A position for rest at or near the place he will occupy in case of attack should be allotted to each man, and these should be so arranged that reliefs can leave and rejoin the piquet without disturbing the remainder.

4. The horses of a piquet or detached post should not be unsaddled and unbridled at night. During the day, when matters seem quiet, one-third of the horses may be watered and fed at a time, their girths being loosened and saddles shifted. Horses that are to be fed should be taken short distance from the piquet in order to order disturbing the remainder.

5. Not more than a few men should be allowed to leave the piquet for any purpose at one time. When seeking water, fuel, forage, &c., they should never be allowed to move about in or in front of the sentry line or where they might be visible to the enemy.

6. The outposts will stand to arms one hour before sunrise, and remain under arms until the patrols, which should be sent out at that time, report that there is no sign of an immediate attack. Care should be taken that these patrols remain out till after daybreak. When the outposts are relieved in the morning, the relief should reach the outposts half an hour before sunrise. The troops relieved will not return to camp until the patrols report all clear.

135. *Outpost patrols.*

1. Outpost patrols are sent out from the outposts with the object of searching the country in front of the outpost position, or of watching the enemy if the opposing forces are in close touch. They are particularly useful when sent out just before dawn to look for any signs of an intended attack at daybreak. Their usual strength is from two to eight men under a non-commissioned officer.

2. An outpost patrol, when going out, informs the nearest sentry of the direction it is taking. In the event of a patrol not returning when expected, another should be immediately sent out. If a force halts for more than a day in one place, the hours at which the patrols go out, and also the direction of their route, should be changed daily.

136. *Standing patrols.*

1. Standing patrols are formed by two to eight mounted men under a non-commissioned officer sent well in advance, to watch either the principal approaches, or some particular points where the enemy could concentrate unseen. Their positions are fixed, and they remain out for several hours. They are of the utmost value, especially at night, and spare the horses, as they are not constantly in movement.

2. The commander of the outposts will issue orders as to the employment of standing patrols.

3. Standing patrols should be ready to move at a moment's notice. The horses should be watered and fed a third at a time when favourable opportunities occur. They should not be off-saddled day or night.