

**1.—Schools in France.**

(a) The syllabi at Army and Corps Infantry Schools were considered, and suggestions were put forward that the courses, particularly at the Corps Schools, were too elementary, bearing in mind the fact that the majority of officers attending them had only recently been through a long course at a Cadet Battalion prior to being commissioned. It was pointed out that G.H.Q. had recently issued instructions that Commandants of Army Infantry and Musketry Schools and Corps Infantry Schools should be appointed from Battalion Commanders fresh from the line who could ensure that the training given at the Schools would be both up-to-date and in accordance with the requirements of Battalion Commanders.

(b) The question of the numbers sent to courses was fully considered and instructions have now been issued from A.H.Q. (Amendment No. 1 to G.S.37, dated February 7th, 1918), and distributed down to Battalions, that in allotting vacancies for Schools due consideration is to be given to the numbers left with the Battalion, whether in the line or out for training.

(c) It was suggested that the weak point at every School for officers was that they cannot be taught the art of actually handling men at the School, and that an establishment of young soldiers under 19 should be maintained at the School for the purpose.

It was pointed out that, while the suggestion is quite correct, it would be impossible to remedy it, without a very large number of troops being made available. In addition, the time that would have to be spent in giving 300 students even a limited amount of time in actual command would be prohibitive.

(d) It was suggested that demonstrations of the penetration of bullets into various materials used for defences should be given to all officers at the School. This will be carried out.

(e) It was suggested that special courses should be held for Adjutants and Regimental Sergeant-Majors at the Army Infantry School.

A general opinion will be obtained both as to the necessity for them, and also as to the length of the course and syllabus. If favourable, a course will be instituted, and vacancies allotted as required by Commanding Officers.

It was pointed out that Regimental Sergeant-Majors, as well as Company Sergeant-Majors, both could and did attend the ordinary courses. It should be noted that these Warrant Officers should attend Army, and not Corps Infantry Schools.

**2.—Training of Cadets.**

Could Officer students at Sandhurst and Cadet Schools undergo a sound training in the Lewis gun prior to receiving commissions? They join with little knowledge of the Lewis gun.

*Answer.* It is agreed that this is most desirable, and the question is being taken up with the Home Authorities. Time for training is again the deciding factor. The question of training Cadets from Sandhurst in Lewis guns on their arrival in France is being considered at the moment, and will probably be decided upon.

**MACHINE GUNS.****3.—S.O.S. Barrage.**

In the event of a battalion front being covered for S.O.S. purposes only by Machine Guns placed under command of the Battalion Commander, it is suggested that these Machine Guns should be placed under the C.R.A. Division, who may have to switch one of his batteries from another portion of the line to assist the Machine Guns.

*Answer.* The S.O.S. defence of a line, whether Artillery or Machine Gun, is a matter for the G.S. of Divisions to co-ordinate; co-ordinated still further between Divisions when necessary by the G.S. of the Corps.

**4.—German Machine Guns.**

Is sufficient being done, both in France and England, to instruct our men, especially officers, Lewis gunners, and N.C.O.s in their use, since a great many are captured during an advance, and the gun and ammunition are on the spot?

*Answer.* Captured German machine guns are being issued to Schools and Divisions for the instruction of our troops, on the following scale:—

	Pattern '08.		Pattern '08/15.		Auto-rifles.
	Heavy.	Light.	Light.	Light.	
G.H.Q. S.A. School ... ..	24	11	...	2	
Machine Gun Corps: Base Depot ...	12	4	...	2	
Army Infantry Schools ... ..	2	2	...	2	
Cavalry Corps ... ..	2	2	...	2	
Corps Infantry Schools ... ..	2	2	...	2	
Army Musketry Camps ... ..	2	—	...	—	
Corps Reinforcement Camps ...	4	—	...	—	
Cavalry Divisions ... ..	4	—	...	—	
Divisions ... ..	5	—	...	—	

In the case of the Canadian Corps, a special scale of German machine guns is authorized.

In addition to the issues tabulated above, which have already been authorized, approval is now given for the issue of the following German machine guns to Armies as a pool from which extra guns may be allotted temporarily to Divisions and units withdrawn from the line in order to afford increased facilities for training:—

Pattern '08 (Heavy) Machine Guns ... ..	...	...	20 per Army.
„ '08/15 (Light) Machine Guns ... ..	...	...	15 „

Indents for this extra allotment should be forwarded through the usual channels, and issue will be made as the machine guns become available.

As far as possible, each gun will be issued complete with mounting belt box and three belts.

The numbers at Schools are sufficient because only a limited amount of time can be given to the subject. It is open to further consideration as to whether more are required by Divisions.

#### 5.—Organization of Machine Gun Companies.

1. A Field Kitchen be added to the establishment of the transport. This is urgently required. The establishment of a Machine Gun Company is 185, and there are, in addition, 33 men attached from Battalions in the Brigade.

2. A Transport Officer be added to the Officer establishment, and receive extra duty pay at an equivalent rate to a Battalion Transport Officer. The establishment of officers is at present 10, one of whom performs the duties of Transport Officer. The present establishment of Transport is 13 limbers, one cook's cart, one water cart, and one G.S. wagon attached from Divisional Train, A.S.C. Total animals, 34.

3. A full corporal be added to or allowed for on Transport establishment. At present the only N.C.O. allowed is one sergeant.

*Answer.* The whole question of the organization of Machine Gun Corps units with Divisions is now under consideration and will very shortly be decided. It is understood that a Battalion organization is likely to be authorized, in which case the entire War Establishment for a Machine Gun Battalion will be revised. Owing to the present situation as regards man-power, this establishment must necessarily be kept to the lowest workable minimum.

#### 6.—Training Machine Gun Corps Recruits.

The period of training of recruits for the Machine Gun Corps be lengthened or more hours spent each day on actual machine gun work. Reinforcements have very little knowledge of their work beyond actual firing of the gun.

*Answer.* The present condition of man-power does not allow of more than eight weeks' training being given to Machine Gunners before being sent out as Machine Gun Reserves. The newly established Reserve Machine Gun Training Brigade will, however, probably improve matters in this respect. The whole question of Machine Gun Corps organization and training is under consideration, and every endeavour is being made to make Machine Gun personnel more efficient.

### AVIATION.

#### 7.—Low-Flying Aeroplanes.

Would these not prove an easy target to a rapid firing trench gun after the type of a pom-pom?

Even one gun per Brigade Sector would be valuable, if in the support line.

The gun would be valuable also as an anti-tank gun, and could move about from place to place to avoid being marked down.

*Answer.* Pom-poms have been tried as anti-aircraft weapons, but they have not achieved any success. Moreover, they are not easily enough manipulated to be of use against low-flying machines.

#### 8.—Flights by Infantry Officers.

Would it not be valuable if a greater number of Infantry officers were taken up in an aeroplane to get an idea as to what can be seen from the air at various heights?

Many of us have been in France for a considerable time, but (except from books), have no knowledge as to what an observer can or cannot see.

*Answer.* During the winter a Flying Corps Squadron has been placed at the disposal of Armies for the purpose of giving experience to officers in observation from the air. A total of 120 officers from the Fourth Army have been through a four days' course with this Squadron at Bertangles. Five Fourth Army courses were held, each comprising 24 officers, *i.e.*, 10 Infantry Brigade and Battalion Commanders, 4 Staff Officers of Divisions, 2 divisional machine gun officers, and 8 artillery officers. In addition to this, the G.O.C., 2nd Brigade, R.F.C., is most desirous of officers visiting his squadrons, and will make arrangements for them to do so whenever application is made to him. He has promised that whenever officers want to come to Corps Squadrons, either for a day to talk over matters with his officers, see the machines, or to stay with them for a few days, he will put them up and send a tender to fetch them. If the weather allows and machines are available, he will arrange, if possible, for officers to be given a short flight. It is impossible for the officers of Corps Squadrons to visit all battalions and, therefore, infantry officers must take the initiative themselves, and let the G.O.C., 2nd Brigade, R.F.C., know when and for how long they wish to come.

#### 9.—A.A. Defence.

An increase of mountings and sights for Lewis guns in forward areas is considered desirable. Would it be possible to have an anti-aircraft machine gun mounting in the vicinity of all Vickers and Lewis gun posts?

*Answer.* Portable mountings and sights are being issued as fast as received—portable mountings at the rate of four per battalion, sights at the rate of one per Lewis gun. In addition, it is understood that four Lewis guns equipped with mountings and sights will be issued to battalions extra to the present establishment of the 16 platoon Lewis guns. These are solely for A.A. defence. Two or three permanent and stationary mountings are being allotted to billets, camps and dumps, on to which units can mount their own guns.

## TANKS.

### 10.—Use of Anti-Tank Guns.

Will infantry be trained in the use of anti-tank guns?

*Answer.* Infantry will not be trained in the use of anti-tank guns. Secret Instructions for Anti-Tank Defence (S.S. 203), dated February, 1918, have been issued down to Brigades.

### 11.—Enemy Tanks.

Has any plan been made for dealing with enemy tanks by infantry in the line, in the event of the enemy using tanks?

*Answer.* This question has received the earnest consideration of the General Staff. See answer to Question 10.

## R.E.

### 12.—Staff of C.R.E. of Division.

The R.E. of a Division are stronger than any Battalion in men and in horses and vehicles.

The C.R.E. of a Division has the following functions to fulfil:—

- (i.) Adviser to the G.O.C. on all R.E. matters.
- (ii.) Direct execution of most work in the Division, and moral responsibility for most of the remainder.
- (iii.) Administration of four Companies R.E. of a Division which, owing to complicated rates of pay, trade tests, etc., and larger number of horses, vehicles, stores, etc., is probably heavier than any Battalion Commander.

He is responsible for the training of three of the Companies.

- (iv.) Handling of all R.E. stores used, amounting to roughly 100 tons a day, is probably more than Ordnance or A.S.C., and arrangements for getting them up to or as near as possible where they are required.

To carry out these, officially he is allowed:—

One officer (Adjutant) ranking as a Captain; paid as a Lieutenant. Total emoluments, including R.E. pay, less than the Adjutant of an Infantry Battalion

One Regimental Sergeant-Major (he has to be used as chief storekeeper, though seldom by his past services or training is very suited for it.)

One clerk.

One cook.

Could the questions—

- (a) Of appointing a Second in Command,
- (b) Of making the Adjutant a Captain, R.E. pay and allowances as such,
- (c) The appointment of an Assistant Adjutant or Reconnaissance Officer,
- (d) A second clerk,
- (e) A draughtsman,

be officially allowed for in the establishment?

Practically, except (a), these exist in most Divisions by attachment from Companies, which means that the Companies are short, but (a) can never be taken at present, as it would remove the most senior Company Commander from his Company.

I consider that the efficiency of work would greatly gain by this, and also training, administration and command. A Second-in-Command is probably more needed with Divisional R.E. than with a Battalion or any similar unit, because:—

(i.) There are more men, horses and vehicles and technical equipment than in any Battalion.

(ii.) A large amount of the time of the C.R.E. is necessarily taken up in discussion with the G.O.C. and General Staff as regards plans of work, especially previous to an offensive, etc.

(iii.) He is separated from his Companies frequently by distances which, if he has work in hand, make it very difficult to superintend their training, etc., etc.

*Answer.* This matter will receive consideration if brought up officially. It is, however, doubtful if the supply of R.E. Officers is sufficient to justify an increase in establishment.

### 13.—Pioneer Battalions.

The relations of the C.R.E. of a Division and the Divisional Pioneer Battalion are at present rather indefinite, and the Pioneer Battalion is rather in need of a "Father."

Although not definitely laid down anywhere, the C.R.E. is almost invariably in charge of the work of the Pioneer Battalion, and gives it all orders for work, but he is not in any way responsible for its administration, and hardly, if at all, for its training, except he may advise the G.O.C. on the matter. At present the Pioneer Battalion is very seldom out at training, and when left behind for work under the Corps is almost invariably absolutely under the C.R.E. for work and even for march orders, etc.

Administrative questions can and do have a very considerable effect on work, and training has a great effect.

The facilities for training Pioneers in their work are still insufficient, although something has been done by classes at the R.E. Depot, Rouen. Pioneer Officers often join with little or no training as Pioneers, and with the consent of the Pioneers and approval of the G.O.C. I have attached them to Field Companies with good results, but I feel that for want of definite relations and for lack of facilities for training the best use is not got from Pioneer Battalions. Moreover, they have special difficulties of their own to contend with, particularly when separated from their Divisions and working under Corps.

When Pioneer Battalions were first raised for new Armies it was intended to have a fairly senior officer of R.E. as part of their H.Q. (I was actually sent to 9th Gordons, but was sent almost at once back to France and was never replaced), and I have attached a Field Company Commander once (in consultation with O.C. Pioneer Battalion and with approval of the G.O.C.) as adviser on technical matters.

The recent sending of B.1 men to Pioneer Battalions in exchange for trained "A" men has made the question more pressing than ever on account of the training question.

Most units, such as R.A., R.E., Signals, Tunnellers, have representatives in higher formations watching their especial interests and directing their technical work and perhaps training. As most of their work is almost entirely done under the C.R.E., the R.E. channel seems the most suitable for them. The E.-in-C. would then feel responsible for providing more facilities for training in France and at Home, and the lines on which the instruction would be given would be uniform and not of different schools.

The only other solution would seem to be an Inspector of Pioneers on the lines of Inspector of Mines. I know that the Pioneer Battalion in my Division agrees with me that at present it is apt to suffer under special difficulties, both in training and lack of a head.

*Answer.* This matter will receive consideration if brought up officially. It opens up a big question.

## STAFF.

### 14.—Tour on Staff Employment.

That Staff and other employment be for a fixed period, after which all officers should return for a tour of duty with their regiment.

*Answer.* This would be very uneconomical. The supply of junior Staff officers trained before the war is nearly used up, and recourse is now had to those trained during the war. All junior Staff officers now being appointed have been through a special learners' course after being recommended for the course by Battalion and Brigade Commanders. They should have had considerable regimental experience before being recommended, and it is for Battalion Commanders to assist by only putting forward the names of those with regimental experience and suitable in every way for Staff employment.

### 15.—Selections for Staff.

Could not more temporary officers who are used to organizing in civil life be employed in the "Q" and "A" branches of the Staff, thereby relieving many Regular officers for Command and Second-in-Command of Battalions?

*Answer.* This is already very largely done. In the G.S., A. and Q. Branches at Fourth Army H.Q., out of eight officers holding Staff appointments below first grade, all are either Territorial or temporary-commissioned, except one.

## MEDICAL.

### 16.—Sanitation.

The question of sanitation in a line of shell-hole posts. The fouling of the ground will become a grave danger to the health of the troops in the hot weather.

*Answer.* This would appear to be largely a question of discipline. In exposed positions, difficulties are bound to occur, but it is thought that as a rule it would be possible to arrange for receptacles to be provided which could be emptied at night.

### 17.—Medical Boards.

It is suggested that more care should be taken at the Base not to return at once to units the greater percentage of men sent down by A.D.M.S.'s Weekly Boards. Such men invariably turn up again with the next draft. There is at present no remedy against a Medical Board at the Base finding a man fit, although the Board may have no practical knowledge of the conditions and work the man may have to endure. Should Boards be held by M.O.s having a practical knowledge of trench life, men who are obviously only fit for labour units, P.B., etc., could be permanently got rid of and not turn up again and again like a bad halfpenny.

*Answer.* Monthly Returns from Assistant Inspectors of Drafts at the Reinforcing Bases show that during the six months ending 30/11/17, 6,217 men were sent down as unfit for further service at the front by A.D.M.S. of Divisions. Of these 92 were classed "A" on arrival at a Base (rather under 1.5 per cent.), 1,096 "T.B." for dentures, Ophthalmic Specialists' Reports, etc., and the remainder were made "P.B.," the exact percentages available for immediate return being 1.5 per cent.

All the Assistant Inspectors of Drafts have served with front line units and have a knowledge of what men have to endure, and so have the vast majority of the officers who are members of these Boards.

It is also pointed out that they know the class of reinforcement which is being sent from England at the moment, and are in a far better position to select the most suitable men from the material at their disposal than officers serving at the Front, who possibly think there is an unlimited supply of really first-class men available.

All the Assistant Inspectors of Drafts are quite aware of the class of man wanted by Commanding Officers, but if the supply is not equal to the demand the only thing is to send the best obtainable.

## GAS.

### 18.—P.H. Helmets.

It is suggested that the P.H. Helmet be done away with.

*Answer.* The present policy with regard to the P.H. Helmet is that it should be abolished with the two following minor exceptions:—

1. Field Ambulances and C.C.S.s should maintain a small stock in order to equip wounded officers and men who come in without Box Respirators and require an emergency appliance.

2. Alien and coloured Labour Units. These are never employed within 10 kilometres of the line, and it is thought that it would be a waste of money to issue Box Respirators under those conditions. Moreover, it is very difficult to fit many of the coloured races with a respirator on account of the shape of their nose.

It is proposed shortly to publish a G.R.O. giving effect to this policy.

### 19.—Small Box Respirator.

Whether the leather loop and brass stud on the Small Box Respirator might now be discarded.

Practically everyone now wears the Box Respirator in the Alert position by passing the string through the sling at the back. Even if individuals do not approve of this method the sling could be shortened to any length if the brass stud is taken away.

*Answer.* This suggestion would not appear to have been carefully considered.

The units referred to may not be in the habit of using the leather loop and brass stud, but they are not the majority, and they are certainly wrong.

If the leather loop and brass stud are taken away, and if the string breaks, which is quite possible if the weight is placed on it continually, then it is not possible to keep the Box Respirator in the Alert position.

And, if the mask is being worn and the string breaks, the weight of the box would promptly come on the teeth and tube.

## TRANSPORT.

### 20.—Transport for L.T. Batteries.

The advisability of placing some transport on the establishment of a Light Trench Mortar Battery.

*Answer.* It is regretted that the available supply of transport will not permit of any transport being placed on the establishment at present. The organization of Light Trench Mortar Batteries is now under consideration.

### 21.—Requirements of Battalion Transport.

It is suggested that the following be issued to Battalion transport:—

(i.) 25 lbs. of rock salt per month.

(ii.) A certain amount of bran, if demanded.

(iii.) That a waterproof sheet be allowed each animal during the winter months. This is to be used as a loin cloth when working. At present only one loin cloth is issued, the result being in bad weather the animal has nothing dry on return to stables.

*Answer.* As regards

(i.) The Director of Veterinary Services considers that rock salt proves very wasteful. An issue of 1 oz. of coarse salt per animal per Division is more suitable, and is being issued. It was suggested that some of the salt was used by Veterinary Officers for curing hides; this will be taken up by the Q.M.G.'s department with a view to an extra issue being made for this purpose. (*Vide* G.R.O. 3406, dated Feb. 17, 1918.)

As regards

(ii.) Owing to the increased difficulties of supply, it was decided in December, 1916, that bran should only be used for sick animals. The Director of Veterinary Services agreed to an issue of 135 lbs. per diem per Division being made for this purpose.

As regards

(iii.) It is regretted that owing to the scarcity of all kinds of waterproof material, this suggestion cannot be considered.

### 22.—Transport of Battalions.

(a) Could regimental transport be increased in view of present requirement of surplus authorized stores?

(b) Increased Mobilization Equipment and the carrying of canteen stores and recreational kit, have rendered the transport provided inadequate, even including the extra wagons provided by the train. Still further transport is considered necessary.

*Answer.* The present position as regards the supply of transport does not allow of any further increase. In addition, it is not considered economical to increase the establishment of transport in units under circumstances in which the transport is not always required. When a unit moves application should be made through the proper channels to the Corps when extra transport in the shape of lorries will be provided.

### 23.—Lightening of Battalion Transport.

Might it be arranged that when units move from the forward area, the echelon be dumped, so as to release transport?

*Answer.* There is no objection to this being done with the permission of Divisional Headquarters.

**24.—Dress for the Trenches for Winter Months.**

It is suggested that a pair of light waterproof "legs" be worn over the S.D. trousers, made to strap at the ankle. No puttees to be worn.

*Answer.* Anything that tends to add to the numerous items of clothing to be provided for the man, unless the necessity is really proved, is to be deprecated at the present juncture, when the difficulty of supply of materials of all kinds is becoming day by day increasingly evident.

A new description of garment means a new trade, or the allocation of individuals on to a new type of work.

Some time since an exhaustive enquiry was started in Armies as to whether the puttee was found satisfactory or whether some substitute should be found.

This was at a time when resources allowed us to change a pattern or provide a fresh pattern with a certain amount of facility.

Several suggestions were obtained, such as a legging because it looked better, a canvas gaiter like the Navy pattern, but the overwhelming majority, 90 per cent., were in favour of the retention of the puttee, and (I fancy) the medical authorities favour it on account of the warmth it gives.

An objection to the puttee is that if it is wrapped tightly it increases the chances of trench feet. The suggestion that a pair of waterproof "legs" should be supplied has never been strongly backed up, and anything that entails the provision of waterproofed material at the present time is a difficulty.

**25.—Special Pocket for Field Dressing.**

It is suggested that:—

(i.) The pocket be made wider, and

(ii.) That it be made nearer the corner of the tunic.

The present size and position render the removal of the dressing a matter of considerable difficulty, even when no equipment is worn.

*Answer.* This is the first time since the beginning of the war that this suggestion has been raised.

The alteration, when it comes to millions of coats, involves the use of so much material that unless the necessity is one of great importance and is the general opinion throughout the Armies it should not be undertaken.

If found to be a necessity after a thorough and complete investigation, and is referred, the matter will be taken up in regard to future supplies.

**26.—Fitting of Boots.**

The issue of the small fitting boots, for example, boots size 8.3 and 8.4, should be discontinued, and the issue of larger fittings, *i.e.*, 8.5 and 8.6, increased.

*Answer.* This has not been found to be necessary. There has been no difficulty up to the present in the supply of boots of all sizes, and, as the smaller size is often required, a stock must be kept. They need not and should not be demanded by units who don't want them.

**27.—Canvas Shoes.**

Whether each man could not have a pair of light canvas shoes. It is recognized that this gives the man a slight extra weight to carry, but this would be balanced by the benefit to the man's feet.

*Answer.* To supply canvas shoes means an initial issue of more than two million pairs, or immediate provision of three million, allowing for upkeep.

Supply of canvas, like other things, is becoming difficult, and unless the necessity for such an issue has been proved from the point of view of health and efficiency of the troops, it ought not to be proceeded with.

We have had no application, and as stated in the question it is another article in the list which is already numerous, and many of which items are continually being abandoned and left about by the troops.

**28.—Leather and Web Equipment.**

(a) Can the leather equipment be withdrawn from the fighting troops and substituted by web? Or failing that, can the present leather ammunition pouch be improved?

(b) It is suggested that arrangements should be made for standardising the equipment of units, so that each unit is fitted with either leather or web equipment, thus securing uniformity and greatly improving the appearance of battalions.

*Answer.* This equipment has been standardised as far as possible, and no more leather equipment will be supplied.

Owing to the difficulty in the supply of web at the beginning of the war, when the size of the Army was so suddenly increased, it was necessary to find a substitute and leather equipment had to be supplied.

The manufacture has now ceased, but the leather equipment has got to be used up, and as the material is good it will take some time.

From the point of view of economy, this equipment is received back, cleaned up and used for reissue; we demand but little from home, and in consequence units must take what happens to be available.

With the limitation of resources, we cannot call on the Home Authorities for more while the leather material is good.

The leather pouch is being improved by the addition of an extra tab and special stud, which will be carried out as soon as the studs can be obtained.

This alteration has been given a definite extended trial, and a good report of the alteration received.

### 29.—Socks.

Men are encouraged, when using gum boots, to wear two pairs of socks, this being considered a good preventive of trench feet.

It is suggested that the issue of socks be increased to four pairs, thus enabling two dry sets to be available for use.

*Answer.* As many pairs of socks as are required can be taken up to the trenches when desired. They can be drawn through the divisional baths.

### 30.—Undervests.

Only one undervest is issued for men for winter months. There is often a shortage of clean vests at the baths, which entails the wearing of the same vest for perhaps four or five weeks. If the issue were increased to two pairs per man this would be obviated.

*Answer.* The objection to increasing the scale of equipment is that it would increase the weight to be carried by the soldier. There is no reason why sufficient vests should not be available at the baths.

The following Army Routine Order was published on the 26th January:—

“1674—*Clean Undervests.* It appears that troops do not in all cases receive a change of undervests when changing their underclothing. Corps and Divisions will hold a sufficient stock of clean undervests to ensure that all men receive a complete change of underclothing at the baths.”

## IRON RATIONS.

### 31.—Receptacle for Iron Rations.

The greatest difficulty is experienced in preserving the iron ration from damage through weather and rough usage, incidental to present conditions. The tin containing the grocery portion gets crushed, and the contents wet or lost.

The biscuits are crushed to powder, spoiled by rain, and are frequently consumed by rats, who gnaw through the haversack.

Could a good, strong tin be issued, of suitable design, which would obviate the above? It could contain the complete iron ration, less the meat, and could be provided with, perhaps, some type of seal. It should be so made as to be capable of being opened without damaging the tin.

*Answer.* This question has been constantly brought up and represented to the War Office. The War Office has, however, ruled that, owing to the shortage of tin plate, it is impossible to provide new tins for this purpose, the initial issue being about 3,000,000 tins. In addition, the varying sizes of biscuits they are forced to take from the manufacturers would entail the provision of too many different sized tins.

It is now under consideration whether it is necessary for troops to carry an iron ration at all times, or if an issue should only be made before active operations or when units are occupying a portion of front, the conditions on which are such as to make it advisable that they should do so. Opinions on this are being asked for.

### 32.—Iron Ration.

It is suggested that the iron ration be issued at the Base to each man of a draft, and not in bulk to the N.C.O. in charge, as is now done. An enormous number of men arrive deficient owing to the N.C.O. forgetting to issue the rations or losing them during the journey up.

*Answer.* The O.C. the men's depot is responsible that each reinforcement is issued with an iron ration before entrainment, and that the men are collectively warned that if they eat or lose their iron rations they will be severely dealt with. (See G.R.O. 3189, dated January 15th, 1918, para. 6.)

### 33.—Rum, Jam, etc.

Rum is frequently issued in kegs, jam in cardboard cartons, and other rations in ways which make them similarly liable to deterioration during transport in the forward area. Might not pack trains be so adjusted that such issues will not be made to divisions in the forward area?

*Answer.* The provision of rum in kegs is entirely dependent on the number of jars returned by Armies to the Base. Armies have been informed that unless rum jars are returned to the Base it will be necessary to forward rum in kegs to railheads. The return of rum jars is far from satisfactory.

Owing to the shortage of tin plate the War Office has decided to send jam in carton pack. The question of the suitability of this carton pack is still under discussion with the War Office, who have asked for further trials to be made. At present Armies are not agreed as to these carton containers.

### 34.—Shortage of Meat and Bacon Rations.

The provision of facilities at refilling point for weighing of rations. The present system involves “averaging” the weight of meat, etc., but from the undermentioned return it will be seen that this system invariably results in a shortage, while the unit is debited with the estimated and not the actual weight. The figures submitted are typical of the past three weeks.

Statement of estimated and actual weight of Meat and Bacon issued to Battalion for period from 15-1-18 to 20-1-18.

Date.	FRESH MEAT.			BACON.		
	Estimated.	Actual.	Shortage.	Estimated.	Actual.	Shortage.
15/1/18 ... ..	470 lbs.	361 lbs.	109 lbs.		Correct.	
16/1/18 ... ..	415 "	395 "	20 "	168 lbs.	141 lbs.	27 lbs.
17/1/18 ... ..		Correct.		167 "	159 "	8 "
18/1/18 ... ..	410 "	373 lbs.	37 "	167 "	152 "	15 "
19/1/18 ... ..	426 "	446 "	+ 20 "	173 "	160 "	13 "
20/1/18 ... ..	408 "	334 "	74 "	169 "	160 "	9 "

*Summary.*

Meat shortage, 220 lbs. = 220 rations.

Bacon shortage, 72 lbs. = 288 rations.

*Answer.* The length of time required for weighing meat at the refilling point would be so great as to be prohibitive; besides, the weighing would serve no useful purpose, as quarters of meat have to be accepted at an average weight.

The system is this:—

When the meat is loaded into the railway train at the Base, all the forequarters and all the hindquarters are weighed in bundles. The average weight of all the forequarters and the average weight of all the hindquarters loaded on the train is taken. These average weights are entered on the waybill, and each fore or hindquarter has to be accepted at the average weight.

The Battalion whose figures are quoted in the question was very unlucky in the week under review, as it must have received quarters which were all much below the average weight.

Similarly, bacon is packed at certain weights, which are marked on the case, and it must be accepted at those weights.

**35.—Hot Food Containers.**

It is suggested that the hot food container be done away with, as it is too heavy. A petrol tin packed in a valise to enable it to be carried on a man's back is far better and keeps the food just as hot. Thirty-six of these tins are carried on the cookers (*i.e.*, 9 on each cooker). They are permanently kept in their valises and are always available, as follows:—Two per platoon and four for Battalion Headquarters. Each night half the number are sent up and the empties returned for next night's use. This method prevents the food getting cold at Company Headquarters whilst being proportioned out to platoons, as each platoon has its own tin.

*Answer.* In some sectors where the going is good and the distance over which the container has to be carried is not very great, the hot food container is found very useful. It would be impossible to substitute a lighter pattern this year. The petrol tin carrier suggested is described on page 12 of a book called "Cooking in the Field," S.S. 615, which has been issued to units at the rate of one copy per 50 men.

The petrol tin cannot be used for stews unless the top is cut off and the lid properly fitted. It is very useful for tea or soup as it is.

Either the hot food container or the petrol tin carrier or any other system that is found useful can be employed as desired; there is no compulsion to use any particular system.

**FUEL.**

**36.—Issue of Fuel.**

At present the issue of fuel to drying sheds and baths is often insufficient, and is supplemented by deductions from unit issues. Might not the issue to baths and drying sheds be increased to such an extent as to make this unnecessary?

*Answer.* It has been decided that owing to the difficulties of shipping, it is impossible to increase the existing scale of fuel. It is perhaps not realised that for every ton of coal taken out of French mines for our Armies in France, a like amount has to be put into the country from home for use by the French.

**37.—Extra Fuel required in Front Area.**

Is there any possibility of providing more fuel for the troops in the forward area?

*Answer.* Permission has been given to Corps in the Fourth Army Area to exploit certain devastated woods for use as fuel.

The scale of issue of fuel for a Division in the forward area is:—

(a) 12,000—20,000 ozs. of solidified paraffin a week for a Division for use in the front line where other fuel cannot be used.

(b) In addition, an issue at the rate of 4 lbs. of fuel a day per man throughout the Division is made thus:—

(i.) For men in trenches:—2 lbs. of coke and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of charcoal.

(ii.) For men not in the trenches:— $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of wood and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of coal and the balance of the 4 lbs. allowed for the men in the trenches, which can be drawn as either  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of coal or 1 lb. of wood.

(c) 200 lbs. of coal a week for each office fireplace up to a limit of 200 fireplaces per Division.

(d) Five tons a week for use in divisional baths and laundries.

It is not possible to increase this scale, and it is found that often the full amount of coke and charcoal is not drawn.

### 38.—Fuel for Units on the Move.

That issues of fuel be made when Battalions are on the move.

*Answer.* Fuel certainly ought to be issued when Battalions are on the move. The Quartermaster ought to ascertain from the Brigade Supply Officer what the arrangements are for making the issue, and if he finds that it is not proposed to make any issue, the Divisional Staff should be approached at once, so that they may have arrangements made.

## OFFICER QUESTIONS.

### 39.—Promotion of Officers at Home.

There are many officers who go home for various reasons, and remain there for considerable periods, and get promotion over the heads of those who were senior to them in France. Why should not these officers be sent back and relieve those who have served for long periods in France?

*Answer.* Officers are always sent out to France directly they are passed "A." Establishments at home have to be maintained as well as those in this country; unfit officers on the Home establishments are promoted on it in their turn as vacancies occur.

### 40.—Promotion of 2nd Lieutenants.

Is it deemed advisable to alter the number of lieutenants on the establishment of a Battalion? At present a 2nd Lieutenant of outstanding ability may be debarred from promotion if he has less than 18 months' commissioned service.

*Answer.* So far as the system of promotion is concerned, the proportion of Lieutenants to 2nd Lieutenants makes no difference. The duties of both ranks are the same; and the number of Lieutenants does not affect the rate of promotion to Captain. In Regular and T.F. Battalions promotion to Captain is by seniority; in Service Battalions, where promotion is by selection, 2nd Lieutenants are eligible for promotion to Captain, so that they can receive accelerated advancement equally whatever the number of Lieutenants is.

As regards balance of ranks, which is largely a question of War Establishments, the general rule has been that the number of Lieutenants and 2nd Lieutenants should be, roughly, equal. In the case of a Service Battalion, establishments authorize 9 Lieutenants and 7 2nd Lieutenants. Now that 14 supernumerary subalterns have been added to the Battalion, the proportion of Lieutenants becomes very much lower.

There are at present (on the average) over 12 Lieutenants per Battalion, owing to the fact that officers are now promoted to Lieutenant after 18 months' service; but this excess of Lieutenants over establishment is likely to be only temporary.

Whatever number of Lieutenants is approved, the general system of promotion in the Battalion and the efficiency of the Battalion would appear to be unaffected.

Application has, however, been made to hold the undermentioned officers on the establishment of a Battalion. At present if employed they have to be taken from the company officers. Should they be held extra to the present establishment they will probably rank as Lieutenants. This would increase the number of Lieutenants and equalise matters:—

Lewis Gun Officer.

Scout Officer.

Transport Officer.

Assistant Adjutant.

### 41.—Antedating Promotion of 2nd Lieutenants.

That 2nd Lieutenants with more than 18 months' service before promotion should date back to 18 months.

*Answer.* G.R.O. No. 2600, of 11-9-17, definitely states that anti-dates for 2nd Lieutenants with more than 18 months' service before promotion cannot be made retrospective beyond 1st July, 1917.

### 42.—Acting Rank of Captain.

What exactly is the difference between the ranks of "Acting Additional Captain" and "Acting Captain while commanding a Company"?

*Answer.* Before the 5th August, 1917, acting rank of Captain had been granted only to Officers Commanding Companies, *i.e.*, a maximum of four per Battalion. By G.R.O. 2545 of above date two additional acting Captains were authorized, so that the total number of Captains serving with a Battalion in the field may be maintained at six. Such appointments are notified in G.H.Q. list of appointments as "Additional."

The difference between the two is that the "Acting Additional Captain" need not be commanding a Company, whereas the other only gets the acting rank of captain whilst actually commanding a Company.

#### 43.—Command Pay for O.C. Company.

That command pay be given to an O.C. Company.

*Answer.* War Office authority for grant of command pay states that pay is only admissible for officers who are in separate and responsible command, and not immediately under the command of a Lieutenant Colonel or other officer drawing command pay. It actually goes so far as to state that an O.C. Company will *not* be granted command pay.

Before any officer can be granted command pay, the strength of the unit under his command must exceed 250, and a certificate to this effect has to be rendered before the claim is approved.

#### 44.—Proposal for New Rank.

Whether it would be an advantage to have officer substitutes in command of platoons, as a grade between N.C.O.s and officers.

At present, students on their return from Army Schools, are taken for commissions, and are lost to their unit; with the officer substitute this would not occur.

There are also other obvious advantages, *e.g.*, "class," no forfeiture of separation allowances, better status for old N.C.O.s than 2nd Lieutenants, etc.

*Answer.* This proposal was previously made at the Sixth Commanding Officers' Conference, held in January, 1917. The matter was taken up at once, and after opinions had been taken, a definite proposal was put forward to the War Office. The War Office in reply forwarded a draft of a suggested order to France for approval, but after being submitted to Armies for remarks, it was eventually not approved, and the matter dropped. It is, therefore, not proposed to take the matter up again.

#### 45.—Regimental Badges of Officers attached to Units other than their own.

It is suggested that officers attached to units other than their own should automatically wear the badge or dress of their new unit. This is often not done and has a bad effect on the *esprit de corps* of the men.

*Answer.* It was suggested by C.O.s that in order to promote *esprit de corps* it was almost essential that at any rate the C.O. and Second-in-Command should wear the dress and badges of the unit with which they were serving. As regards the junior ranks, it was considered very desirable that they should also do so, and the matter will be considered by A.G., and a general opinion obtained. Difficulties as regards expense would arise in the case of officers of Scottish Battalions attached to other than Scottish Battalions, and *vice versa*.

#### 46.—Commissions from the Ranks.

An Orderly Room Sergeant, who is excellent as such and would make a good junior Staff officer, provided he has to deal with none except clerks, is at a dead-end, as he cannot be recommended as a Platoon Officer for a Commission. How can he become an officer?

*Answer.* If under 35 years the only outlet for an Orderly Room Sergeant is to take a combatant Commission. If over 35 years of age he can be recommended for appointment as temporary Quartermaster. There are no Staff appointments in which the Staff officer has to deal with no one except clerks.

#### 47.—Additional Pay for Assistant Adjutants.

This was brought up last year, but it has apparently not been taken up.

*Answer.* This question was brought up last year and was taken up. It was referred back officially to Formations and Units, and was negatived.

#### 48.—Payment of Allowances.

That allowances due to officers be credited to them more promptly.

*Answer.* It must be remembered that there are some thousands of officers now in the Army, and the work entailed on the Command Paymaster, at the Base, is consequently very great. It is not considered that the delay at present is sufficient to justify this subject being referred to higher authority.

#### 49.—"Pro Forma" for Confidential Reports.

It is suggested that the *pro forma* for confidential reports on officers now in use at Home be used in France. At present, should it be necessary to report unfavourably on an officer, the correspondence is continually being returned for additions and alterations, which, if laid down in tabulated form, would not be overlooked in the first case.

*Answer.* The system now in force in this country allows Commanding Officers to report quite freely without being tied down to answering certain definite questions.

It is pointed out that most of the unnecessary correspondence referred to is caused by non-compliance with the instructions for rendering such reports, as laid down in S.S. 627.

#### 50.—Officers Cashiered or Dismissed.

Would it not be advisable, when an officer is cashiered or dismissed, to ensure that he returns to the firing line as a private soldier within a week of the date of the promulgation of his sentence?

*Answer.* In order to carry out such rapid disposal, ex-officers would have to be posted to their late units, or to units in the neighbourhood; there are obvious objections to this.

Also, an ex-officer may be sent to another arm of the Service, probably Infantry, and would require training in the work of this new arm.

The existing procedure is for the ex-officer to be sent under escort to a Base Port when he has the option of enlisting right away as a Private, in which case this is carried out by Base Commandant, or of proceeding to England when he is automatically enrolled under the Military Service Act.

It must be remembered that once the officer is dismissed or cashiered he becomes a civilian, and so has no military status in this country.

#### **51.—Officers' Kit on Arrival in France.**

It is suggested that the equipment of all officers coming from the Base for duty with Battalions be examined at the Base to see that they are in possession of a revolver, field glasses and a compass. If deficient, that they be compelled to obtain same through Ordnance before leaving the Base. It is extremely difficult to equip officers from Ordnance stores in the forward area, firstly, because the articles are rarely to be obtained, and, secondly, Ordnance stores are few and far between.

*Answer.* Steps are already taken at Bases to equip all officers who may come out deficient of items which they should have in their possession, provided the stores are available and there is time.

This is an old story. The fault lies in these officers coming out deficient of equipment.

The result is that they come out in numbers expecting to get kit in this country, and as the number is an unknown figure it is not possible to provide for such an emergency, especially when the articles in question are difficult to obtain.

The matter has been taken up repeatedly with the War Office, and an A.C.I. has now been published warning officers that they must come out equipped.

If stores such as revolvers, compasses and binoculars are not obtainable at the Base, officers should put their demands through the Ordnance Officer of the formation to which they belong. They should not apply to Army Depôts, who would not hold such items in stock. There is still a great dearth owing to the very large numbers required by the troops to replace losses, etc.

#### **52.—Visit to 3rd Echelon and Base Depot.**

It is suggested that Commanding Officers and Adjutants be allowed to visit the 3rd Echelon and Base Depot on application.

*Answer.* The Base Depôts have now been very largely reduced, and officers and other ranks are only kept there a few hours before being sent forward to Corps Reinforcement Camps.

A number of Staff Officers and learners are attached there, and the time of the 3rd Echelon is fully taken up in dealing with them.

### **OTHER RANKS.**

#### **53.—Transfer of N.C.O.s to the Home Establishment.**

Whether the privilege of allowing N.C.O.s of long service in this country to transfer to the Home Establishment might be extended to a few selected privates of over 40 years of age who have been in the country over three years.

*Answer.* This question has already been taken up and sanction obtained from the War Office, and instructions will very shortly be issued on the subject by 3rd Echelon.

#### **54.—Notification of Men Reporting Sick on Leave.**

Could a quicker method be adopted for advising units when individuals on leave to the United Kingdom are admitted to hospital?

At present it is often three weeks or more before the notification of a man's admission to hospital is received. This renders it possible that the man may be reported on the Weekly Absentee Return. Wounded and sick men are kept at home for long periods before rejoining.

*Answer.* Reports from the War Office that an officer or man has been admitted to hospital in England or has been medically boarded in England are forwarded to Armies as soon as they are received. There is an inevitable delay between the time an officer or man is medically boarded and the information reaching the War Office.

Several cases which have been taken up, in which the report has been unduly delayed, have been traced to the failure of hospitals in England to report an admission to the War Office.

### **LEAVE.**

#### **55.—Leave Trains.**

That improved accommodation be made for officers on leave trains.

*Answer.* Every endeavour is being made to improve the accommodation for all ranks on leave trains, and first-class corridor carriages will be run for officers whenever possible. The supply of rolling stock in this country is very limited, so when carriages fall into disrepair it is very difficult indeed to take them off work for repair, because it is very hard to find carriages to replace them whilst they are in repair shops. Special leave trains have been constructed in the Fourth Army, and are said to be most comfortable.

#### **56.—Leave Allotment.**

Several cases have occurred of men in non-fighting employment being granted leave after a much shorter period than men serving with a Battalion, *e.g.*, a man serving with an entrenching Battalion, a man with the Railway Transport Service, a man employed at the A.P. and S. Depot, and servants to officers at Corps H.Q., G.H.Q., etc.

*Answer.* The allotment of leave is made out monthly at G.H.Q. on a time basis (*e.g.*, at the present time, proportion of men over 12 months without leave).

Armies, L. of C., etc., likewise sub-allot on the same basis.

**57.—Raiding Discs.**

It is suggested that ordinary patrols be made to wear the " Raiding Identity Disc " now brought into use. Patrols are as liable to leave prisoners or dead in the enemy's hands as are raiding parties.

*Answer.* This matter will be taken up and the general opinion of the Army obtained.

**58.—Roads, Etc.**

The question of repair and maintenance of roads and tracks in forward areas appears to require consideration. At present the responsibility for their upkeep does not seem clearly defined from an Infantry standpoint.

*Answer.*—The Army area is divided into three sub-areas for purposes of road repair and maintenance. From the rear up to a certain line the responsibility rests with the Director-General of Transportation. This line is known as the D.G.T. line. Thence up to the Divisional line it rests with the Chief Engineers of Corps. Thence up to the front line of trenches the responsibility rests with the C.R.E.s of Divisions. In every Divisional area there should be a general policy as to what roads and tracks are to be maintained.

**59.—Flares.**

Are smokeless flares for contact aeroplane work to be issued?

The chief points are that the soldier lying out in a shell hole close to the enemy will think twice before lighting his flare, because the present pattern will give his position away to the Bosche. This is only natural, and it is a most important factor. In the present kind of semi-open warfare, where control by officers and N.C.O.s is very limited once the attack has been launched, the soldier must have confidence in his means of signalling to the aeroplane that he does not at the same time tell the enemy where he is.

The necessity for all aeroplane flares being weather-proof and ignited mechanically.

Are such flares being manufactured to take the place of the present issue?

*Answer.* Trials are now being carried out as regards flares and other light signals. The importance of producing a smokeless signal is fully appreciated.

**60.—Badges.**

During the Ypres operations from September 20th onwards, coloured shoulder bands were worn in certain divisions to distinguish the sections of the platoon.

While the present organization of the platoon obtains, might not authority be given for the wearing of these badges, both during operations and during training?

*Answer.* The necessity for these badges is being considerably reduced owing to the new organization of platoons as shown in S.S. 143, a new edition of which is in process of circulation. In future, the platoon will consist of three Riflemen Sections and one Lewis Gun Section. It is recommended that one of the Riflemen Sections should be trained to act as a Bombing Team. The whole Platoon should be trained as bombers and 50 per cent. as rifle-bombers. Four of the new dischargers which throw the Mills grenade will be issued to each platoon. These can be distributed within the platoon at the discretion of the Battalion Commander.

The question of a distinctive badge on the shoulder strap for Lewis gunners will be taken up by G.H.Q.

**61.—Duck Board Tracks.**

As duck board tracks are heavily strafed during an attack, would it not be worth while laying in every Battalion Sector an emergency track well camouflaged, to be used only by order from Brigade Headquarters?

*Answer.* This is a sound suggestion, and it is already being carried out in certain cases.

**62.—Reward for Salvage Collected.**

That a reward (monetary or other) be made to units in proportion to the amount of salvage collected. If money, the amount to be expended on sports, extra messing, etc.

*Answer.* This question has been brought up previously and referred to G.H.Q. It was then decided at an Army Commanders' Conference that rewards should not be introduced, firstly, because salvage is a matter of discipline, and, secondly, because the payment of salvage might lead to corrupt practices.

**63.—Formation of Territorial Corps.**

That Territorial Corps be formed to allow Territorial Officers, both Regimental and Staff, to obtain the promotion they deserve, and to encourage *esprit de corps*.

*Answer.* This would be contrary to the policy now obtaining of making no distinction between Regular, Service and Territorial Officers, and to some extent, Dominion Officers.

**64.—Battalion Intelligence Section.**

It is suggested that a Battalion Intelligence Section should be authorized and that an establishment and equipment for same be laid down.

*Answer.* One Scout Officer, one Scout Sergeant and one Scout Corporal at Battalion Headquarters and four Scouts per Company Headquarters are being included in the revised War Establishment for Infantry Battalions. It is the intention that this personnel should be grouped within the Battalion according to the requirements of the situation, and that these should form the Intelligence Section of the Battalion.

### 65.—Venereal Disease.

Would it not be advisable for the purpose of reducing a serious wastage of man-power to give more publicity in regard to the names of men who contract the disease, such as informing next-of-kin, publishing names of sick under this heading, etc.

It appears that a very easy method of evading service indefinitely presents itself, and that a man who deserts or absents himself runs far greater risks than the man who obtains the same result through contracting venereal disease.

*Answer.* There appears to be no reason why the names of men admitted to hospital suffering from venereal disease should not be published in Battalion orders, but it is not considered that the publication of names in the orders of higher formations would cause such a reduction in wastage of man-power as would justify the amount of clerical labour which would be caused.

It has been laid down by the War Office that the next-of-kin will not be informed.

### 66.—A.F. B.213.

That the Army Form B.213 be altered to allow of it being the only return necessary.

*Answer.* This has been very carefully considered, and no return which will include all the information required has yet been evolved. A draft of such return would be welcomed and submitted to G.H.Q.

### 67.—Trench Feet.

1. Has the camphor method of treatment been adopted in preference to the whale oil method because supplies of the latter are difficult to obtain?

2. If not, is it considered that the camphor method is the better in all circumstances?

3. Is the camphor method considered any preventive whatever in the following conditions:—

(a) Trenches 2 ft. 6 in. deep in "porridge" mud and water.

(b) No shelter in the front line, and little in the support and reserve lines.

(c) Men completely wet through heavy rain; changing of socks of very little use, as all clothing is very wet, gum boots "ditto," and the socks are wet almost as soon as they are put on.

(d) No possible chance of drying the feet, which soon assume a white, "washed-out" appearance, similar to "washerman's" hands.

4. Whether it is not a fact that the majority of medical officers (regimental) are of opinion that the whale oil method is the better.

*Answer.*

1. No.

2. Yes.

3. (a) Yes, when men are relieved as laid down in Fourth Army Standing Order 918 (b), because the sterilization of the feet and legs is ensured for a short period.

(b) Yes. It requires very little shelter for men to change their socks and rub their feet. A Pill Box will do. If sufficient shelter is not provided it is generally due to faulty Divisional arrangements.

Recently a Divisional Commander published an order complimenting a Battalion on not having a single case during a tour of duty in a bad part of the line. The trench foot cases in other Battalions of the same Division were worse than others in the Army.

(c) Yes, because when a man changes his socks and rubs his feet his circulation is aided—this is of great value. Moreover, it is then possible by inspection to detect whether a man is developing trench foot, *see* Fourth Army Standing Order 918, and take immediate steps before it becomes serious.

(d) Yes, the answer to (c) also applies.

4. No, quite the reverse in this Army. Reports received at A.H.Q. show that the men also prefer it.

### 68.—Drafts.

Is it not possible to arrange that drafts from Home are sent to their own regiments?

When a draft arrives it generally consists of men of any Regiment but its own. Many of these men have been wounded, but they are not known, whereas if they had joined their own Battalion they would have had a chance of getting on, and keeping up the *esprit de corps* of the Battalion.

*Answer.* This is done in every case where possible. It is, however, pointed out that at the time reinforcements are available other Battalions of the same regiment may be more in need of reinforcements than the actual Battalion in which the man previously served. Any concrete cases in which men of other Regiments have been posted will be enquired into and rectified, if possible.

### 69.—Drafts.

That a Battalion should receive the drafts which its Reserve Battalion sends out, and that there should be a free interchange of officers and N.C.O.s between the Battalions.

*Answer.* A Reserve Battalion in England, with very few exceptions, finds drafts for a large number of Battalions of its own Regiment in this country and other theatres of war.

An interchange of officers already exists under the "Tired Officers" scheme, and a system also exists whereby a N.C.O. of long service in this country may be exchanged for a N.C.O. of similar rank from home.

#### 70.—Bandsmen for Battalion Bands.

As bandsmen cannot be trained locally, it is suggested that Battalions which maintain bands should have the first call on any reinforcements who are bandsmen.

*Answer.* Battalion bands are not officially recognised. If Officers Commanding Battalions will notify the D.A.G., 3rd Echelon, privately, stating requirements, the D.A.G. will assist as far as his resources will allow.

#### 71.—Supply of Signallers.

Although the output of these from Home (newly-trained men) must be large, the 2nd Bn. The Welch Regt. has only had three signallers drafted to it in 18 months, and has had to depend on local training to replace deficiencies.

The ordinary application for these specialists seems to have no effect at the Base. (A.F. B.213.)

*Answer.* The above statement has been investigated and is approximately correct. There is no doubt there has been great wastage in specialists trained at home owing to their having been sent to join units as drafts without having been sorted out. Instructions have now been issued that men whose A.B.s 64 show that they have been trained as signallers are to be sorted out at Corps Reinforcement Camps and only sent up to units when signallers are required.

#### 72.—B.A.B. Trench Code—Correction to Map Reference, Figures, etc.

In a printed card recently issued, to be hung in all signal offices, para. 7, second part, states that map co-ordinates and figures *may* be sent in clear.

A complete map reference would probably be easy to recognise, but the question of figures is different, and this paragraph in the above-mentioned card is liable, in my opinion, to cause very serious confusion and danger.

Would it not be advisable to lay down definitely that the correction be applied to every group and every portion of a code message, and that on no account is "clear" and code to be used in the same message?

*Answer.* The B.A.B. Trench Code is obsolescent and will be obsolete in a few days.

#### 73.—Telephone Wires over Trenches.

The orders regarding laying wires over trenches appear to require emphasizing, as in nearly every sector one finds communication trenches, fire trenches, etc., obstructed by telephone wires.

Ration and carrying parties are very much hampered by these wires, unless the wires are carefully laid.

The Artillery are the chief offenders as a rule, since Infantry Commanders see that obstructions are not caused by their own wires.

*Answer.* Fourth Army Standing Orders (General Staff), para. 10, deals with this question.

The Brigade Signal Officer is entirely responsible for *all* lines in his area. The Battalion Signal Officers should immediately report if any lines are not properly laid, labelled and maintained, and the Brigade Signal Officer will inform the Unit concerned that necessary steps must be taken. If no action is taken the line will be reeled in.

#### 74.—Forward Cable Buries.

(a) In many instances, prior to major offensive operations, the buried cable stops at forward Brigade Headquarters, after working forward from Divisional Headquarters, leaving communication from Brigades to Battalions and from Battalions to Companies to visual or air lines.

Could it not be made a settled policy to commence cable buries from as near the front line as practicable and work back?

(b) The extension of existing buried cable from Battalion Headquarters to Companies in the line. Where all lines forward of Battalion Headquarters are laid in one trench, as often happens, it has been found that during a hostile bombardment the possibility of maintaining uninterrupted communication between Battalion Headquarters and Companies in the line is very remote.

It is suggested that this extension—consisting of a 16-line bury—be carried to the support line at least, and to the close support line, if possible.

*Answer.* S.S. 191, "Inter-communication in the Field," Sec. 2, para. 3, deals with this question, which may be summarized as follows:—

Main forward buried routes are constructed and maintained to within about 1,200 yards of our front line, and the cable heads are connected laterally if time and labour permit.

Immediately before an offensive the forward routes are advanced to our front line to dug-outs previously prepared.

Buried routes to Battalions and Companies have given so much trouble and are broken so frequently that it has been found preferable to utilise open, trench or ditched wires, as they can be more readily repaired.

When the forward buried routes are being extended to our front line, spurs can be built to Battalion Forward Headquarters if labour is available. There is no objection to the construction of buried routes to Battalion Headquarters from the cable heads for normal conditions if it is considered that the labour entailed is justifiable.

Only a few circuits would be needed, as the route would be useless as an adjunct to the main scheme.

Power buzzers have proved an excellent means of communication when lines have all been broken, and if these instruments are properly employed they are invaluable. The personnel, however, must be thoroughly trained, or they have no confidence in the apparatus, and the majority of failures can be attributed to this cause.

Buried wires from Battalions to Companies are practically an impossibility. These are invariably cut, and well-laddered ground cable lines are preferable, using the Fullerphone. Visual and power buzzer should supplement these lines where feasible.

**75.—Issue of Army List.**

That the portion of the Army List which concerns a unit be supplied each month.

*Answer.* This has been referred to G.H.Q., who state that consent would never be given. Nearly all the information affecting Battalions is given in the weekly list of appointments which is circulated to Corps, who are responsible for making extracts for all units in the Corps who are concerned.

**76.—Suspension of Sentences.**

That before a sentence passed by a Court-Martial be suspended, the recommendations of the O.C. Battalion shall be considered, and that any man sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment with hard labour undergoes three months' Field Punishment No. 1 to commence with.

*Answer.* It is agreed that before a sentence by a Court-Martial be suspended, the recommendation of the O.C. Battalion shall be considered, and it was hoped that this was done as a matter of course by Brigade Commanders before making their own recommendation. Before any definite orders on this point can be given, the question will be referred to G.H.Q., because it is considered advisable that the same procedure should be adopted throughout the whole Expeditionary Force.

The question of a man sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment with hard labour being first made to carry out three months' Field Punishment is against the law and cannot be altered without an Act of Parliament.

This has already been referred to the War Office and refused.

(Signed) A. A. MONTGOMERY,  
*Major-General.*  
GENERAL STAFF, FOURTH ARMY.

FOURTH ARMY,  
*February 20th, 1918.*