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WAR - ESTABLISHMENTS AND METHODS OF EMPLOYMENT  
OF RIFLEMEN-PLATOONS.

Relative instructions for the tactical employment of the ~~quadres~~ riflemen quadres and platoons, are contained in the Training for Infantry - part VIII- a translation of the English publication 26/G.S./1076.

Naturally these employment instructions are in relation with the war- establishment and the means of the unit they are referring to, but as our Command Squadre has a different war-establishment and different arms as the English, there are difficulties and inconvenients, which I want to give importance, as they can and have to be eliminated.

1.+ The employment instructions of a platoon, that have been published in the above quoted publication are referring to a platoon constituted of three riflemen squadres and one Command. Since <sup>1</sup>Aug. 46 our platoon consists of three riflemen squadres and one quadre Command.

The substantial difference between the two platoons is represented by the fact our Command Squadre is formed of one group of gunners (with one bren) and one group of mortars (with one mortar of 2" and one Paat) while the English Command is consisting only of a mortar group. In relation to this, the English instructions, recognising the necessity that the squadres appointed for the attack have to be backed by a fire basis, establishing that these have to be constituted by a riflemen Squadre (advanced) normally reinforced by the "Command". Applying this instruction, we constitute the fire basis of the advanced riflemen Squadre, reinforced by the Command Squadre that is causing :- disproportion between the assault group and the backing riflemen, excessive personnel on the fire basis.

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In fact our riflemen platoon, which war-establishment is consisting of 1 officer and 34 is disposing in the last phase of attack of 14 riflemen, while the rest of 20 are backing the movements of the first.

In consequence, the Coy. that normally has two advancing platoons, and one on the fire basis is reaching the objective with 2 officers and an assault group of 28 whilst in the supporting group there remain 75.-

The disproportion between elements ~~destinated~~ destined to movement and those employed for firing (specially if they are minor Inf. Units), are excessive, thus coming back to the situation (1933) when every unit, beginning from the platoon, was constituting a reserve unit, and normally a battalion was definitely attacking with 8 of the 27 war establishment cadres.

Now this inconvenient is repeating, the reason now is not the various reserve units, but the various fire basis and specially the disproportion between assault groups and the supporting riflemen.

When further one is considering that:

- = it would be very difficult that the war establishments are complete, caused by illnesses, wounds, leaves and soon
- = that during the phase of attack, there could be losses, specially among the personnel that is destined for the movement.

- = having reached the aim, normally the platoon has to await the adversal counter attack, that in case of an immediate reaction, is going to be effected before the personnel of the fire basis had the time to reach the assault group.

One has to agree, that at the present, the platoon is not in the best conditions, to resolve in the attack their own task.

It is proposed:

- a) - to diminish the personnel destined for the fire basis of the platoon, constituting the basis only with the Command cadre which war-establishment has be reinforced.
- b) reinforcing the number of the assault-group in the

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riflemen quadre.

c) - modify partly the instructions for the attack of the platoon

II°- The circulaire 26/G.S. - as has been said- foresees; that on the fire basis there should be a bren, that of the advanced squadre, while we are having two, that of the advanced squadre, and that of the Command squadre. I believe that it would be more opportune to employ two, besides for a larger firing basis, specially to allow the leapfrogging between the bren during the displacements of the fire basis.

However, if case one is considering that one bren should be sufficient, there is no motive, why the whole advanced quadre should remain on the fire basis. If however it going to be retained of more utility to have two bren groups, as this necessity would be of permanent character, instead of engaging an entire quadre, it seems to be more opportune to constitute as war establishment the Command quadre (that with more precision and distinction should be called support quadre insofar as it is constituted by the support arms of the platoon) on two bren groups rather than one.

It could be objected, that nothing is forbidding the commander of a platoon, to the leave on the fire basis the only group bren of the advanced quadre, but this would be a retreat solution that would deprive the riflemen of the support arms, while the riflemen themselves would end by reinforcing the two other quadres, that practically would mean, that this quadre would be dissolved.

Therefore it is preferred to modify the war establishment of the Command quadre. Regarding the riflemen to be left on the fire-basis, useful for sharp-shooting, for the double reason to increase the scarce number of ammunition carriers of the groups bren and portar, and to provide the fire basis with riflemen it would be convenient (in case the Command quadre is going to be changed as it has been proposed) to take back to three the number of the personnel of the bren and mortar groups of "2".-

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The 3 riflemen quadre thus rendered disposable represents the problem of its further utilisation or disbandment.

I feel that the second solution should be preferred, as it does not seem advisable, that the platoon in the phase of attack is manoeuvring with three advancing quadres for the excessive largeness that the front would assume and it would neither be opportune, the 3 quadre constituting unit reserves for platoons, as it would only increase the platoon, which would be only of a relative advantage, as the quadre - as reserve unit - would not take part directly in the attack.

Further, concerning always the Command quadre, one does not understand, why the new war establishments do not take into consideration for this quadre the commanding N.C.O., when it is specially the command quadre, that for its various functions, of support quadre and for the difference of arms in the war establishment has the greatest necessity of a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, technically and tactically capable commander, who often has to act upon his own initiative.

Evidently the present war establishments presume, that the commander of the fire basis has to be the chief of the advanced quadre, would a commander, let us say not specialised and of discussable ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ capacities not be patronized by the personnel?

It is necessary therefore that also the Command quadre dispose in the war establishment of a N.C.O. commander, who ~~has~~ for his important tasks - and as it has been within the previous war establishments - should be the Vice-Commander of the platoon & charge, that was not taken into consideration anymore.

Finally the new war-establishments order that the personnel of the mortar and the Piat are depending of one and the same rank. The different ranges of the two arms and the different use make this solution not<sup>a</sup> very practical and opportune realization.

It is to be preferred as it has been in the previous war-establishments, that is a corporal and one mortarist for the mortar and the same for the Piat.

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III.- As it is known, the riflemen quadre is divided in groups in order to take more advantage of the ground, facilitating the manoeuvre, and diminishing the number of the losses.-

At the present the quadre is constituting two riflemen groups, but not as it has been said, 7 riflemen for the quadre admitted in the war establishment quadre and that all reach the aim, it seems to be few for the occupation and the maintenance.

Increasing the quadre of two men, one could constitute a third group, normally the commander of the quadre could stay with, thus having more manoeuvring possibilities and more power without that the quadre has such a strength to overpass the possibilities of command of the NCO, chief of the quadre.

IV.- Admitting the platoon on two riflemen quadres and one support quadre, slight modifications of the present regulations of attack of the platoon are necessary.

If the advanced quadre does not succeed to proceed with its own arms only, which is caused by the heavy ~~xxxxxxx~~ firing of the adversal Inf., the fire basis is going to be constituted with the support quadre, upon which the two riflemen quadres are going to manoeuvre on one or the two flanks of the objective. Thus one has the advantage, that the advanced quadre, the only one that is orientated about the situation, is going to take part in the action.

In the case of reinforcement of the conquered objective, the platoon is deploying the riflemen quadres one in the front, and one on the ~~xxxxxx~~ flank most exposed, while the other flank could be defended as soon as possible, by one or two of the bren groups of the support quadre.

V.- Substantially a riflemen platoon is proposed to be <sup>2460</sup> constituted as follows:

= Two riflemen quadres, each with one bren group (2u.) and three riflemen- Total 11 .

= one support quadre with two bren groups and one mortar group, with each on three, and one group Piat on two.u. - Total 13. including the NCO chief of the quadre and

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and Vice-Commander of the platoon and the messenger.

The strength of the platoon therefore would be the same of the present ( 35 rather than 34) with the proportion of assault group and riflemen group in ~~support~~ advantage of the first and any more of the first, while the strength of the fire basis of the platoon would remain the same , and the firing manoeuvre would be better arranged by a specific Commander.

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