



## Notices of Books

To cite this article: (1922) Notices of Books, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 67:468, 768-770, DOI: [10.1080/03071842209420235](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071842209420235)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071842209420235>



Published online: 11 Sep 2009.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3



View related articles [↗](#)

- H. G. HAWKER, AIRMAN: HIS LIFE AND WORK. Illustrations. By M. Hawker. 18s. 8vo. London, 1922.
- REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO H.M. SERVICE AT SEA. 8vo. London, 1772. (Presented by Mrs. Chapman.)
- BATTLE STUDIES, ANCIENT AND MODERN BATTLE, By Colonel A. du Picq. 12s. 6d. 8vo. New York, 1921.
- THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC: A SURVEY OF ITS HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY. By J. Cisar and F. Pokorný. 9s. 8vo. London, 1922.
- THE MACEDONIAN CAMPAIGN. By L. Villari. Maps and Illustrations. 25s. 8vo. London, 1922.

## HISTORIES.

- HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE 2ND Q.V.O. SAPPERS AND MINERS, 1910-1919. Vol. II. 8vo. Bangalore, 1921. (Presented by the Officers, 2nd Q.V.O. Sappers and Miners.)
- THE HISTORY OF "A" BATTERY, 84TH ARMY BRIGADE R.F.A., 1914-1919. By Major D. F. Grant, M.C. 8vo. London, 1922.
- HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR, BASED ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, MEDICAL SERVICES, GENERAL HISTORY. Vol. I. By Major-General Sir W. G. Macpherson, K.C.M.G., C.B. 21s. 8vo. London, 1921.
- HISTORY OF THE 7TH BATTALION QUEEN'S OWN CAMERON HIGHLANDERS. By Colonel J. W. Sandlands, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and Lt.-Col. H. Macleod, C.M.G., D.S.O. Illustrations. 4s. 10d. 8vo. Stirling, 1922.
- RECORDS OF THE IV. MADRAS PIONEERS (NOW THE 64TH PIONEERS), 1759-1903. By Major H. F. Murland. Maps. 4to. (Higginbothams, Ltd.) Bangalore, 1922. (Presented by the Officers 64th Pioneers.)
- HISTORY OF THE 1/1ST HANTS ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY DURING THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1919. Edited by Captain P. C. D. Mundy. Illustrations. 8vo. (Hampshire Advertising Company, Ltd.) Southampton, 1922. (Presented by the Author.)
- HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR, BASED ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS. PRINCIPAL EVENTS, 1914-1918. Compiled by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. 10s. 6d. 8vo. (H. M. Stationery Office). London, 1922. (Presented by Colonel E. Y. Daniels, C.B.E., Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence.)

---



---

## NOTICES OF BOOKS.

---

**Entwicklung der Taktik im Weltkriege.** By LIEUT.-GENERAL W. BALCK. (Eisenschmidt, Berlin.)

This work is a very interesting survey of the changes and innovations brought about on both sides by experience and material and physical deterioration.

The author comments on the danger of forgetting the lessons of war experience and the curious reactions set up in military circles by the failure or success of certain methods. He favours the idea of envelopment, leading to a battle of Cannæ, even with a numerically inferior army, and contrasts the French pre-War conception

of an army advance guard which is to gain information to enable decisive dispositions to be made with the German idea of acting on a predetermined plan.

After commenting on the varying quality of officer reinforcements, he proceeds to discuss the methods, training and organisation of the various branches of the German, Austrian and French armies, praising the skill of English and French in the use of ground individually and collectively.

In dealing with Western trench warfare he is in doubt as to whether modern technical accessories favour attack or defence, but attaches the greatest importance to surprise. It is interesting to note that this feature was discounted as regards the French push (20th Corps) in the Champagne by the capture of an early operation order. English prisoners who spoke of Lord Byng's attack at Cambrai were fortunately disbelieved. It is stated that infantry reports of mining prior to the 1917 assault of Messines ridge were disregarded by the German engineers, but a German book ("Der Mineur im Felde," Brit. Museum) states that German tunnellers were quite aware of our subterranean activities.

General Balck says that the unexpected rapidity of Allied artillery development led to the construction of second and third lines in order to compel the enemy to deploy his guns anew for the attack on the rearward lines.

The engagement at Vailly, 30/10/14, was the first case of synchronised co-operation of infantry and artillery.

On the Somme the machine-gun fire of low-flying planes was more effective than the short-lived surprise caused by our tanks. German infantry became reluctant to construct continuous lines from shell hole positions on account of the greater losses due to their visibility on aerial photographs.

The Verdun autumn fighting showed somewhat different French tactics, involving better use of the ground than the method laid down by Marshal Joffre. These innovations were due to General Nivelle, but were countered by a weak occupation of the front lines and heavy machine-gun fire on the intermediate ground between the lines.

In dealing with the Russian and Italian fronts, he pays tribute to the improved efficiency and zeal of the Russian staff. The Russians showed great skill in rearguard actions and field fortification, but were lavish of men in the attack. They were adepts in crossing swamps, resembling in their nature Canadian Muskeg. The observations on the war in Italy are chiefly interesting in showing the specialised nature and peculiar difficulties of Alpine warfare.

A chapter on technique gives a brief survey of the supply of raw materials and substitutes, and discusses signal service, aircraft, tanks, gas and mine-throwers. The author emphasises the paramount importance of the moral factor, and is of opinion that, failing the discovery of adequate means of defence, aircraft will be the decisive factor in future warfare. German machine-guns made a point of closely supporting attacking infantry, being distributed in depth, with the light machine-guns ahead. Heavy machine-guns should enable infantry and light machine-guns to reach their fire position. In defence, machine-guns had to be distributed in depth and concealed. Their first serious opponents were tanks. The French preferred using machine-guns from positions such as trees and houses rather than in the firing line, and for defence at close ranges; similar ideas prevailed in Russia. English machine-guns were specially efficient as regards the qualities of the gun and the methods used in fighting the gun.

In dealing with Infantry the author states that whilst the French, prior to the war, underestimated the effect of German rifle and machine-gun fire, the Germans were surprised at the effectiveness of French field artillery.

The Germans attached great importance to fire superiority to be gained by

artillery and machine-guns, whereas the French Army was more concerned with pushing ahead. Cavalry can only gain outlines of enemy disposition; consequently, infantry must participate in battle reconnaissance as well as artillery officers. When the attack is succeeding at weak points, reserves should be thrown in there to turn progress into victory; they should not be used to repair gaps or revive an advance which is held up. The use of the spade is not favoured except when the advance is more or less definitely arrested. Some remarks are devoted to the psychology of the charge and reorganisation; these are in part humorous. In a night attack surprise and *morale* are paramount factors. The observations on village- and wood-fighting, and German attacks with limited objectives, contain no special features.

The author goes on to the organisation of trench systems into a weakly held outpost zone, and the main line of resistance or battle zone. The weak occupation and diminished maintenance being discernible on aerial photographs, stronger occupation is advisable in quiet times, to be in part withdrawn by order when a grand attack is seen to be imminent. The difficulties of deciding on, and executing such withdrawal are then dealt with. Special troops should be detailed to carry out the counter-attack against an enemy who has penetrated into and occupied part of the trench system; the staff must maintain close *liaison* with the occupying units.

Dealing with cavalry, much importance is attached to leadership. Cavalry should not wait for opportunities to charge, but endeavour to throw its weight of fire power against weak spots. Allusion is made to the French 5th Cavalry Division raid during the battle of the Marne. Allied cavalry is said habitually to have avoided threatened German charges; lists are given of such occasions. German cavalry did well on Russian front, and its dash in patrol enterprises obtained frequent successes on the Western front. The advance of the 1st and 2nd German Army was completely screened. Cyclists seem to have been useful. The French cavalry tended more and more to become mounted infantry.

The artillery of new and reserve formations was insufficient, and the rapid increase of the German army made it necessary to resort to four gun batteries. Trench warfare called for larger supplies of H.E. shells. Railway guns came into use, and whilst the Germans paid more attention to the development of high angle fire, the Allies favoured flat trajectory guns. Great strides were made by the introduction of sound- and light-ranging sections and the elimination of registration.

The author comments on infantry and aerial co-operation with artillery, changes in methods of combatting enemy infantry and artillery, and the functions of artillery in the *grande bataille*. A number of interesting tables are included.

The last chapter deals with the methods of attack and defence in, and the events of 1918; the arrival and effect of fresh American troops, when the German companies were often down to a strength of 30 rifles and composed of inferior and untried officers and men.

An appendix gives the French instructions of February, 1920, for the infantry combat.

---



---

### NOTICE TO AUTHORS.

The number of books lately presented to the Library by their authors being but small, writers of books are reminded that none other are reviewed in the *Journal* than those of which presentation copies have reached the Librarian.