

THE ORGANIZATION OF A BATTALION IN WAR AND PEACE.

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"Want of organization is more fateful than want of discipline."—
Henderson.

CONTENTS.

Foreword. Introduction. Battalion War Organization Examined. Battalion Peace Organization Examined. War and Peace Strengths Compared. War and Peace Strengths of Battalions and Companies in Foreign Armies Compared. Some Proposals for the Improvement of, or Changes in our Infantry Organization. Conclusion.

Appendices.

APPENDIX A.—War and Peace Establishments compared.

APPENDIX B.—Tabular Statement showing approximate Strengths of Battalions and Companies in Foreign Armies in Peace and War.

FOREWORD.

THE writer feels called upon to preface this article by stating that for the past three years¹ he has held the appointment of adjutant to a home battalion, and has therefore been in a position to observe carefully the many disadvantages under which the present system labours. The modern trend of ideas on war training, so largely influenced by the ceaseless adaptation of science to warfare, daily tends to call for a more scientific system of battalion organization than the British infantry has been blessed with in the past: the greater the calls made on the zeal and energy of the company and detachment commanders, then the greater their dislike to the frequent and exasperating changes in the personnel of their commands: to give them every encouragement by ensuring that they have

¹The article was written at the latter end of 1910.

real responsibility, proper facilities for progressive training, and a command in some way commensurate with that which they will be called upon to lead in war appears to us to be the ideal for which we must all ceaselessly strive.

INTRODUCTION.

Before attempting to examine satisfactorily the problem of Infantry Organization, it is necessary to keep clearly before one's mind the various principles on which it should be based. Briefly summarized, they are as follows:—

- (1) The British Army exists for war, and for war alone; therefore all sentimental considerations, so long as they do not affect the "moral" of the Army in a marked degree, must be banished if reforms are to be effected.
- (2) The cost in £ s. d. of any change is an essential factor in determining its practicability.
- (3) That the aim of any organization should be to give as much real responsibility as possible to the greatest number of individuals.
- (4) That questions dealing with drafts, periods of engagement, ability to recruit up to strength, increases in the non-effective charges, must never be lost sight of, being as they are of the utmost importance in a voluntary army.
- (5) That the home establishment of a unit should be so arranged, as to harmonize as closely as possible with that of war.¹
- (6) That the training (or, in sporting parlance, the "close") season commences on November 1st, and ends on September 30th the following year, every possible change in personnel being therefore compressed into the month of October.
- (7) That the officers and N.C.O.'s form the backbone of a battalion, and that constant changes during the "close" season in the personnel nullify all attempts at a really progressive system of training.

¹ A moment's glance at the peace and war establishments of the British Infantry goes to show that this is not so. In the one, the strength of a company is considered, while in the other not a thought is bestowed on it. The writer has endeavoured to rearrange the method of showing peace establishments in consonance with those of war.

With these principles well in view, the writer intends in the first place to examine thoroughly the composition of a mobilised British infantry battalion, and to ascertain as approximately as he can the greatest number of rifles a company commander can command under four different systems of company organization, viz :—

- (a) The existing company system.
- (b) A seven company system, with an additional headquarter company, containing all odd detachments for whose training the company commanders are not responsible, and who form no part of the fighting strength of their companies.
- (c) An eight company system, with an additional headquarter company containing all odd detachments, is also touched on.
- (d) Six companies with an additional headquarter company.

The four, or double company system, has purposely been omitted; it has sundry disadvantages, and the question of the desirability of its introduction into our Army, though it has often been discussed at lectures and in print, has not been very seriously considered during the past few years. It suffers from two outstanding weaknesses: firstly, it places responsibility on only four shoulders, in comparison with eight under the British system, and, secondly, it lacks elasticity—an important point when small wars have so often to be reckoned with.

After discussing War Organization, the intention is to pass to that of Peace, when it will easily be seen that a company suffers from having on its books a number of individuals who form no part of its fighting strength, either in peace or war.

Consideration will next be given to the arrangements in vogue in foreign armies, after which suggestions for constructive reforms will be outlined and submitted for consideration.

THE BATTALION WAR ORGANIZATION EXAMINED.

(vide Appendix A).

A battalion in war is divided up into certain "departments," each of which has its responsible head, and is separately trained in peace time for the duties required of it in war. Some departments, as will be seen hereafter, only exist in war; others only in peace.

War Establishments re-arranged in "Departments."

	Officers.	W. O's Staff Sergeants and Sergeants.	Rank and file.
(1) COMMAND (Commanding Officer & Senior Major) with Batmen	2	—	4
(2) RECORDS & DISCIPLINE (Adjutant, Sergeant-Major, Orderly-room Clerk, Sergeant-Drummer, Provost-Sergeant, Batmen) ...	1	4	2
(3) SUPPLIES & CLOTHING (Quartermaster, Cook, Shoemaker, Pioneer, Armourer-Sergeants, Batmen & Assistants: Officer's Mess-Sergeant & 3 men: Quartermaster-Sergeant) ...	1	6	8
(4) MEDICAL, under the Medical Officer attached, includes Sanitary Squad, Stretcher Bearers, & Water Dutymen ...	1	—	48
(5) TRANSPORT under Regimental Transport Officer ...	1*	1	21
(6) SIGNALLERS under Signalling Officer ...	1	1	32
(7) MACHINE GUN under an officer...	1	1	15
(8) EIGHT COMPANIES under a captain	21	38	814
Total ...	29	51	944

* Under the new transport organization will probably not be required.

Deducting 10 pioneers, who in war time are usually attached to the Supplies and Clothing "Department," it leaves each company commander, under our existing company system, with a unit of a fighting strength of:—

- 3 officers (3 companies with only 2),
- 1 colour sergeant,
- 4 sergeants (2 companies with only 3),
- 100 rank and file (approximately).

Of the latter two men lead the pack animals, which leaves the company commander 98 rifles in all, or 4 sections of some 25 men each. No allowance has been made for casualties and sickness, and it therefore appears doubtful whether his command could not with advantage be increased. If "Departments" (1) to (7) were all merged into one company under the third senior officer for administrative purposes, we should then find the remaining seven fighting line companies approximately of the following strength :—

- 3 officers (one company with 2);
- 1 colour sergeant;
- 4 sergeants (3 sergeants surplus);
- 115 rank and file.

Which, deducting 2 men as leaders for pack animals, gives four sections of approximately 33 each. At the same time, the strength of the 8th—or headquarter—company will be :—

- 8 officers (includes medical officer);
- 13 warrant officers, staff sergeants and sergeants;
- 130 rank and file, which includes headquarter batmen, signalers, machine gun, details, attached, transport, officers' mess;
- 3 stretcher bearers, sanitary squad.

It would seem to be an open question whether the sanitary squad and stretcher bearers should not be distributed with the companies to which they belong.

PEACE ORGANIZATION OF A HOME BATTALION EXAMINED.

(vide Appendix A.)

In the majority of home battalions the largest influx of recruits takes place early in the year, while the efflux of trained soldiers for service abroad makes itself felt in the late autumn. The voluntary system of enlistment and the heavy strain of keeping up an over-seas army in all probability render these fluctuations quite unavoidable. The writer has therefore considered it necessary to take the full peace establishment (home service) as the only basis from which to carry out an examination of the strength and organization of a battalion.

If the peace establishments are worked out by "departments," as we have previously done in the case of war, the result is found to be as follows :—

PEACE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOME BATTALION BY
" DEPARTMENTS."

	Officers.	Warrant Officers, Staff Sergeants, and Sergeants.	Rank and File.
(a) COMMAND. Commanding Officer & senior major with batmen	2	—	4
(b) RECORDS & DISCIPLINE & RECRUITS. Adjutant, Sergeant-Major, Orderly-Room Sergeant, Orderly-Room Clerk, Drum-Major, & Provost Sergeant.*	1	5	2
(c) SUPPLIES AND CLOTHING.			
(1). Quartermaster, Quartermaster-Sergeant, with clerks, assistants* & batmen ...	1	1	4
(2) Tailors, shoemakers pioneers, cook-sergeant ...	—	4	—
(3) Officer's Mess. ...	—	1	3*
(d) MEDICAL.			
(1) Sanitary Squad ...	—	—	9*
(2) Marching sick (usually an old soldier) ...	—	—	1
(e) TRANSPORT. (Officer only occasionally away from his company) ...	—	1	3*
(f) SIGNALLERS ...	1†	1*	32*
(g) MACHINE GUN SECTION ...	1†	1	14
(h) BAND ...	—	2	21
(i) MUSKETRY. Assistant Adjutant & C.S.I. Musketry ...	1	1	12
(j) BOYS ...	—	—	—
(k) EIGHT COMPANIES ...	19	24	631

† Now additional to the 1910 Establishment.

* Attend Company Field Training.

EXEMPTIONS FROM ANNUAL COMPANY TRAINING.

The regulations admit, however, of a considerable number of exemptions from the annual company training, viz:—

	Officers.	Sergeants.	Rank and File.
The Machine-Gun Section	1	1	14
Pioneers	—	1	10
Command, Warrant-officers & Staff			—
Sergeants	4	8	31
Bandsmen	—	2	13
Boys	—	—	—
Assistant Adjutant & C.S.I.M. ...	1	1	—
Transport & Officer's Mess Sergeant	—	2	—
Also some special exemptions such as:—			
Men over 15 years service, say	—	—	10
Recruits at drill, say	—	—	20
Special Regimental or Garrison employ, say	—	—	5
In hospital, say	—	—	10
Absent on command, special furloughs, etc.	—	—	20
APPROXIMATE TOTAL	6	15	122

Deducting the above exemptions from the Peace Establishment, we find that:—

19 officers,
26 colour sergeants and sergeants,
614 rank and file,

remain available for company training, giving each company approximately:—

2 officers (3 companies with 3),
1 colour sergeant,
2 sergeants (2 companies with 3),
77 rank and file.

If, on the other hand, the Signalling and Transport "Departments," together with the Provost Sergeant, were eliminated and placed in a headquarter company under a captain, with a colour sergeant for accountant duties, a company under the seven company system would work out somewhat as follows:—

	War.	Peace.
Officers	3	2 (3 companies with 3).
Colour Sergeant	1	1
Sergeants	4	2 (2 companies with 3).
Rank and file	115	83

The "Break Up" of the Company.

The cardinal difference between the eight and seven company systems is that in the former some of the section com-

manders are merely birds of passage, who, as soon as the training in the company is over, disappear from it for the remainder of the training season, while in the latter they remain constant, and very few, if any, changes occur; as regards the rank and file in both systems, the company commander has some 70 per cent. of the total company fighting strength allotted to him in war. No one should have any right to complain if he gets 70 per cent. of his war establishment for his annual training. Unfortunately for the company commander, it is at its conclusion that he faces disaster and disappointment. No sooner is his training over, and his musketry completed, than he finds his command reduced to the merest shadow of its former self. At various times and in varying degrees during battalion, brigade, and divisional training he has to supply :—

- (1) Instructors for drilling recruits.
- (2) Instructors for recruits musketry.
- (3) An N.C.O. to a gymnastic course, or to Hythe, or to mounted infantry, or to the garrison school.
- (4) N.C.Os. to Bisley for marking.
- (5) N.C.Os. as gatekeepers at the tournaments, pageants, etc.
- (6) A provost sergeant and sergeants' mess caterer.
- (7) Acting bandsmen return to their music.
- (8) Brigade Communication Section.
- (9) Brigade scouts.
- (10) Garrison employments.
- (11) Tailors and shoemakers to their work.
- (12) Clerks to their offices.
- (13) A party to mounted infantry.
- (14) Recruits to Table A.

and finally his subaltern to another employment or possibly to a course. Instead of 75 on parade, he finds but 35, and, what to him is of far greater consequence, only one or at most two of his original section commanders remain with him; a little later he finds his company gradually increasing in numbers; on going into things, he discovers the newcomers are raw recruits just off the square, and entirely ignorant of all field work. If these same men only "stick it" on manœuvres, and he finds he is enabled to obtain some semblance of order in his sections, he is well pleased. All thoughts of progressive training have of course long since vanished.

The difficulties of the junior officers in a continental army are as nothing in comparison to those of our own regimental officers; the former take in all their recruits in one day in each year; they do not suffer the loss of a section commander as a drill instructor, or for Table A, or for gymnastic work, and as a consequence they reap the benefit of a thoroughly progressive system of training. The writer heard lately that our Infantry were sharply criticised for lack of fire discipline during the past manœuvres. Can its absence be wondered at when the

facts are faced? The marvel is that companies show up so well. It surely speaks volumes for the leadership of the officers and N.C.O.'s and the adaptability of the men.

The Remaining "Departments."

It only remains now to examine the state of the other "Departments" in a battalion in peace time, and to ascertain what difficulties they, too, have to face, and whether their war training suffices.

TAILORS AND BOOTMAKERS.—In war they fight in the ranks of their respective companies: in peace they do a considerable amount of training, and somehow manage to get through their technical work: as soldiers they can well be considered efficient.

PIONEERS.—Exempt from company training, for no apparent reason. It appears questionable whether the establishment of 10 is altogether required; in any case, as in peace or war they habitually march with the 1st or 2nd line transport, they form no part of the fighting strength of a company. It is submitted that they should at least attend company field training every other year.

SANITARY SQUAD.—In peace clean barracks in conjunction with the Pioneers: they train with their companies, but in war are under the orders of the medical officer attached to the battalion. As they constantly change, it would appear undesirable to remove them from their companies to a headquarter company.

TRANSPORT.—The sergeant, unlike his men, never attends company training; both he and his men are fully occupied the rest of the year with their legitimate work, which, so far as they are concerned, is their war training. In war the transport personnel expands to 1 transport officer, 1 transport sergeant, 12 drivers. If in peace time the transport cadre was struck out of a company, they would not be missed.

MACHINE GUN SECTION.—It is now realised that this is a unit by itself: the officer, N.C.O.'s and men must in future be struck off everything throughout the year, and they therefore form no part of a company's fighting organization. It would in all probability assist their instruction if they lived together.

SIGNALLERS.—The officer and sergeant both usually train with their companies, and so do the signallers. At the same time, one constantly hears that the signallers' task is a thankless one, that the general standard of signalling in the Home Army is not up to the mark; it is also common knowledge that the work, after a time, becomes uncongenial to most men, that in war a signaller's responsibility is very great, and, what with day and night work, his task becomes an endless grind.

Those who are thoroughly acquainted with the work and training of signallers, have ceaselessly advocated their being

considered specialists pure and simple, to be trained year in and year out by the officer in charge of them. In the field the latter should merely detail signallers to companies as the situation demands, and the signalling "Department" would be as distinct from the companies as the machine gun section is now.

To keep up the present establishment required by Regulations, and to supply the divisional and brigade communication company, or section, with the requisite number of men, entails the training, year by year, of some 40 N.C.O.'s and men, a formidable task indeed in a home battalion. It has, therefore, been fairly demonstrated that the relations between the company and its signallers from a training point of view can hardly be considered as satisfactory. It would doubtless add to their efficiency if they, too, were housed together, instead of being scattered as at present.

STAFF SERGEANTS.—The armourer sergeant, the master tailor, shoemaker sergeant, orderly room staff, quarter master sergeant, pioneer sergeant, cook sergeant, and drum major form no part of the company's organization except for purely administrative purposes.

THE BANDS.—Bands are divided into two parts:—

(a) The drum and fife (or pipe) band is made up of 16 full drummers with a certain number of boys and acting drummers from the ranks, totalling roughly some 25 or 30 performers in all. In war time it no longer exists as a band, the complete personnel going to their companies and forming part of its fighting line strength. Undeniably it is the most popular form of martial music in existence, and is popular with officers and men, for whose pleasure, after all, it entirely exists.¹

(b) The band consists of:—A bandmaster (remains at home in time of war). A band sergeant (remains at the Base). Full bandsmen (21 in number, consisting of men and boys, usually in equal proportion, who are detailed to carry stretchers in war). Acting bandsmen (on loan so to speak from the companies; number varies). Boys—4 to 8 in number (not for active service).

It can be safely asserted that as a general rule a good band means a strong band; that the possession of a really high-class military band entails having, as a minimum, 50 or more men

¹ There is no more exhilarating music than the music of the fife and drum. It is of the very essence of soldiering. A band inspires and pleases, but we hear bands anywhere. The drum and fife belong to the army. Only real soldiers can give the true speech to the drum and fife. No old soldier can hear the drums and fifes unmoved."—Extract from the writings of Mr. R. Blatchford.

and boys under training. It is idle to say that the average military band exists entirely for the Army; on the contrary, it almost solely exists for populous civilian centres, Exhibitions, and South Coast watering places. No one appreciates a bad band, and it is the aim and object of every band president and bandmaster worth his salt to get together a good band and to keep it well up to the mark musically and financially by means of well paid outside engagements. It is common knowledge too that the officers like the band so long as it plays well and they can hear it reasonably often, but the great mass of the soldiers dislike it; they see it going off to well-paid engagements just as they themselves march out to what they somewhat naturally perhaps consider dull and tedious forms of training. The authorised grants both in men and money are also inadequate to support a good band throughout and to keep it supplied with up-to-date music and high-class instruments. In foreign armies and in our own Brigade of Guards brass bands are allowed for a complete regiment, while in the Line every battalion—despite its slender establishment—is to be found with some 12 per cent. or more of its establishment devoting their time to music of one kind or another. There is also a political factor which sooner or later will have to be taken into serious consideration. Trades Unionism makes no secret of the fact that it is bitterly hostile to military bands, and it is only lack of political power at the present time which limits its enmity to threats and abuse of a system which in the opinion of its members allows the military to “cut” the prices of the civilian musicians. Whether the average bandsman is sufficiently trained in all the duties of a stretcher bearer, whether the test of their individual capabilities in administering first aid is severe enough, and whether they have sufficient practice on manœuvres under more or less active service conditions in the task assigned to them in war is beyond the scope of this article, but nevertheless one may perhaps be permitted to remark that, to judge by the lack of enthusiasm in the Aldershot Competition for this class of work, one would hardly feel warranted in giving a satisfactory reply.

WAR AND PEACE STRENGTHS COMPARED.

Before attempting to give an outline of the organization of the infantry of foreign armies it will perhaps be as well to dwell ever so briefly on certain points which are brought to light in a comparison of Peace and War Establishments.

Officers.

The fact that a home battalion on paper is only 4 officers under its war establishment appears on the surface to be extremely satisfactory; such however can hardly be said to be the case when it is remembered that on mobilization such

appointments as:—Brigade Communication Officer, extra A.D.C.s., mounted infantry, extra staff appointments have to be filled from the peace cadre. Thus one would not be far outside the mark in reckoning that every battalion would be short of 1 captain and 7 fully trained subalterns on the day of mobilization. Though peace time economy lies at the root of the difficulty the fact must not be overlooked that the existing arrangements for the mobilization of the mounted infantry make matters trebly worse by robbing battalions of a heavy percentage of the pick of their officers, N.C.O.'s, and men.

Non-Commissioned Officers.

A glance at Appendix A goes to show that a mobilized battalion has (inclusive of those at the base) 56 warrant officers, staff sergeants and sergeants in contrast to 42 in time of peace and of the latter two (the bandmaster and colour sergeant instructor of musketry) remain behind at home. Allowing that two sergeants return to the colours from the Reserve on mobilization, the discrepancy between war and peace is 14 in a Home battalion, 9 in an Indian battalion, and 8 elsewhere; but the disparity in the case of the first-mentioned does not end here. Reckoning 1 sergeant to the brigade communication section, 3 section sergeants or even more to mounted infantry and one sergeant to a Base Record Office, or to some other employment of a similar nature the deficiency still further increases till it is eventually found that no less than 19 full sergeants (or some 80 per cent. of the full peace strength) are required over and above the normal establishment. With eight fresh officers—many of whom will be quite untrained—with 19 newly promoted sergeants and with some 700 reservists fresh from civil life in the ranks of a mobilized battalion, the task of its commander and company leaders can hardly be called a light one.

Rank and File.

A careful examination of the state (A.F. B. 89)¹ of a certain unit reveals the fact that some 1,100 reservists in all are available for mobilization, and that 300 men on the peace strength are disqualified for service abroad by age in a battalion approximately 850 strong. Deducting these 300 as well as 100 of the rank and file who leave the battalion on mobilization for mounted infantry and other detached duties, it is seen that, of the 944 of the rank and file required in war, only 450 of the peace cadre remain—or less than 50 per cent; in the more usual case of a battalion considerably under peace establishment the percentage would drop to nearer 30 per cent. than 50 per cent. Of the 50 to 70 per cent. of newly imported men many are completely unknown even by name to their section commanders

¹This particular battalion was 850 strong in the early autumn of 1910.

and fewer still to the officers. In the event of a rapid mobilization followed in quick succession by field operations against a highly organized continental army, our company commanders would find themselves at a serious disadvantage in comparison to those of their opponents.

Recapitulation.

In the foregoing sections the writer has endeavoured to bring to light certain prominent weaknesses in connection with our peace organization, and his conclusions can be briefly summarized as follows:—

(a) That in peace time under the present system every company in a battalion has on its books certain N.C.O.'s and men who in war form no part of its fighting-line strength; these are roughly computed at:—

2 to 3 Warrant Officers, Staff Sergeants, or Sergeants.

12 to 15 Rank and File.

(b) That although battalions can be said to be sufficiently well provided with officers for all duties of peace, yet the large reduction made in their numbers on a general mobilization can hardly be contemplated with equanimity.

(c) That the present establishment of sergeants for battalions quartered at Home is very inadequate, when it is taken into consideration that modern military training tends year by year to become increasingly strenuous, that more than ever before is expected of our company and section leaders, while our short-service system means the drafting into the ranks on mobilization of large numbers of reservists unacquainted with their leaders and ignorant, through no fault of their own, of the latest changes in battle tactics and manoeuvre. Does not then the fact that mobilization entails the posting to a battalion of some 7 untrained officers—or 25 per cent. of its strength—and of some 700 reservists—or 70 per cent. of its numbers—mean placing a terrible load of responsibility on the shoulders of the section leaders?

Granted that this is so, are we not courting disaster by placing a disproportionate amount of this load on the shoulders of sergeants who in most cases but a few weeks before were inexperienced corporals?

(d) As regards the rank and file little need be said. Questions which affect their positions as recruits, and their transfer to the Reserve, are fully dealt with hereafter.

**A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE ORGANIZATION AND STRENGTHS
OF COMPANIES AND BATTALIONS IN FOREIGN ARMIES IN
PEACE AND WAR.**

(vide Appendix B).

Germany.

There are approximately 620 battalions in the German Army; in most cases 3 battalions go to form one regiment, and of these latter 33 are quartered in Alsace-Lorraine, and are on a higher establishment than the remainder. For the sake of brevity details of those on the lower establishment will alone be submitted.

The Regimental Staff is kept distinct, and contains:—

- 3 officers;
- 1 paymaster;
- 3 N.C.Os.;
- 42 bandsmen;
- 11 tradesmen.

A battalion consists of 4 companies, each of which, in Peace, has, approximately, strength of:—

- 4 officers and 145 N.C.Os' and men,
- and in war of 250 of all ranks, with 1 baggage wagon, 1 S.A.A. cart and 1 supply wagon, or 3 vehicles in all.

From a peace establishment of 18 officers and 570 N.C.O.'s and men a battalion in war time expands to 1,056 of all ranks.

It will be noticed that a German company in both peace and war is relieved of having on its books bandsmen, tradesmen, and details belonging to the machine gun section.

France

There are approximately 512 battalions in the French Army; as in Germany a certain number of units on the eastern frontier are kept on a higher establishment, but with these we need not concern ourselves.

The Regimental Staff is kept distinct and consists of, among others:—

- pioneers, 12;
 - musicians, some 40;
 - transport details (about 25 of all ranks);
 - all staff sergeants;
 - cyclists 4;
 - orderlies 8.
- Making, altogether, a total of 112 of all ranks.

A battalion, the headquarter staff of which comprises but 15 of all ranks, contains 4 companies, each of which in peace time consists of :—

- 4 officers;
- 1 warrant officer;
- 1 colour sergeant;
- 1 quarter master sergeant;
- 8 sergeants;
- 1 quarter master corporal;
- 16 lance corporals;
- 1 hospital orderly;
- 4 stretcher bearers;
- 1 tailor;
- 1 bootmaker;
- 2 drummers;
- 86 privates (approximate).

Total :—4 officers and 125 of other ranks.

It may be remarked here that a French (as in a German) company is relieved of its band, its transport men, a machine gun section, and any staff sergeants. The proportion too of officers and N.C.O's in peace time compared with that of war appears to be higher than in our Army.

Austria-Hungary.

There are, speaking roughly, in the Austrian Army, 400 battalions of infantry, 4 of which, plus the Regimental Staff, compose a regiment. Each battalion has 4 companies. In the Regimental Staff on a peace footing are included a band of 43, 3 officers for special duties such as relieving battalion or company commanders temporarily absent for any length of time, some staff sergeants, and servants, making a total of 74 men.

A company on a Peace footing, contains :—

- 1 cadet-probationer;
- 1 colour sergeant;
- 1 pay sergeant;
- 2 sergeants;
- 6 corporals;
- 6 lance corporals;
- 1 bugler;
- 1 drummer;
- 4 officers' servants;
- 70 privates.

Total :—4 officers and 93 men.

In war it expands to 4 officers and 235 men, of whom 4 are stretcher bearers and 4 are pioneers, the latter being taken away from companies in war, and grouped under a pioneer officer with the regimental staff.

Machine guns have nothing to do with battalions, but are trained as special units by themselves.

Russia.

The 208 Russian regiments each consist of 4 battalions, composed of 4 companies with a headquarter company. Machine gun detachments are organized in companies, and usually attached to regiments.

A Russian company in peace contains 3 or 4 officers and some 110 N.C.O.'s and men, of whom 2 are buglers, 6 are stretcher bearers, and 4 are specially trained scouts.

In war the officers remain the same, but the numbers of men are doubled.

Bulgaria.

The only point of importance in the Bulgarian infantry organization, so far as we are concerned here, is that in peace each regiment consists of a staff, a small transport squad, and two battalions which expand in war to a staff, a transport company, 4 battalions and a dépôt battalion.

The strength of a company and battalion in war or peace can be compared on reference to Appendix B.

Roumania.

Each regiment has a non-combatant section consisting of tradesmen, musicians, etc. No further details of interest to us are given in the handbooks but reference should be made to Appendix B regarding peace and war strengths.

Summary of Conclusions.

A survey of the various handbooks dealing with foreign armies brings to light certain points which the writer has endeavoured to condense in the foregoing notes as well as in tabular form in Appendix B.

From these it will be seen that as regards officers and N.C.O.'s the most notable feature in the infantry organization of the four greatest military Powers in Europe appears to be the fact that in peace and war the establishment of officers and N.C.O.'s remains practically the same. The machine gun section is now considered to be a unit by itself in practice as well as in theory. On the other hand a comparison of the number of rifles in a company under both conditions leads one to think that the British company leader is very well off; at the same time it must not be overlooked that on the Continent the company is, it is believed, usually partially completed to full war strength during the higher forms of training, including manœuvres, by calling up the previous year's reservists.

SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF, OR CHANGES IN, THE INFANTRY ORGANIZATION.

The Headquarter Company.

Allowing then that an unprejudiced reader of the foregoing pages can hardly have failed to agree that there seems to be a

really good case for the establishment of a headquarter company, yet, when a decision has to be made as to whether an eighth or an additional ninth company would best meet the case, the endless question of £ s. d. at once comes to the fore.

If a battalion organization, which includes seven companies plus one headquarter company, be adopted, no additional expense ought to be incurred; in this case the services of the commander of the eighth (or headquarter) company could be utilized as a wing commander in war and as an umpire, etc., in peace and those of his colour sergeant as a drill sergeant for the recruits or even as a provost sergeant. Moreover, the change could be easily and quickly effected.

On the other hand, on examining the nine company system it is at once seen that an extra pay sergeant has to be provided, and that additional N.C.O.'s of senior rank would be required for the eight firing line companies in view of the reductions caused by the withdrawal from companies of machine gun signalling, transport, officer's mess sergeants, etc. As regards the commander the difficulty might be overcome by making the senior of the two officers in charge of the machine gun section and signallers respectively responsible for the payment of the details on the books of the headquarter company.

The question as to whether the increases in N.C.O.'s demanded by the formation of this ninth company could be met can hardly be discussed within the limits of this paper, but it may well be observed in passing that the new regulations affecting the postings of colour sergeants to the staff of the Territorial Army may have a serious effect in time to come on the future prospects of a large number of deserving N.C.O.'s who, realizing that to obtain the pension of a colour sergeant is in their opinion more of a lottery than ever, may deem it advisable to leave the colours at the earliest possible moment or else utilize their attachment to the Territorial Army as a stepping stone to a good civilian billet. In view then of future savings in the non-effective vote brought about by this change it might perhaps in some way be found possible to allow each battalion at least one extra colour sergeant.

Suggested Establishment for a Headquarter Company.

A rough draft of a scheme for the establishment of a headquarter company in war and peace is therefore now submitted.

WAR.

1. Commander.
2. Pay sergeant.
3. All warrant officers & staff sergeants
(other than those left at the base).
4. Machine gun section complete.
5. Signallers (including officer and sergeant).
6. Transport—officer, sergeant, N.C.O.'s
and men, but not pack animal leaders.

7. Officers' mess—sergeant and 3 men.
 8. Provost sergeant.
 9. Cooks—Headquarter cooks (?)
 10. Quartermaster's men, pioneers and storemen.
- and possibly :—
11. Stretcher bearers.
 12. Sanitary squad.

PRACA.

1. Commander.
2. Pay sergeant.
3. All Warrant officers and staff sergeants.
4. Machine gun section complete.
5. Signallers (including officer and sergeant).
6. Transport—sergeant and 3 men.
7. Officers' mess—sergeant only.
8. Provost sergeant.
9. Boys.
10. Bandmaster, bandsergeant, full bandsmen.
11. A few selected old soldiers.

The Number of Companies in a Battalion.

Having decided on the personnel of the headquarter company, which, to avoid confusion, will hereinafter be called the headquarter section, it becomes necessary to fix on the number of fighting companies for a battalion.

Taking the various proposals there are found to be four alternatives, viz :—

- (1) The headquarter section and 8 companies.
- (2) The headquarter section and 7 companies.
- (3) The headquarter section and 6 companies.
- (4) The double company system.

Of these (1) and (2) have already been well discussed. (4) has been purposely omitted, and (3) therefore remains for careful consideration.

Of all the above many would naturally incline to (1) as being the least upsetting to the existing order of things. On the other hand, there is no question that the six company system has much in its favour.¹ To commence with, the number of

¹ Until 1866, the six-company battalion predominated in the Infantry of all European armies, but early in the seventies most States adopted the four-company battalion, Prussia having set the example in this respect as far back as 1812.

The French Chasseur battalions are now the only ones that consist of six companies, because their proposed independent employment, for instance, in mountain warfare, makes it more often necessary to detach small units than is the case in operations on more favourable terrain. (from "Tactics," by Colonel Balck, Vol. 1.)

companies contain a multiple of three, which of itself must be pleasing to any student of Clausewitz's theories, while the abolition, too, of the seventh and eighth companies will release a certain number of those valuable infantry assets—Subalterns and Sergeants, all of whom will materially help to fill up the blanks in the remaining six companies.

As has already been seen, the approximate paper strength of the various ranks available for the "fighting" companies in war and peace works out as follows:—

	Officers.	Colour Sergeants & Sergeants.	Rank & File.
WAR	21	38	814
PEACE	18	24	631

Therefore, in a battalion of six companies each of the latter would be of a strength somewhat as follows:—

IN WAR	IN PEACE
3 Officers (3 spare)	3 Officers.
1 Colour Sergeant.	1 Colour Sergeant.
5 Sergeants (2 spare).	3 Sergeants.
135 Rank and File.	105 Rank and File.

The writer is, however, strongly in favour of six companies, each of six sections, which, with existing establishments, will give each section a strength approximately as follows:—

IN WAR	IN PEACE
1 Sergeant.	1 Sergeant.
1 Corporal.	1 Corporal.
16 Privates.	22 Privates.

NOTE.—In peace time 3 sections in each company will only be commanded by corporals, unless the present establishment of sergeants is considerably increased.

The six section company has sundry gains, a few of which may with advantage be enumerated here:—

(a) It gives a company commander a better command—one, moreover,, which is divisible into threes.

(b) It enlarges the command of the half company commander; even if he loses one section he still has two under his control.

(c) It adds to the number of section leaders over and above those in the existing order of things, which means responsibility on more shoulders.

(d) The increase in the number of sections will tend to make the change in personnel amongst the sections from peace to war felt less.

(e) From a tactical point of view the gain too would appear to be on the side of the smaller sections, inasmuch as each would be more in hand, being smaller in numbers, and therefore easier to control.

The Close Season (March 1st to October 1st).

As has already been shown, the main idea of the "close" season as regards changes in personnel, whether in squadron, battery, or company, is to allow of more progressive training and to keep the amount of routine work in units to the very lowest possible limit during the collective training season.

In an infantry battalion quartered at home the following are the most usual changes which are extremely trying even to the least zealous of company commanders:—

(A) N.C.O.'S AND PRIVATES TIME-EXPIRED DURING THE TRAINING SEASON.

It is suggested that the same clause be added to the attestation papers and various re-engagement papers of N.C.O.'s and privates which will prevent them (if serving at the time in the Home Army) from leaving the colours during the period March 1st to October 1st; allowing that each individual obtains 2 months' furlough pending discharge, the period during which the expiration of every man's service will take place will be from December 1st to May 1st. There appears to be very little reason why the comparatively small number of annually time-expired N.C.O.'s and men from the Home Army should not be in a position to find employment during the period October 1st to May 1st, the more so as, unlike their comrades serving abroad, they have had the opportunity of keeping more or less in touch with the labour market. It would in any case seem possible to amend the Regulations so as to admit of individuals who, on October 1st in any one year, are due for discharge or transfer to the Reserve during the succeeding 12 months, proceeding to take up employment at the earliest convenient date after the conclusion of the Army Manœuvres.

(B) POSTINGS OF OFFICERS, N.C.O.'S AND MEN TO THE PERMANENT STAFF OF THE SPECIAL RESERVE OR TERRITORIAL ARMY.

The success which has attended the posting of the attached N.C.O.'s and men to Depôts in the autumn, as introduced 2 or 3 years ago by special War Office letter, has been most marked. Surely then some such system could be devised which would allow Territorial Army adjutants and N.C.O.'s, Special Reserve officers (regulars attached) and N.C.O.'s leaving, or returning to their units in the early autumn.¹ Some elasticity on the part of the Regulations, and a little forethought on the part of the administrative officers concerned should surely be able to effect this.

(B) THE ARRIVAL OF RECRUITS IN HOME BATTALIONS.

For some years now, in the battalion to which the writer belongs, a system of working hand in glove with the Depôt, as

¹Thus effecting a considerable financial saving to married officers whose battalions are moving in the autumn.

regards the particular date on which the posting of recruits takes place, has been adopted with excellent results.

For example :—During November and December each year the Depôt is emptied of all recruits to allow of the latter being passed off the square and completing their Table A in time for company training. Again, no further batches from the Depôt arrive till the end of April, thus preventing a certain number of N.C.O.'s being withdrawn to act as drill sergeants when their companies are engaged either at musketry or on field training. Similarly, the Depôt is again emptied of all possible recruits before the commencement of the Special Reserve training, thus permitting a large number of Depôt N.C.O.'s to attend the annual camp.

Although such methods are of considerable benefit to company commanders the fact still remains that recruits keep arriving month by month, either in batches or else, as in the case of Special Reservists, in dribbles. The worry and extra routine work occasioned by this system is detrimental to training and therefore calls for a remedy, partial or complete. It is suggested in the first instance that the Guards system of completing gymnastics before leaving the Depôt should be adopted WHERE POSSIBLE: if it is a question of accommodation, tents or hutments might be resorted to or, failing this, the rigid system of putting in 110 attendances at physical training could well be dispensed with in the case of elderly recruits or those specially well developed. In such cases recruits from the Special Reserve would be sent to the Depôt and not, as at present done, direct to the battalions for clothing, fitting, and completion of their gymnastic attendances. Commanding officers of home battalions could then arrange to have their recruits sent to them at the particular periods they were prepared to receive them and not before, while the company commanders would no longer have to find gymnastic instructors, the drilling of the recruits would be over sooner, gymnasia would become available for other purposes, and considerable reductions could possibly be made in the Army Gymnastic Staff.

(D) COURSES.

The fact of officers and N.C.O.'s being constantly and suddenly detailed to attend courses tends to a considerable amount of dislocation in the work and training of a home battalion. One ventures to think that, if units were told, say, on or about January 1st, exactly what number of officers and N.C.O.'s they would have to supply for such and such courses throughout the year, considerable benefit would accrue, and much routine work would ultimately be saved. The dates of courses might be fixed after the training programmes of all the commands have been examined. As an instance of inconvenience caused to units, the

fixing of February 1st as the date of assembly of the first mounted infantry class in each year might be cited as an example. In this case it is impossible for a proportion of the N.C.O.'s and men who have thus been relieved on returning to their units to have their annual furlough without missing their company training or musketry, since in many units it is either necessary or customary to give all ranks a minimum furlough of 6 weeks' duration.

(E) DETACHED DUTIES. E.G. :—MARKING AT BISLEY, GATE-KEEPERS AT MILITARY TOURNAMENTS, PAGEANTS, ETC.

Such duties as mentioned above considerably interfere with progressive training, and it seems a matter for consideration whether duties of this nature should not be supplied by the regular N.C.O.'s of the Special Reserve, or, failing that, by commissionaires or ex-soldiers.

The Paucity of "Rifles" in Companies of a Home Battalion During the Training Season.

Apart from the constant changes in, and the weakness of, the authorised establishment of a home battalion there are other causes which during the training season reduce the strength of companies out of all proportion to their establishment. Chief among these is the abnormal number of men withdrawn for service in the bands.

Now, there can be few, if any, infantry officers who do not desire a strong, efficient, and well equipped drum and fife, or pipe, or bugle band, but the point is, can we with our small army and limited recruiting potentialities afford from every point of view to spare all these men from the ranks for musical training? Would it not be better in our Army for each unit to possess a really strong, smart, efficient, and well equipped drum and fife band while retaining perhaps an extremely small and efficient string band for the purposes of sociability and amusement strictly within the limits of the garrison? Such an arrangement would leave the door open for considerable economies in upkeep of bands as well as in a reduction of the non-effective charges caused by bandmasters' and bandsmen's pensions, as well as releasing two or three full ranks for War Training.

Signallers perhaps, make the next largest hole in the training strength of a company. To train and keep efficient an establishment of 32 signallers is no mean task, and implies nearly 40 N.C.O.'s and men being withdrawn from their companies throughout the greater part of the year. The slightest reduction in their establishment would be welcome from the company commanders' point of view.

The Paucity of Sergeants.

In previous pages it has been shown how serious is the depletion of the section commanders on mobilization. Only this year the writer noticed a company at its annual training, with two sections commanded by corporals and two by lance corporals. The only remedy appears to be to increase their numbers, and this means expense. It seems that the only possible way to do this, other than by increasing the Establishment Vote, is to eliminate gradually all 21 years' men and full bandsmen from the Army, thus permitting the pensions so saved being used for the cost of augmentation in the establishment of sergeants.

The truth is that an increase in the number of sergeants is the most pressing need of the infantry at the present time, and is likely to remain so till something is effected.

Depletion of Companies of Trained Soldiers both on Mobilization and in Peace Time, by Foreign Drafts.

It has been shown that on mobilization a home battalion requires in reservists nearly 70 per cent of its strength to complete it to its War Establishment.

General Kuropatkin in his treatise on the Manchurian War again and again dwells on the importance of having a high percentage of regulars to reservists. He points out that most of the latter take some time to settle down, and that they are torn apart from their families at a time when they have begun to think their military liability is over, that they lack the training, fitness, and "esprit de corps" of the serving soldier, while, in the case of elderly men, they are apt to put on flesh.

It is well to remember that in the South African War most of the British reservists never went into action till at least 6 weeks or even 2 months had elapsed from the time they once again donned the uniform of their corps.

On the other hand, suppose the Expeditionary Force were suddenly mobilized for important operations nearer home. Would this unwieldy influx of reservists be appreciated by company commanders? It is now suggested that the present somewhat inelastic system of only selecting men 20 years of age on mobilization be abolished, and that the company commanders in conjunction with the medical authorities be allowed to select any men under that age whom he feels he can fully depend on. By this means a considerable increase in the numbers of serving soldiers in units might be made on mobilization. To quote verbatim the Russian Generalissimo:—

"According to the opinion of competent officers who served in the war (which I fully share), other conditions being equal, the more regular soldiers there were in a unit the more it could be relied on in battle."

The *Times* military correspondent also wrote a few weeks ago:—

“The tendency of the day in Germany is to trust rather to quality than to quantity and to place confidence in young troops highly disciplined and trained, and led by good active professional cadres, rather than in masses of men long absent from the Colours.”

Those in close touch with the young soldier who see him throughout the war-training season, who know how he shoots, how he marches, how he “sticks it,” the life he leads in barracks, the full extent of his enthusiasm, energy and good will during the longest marches of the Autumn Manœuvres, should be fully qualified to say whether they wish to have him on active service, regardless of whether or not he has reached a regulation age.

Turning to the question of foreign drafts, the regulation which lays down the conditions of service for India aims a heavy blow at the enthusiasm of the company commander. A slight amendment in the age limit, say to 19½ years, having regard to the vastly improved health and well-being of the Army in India during the past few years, besides a lowering of the service qualifications from one year to nine months, would considerably assist matters.

It has been said that the N.C.O.'s are the backbone of the British Army. If this is so we cannot be too careful over their selection and this in itself becomes a task of the greatest complexity when a heavy call is made on a company for men for India; it is then that its commander finds the very men he has had his eye on for promotion during the coming winter are one and all taken from him.

Committees on Organization.

It is impossible within the limits of this essay or even for one individual to attempt to lay bare all the weaknesses of the present organization and to submit sound arguments for radical changes. At the same time one ventures to think that if each brigade or division had a standing committee, changed annually, of specially selected officers with power to call in witnesses (officers or N.C.O.'s) to probe into all questions connected with infantry establishments and organization in war and peace, reduction in correspondence, and other questions connected with its well-being, much good would result. It cannot be possible for an officer who has been for some years away from a battalion to realize all the difficulties and worries that beset the company or detachment commander day in day out. The educational value of such committees as suggested above must be very great and if well presided over could hardly fail to lead to excellent results. It is hoped too that some such scheme would have the further advantage of decreasing the number of

reports which have to be furnished so frequently, and thus relieve commanding officers of what, to many of them, is an uncongenial task coming, as so many of these reports do, in the very midst of the training season.

If, however, in the near future changes are to be made in Infantry Organization, and they are surely needed, let the most be made of the experience and ideas of the many excellent company commanders our Army contains. To call upon an officer who has trained and commanded a company for 3 months in 5 years is useless. Things in these days move so fast, while different conditions exist in every station, that the advice of officers well seasoned in command of companies is most needed. As an instance, during the present training season, and in the very middle of it too, we have seen certain battalions unexpectedly called upon to pass an exceedingly large proportion of their older soldiers prematurely to the Army Reserve. Had the authority responsible for this order seen the face of the Signalling Officer of a certain battalion, who, thanks to the stroke of a pen, saw his 12 best signallers depart in the very middle of the training season, he would surely have rescinded the order and arranged for these men to leave two or three months later. It is these little incidents that bring discouragement to the heart of a regimental officer, nor can it in any way be attributed to callousness on the part of the responsible party. It is simply due to the fact that he is (unconsciously perhaps) out of touch with regimental life.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion the writer feels he must disclaim any wilful intention of descending, in the preceding pages, to carping criticism or dogmatic assertion. His sole aim has been to attempt to lay bare some of the weaknesses inherent in the present organization, as daily experienced by company commanders, and to suggest, however crudely, certain remedies.

Modern war demands above all else perfect organization; this of itself entails constant and sometimes sweeping changes, but only as the result of careful forethought, much consideration and, if possible, personal experience. If our organization is to become and to remain as near perfect as anything can be we must be prepared to ride roughshod over all sentimental considerations, fads, and personal predilections.



**APPENDIX "A."
War and Peace (Home) Establishments Compared.**

HEADQUARTERS.	WAR.			PEACE (HOME).			REMARKS.
	Officers.	W. Oftrs. Staff Sgts. Sgts.	Drums, Rank and File.	Officers.	W. Oftrs. Staff Sgts. Sgts.	Drums, Rank and File.	
Lieutenant Colonel	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Major	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Adjutant	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Quartermaster	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Transport Officer	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Signalling Officer	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Sergeant Major	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Quartermaster Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Orderly Room Clerk	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Sergeant Drummer	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Pioneer Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Sergeant Cook	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Transport Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Signalling Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Sergeant Shoemaker	—	1	7	—	1	3	
Drivers, Transport, 1st Line.	—	—	3	—	—	1	
Orderlies for "Medical Officer"	—	—	2	—	—	7	
Batmen	—	—	6	—	—	—	
Total	4	9	18	4	9	11	
ATTACHED.							
Armourer	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Drivers, A.S.C. 2nd Line Transport	—	—	10	—	—	—	
R. A. M. C.	1	—	5	—	—	—	
Total Head-quarters (including attached) ...	5	10	33	4	10	11	
MACHINES GUN SECTION.							
Subaltern	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	
Corporal	—	—	1	—	—	1	
Privates	—	—	12	—	—	12	
Drivers	—	—	2	—	—	1	
Total Machine Gun Section	1	1	15	1	1	14	
COMPANY.							
Major or Captain	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Subaltern	—	—	—	2	—	—	
Colour Sergeant	—	1	—	—	1	—	

1 shown with Machine Gun Section.
Marching sick (usually an old soldier).

APPENDIX "B."

Tabular Statement showing Strengths of Battalions and Companies in Foreign Armies in Peace and War.

NATIONALITY.	COMPANY.				BATTALION.				REMARKS.	
	PEACE.		WAR.		PEACE.		WAR.			
	Officers.	N.C.O's and Men.	Officers.	N.C.O's and men.	Officers.	N.C.O's and men.	Officers.	N.C.O's and men.		
	Percentage of PEACE Strength of all ranks to that of WAR.		Percentage of PEACE Strength of all ranks to that of WAR.		Percentage of PEACE Strength of all ranks to that of WAR.		Percentage of PEACE Strength of all ranks to that of WAR.			
Germany ...	4	142	5	259	18	570	—	1056	65 %	Signallers and M.I. are non-existent.
France ...	3	125	4	250	—	500	—	1050	51 %	" "
Austria-Hungary ...	4	93	4	222	18	400	19	960	40 %	" "
Russia ...	3	110	4	222	15 or 16	448	17 or 18	960	46 %	4 trained semaphorists per company are required.
Bulgaria ...	4	97	3	265	24	456	14	1063	48 %	
Romania ...	—	80	4	244	—	—	18	985	—	
Italy ...	3	110	5	196	16	445	24	1019	—	