

Responsibility for Training.

82. I respectfully submit that if any one reading this report will carefully consider the subject of military training in New Zealand in the light of the foregoing suggestions they will thenceforth and for ever afterwards have a clear-cut comprehension not only of the true purpose for which the instructional staff exists, but also of the real significance of every form of training now laid down by law. Such a study should also help the reader to understand where responsibility should rest for the training of the soldier at every stage of his career.

The Area Commander.

83. In war the training of the recruit is necessarily effected apart from the unit. In New Zealand it will have to be carried out within the area by a portion of the present instructional staff, acting under the orders of the Area Commander. With a view to reproducing in peace the exact machinery needed in war, I strongly recommend that the responsibility for training the recruits of the Infantry and Mounted Rifles shall devolve on the Area Commander until such time as they are passed fit to take their place in the ranks. The District Commander, or some officer deputed by him, should be the authority to certify that recruits have reached the standard of efficiency laid down by regulation for the trained soldier. Both in war and in peace, the unit commander will thus have an assurance that the men joining his unit are up to the required standard.

Cadet-training, as forming a definite portion of recruit-training, will naturally be controlled by the Area Commander. (See Appendix XI.)

The Squadron and Company Commander.

84. Subject to the authority of the unit commander, company and squadron commanders should be held responsible for the instruction of the trained soldier. In towns, and in thickly populated districts, this instruction would be given by means of home training; elsewhere, at company and squadron concentrations. The less a Territorial officer has at this stage to rely on assistance from the permanent instructor the better—not only for himself, but also for his command, as well as for the army to which that command bears much the same relation as a family does to a nation.

The Regimental Commander.

85. Next comes battalion and regimental training. Given a sound system of squadron and company training, the time allocated for this purpose should be comparatively limited. Two or three days should suffice. Here again the alternative of home training or regimental concentration should be considered, having due regard to the circumstances of each unit. Where home training is impracticable the existing system of bringing rural corps into camp proportionately earlier than the home-trained corps would continue to be enforced. During these days they should be placed entirely at the disposal of the unit commander.

Units, on the other hand, which can conveniently be home-trained should be assembled periodically under their commander for drill and field exercises, preferably in the weeks immediately preceding the annual camp. Squadron and company drills and training should be completed before the regimental training commences.

Divisional and Brigade Commanders.

86. The annual statutory training of seven days should invariably be effected under the supervision of the brigade commander. By this I do not mean to imply that the whole period should be devoted to brigade-training, or even that the whole brigade should necessarily every year be concentrated in the same camp. While the Territorial Force is still in the making it may be advisable that in alternate years—or for one year out of three—regimental or battalion camps should be formed for backward units, where they would be left almost entirely at the disposal of their own commanding officer. In such cases also the Brigadier should be watching progress from the background and keeping a close eye on the whole character of the instruction. It is sometimes possible for a Brigadier to fix up simultaneous camps for two or more of his units separately and yet within striking distance of one another. In such case he may vary the purely regimental training in the most instructive manner by arranging for an encounter fight or for a night attack. As the forces of New Zealand become seasoned these quiet regimental camps will less frequently be needed, and the ordinary concentration will be by brigades. But even then a wise Brigadier will be careful to leave units at the disposal of their commanders for several days out of the seven, the balance being devoted to some form of realistic field manœuvres. Ultimately it is to be hoped that the Force will reach a stage of development where divisional manœuvres under war conditions will become possible—say, every fourth year—the manœuvres extending over the whole of the seven days.

War Conditions must be observed.

87. I have two explanatory points to make in connection with the previous paragraph. First, as emphasizing the necessity for bringing corps together into larger formations, I would urge that not only do the fighting troops learn thus to work together in unison as they should do in war, but also that such concentrations afford the only possible real war training for all departmental corps such as telegraphs, signallers, telephonists, Army Service and Medical Corps. Secondly, that the adoption of any such system as I have recommended implies the passing of an adequate Manœuvre Act. Such an Act, with its customary proviso that the same ground may not be proclaimed more than once in a certain number of years, is fair to every one, and ensures the troops good fresh ground to work over—an advantage equivalent in training to half the battle.