



Queen Mary
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Meanings of Military Service

Learning Resources KS3

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Rear Guard

(1) Principles.

Doesn't matter what method they are carried out. A Rear Guard is one of the most important duties for an officer to study, as the conduct of a rear guard depends for its success almost entirely on the character, determination, skill and energy displayed by its commander.

In all great retreats in the past, the figure that has stood out has been the commander of the rear guard who by his boldness and aggressive methods has inspired his troops with confidence and courage.

The first thing a commander must do is make up his mind to fight, and not only to hold his ground, but to make your enemy realise that you're looking for a chance to give him a staggering blow.

Moore, Crawford, Ney, Wellington, Napoleon, Jackson. Moore's talents and firmness alone saved the British.

Nap. "At last I have an enemy worthy of my sword."

(2) Object of.

Is to relieve the pressure from a retreating force, to enable it to reform – collect itself, and recover moral.

A Rear Guard carries out its object best by compelling the enemy's troops to halt and deploy for attack as frequently and at as great a distance as possible. This is done by taking up successive positions which the enemy must attack or turn.

A. B. C.

A rear guard of a large force is retiring via A. B. C. The enemy deploy and attack A.

If the rear guard retire to B. the enemy without reforming – advance deployed attack B. But if the rear guard retire to C. five miles or more, the enemy must reform column of route – march. Then deploy again and attack C. All this takes a great deal of time, and it is time that a retreating army wishes to gain.

Each time that the enemy's dispositions are nearly complete the rear guard moves off by successive retirements to the next position – and – Each party cover the retirement of the next by its fire.

The retirements must be carried out with method and deliberation.

(3) Duty of.

1. To show was strong a front as possible to the enemy.
2. To make sure of good lines of retreat.

(4) Method of Conducting for Small Parties.

The same principles applied in an advance guard are applied in a rear.

Retirements are made by successive bounds to rear. In open country retirements by small forces are made from hill to hill. In enclosed country retirements are made from bend to bend of the road.

(5) How to Dispose Troops.

When pursuit is not close, a rear guard should be disposed in the same way as an advanced guard reversed, - but patrols must be left to keep touch with the enemy.

If pursuit is vigorous – you must stand your ground, and prepare to hit back. I always advocate dividing your force in two – or $\frac{1}{2}$.

Either sections, troops or squadrons or regiment.

A. part holds its ground, with other B. Part retires – takes up position, so that it can cover the retirement of A.

A. then retires through B. and takes up a position concealed so as to cover B. and so on.

The result of this is that you can never be caught on the run – you keep a firm front – and give as great a display of force as you can. In making these retirements you must begin to choose your next position from your last position. By this means you will see what your position will look like from the enemy's point of view, and the successful Leader always takes into consideration as to what will influence the leader opposed to him. All the difficulties are not on your side.

Retire outwards in open country so as not to mask the fire of troops covering your retirement. Remember that every moment separates you from the main body – and watch your flanks to see you cannot be cut off. If you are cut off work your way round.

Advance Guards.

No troops must ever move through a country in which it is possible the enemy may be encountered without being preceded by an advance Guard.

Object of

The object of the advance guard is

- I. To prevent the main body from being surprised.
- II. To give it time to deploy for action.
- III. To ensure that the main body is never caught in a defile.

Duty of

- i. Reconnoitre.
- ii. To fight.

The Strength depends on the size of force, length of defiles and time it is expected to resist – rough rule about $\frac{1}{4}$ of force.

General Principles.

1. The advance Guard must always be ready for action and must take the initiative, and seize any favourable ground for the main body.
2. It must never retire.
3. The commander must always have his troops in hand.
4. The adv. Guard is responsible for the protection of the main body the moment the latter commences its march.
5. It must not get too far ahead. EX. Nachod.
6. It must not be too close. Ex Rouvaal.
7. It must advance in bounds.
8. It must always have something definite to hold on.
9. The commander must always have his mind made up what he will do in case of attack.
10. The commander must send out patrols to keep touch with troops on flank.
11. The adv. of main body must not be delayed, and troops men with in same numbers brushed aside.

“Study the map very carefully and note the general nature of the country, with special reference to:

- (i) Tactical features running at right angles to the advance, and especially those affording good artillery positions.
- (ii) Tactical features outside the general line of the advance which will require to be reconnoitred.

- (iii) Obstacles in the shape of woods and steep hills which are likely to impede the advance.
- (iv) General run of the roads: whether parallel or at right angles to the line of advance.

Decide whether the line of advance of the main body can be covered by means of centre and flanking parties. Or whether picqueting must be resorted to.

Determine on the "Main Bounds" for the Advanced Guards. The ideal "bound" is to a strong tactical feature with good communications to flank and rear. "Main Bounds" should if possible be from three to five miles apart. The commanders of the different advanced positions of the Advanced Guard must arrange for intermediate "bounds". These should seldom be more than a mile to a mile and half apart. It is a definite rule that after each "Main Bound" advanced parties must communicate with the support, and when possible with parties to the right and left.

Reconnaissance

Information regarding the enemy's dispositions and the features of the country is absolutely essential for success in war.

Information required by the commander must be got by hook or by crook, and it must get back to the commander in time for it to be of use to him.

Before going into principles there are two remarks to make. A patrol consists of 2 parts (a) a leader and the men of patrol, (b) all classes of patrols if called on to make good any particular feature should act on the same principle. A leader should use the men of his patrol as circumstances demand.

A leader is accompanied by men to enable him to carry out his mission i.e.

- a. To prevent him falling into an ambush.
- b. To enable him to defend himself against enemy patrols.
- c. To enable him to send messages.

A patrol should move as concentrated as possible but the leader must suit his formation to the country.

Principles.

Reconnaissance is the service of obtaining information. It is divided under three headings: -

- (1) Strategical
- (2) Tactical
- (3) Protective

1. Strategical Reconnaissance means the discovery of armies and concentration areas and has passed from Cavalry to Aeroplane.
2. Tactical Reconnaissance is also passing to aeroplanes but often information must be gained by Cavalry. Misty weather may render aeroplane reconnaissance impossible.
 - a. Tactical reconnaissance is the gaining of information both of the enemy's disposition (when armies are close to each other) and of ground in order to furnish the Commander with information on which to base his tactical plan.
 - b. In order to consider clearly the principles on which reconnaissance should be conducted, it is necessary to define the different systems that may be used. There are two systems:
 1. Reconnaissance for Information.
 2. Reconnaissance for protection and warning.
 - c. There are three types of reconnaissance which differ essentially from each other in the methods by which the same object- information – is obtained. They are called
 - A. Contact

- B. Independent
- C. Protective

Musketry Notes

1. Tendency to dismount too soon and in many cases scouts do a dismounted reconnaissance when a mounted one should be done.
2. An advance should always be covered by Scouts unless the enemy is in full retreat when risks can be taken and troop leader himself go on and select fire position.
3. On coming into action it is best to dismount even numbers first and then reinforce. The reinforcements should if necessary take over the ammunition of the Nos. 3 before they start.
4. Covering Fire must always be given to assist any movement whether it be reinforcements or other portions of the line but at the same time commanders must fully realise that covering fire cannot always be given, and this fact must not prevent units pressing forward to the attack. A rapid advance in Cavalry Dismounted action is essential.
5. A. In Attack you want to save time so reserve fire as long as possible.
 In Defence (ramparts) you want to waste time so open at long range.
 Except a rearguard against cavalry when fire should be reserved.
 B. The description of difficult objectives such as a fold in the ground without distinctive features necessitates the employment of some system. All Section leaders should master the clock face system of directing.
 C. Fire unit commander must pick up some prominent features in his sector of ground and describe target, give range and rate of fire.
 D. Choice of background, avoid new cut grass, avoid unnecessary movement especially officers.
 E. Close grouping of collective fire favours.
 a. The production of maximum fire effect against dense formations.
 b. The observation of results.
 c. The maximum effect when sighting has been verified by trial shots or otherwise.
 F. Fire artificially distributed in depth is called searching fire. Fire distributed laterally is called distributed or sweeping fire.
 G. In attack concentrate for decisive effect; distribute for neutralising effect.
 H. In defense distribute in open ground concentrate on sheltered avenues of approach.
 I. Fire slowly when enemy is halted. Fire rapidly when enemy is in movement.
 J. Men must get up and lie down quickly.
 K. Importance of control in order to break off action and take advantage of mobility.
6. On the command "Retire" the troop will invariably wiggle back till out of sight, and this will always be done in retiring from a position under fire, but when the

enemy has vacated a position and is on the run, secrecy is no longer essential and the command "Mount" can be given when all rise up and get to their horses as quickly as possible.

7. Leaders must differentiate between the occasions for the use of Rapid and Ordinary rates of fire.
8. When "Cease Fire" is ordered all safety catches must be over. The command cease fire should invariably be given before movement.
9. If the Nos. 3 are brought into the firing line, they should be sent back first to render horses mobile before the remainder retire.
10. The duties of observers are: -
 - (a) To look for signals or commands from Squadron Leader.
 - (b) To keep a look out for the appearance of fresh targets.
Care must be taken not to sacrifice the one for the other, which there is a tendency to do.
11. Troops detached to right or left must be very careful to maintain signalling communication with squadron leader, and also to be on the look out for signals from him.
12. In a retirement always send someone back to select next position and at any rate do not order a troop or section back without explaining to the leader the position you wish him to take up. Care must be taken that horses when led, whether by mounted men or men on foot are led in the proper manner.

Grooming

The following system of grooming will be carefully adhered to in every Squadron.

Squadron Leaders are responsible that every Officer, N.C.O. and man is carefully instructed on this system and that all horses are groomed in the manner indicated.

- (1) Sponge out the eyes, nostrils, dock and occasionally the sheath.
- (2) Groom the head, legs and pick out the feet. The coronets must be polished as a man polishes his boots. This will produce a healthy hoof.
- (3) Start grooming the body commencing at the hock. To groom properly the man must:-
 - (a) Stand well away and so get the whole weight of his body onto the brush.
 - (b) Work the brush with a circular motion against the hairs. The curry comb should not be held in the hand but laid on the manger or other place and only used very occasionally
 - (c) Brush the coat over with the hairs and finally wisp to give final polish.
- (4) The mane and tail can now be done. They must be carefully brushed out lock by lock. The comb must never be used on the tail, and only on the mane when the mane is being thinned.

It may be noted that men may be encouraged to brush their horses tails whilst the latter are feeding, as even restive horses will then stand perfectly quiet.

To Pass A Horse

Run the hand over the horse against the hairs, and see that no dirt comes off the fingers.

Pay special attention to those parts most likely to be neglected. :-

- (a) The hocks,
- (b) Between the forelegs,
- (c) Under the belly and between the thighs.

Any feeling of grit shows the horse is not clean.

Manes and tails must be carefully examined. To do this. :-

- (a) Run the fingers through the hairs to see that they come through easily.

Examine the hairs carefully to see that none are curling round one another.