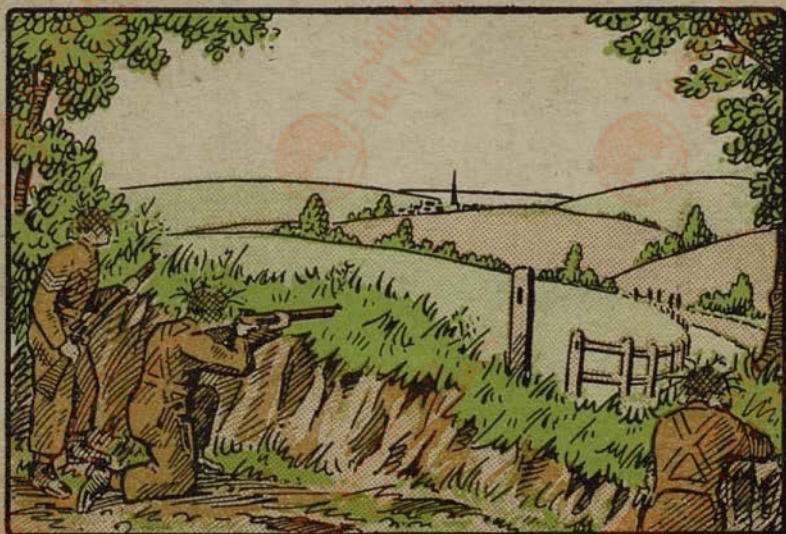


THE GALE & POLDEN  
TRAINING SERIES

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**FIRE**

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**CONTROL**

by COL. G.A. WADE M.C.

Author of "The Defence of Bloodford Village" etc.

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## AMENDMENTS

- PAGE 6, LINE 20.—*For "DRINK" read "DRIK."*
- „ 6, „ 22.—*Delete "Three rounds."*
- „ 6, „ 23.—*Delete all.*
- „ 6, „ 25.—*For "Snapshooting" read "Individual."*
- „ 6, „ 27.—*Delete "Drink." Capital "S" for "Sequence."*
- „ 7, „ 10.—*Delete all.*
- „ 7, „ 12.—*Delete all.*
- „ 7, „ 13.—*Delete all. Add after line 13 new line: "To expose position as little as possible."*
- „ 24, „ 11.—*For "DRINK" read "DRIK."*
- „ 24, „ 16.—*Delete all.*
- „ 24, „ 18.—*Delete all.*
- „ 24, „ 19.—*Delete all.*
- „ 24, „ 21.—*For "Snapshooting" read "Individual."*
- „ 24, „ 23.—*For "DRINK" read "DRIK."*
- „ 25, „ 10.—*For "SNAPSHOOTING" read "INDIVIDUAL FIRE ORDERS."*
- „ 25, „ 33.—*Delete all.*
- „ 25, „ 34.—*Delete all.*
- „ 25, „ 35.—*Delete all.*
- „ 25, „ 36.—*Delete all.*

34	11 - For "DRINK" with "DRINK"
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IN DIVISION 1, 100 ORDERS

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THE GALE & POLDEN TRAINING SERIES

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# FIRE CONTROL

By

COLONEL G. A. WADE, M.C.

AUTHOR OF

"The Defence of Bloodford Village," etc.

2nd EDITION

REVISED IN ACCORDANCE WITH

1942 S.A.T. PAMPHLETS

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# SUMMARY

## PART I

IMPORTANCE from three viewpoints:

### 1. EFFECT ON ENEMY.

Picture Germans attacking where fire control is **bad**.  
Contrast similar attack against **GOOD** fire control.  
Sudden concentrated blast of fire.  
Then **silence**.

### 2. EFFECT ON OUR OWN MEN.

Where fire control is **BAD**:

Dismay on faces when enemy sustains no casualties.

Harassed backward glances.

Having disclosed position are mortared.

Strained almost to limit of endurance.

Where fire control is **GOOD**:

Preliminary instructions to hold fire.

Stillness and self-restraint.

Instantaneous roar from rifles.

Solemn ecstasy—hobnails.

"Going out to look for more!"

### 3. AMMUNITION SUPPLY.

Awful feeling to be short.

When excited easy to blaze away 50 rounds.

**EVERY ROUND SHOULD BE HOARDED LIKE GOLD.**

Be **sure** of hitting.

Waste of S.A.A. a **crime**.

**TALK ABOUT RIFLES.**

**Centuries of research.**

**Gunpowder—Bacon, 1248.**

**Bernard Schwarz—padded arrows.**

1313 unlucky date.

The first small arms.

Wheel-lock invented sixteenth century.

Lasted 150 years, superseded by flint-lock.

**Rifling** introduced sixteenth century.

Slow to take on.

American Settlers' accurate rifle fire.

Rifle Brigade, 1800.



Baker rifle, 30-inch barrel, bore .625 inch.  
Seven grooves—sighted 100 and 200 yards.  
Wooden mallet to load with.  
Percussion cap, 1820.  
Competition, 1834.  
1866, proposals from over fifty sources.  
Bolt actions—magazines.  
Improvements in S.A.A.  
South Africa—Short Magazine Lee Enfield.  
Wonderful ingenuity displayed.  
Puckle, 1718, "SQUARE BALLS for killing Turks."  
Loving care in evolution and manufacture.

### AND YET WE SEE SOLDIERS NEGLECT AND ILL-TREAT RIFLES.

Arouse his interest.  
Six centuries of striving.

### OTHER PEOPLE NEGLECT RIFLES.

Not private soldiers.  
Commanders who consider themselves defenceless.  
And yet they have hundreds of men.  
Armed with **finest weapon of all**—the rifle.  
Nothing to take its place.  
Nothing so universally deadly.  
Nothing to beat it in attack or defence.

### RIFLE FIRE, PROPERLY CONTROLLED, MORE DEADLY THAN M.Gs.

Controlled fire **twenty times** as effective as uncontrolled.  
Chance to make a revolutionary advance in efficiency.

### GET THE RIFLE COMPLEX.

You will infect the whole unit in a week.

## PART II

### HOW RIFLES SHOULD BE USED.

What we want to do to the enemy.  
To surprise him.  
To hit him quickly.  
To kill him economically with minimum risk to ourselves.

## WE MUST TRAIN OUR RIFLEMEN

- (i) To open and stop fire **instantly**.  
No shot without orders.
- (ii) To quickly concentrate or distribute fire.
- (iii) To fire every shot deliberately.
- (iv) To produce fire effect with minimum fire and exposure.

## OPENING AND STOPPING FIRE.

Perfect control needed.

"Leader's finger on ALL their triggers."

One man firing too soon:—

Ruins golden opportunity.

Gives away position.

Causes "unholy complications."

Bleary-eyed, shaky-handed washout fires first shot.

Ability to stop firing instantly.

"Flashes will help enemy."

## QUICK CONCENTRATION OR DISTRIBUTION.

Men should be a **team**.

Section should work like single machine.

"In harmony like parts of automatic weapon."

Considerable art in indicating a target.

Using **minimum of words**.

Practice increases speed.

Study of official pamphlets.

## TARGETS AGAINST WHICH MACHINE GUNS IN-EFFECTIVE.

Rifles properly handled more deadly.

## SELECTIVITY OF RIFLE FIRE.

When rapid fire is ordered.

**Rapidity** should be last thought.

## MOTTO FROM WILLIAM III:

"Every bullet has its billet."

Professional pride in clean kill.

"Do not cause unnecessary suffering."

## BATTLE OF BUNKER'S HILL, 1775.

Untried American Home Guard against Regulars.

Effect of their splendid fight.

"The whites of their eyes."



## MAJOR MACREADY—WATERLOO.

Not a shot fired till within 30 yards.

Effect magical.

"If they could do it so can we!"

## MINIMUM EXPENDITURE OF S.A.A.

- (i) May run short.
  - (ii) Enemy watching for flashes.
  - (iii) Every **miss** encourages enemy.
  - (iv) Every miss discourages firer.
  - (v) Every hit increases firer's confidence.
- "Eager to demonstrate his new-found power."

## AVOIDANCE OF CASUALTIES.

Stillness.

Enemy eagerly looking.

Shuffle—fidget—bob up and down.

To move is to be discovered.

Discovery may mean **death**.

## THE KEY MAN IN FIRE CONTROL.

Official pamphlets at fingertips.

Practice with his men.

Splendid consciousness of **power**.

**King Death** himself.

## CHOICE OF SUITABLE FIRE POSITIONS.

Lower the better.

Background.

Avoid sky or anything light.

Garnishing helmets—darkening faces.

Improvement of cover.

Covered approaches.

## ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS.

Cover same field of fire.

Movement at once if detected.

Covered communication.

"Do not wait for him to smite back."

Long field of view not necessary.

200 yards ample.

Use of look-out.

## PART III

### SELECTION OF TARGETS.

What you can see in a battle.

If you keep still enough.

### IS IT A FLEETING TARGET?

Will opportunity be lost? (Plate 11.)

Can another target be dealt with first?

### IS IT AN IMPROVING TARGET?

Are enemy lessening distance? (Plate 6.)

Are they moving to where fire can enfilade them?

Are they getting away from cover? (Plate 7.)

### IS IT A DANGEROUS TARGET?

All Germans dangerous, except dead ones.

Mortar teams, machine-gun teams (Plate 3).

Wipe out by **first volley**.

### SECTION SHOULD ENGAGE TARGET NEAREST ITS FRONT.

Disappointing not to know who killed them.

### DOES TARGET REALLY WARRANT FIRE?

Expenditure of S.A.A. and exposure of position.

### CORRECT SEQUENCE.

"17th Verse, 4th Chapter, Book of Job."

"Job—4th Chapter—17th Verse."

### THE DRINK SEQUENCE.

**No. 1 Section—300—Church—6 o'clock—Sunken road—Three rounds—Fire.**

Section Leader can remember **DRINK**.

### FOUR KINDS OF FIRE ORDER.

**Normal—Brief—Anticipatory—Snapshooting.**

### NORMAL FIRE ORDERS.

"Drink" sequence—think out carefully.

Be sure all men hear order.

Avoid mix-up of reference points (Plate 4).

### BRIEF FIRE ORDERS.

For **unmistakable targets** (Plate 5).

### ANTICIPATORY ORDERS.

Put men in picture and improve accuracy.

Prevent premature firing (Plates 8 and 9).

### SNAPSHOOTING ORDERS.

Important to take advantage of **fleeting targets**.

Golden opportunities lost by delay (Plate 12).



## KINDS OF FIRE.

Concentrated (Plate 1).

Distributed (Plate 2).

Leader should use section like automatic weapon.

## INDICATION AND RECOGNITION.

S.A.T., Vol. I, Pamphlet 2.

Aids very useful.

Avoid using fingers if possible.

## NUMBER OF ROUNDS.

Sign of inexperience—"Five rounds rapid."

"Rapid fire" reserved for special targets (Plate 10).

Three well-aimed shots far better than five blazed off.

"To kill with as little ammunition as possible."

## FIRE CONTROL COMPETITIONS.

Full of interest for competitors and spectators.

Simple to run.

Rules and marking self-explanatory.

## OBSERVATIONS.

Eagerly turn to official publications.

All shooting should be at **close ranges**.

200 yards absolute maximum.

Far better 50 or 100 yards.

No reference has been made to judging distance—  
wind allowances—sight setting—observation of  
fire—range cards—knowledge of trajectory, etc.

These should be taught **afterwards**.

Train to count shots and refill first opportunity.

Danger of loud click of empty weapon.

Does not always pay to advertise.

## THE ATTACK HAS IT EVERY TIME.

Movement of half-section.

Boldness to the point of **impudence**.

## BOLDNESS IS THE SAFEST POLICY.

## BOLDNESS IS THE FINGERPOST TO VICTORY.





Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



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# FIRE CONTROL

THERE are three viewpoints from which Fire Control may be considered of the utmost importance. First, there is

## THE EFFECT ON THE ENEMY

Picture German troops advancing against positions held by troops whose fire control is *bad*. Along come the invaders, pushing ahead, inflamed with blood-lust but full of doubt as to the sort of fighters they are about to come up against. If while they are still hundreds of yards away from the British positions a ragged fire opens and bullets crack overhead or fly round without doing much damage they know at once that the troops in front of them are badly disciplined and will be "easy meat." Their doubts are immediately dispelled, their tails go up, and, knowing exactly where the defenders are, they set about bringing machine-gun and mortar fire to bear upon them while the attack is pushed forward with absolute confidence.

That is the effect lack of fire control will have on the enemy.

But now let us imagine a far different case—one in which the Boches have not been fired upon and are still wondering if they are to encounter good or bad troops, wondering where the defenders are and if there are many of them. They are eager to use their supporting weapons but unable to do so until the British open fire and disclose their location. The further they advance without anything happening the more uncertain they become.

Suddenly there is a blast of concentrated fire, followed by intense silence.

The range is so short that three-quarters of the Germans shot at are flat on their backs and the rest are under cover, looking in vain for a flash or movement which will show them where the British are. The firing happened so unexpectedly and ended so suddenly that those Huns left alive have had no time to do anything but scramble for cover.

When they are ready to look for flashes and signs of the enemy there are none and all is as still as the grave.

Well, they had been wondering what sort of soldiers confronted them, and now some of them know and the rest have ceased to care.

What about the survivors' morale? They will not be so cocksure when they advance again; and if the same thing happens a second time they will be severely shaken and well on the way to becoming suitable objects for counter-attack.

Having seen the effect of bad, and also good, fire control upon the *enemy* let us consider it from another viewpoint:—

### THE EFFECT ON OUR OWN MEN

If we had been with the defenders in the two cases just described we should have been very struck by the difference in morale between the troops with the bad fire control and those with the good fire control, although both lots were equally stout fellows.

In the first case we should have seen the dismay upon the faces of the men who opened uncontrolled fire at long ranges when they saw the enemy deliberately pushing on, in spite of their fire, and with few, if any, casualties.

Then, as the Boches pressed nearer and seemed to bear charmed lives, we should have seen the defenders throwing those harassed backward glances which are often the preliminary to a rapid change of address. And when, having disclosed their position too soon, they were machine-gunned and mortared, we should have seen them strained almost to the limit of human endurance.

But if we had been with the troops who had good fire control, what a difference!

We should have heard the preliminary instruction to withhold fire till ordered. We should have admired the stillness and self-restraint of the men. We should have held our breath with excitement as the targets came nearer and nearer till it seemed impossible to miss.



We should have shared the thrill which followed the fire order with its instantaneous flash and roar from many rifles.

And we should have felt that solemn ecstasy which comes when your mortal enemies show you the hobnails on their boots!

After that we should have wanted more targets. We should have been impatient for the Huns to attack again. Having tasted blood we should even have felt like going out to *look for more!*

*That* is what good fire control would have done!

And now for the other reason why fire control is so important:—

### AMMUNITION SUPPLY

Of all the awful feelings there is none so bad as to be short of ammunition in a battle. Under the influence of excitement, fear and the sense of unreality experienced during an engagement, it is the easiest thing in the world to blaze away fifty rounds and find you have none left. Unfortunately, to keep loading and firing is the obvious and easy outlet for the nervous tension under which one is labouring, but what a fatal thing to do! And the trouble is that when there are so many distractions the precious rounds are expended so quickly that when no more are left the soldier cannot believe it, and searches vainly for the clips he thinks must have slipped from his pouches.

Too late *then* to think about fire control!

### EVERY ROUND SHOULD BE HOARDED LIKE FINE GOLD

No soldier should ever fire unless he has a splendid target which he can be *sure* of hitting. Then he should drive his bullet home like the stab of a dagger.

Under present circumstances, to waste ONE round of ammunition is a CRIME.

Those are the three reasons for considering fire control of the greatest importance: the effect on the enemy; the effect on our own men; and the need for conservation of ammunition.

Now, before we go on to discuss fire control, let us talk about rifles. Sometimes you see a man handle his rifle in a way which plainly tells you he has not the least appreciation of the wonderful and deadly instrument placed in his care.

It is not unusual to see a man shuffling along using the rifle, with its butt on the ground, as a sort of crutch. I have even seen a soldier using a rifle as a lever to close a road block!

Some men find cleaning a rifle a fatigue and a bore, whereas if they really understood what a marvel of precision and ingenuity the rifle is they would clean it with pride and joy.

Surely the most unimaginative man would handle his rifle with care amounting almost to veneration if we could make him realize how many centuries of intense research, experiment and invention it represents. Let us take just a glance at its evolution.

Roger Bacon discovered gun-powder in 1248, but he did not think much of it, and it was left to a German, of course, to recognize this splendid new means of maiming and killing his fellow-creatures. Bernard Schwarz was his name, and with great glee he padded out arrows to fit into the bore of the weapon. That was in 1313, an unlucky date for mankind.

The first small arms were just tubes closed at one end and held under the armpit while the charge was exploded by means of a smouldering wick. All right if the battle was on a nice fine day, but useless in the rain. For many years men racked their brains to overcome this handicap, and early in the sixteenth century the wheel-lock made its appearance. It used pyrites and when rotated gave off sparks very like a modern cigarette lighter. The wheel-locks held the field for a hundred and fifty years and were evolved into very beautiful bits of mechanism. They were finally superseded by the flint-lock, which was adopted by the Army and used in Marlborough's and Wellington's campaigns.

Rifling of the barrel had been introduced at about the same time as the wheel-lock, but the idea was very



slow in taking on owing to the difficulty caused by fouling of the barrel and the loading process being too elaborate and slow for battle conditions.

However, when our troops began fighting the American settlers in the War of Independence they were astonished by the accuracy of their rifle fire and soon realized that the English smooth-bores were hopelessly outclassed.

In 1800 the Rifle Brigade was raised and armed with the Baker rifle, which had a 30-inch barrel with a bore of .625 inches and seven grooves.

It was sighted for 100 and 200 yards and a wooden mallet was supplied to force the ball down the barrel.

The next great invention was the percussion cap in 1820. It was very successful in fowling-pieces, but the military authorities would not adopt it for some years until, in 1834, a great competition was held. Six thousand rounds were fired from six flint-locks and six thousand from six percussion muskets. The tests were made in all sorts of weather and resulted in a great victory for the percussion system.

The years which followed showed steady improvement, and in the Crimea the British soldier had a rifle which had a bore nearly three-quarters of an inch and was sighted from 100 to 1,000 yards.

Such was the urge to improve upon the existing rifle that in 1866 the Government received proposals and inventions from over fifty sources. Bolt actions, magazines and improvements in ammunition came along, and as a result of experience gained in South Africa the short magazine Lee Enfield was produced.

This represents high-water mark in military rifles, although the United States, working along similar lines, has produced a weapon with much the same characteristics and performance.

That is only a sketch outline of the evolution of the modern rifle, but how full of interest the subject is! The ingenuity displayed and the ideas which have been tried have been almost infinite. Every possibility seems to have been explored. In 1718 a fellow named Puckle even patented a firearm which fired "Round balls for killing Christians and square balls for killing Turks"!



And yet, after all the loving care which has been lavished upon the modern rifle, both in its evolution and its manufacture, we see soldiers who neglect and ill-treat it!

Next time you see this happening do not yield to your natural instincts and abuse the sinner; he will never be genuinely cured that way. Arouse his interest!

Get him to see his rifle as the triumphant outcome of SIX CENTURIES of striving by scientists and skilled craftsmen.

Point out the graceful streamline of its form, its lightness and handy size. He probably does not know how immensely strong the bolt and breech must be to withstand over twenty tons of pressure when the rifle is fired. He may not understand the deadly precision of the rifled barrel or how easy it is to bend or damage it.

Arouse his admiration for perfection produced in spite of immense difficulties, and do not forget to point out that a round of ammunition is just as wonderful in its way. Draw his attention to the safe and reliable detonator; the case which swells up to prevent gases escaping on discharge and then contracts so as to be easily extracted: the bullet so well adapted for its flight through the air, and its powerful yet smokeless propellant.

After he appreciates these points, which he soon will if you put them to him nicely, never again will he ill-treat his rifle.

But there are OTHER people who neglect and ill-treat rifles, and they are *not* private soldiers.

How often we hear commanders talking as though they consider themselves practically defenceless because they are without machine guns and anti-tank weapons!

And yet they have HUNDREDS of men armed with the FINEST WEAPON OF ALL—THE RIFLE!

For general use there is nothing to take its place. Nothing so universally deadly; nothing to beat it in attack or defence. I never handle a rifle but my heart rejoices.

I say, without hesitation, that rifle fire, PROPERLY CONTROLLED, can produce more slaughter than machine guns!

If those people who are always hankering after other weapons would only realize the potentialities of well-organized RIFLE FIRE they would cease bellyaching for what they have not got and start making the best use of the wonderful weapons they have.

It is no exaggeration to say that a few well-controlled rifles will produce more effect on the enemy than TWENTY TIMES their number firing haphazard.

Do you want to make a revolutionary advance in the *fighting efficiency* of your men? Of course you do; but you need not wait till you are issued with new weapons.

You can do it straight away by making an intensive drive to teach your men A HIGH STANDARD OF FIRE CONTROL.

Get the *Rifle Complex*! If you catch it from me now you will infect your whole platoon, company or battalion within a week.

Well, now, having impressed upon you the three reasons why fire control is vitally important—effect on enemy; effect on your own men; ammunition supply—having aroused your interest in the mechanical evolution of the rifle and suggested to you that it is the *finest weapon of all*, let us discuss how rifles must be used in order to justify my claim that they can produce more slaughter than machine guns.

First let us get an absolutely clear picture of what we want to do to the enemy. We want to SURPRISE him; to hit him QUICKLY; to KILL him swiftly, economically, and with the *minimum risk to ourselves*.

To obtain this result we must so train our riflemen:

- (1) That fire will OPEN and STOP instantly as required and that no shot will ever be fired without orders, except in sudden emergency.
- (2) That fire will be quickly concentrated on, or uniformly distributed over, any target indicated.
- (3) That every shot will be fired coldly, deliberately, and accurately, no matter how exciting the circumstances.



- (4) That adequate fire effect will be produced with the minimum expenditure of ammunition and the least possible exposure.

Let us take this training in detail.

## OPENING AND STOPPING FIRE

The men must be so trained that the Section or Squad Leader has their fire under his control just as effectively as if it were *his* finger upon all their triggers.

Impress this deeply upon all your men by pointing out how ONE MAN, firing before he should, will not only ruin a golden opportunity of killing Germans, but will endanger his own and his comrades' lives by FAILING TO KILL THE ENEMY, and by WARNING HIM, so that he darts under cover before full fire effect can be brought to bear. He also GIVES AWAY THE POSITION of our men, with the result that the enemy immediately forms a plan for covering fire, flanking movements and all sorts of unholy complications.

If fire had been withheld only a couple of minutes longer the Germans could have been struck an instantaneous, devastating blow and that party's power to inflict casualties on us would have gone for ever.

I'll tell you a curious thing, based on bitter experience.

It is never the crack shot, who might reasonably expect to hit a man at fairly long range, who opens fire too soon. No, it is always some bleary-eyed, shaky-handed washout who could not hit a haystack at the distance who fires the first shot!

And then, of course, the rest, seeing their targets vanishing, start firing too.

So much for the importance of control in opening fire. To be able to stop fire instantly is nearly as important. If you engage a target at close range accurately and suddenly, the survivors of the enemy, if any, will have been so startled that they have been more intent on getting under cover than observing where the fire is coming from. But if the firing goes on in a



casual, long-drawn-out manner this will give them time to spot exactly where our men are, and flashes will help them!

Consequently, continual practice in opening and stopping fire under all sorts of exciting conditions will be of the utmost value. Any breach of fire discipline should be very firmly dealt with, not necessarily unkindly, but by a forcible explanation along the lines I have just indicated.

Next we will consider:—

## QUICK CONCENTRATION OR DISTRIBUTION OF FIRE

The aim of the Section Leader should be to train his men so that they are a TEAM. He should aspire even higher than that and look upon his section as *one single machine for producing fire effect*, the men working in harmony together like the parts of an automatic weapon.

In order to attain this ideal the Section Leader must first be thoroughly instructed and then he, and he only, should instruct his section.

There is considerable art in indicating a target with the MINIMUM of words. By practice great increase in speed can be acquired by the men in picking up targets.

The official pamphlets dealing with application of fire give full instruction in admirably concise form, and you will find close study of them interesting and profitable.

Here are just a few points I would like to amplify:—

There are certain types of target upon which machine guns find it very difficult to produce any serious effect, and these are the commonest targets met with in battle.

It is against these that the rifle, properly handled, will justify my claims.

Take, for instance, a line of men advancing to attack. If a machine gun could take this target in enfilade it would play hell with it, but if it cannot and has to traverse it frontally the odds are that not enough casualties will be inflicted to stop the enemy.

Rifle fire, properly aimed and distributed, against the same target could be made absolutely devastating.

Unlike the machine gun, which would be sending bursts of concentrated fire against a dispersed target, the well-trained riflemen would each be choosing the German whose place in the line opposite corresponded to his own in the section, and there would be no waste of time, opportunity or ammunition due to all concentrating on one spot.

Under the many varying conditions of war it is the **SELECTIVITY** of organized rifle fire which gives it destructive potentialities greater than those of any other weapon.

But you cannot get this selectivity without thorough training.

### **EVERY SHOT SHOULD BE FIRED COLDLY, DELIBERATELY AND ACCURATELY**

The range should be so short that every shot is a **HIT**. The idea of useless "browning" of where the firer *thinks* the enemy is should be banished for ever. If the order "Rapid fire" is given, rapidity should be the **LAST** thought in the firer's mind: he should concentrate on **ACCURATE SHOOTING** at the *right target*.

A wonderful motto for soldiers comes down to us from William III:

### **"EVERY BULLET HAS ITS BILLET"**

No soldier should ever send a bullet speeding on its journey without knowing exactly where its billet will be. He should take a professional pride in a swift, clean kill. Dammit, he owes it to the man he is shooting not to cause him unnecessary suffering!

At the Battle of Bunker's Hill in 1775 the untried American Home Guard was attacked by well-trained British regular troops, but, in spite of their inexperience, they gave such a splendid account of themselves that all the other Americans were inspired to fight. If these raw troops had been easily overwhelmed the War of Independence might never have been fought, because the contest would have appeared hopeless.



Why did the Americans do so well? Simply because of their excellent *fire control*.

This was the order given to them before the engagement:

"Men, you are all marksmen—don't one of you fire till you see the whites of their eyes!"

Major Macready has left us a sparkling account of fire control in the Battle of Waterloo. "Bodies of infantry and cavalry were pouring down on us. . . . Their first charge was magnificent. As soon as they quickened their trot into a gallop the cuirassiers bent their heads, so that the peaks of their helmets looked like visors, and they seemed cased in armour from the plume to the saddle. NOT A SHOT WAS FIRED TILL THEY WERE WITHIN THIRTY YARDS, when the word was given, and our men fired away at them. The effect was magical. Through the smoke we could see helmets falling, cavaliers starting from their seats with convulsive springs as they received our balls, horses plunging and rearing in the agonies of fright and pain, and crowds of the soldiers dismounted, part of the squadron in retreat, but the more daring remainder backing their horses to force them on our bayonets. Our fire soon disposed of these gentlemen."

Think what really wonderful fire control that was. In spite of the fear and excitement which must have been felt by those splendid troops when they saw the French cavalry forming up ready to charge, NOT A SHOT WAS FIRED till the ORDER was given!

If they could do it so can we!

The last of the results we are setting out to attain is:

### **MINIMUM EXPENDITURE OF AMMUNITION— LEAST EXPOSURE**

There are overwhelming considerations in favour of the most sparing use of ammunition in a battle, and these should be thoroughly drummed into every man:

- (1) If he wastes ammunition and runs short he will then be at the enemy's mercy.
- (2) The flash of every shot is dangerous because watching for it are enemy machine gunners,

rifleman and mortar teams, ready to reply. Some flashes are unavoidable, but he should make sure that every flash means a dead Boche and that not one more shot is fired than is absolutely necessary.

- (3) Every shot which misses *encourages* the enemy to press on and attack. Consequently, no shot should ever be fired unless the target is so easy that a miss is unlikely.
- (4) Every shot which misses *discourages* the firer and he begins to get agitated and shake. When *that* starts he is *much more likely to miss again*, and thus a vicious circle is set up.
- (5) Every shot which **HITS** increases the firer's self-confidence and soldierly pride. Once a soldier has flattened a Boche he is never again liable to fluster or fear. At long last he *knows* beyond all doubt that the rifle in his hands is the perfect means of self-defence, and he becomes eager for more targets upon which to demonstrate his new-found power.

As the surest means of avoiding casualties, I have on many occasions stressed the advantage of **STILLNESS**. Instruction in fire control will be quite incomplete unless the **men** are taught the huge importance of keeping still during an engagement. Unless they have been well trained they will, under the long-drawn-out nervous strain, shuffle, fidget and bob up and down quite oblivious of the fact that the enemy may be eagerly looking for them, probably with field-glasses.

If it is not made very clear to them they will not realize that to move is the surest way to be discovered and that discovery may mean **DEATH**.

Let us now consider:—

### **THE KEY MAN IN FIRE CONTROL**

I mean, of course, the Section Leader. He should have the official pamphlets at his fingertips and should have much practice in choice of fire positions, selection



and indication of targets, and application of fire. He should be given frequent opportunities of carrying out all these activities with his men.

By and by he will acquire a **SPLENDID CONSCIOUSNESS OF POWER** when he is out with his section.

From close to his section he will gaze at the landscape and feel like that rare old fellow King Death himself—able to direct quick and certain annihilation to any given spot within range.

The efficiency of his fire and the safety of his section will largely depend upon the Section Leader's ability to

### **CHOOSE SUITABLE FIRE POSITIONS**

Generally speaking, in choosing a fire position the *lower it is the better*. If the **RIFLES** are low down their bullets will be much more dangerous, and if the **MEN** are low down they are much less conspicuous and far less vulnerable than if they are on top of a rise.

Care must, of course, be taken in selecting a low fire position to ensure that it covers the necessary field of fire, and that there is no higher place within effective range from which the enemy could dominate it.

**THE BACKGROUND** should be carefully chosen, bearing in mind that the worst background of all is the **SKY**, or anything light, which will throw up the men's heads in silhouette.

After the position has been chosen the men should make themselves as much like their surroundings as possible by garnishing their helmet nets with foliage and darkening their faces and hands. In some positions a few small boughs or stalks of bracken stuck in the ground in front of the section will make a wonderful difference. The Section Leader should encourage his men to take great interest in these. They are **SAFETY FACTORS** of real importance.

A covered approach to the position is very useful, and the Section Leader should always select one or two.

### **ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS**

These should cover the same field of fire and the section should be able to move from one to the other

unseen by the enemy. This should be done without hesitation when the Leader thinks his men have been detected.

You honour a very good tactical principle when, having smitten the enemy with all your power, you do not wait for him to smite back, but quietly proceed elsewhere in readiness to hit him again.

When selecting fire positions many Leaders make the mistake of selecting a big field of VIEW. This is quite unnecessary and has, in fact, some definite disadvantages. The fact that men can see a long distance may tempt them to open fire on targets far too distant. If they can see a long way they may BE SEEN from a long way off.

In my opinion, a field of fire of 200 yards is ample. If a long view is obtainable near the fire position a look-out should be placed there, but never the section.

Now for

## THE SELECTION OF TARGETS

During a battle the Section Leader may be confronted with all sorts of situations, the simplest being when there is only one target and the question is merely at what range to engage it. The answer usually is "Fire when enemy is *so close that the men cannot miss.*"

But often things are not so easy as this. The landscape may be full of targets of all sorts—single riflemen, small columns of infantry, mechanical transport, A.F.Vs., machine-gun teams, mortar teams, and even Staff cars. It is surprising what you can see in a battle if only you keep still enough.

In making his choice of target the Section Leader must be governed by certain important considerations:

## IS IT A FLEETING TARGET ?

In other words, if fire is not opened quickly will the opportunity be lost for ever? (Plate 11.) Or can another target be dealt with now and this one later?



## IS IT AN IMPROVING TARGET ?

Are the enemy lessening the distance?

Are they moving to where our fire will be able to enfilade them?

Are they getting away from cover to where our fire will catch them in the open?

If the answer to any, or all, of these questions is "Yes," then fire should be withheld till the right moment (Plates 6 and 7).

## IS IT A DANGEROUS TARGET ?

All Germans should be considered dangerous, except dead ones, but some, such as machine-gun and mortar teams, are more dangerous than others.

If we do not get them *they* will get us; so when a dangerous target is within range it is folly to engage one not so dangerous for the sake of killing one or two extra men (Plate 3). With this kind of target, which can hit back very hard, extra care should be taken to wipe it out by the *first volley*. Everyone in the section should maintain statuesque stillness until the Leader gives the order to fire. He will give this when he is certain that every bullet will find its billet, or if the enemy shows signs of coming into action, or is getting near to cover in which he may escape.

Another factor which may affect choice of target is its position in relation to the section. Other sections may be close by and each one should choose the target nearest to its front. It is frightfully disappointing if two sections shoot at the same Germans at the same time, as neither section can say for sure which killed them.

Having selected his target he should ask himself if it really warrants the expenditure of ammunition and the risk of revealing his position. Unless he is quite confident about this he should keep his fire till he has *no uncertainty*. Then he will tell his men, quickly and without possibility of error, what is required of them.

This will be possible only if he and his section have had plenty of practice in indication and recognition of targets.

## **CORRECT SEQUENCE IS MOST IMPORTANT**

I once heard a soldier complain that he could not turn up the text on Sunday because the padre announced it as "the seventeenth verse of the fourth chapter of the Book of Job," so that by the time he realized it was in the Book of Job he had forgotten the chapter and verse. If the padre had said "Job—fourth chapter—seventeenth verse," he thought he might have remembered it.

It is easy to remember the correct sequence of a fire order by thinking of DRINK.

D stands for Designation of unit; say, "No. 1 Section."

R stands for Range; say, "Three hundred."

I stands for Indication; say, "Church, 6 o'clock, sunken road."

N stands for Number of rounds; say, "Three rounds."

K stands for Kind of fire; say, "Rapid fire."

If a Section Leader cannot remember DRINK he cannot remember anything!

There are four kinds of fire order—Normal; Brief; Anticipatory; Snapshooting.

## **NORMAL FIRE CONTROL ORDERS**

If the Leader keeps to the DRINK sequence, thinks his order out carefully, and takes care that all his men hear the order, he cannot go far wrong.

Just occasionally there is a mix-up of reference points and in every section there is one man who will get on to the wrong target if it is humanly possible (Plate 4).

The Leader should have this man in mind when framing and issuing his orders.

## **BRIEF FIRE ORDERS**

Should be given whenever the target is an unmistakable one. Example: "Sights down—quarter right—rapid—fire" (Plate 5).



## ANTICIPATORY ORDERS

These put the men in the picture and if issued carefully will improve the accuracy of the section's fire considerably. They also prevent men spoiling things by firing too soon. Two examples are given in Plates 8 and 9.

You will note that the Section Leader finishes his anticipatory order with "Await my order," and he will order "FIRE" when the target is "on the spot."

## SNAPSHOOTING

Often, in battle, fleeting targets come and go. If the section can swiftly take advantage of these it may do enormous damage to the enemy, whereas if it footles round for a few seconds before it "gets cracking" the golden opportunity may be lost (Plate 12).

## KINDS OF FIRE

Fire may be **CONCENTRATED** or **DISTRIBUTED** according to the nature of the target. (Illustrations, Plates 1 and 2.)

Do not forget the ideal is that the Leader should be able to direct and deliver the *right kind of fire* from his section just as he would from an automatic weapon.

## INDICATION AND RECOGNITION

Should close indication be required, reference points, clock rays and fingers may be brought into use; you will find all about them in "Small Arms Training," Volume 1, Pamphlet No. 2. All these aids are very useful, and the men should be trained to use them quickly. Owing to the movement involved in using fingers it will generally be much safer not to use them if the Section Leader can manage to indicate the target without their aid.

## NUMBER OF ROUNDS AND KIND OF FIRE

The surest sign of an inexperienced Section Leader is that he can think only in terms of "Five rounds rapid fire," and orders it on every occasion.

## KIND OF FIRE

Once having ordered fire to be opened, the Section Leader should order fire to stop the instant he sees the desired effect. If fire has been withheld, as it should have been, until every bullet is sure to find its billet, a few seconds should suffice to wipe out a machine-gun team or small party of infantry.

The order "Rapid fire" should be reserved for special targets of a very fleeting or dangerous nature (Plate 10).

If the Section Leader stops fire too soon he can order some more immediately afterwards, but his primary aim should be to kill the enemy with as little expenditure of ammunition and as little exposure of his section's position as possible.

A splendid way of arousing enthusiasm for fire control and its kindred subjects is to hold periodic

## FIRE CONTROL COMPETITIONS

They are full of interest for competitors and spectators alike. At the conclusion of the lecture I will give you the rules for such a competition. They look a bit complicated, but the competitions are really quite simple to run.

As the contests take place at regular intervals an endeavour should be made to introduce a minor novel feature each time; for instance, close-up fire should be ordered on a tank or A.F.V. to see if the team has a knowledge of the best parts to hit; or the team could be blindfolded and tested in shooting at a target which makes a sound when a string is pulled. A rapid-loading test occasionally adds interest.

And so, in conclusion, let me make just one or two

## OBSERVATIONS

In this lecture I have not tried to teach what is so clearly expounded in "Small Arms Training," Volume 1.

My object has been rather to stress the importance of fire control and excite your interest so that you will eagerly turn to the official publications to amplify your knowledge.



You will have noted that I have repeatedly urged that  
**ALL SHOOTING SHOULD BE AT CLOSE RANGES.**

I have in mind 200 yards as the absolute maximum, and preferably much closer, say, 50 or 100 yards, according to circumstances. Consequently I have made no reference to matters which arise only when firing at longer ranges than 200 yards—judging distance, wind allowance, sight setting, observation of fire, range cards, knowledge of trajectory, etc.

Instruction in these matters should be given; but only after the men have been brought up to a really high standard of performance below 200 yards.

Men should be trained to count carefully the shots fired and to refill the magazine at the first opportunity.

In close-quarter work such as you get in house-to-house fighting, when a man empties his magazine (or revolver) and then presses the trigger, there is a loud click which is most informative to the nearby German. He knows that NOW is the time to RUSH HIM!

It does not always pay to advertise!

Although, in my remarks, I have appeared to stress defensive tactics, I am a believer in the attack every time.

A Section Leader should constantly train his men in moving forward half a section at a time while the other half gives covering fire where necessary. He should practise returning in the same way.

During an engagement the Leader should handle his men boldly to the point of IMPUDENCE. A few good shots pushed forward to unexpectedly enfilade the enemy may work wonders.

Boldness is the SAFEST POLICY.

**BOLDNESS IS THE FINGERPOST TO VICTORY.**

## APPENDIX "A"

### FIRE CONTROL COMPETITION

#### Rules

##### ENTRY.

1. A competing team will consist of one N.C.O. and four men. The leader will not fire.

##### PERIOD.

2. The winning team will hold the cup for TWO MONTHS. Then another competition will be held.

##### JUDGES.

3. Competition will be judged by THREE OFFICERS, who will award points in accordance with para. 9.

##### RIFLES.

4. Firing will be on 30-yards range and every team will use the same rifles, which will have been harmonized by an expert. There will be no alteration of sights by competitors.

##### DRESS.

5. Battle dress, steel helmets (camouflaged), side-arms, respirators at alert.

#### PART ONE.

6. The team will be kept under cover while the Leader is taken forward by a judge to where the ground to be covered can be seen. Judge will indicate area and order Leader to take up positions with object of engaging any targets appearing upon it.

Points will be awarded, as laid down, for selection of positions, use and improvement of cover.

At least one judge will view the team's activities as they would be observed by an enemy.

The judge then paints picture of enemy movements in which a variety of targets are depicted in various parts of the team's area. Points are then awarded



according to Leader's action. This will be repeated twice. After this conditions will be intimated to the Leader which make advisable a change of position. How this is done will be awarded points, as indicated.

## PART TWO.

7. This will be done indoors with a landscape target or in the open air using natural features.

Ten targets will be selected by the judges and ten suitable fire orders will be written out, numbered 1 to 10.

Two rifles on rests are placed pointing towards the target. The team, including the Leader (who participates in this part of the contest), lines up seven paces behind the rifle rests, facing the target, and numbers off.

Time is taken from the command "Go," upon which No. 1 proceeds to the officer holding the written orders (20 yards away), receives order No. 1, goes to the rifles, reads the order, hands it to the judge and aligns a rifle on the target indicated. He then returns to his place in line and, as soon as he is in place No. 2 goes to the rifle and indicates verbally to the judge what target it is laid on.

When No. 2 has indicated the target satisfactorily the judge will order "Carry on," when No. 2 will go for the next order and aim a rifle ready for No. 3; and so on till each man has dealt with two orders.

Should there be misunderstanding the judge will, if necessary, hand back the order and have rifle realigned.

Time will be taken when the tenth target has been indicated to the judge's satisfaction.

All teams will have the same targets and conditions and the winning team will be the one taking the shortest time.

The man aiming the rifle is not allowed to give any verbal indication.

When an order calls for distributed fire both rifles are used, one being aimed at the right and the other at the left of the area indicated.

### PART THREE.

8. The teams will fall in behind the range, out of sight of the landscape target, and will be issued with 10 rounds S.A.A. Leader will then be taken and shown two places on the target, one to be subjected to concentrated fire and the other to distributed fire; the number of rounds to be expended on each place to be clearly indicated.

Leader will order "Standing load," and then lead his men to the firing-point in single file. A whistle blast will signify that the team is under fire from direction of the target. Leader will then order his men to lie down and will direct their fire on to the places indicated. After these targets have been engaged another place on the target will be indicated to the Leader with orders to fire whatever number of rounds should be left out of the ten issued. When that order is completed Leader will order "Unload," inspect arms and report "All clear" to officer in charge.

### System of Marking

#### 9. MARKING.

					Maximum Points
(i) <i>Tactical</i> (150 points).					
Selection of position	...	...	...	...	20
Improvement of cover	...	...	...	...	15
Use of cover	...	...	...	...	25
Choice of targets—issue of fire orders, etc.	...	...	...	...	45
Selection of alternative position	...	...	...	...	15
Movement to alternative position (time)	...	...	...	...	10
Movement to alternative position (concealment of)	...	...	...	...	20
(ii) <i>Indication and Recognition</i> (50 points).					
1st Team, 50; 2nd, 40; 3rd, 30; 4th, 20	...	...	...	...	50
(iii) <i>Firing</i> (300 points).					
Safety precautions (loading, unloading, inspecting, use of safety catch, etc.)	...	...	...	...	20
First fire order	...	...	...	...	10
Second fire order	...	...	...	...	10
Third fire order	...	...	...	...	10



	Maximum Points
Time ... ..	20
Fire effect (possible, 40 shots at 5 per shot) ...	200
General (turn-out, style, quietness, etc.) ...	30
<hr/>	
Total ... ..	500

Scoring will be as laid down in "Small Arms Training," Volume 1, Pamphlet No. 1, Appendix III (3, i), except that only the rectangle 5 inches by 4 inches will be used. Every shot within this will count 5.

(iv) *Penalties.*

Firing more shots than ordered ...	(per shot)	10
Firing less shots than ordered ...	(per shot)	5
Firing on wrong target ... ..	(per shot)	10



**D** DESIGNATION OF SECTION

**R** RANGE

**I** INDICATION OF TARGET

**N** NUMBER OF ROUNDS

**K** KIND OF FIRE

**NORMAL FIRE ORDER  
CONCENTRATED FIRE**

PLATE 1



"No. 2 Section—400—Cottage—Left—9 o'clock—Bush near gate—~~Two rounds~~—Fire."  
Section Leader, being a good one, has been studying the country through his glasses, and has spotted a German machine gun. A lot of weapons can be concealed in a peaceful landscape such as this.

**NORMAL FIRE ORDER  
DISTRIBUTED FIRE**

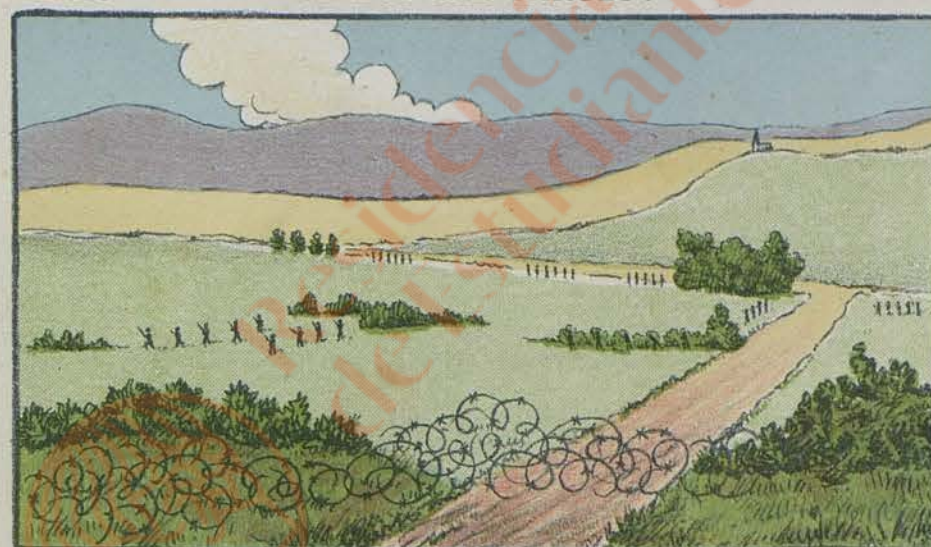
PLATE 2



"No. 1 Section—300—Windmill—Left—7 o'clock—Gap in hedge—From gap to left—Dead tree—~~Four rounds~~—Fire."  
Each man in the Section will fire at the point between these limits corresponding to his place in the Section.

**NORMAL FIRE ORDER  
SELECT THE TARGET!**

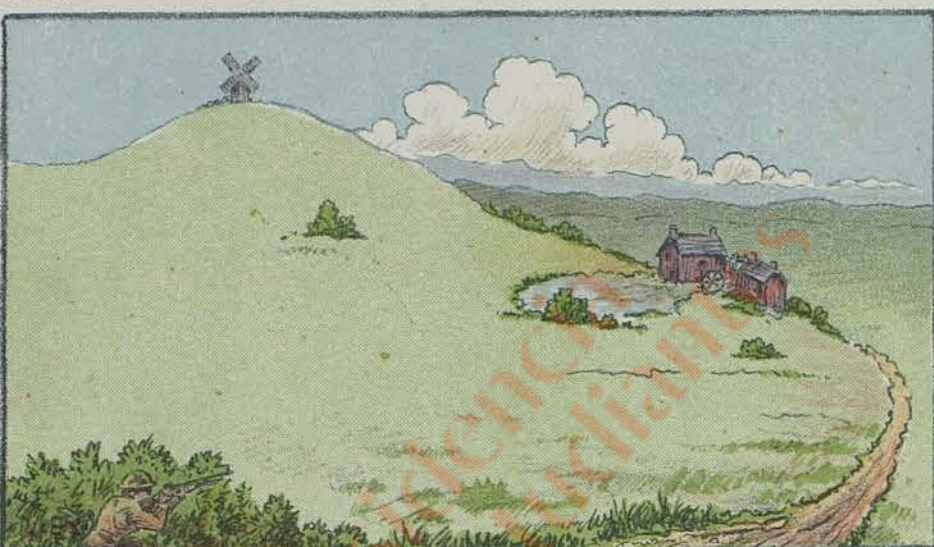
PLATE 3



"No. 1 Section—300—Church—6 o'clock—Machine-gun team—~~Three rounds~~—Rapid fire."  
Leader here wisely disregards the nearer targets because he wants to prevent the machine gun coming into action from the cover they are moving towards. The Section will need to be quick!

**NORMAL FIRE ORDER  
BUT A WRONG INDICATION**

PLATE 4



"No. 5 Section—400—Mill—Right—5 o'clock—Bushes—~~Two rounds~~—Fire."  
There are TWO mills—a windmill and a water mill—and bushes at 5 o'clock from each. If there is the slightest loophole for a mistake, SOMEONE will fire on the wrong target.

**BRIEF FIRE ORDER  
NOT A SECOND TO SPARE!**

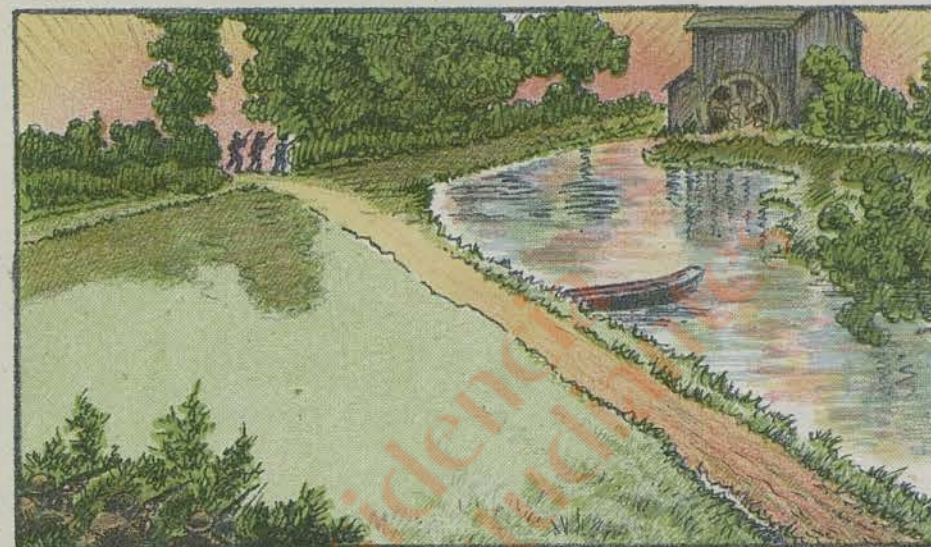
PLATE 5



"No. 2 Section—Sights down—Quarter right—Rapid fire."  
This bunch is coming straight for us! No need to indicate the target, but there is need for rapid fire without a second's delay.

**ANTICIPATORY FIRE ORDER  
IMPROVING TARGET**

PLATE 6



"No. 4 Section—Sights down—When enemy reaches boat open rapid—Await my order."  
If fire is opened too soon the Germans will dive into cover and some will escape. But if fire is withheld a minute or so the only place for them to dive into is the river. The leading enemy has a Tommy-gun. He should be covered all the way so that it is only a question of pressing the trigger should he start anything before reaching the boat.

**ANTICIPATORY FIRE ORDER  
THIS TARGET WILL IMPROVE**

PLATE 7



"No. 5 Section—Sights down—Let Germans come round corner—Await my order."  
The Leader sees, from their shadows, that several Germans are round the corner. If a shot is fired at the one now showing the rest will get away. Leader means to wait till the leading Boche is by the poster.

**ANTICIPATORY FIRE ORDER  
COVERING FIRE**

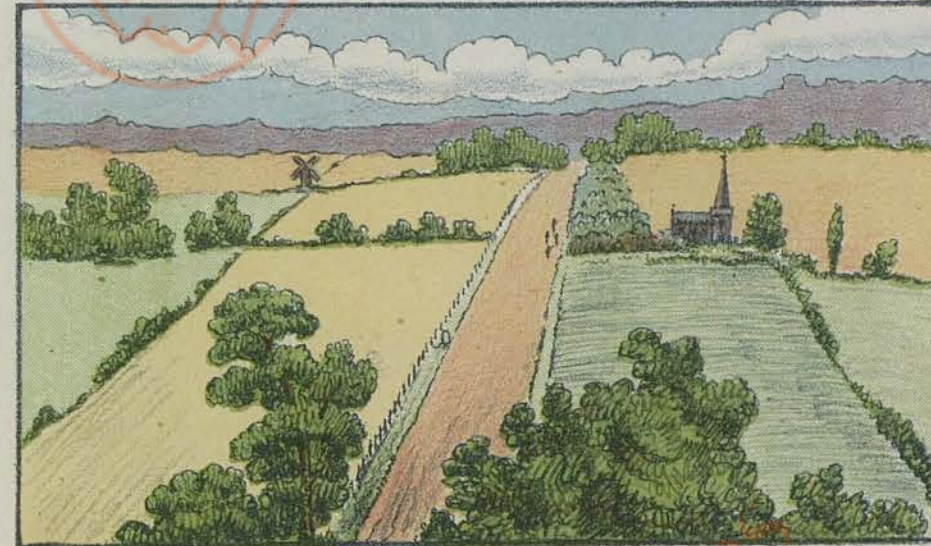
PLATE 8



"No. 1 Section—400—Farm—No. 3 Section is going to attack farm from cutting near bushes—We shall give covering fire on house—Open rapid and stop when attack reaches shed—Await my order."  
When affording covering fire great care must be taken to avoid inflicting casualties on our own men.

**ANTICIPATORY FIRE ORDER  
BEWARE OF FIRING TOO SOON!**

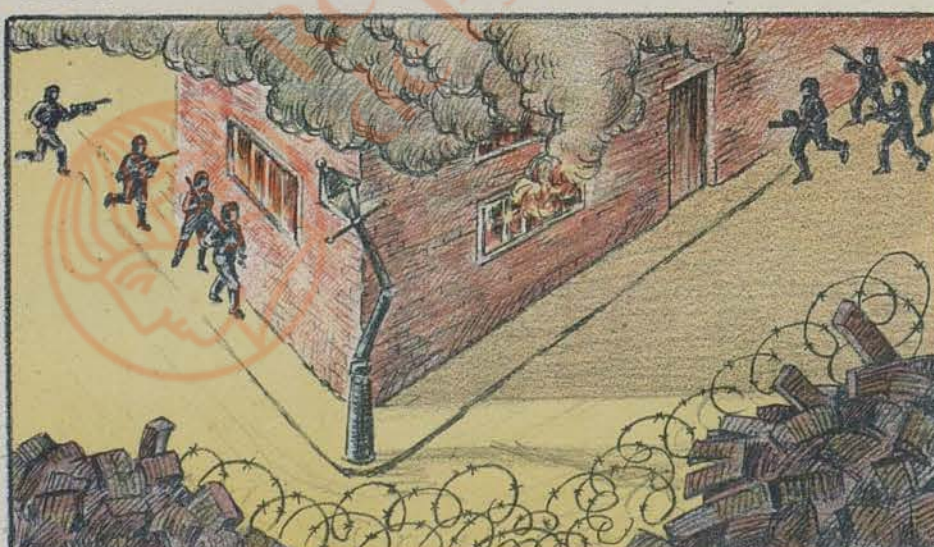
PLATE 9



"No. 1 Section—Sights down—When enemy reaches milestone on left of road—Open rapid—Await my order."  
If fire is opened now they may escape into the churchyard, so the Leader waits till they are within easy range and well away from cover before firing. You can put them in the churchyard later!

**ANTICIPATORY FIRE ORDER  
A CASE FOR RAPID FIRE!**

PLATE 10



"No. 2 Section—Sights down—When two parties meet—Open rapid—Await my order."  
Here come the looters! In a second or so these two parties will meet and for a moment distract each other's attention. THEN will be the time to shoot them down.

**INDIVIDUAL  
SNAPSHOTTING FIRE ORDER  
SELECT YOUR MAN!**

PLATE 11



"No. 3 Section—Sights down—House—Right—Road—Fire when you see the Germans."  
The Section Leader has caught a glimpse of the enemy moving down the lane. There is only a short open space in which to catch them before they pass behind the house and into dead ground.

**INDIVIDUAL  
SNAPSHOTTING FIRE ORDER  
A FLEETING OPPORTUNITY**

PLATE 12



"No. 3 Section—Sights down—Quarter left—Enemy passing along hedge—Fire when you can kill a German."  
This is a common kind of target, the enemy infiltrating along a hedge. Cool riflemen keeping very quiet and still; just waiting till they get a GOOD TARGET and then scoring a "dead centre" can soon stop these tactics.





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de Estudiantes



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