

Historical Extracts from the Decanian

Decanian May 1909

A very important step was taken towards the end of last term, when it was decided that the School should make an offer to the War Office to furnish a contingent in the Officers training Corps.

It is hardly necessary to point out the advantages to the school of the establishment of such a corps: nor those which are thereby offered under the latest Military Regulations to any cadet about to enter the Army.

The offer has been accepted by the War Office, some 50 cadets have already been enrolled, drills and miniature range shooting have commenced.

The form of contract under which cadets are to be held to serve is arranged in five sections as follows:-

1. This section relates to uniform and to the financial assistance offered to the funds of the corps.
2. Recruits are to drill two days a week; each drill is to last 45 minutes.
There is to be a parade of one hour per week
3. Each cadet is to fire at least 14 rounds a week in miniature-range shooting.
4. There is to be one whole Field day every year.
5. All cadets who so desire can attend one of the Public Schools' Divisional Camps.

CMM

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It is difficult to know where to begin the report of the progress made in the formation and training of this contingent during the last term. But we are so far fortunate that the contingent obtained official recognition very shortly after application was made to the army council, so that a certain amount of work could be arranged from the very first fortnight of term. This weekly routine of drills and shooting practice has made a very marked effect in smartening up the company. Unfortunately, owing to the inability of the contractors to complete uniforms and of the ordnance officer to forward arms, it has only been possible to practice marching and a few formations; while at the same time it has necessitated the postponement of field day. However, considerable progress has been made in other directions; a most convenient orderly room has been fitted up; four of the company have practiced semaphore signalling till they are quite proficient, and it is hoped that of those now learning to bugle, a band may ultimately be formed. The maker of the miniature heliograph is to be congratulated on his success; at the latest trial of the apparatus a message was correctly received at a distance of about 3 miles.

Perhaps the greatest work that has been undertaken is the making of a miniature rifle range. In a very short space of time a portion of the bank in the large field some 25ft by 15ft deep has been dug out and a causeway made so that the entire length of the range is 35 yards, with a gradual slope from the firing point to the targets. This will enable cadets to shoot the regulation musketry course at targets of a size to represent 100, 200 and 500 yards, on an open range.

The officers of the contingent would like to take this opportunity of thanking those, including those not on the strength of the company, who worked at this digging out of the range.

Next term it is proposed to enter upon the regulation course of training of musketry, manual and company drill, and skirmishing, and if the efficiency attained at all corresponds with that arrived at this term, the contingent may look forward to a favourable report by the inspection officer to head quarters.

Seventeen drills were held last term, and each member of the corps has fired 160 rounds on the miniature. Details of the best scores obtained will be found in the article of League.

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The Officers Training Corps was described at length, with the reasons which had led to Dr Flecker to consent to its enrolment. "It was quite true that the country would not be saved or ruined according as the boys of this school did or did not recognise the necessity of military training. But the sort of talk heard about leaving others to play at volunteering was just the gravest sign in a very grave outlook. The Englishman was always expecting the other man to do his duty for him." And further on he asked the parents "to welcome the announcement that the school had started a branch of the Officers Training Corps, and to agree with him that in doing so they were not in any way untrue to their bounden duty and allegiance to the Prince of Peace."

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN THE SPECIAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS - War office 40 /1166

1. The following paragraphs give a short summary of the conditions of service in the Special Reserve of Officers as laid down in the Special Reserve Regulations. Paras. 3,5,6,8,9 and 10 do not apply to the non-combatant branches of the service, and there are certain modifications in the case of Royal Engineers and Army Service Corps.
2. The Special Reserve of Officers, which is a part of the Reserve of Officers for the Regular Army, is designated for the following purposes:-
 - (i). To provide officers, up to Lieutenant-Colonel, for units of the Special Reserve.
 - (ii). To provide officers up to the rank of Captain (inclusive) for the supplementary list or Regular units and corps.

The officers required for (a) are almost for Infantry.* There are 101 reserve battalions (formerly Militia battalions) in the Army, and nearly all of these are short of subalterns.

The requirements of (b) include all branches of the service. It is hoped that before very long each Regular unit and corps will have a number of young Supplementary officers, trained in that unit and ready to be called up to serve with that unit, either on the outbreak, or in the course of war. The present shortage of officers in the Infantry Reserve battalions makes it necessary to defer opening the supplementary Lists of Regular Units of Infantry of the Line, and to appoint all candidates for this branch of the services to the reserve battalions. Candidates for the Supplementary Lists of Regiments of Cavalry and Foot Guards, and for Artillery, Engineers, Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, and Army Veterinary Corps, may be accepted at once.

3. The qualifications for candidates are:-
 - (i). To be between the ages of 18 and 25.
 - (ii). To provide a certificate of moral character.
 - (iii). To be certified medically fit, according to the standard laid down for candidates for the Regular Army.
 - (iv). No standard of education required before 31st March 1912.
4. Candidates may select the branch of service, and the unit to which they wish to be appointed. Candidates who fulfil the above qualifications are appointed to a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers on probation, subject to approval by the prescribed authority.
5. The probationary training of officers, performed for the most part (except Royal Engineers and Army Service Corps) with a Regular unit, lasts 12 months for those who have no certificate of proficiency from the Officer Training Corps; it lasts 8 months for those who have Certificate A, and 4 months for those that have Certificates A and B.
6. The probationary officers who are in possession of Certificate B will be allowed to perform their 4 months' training in two parts. By this means an officer can do some or all of his probationary training during university vacations, and if he takes advantage of this during his 4 years stay at university, will have on leaving no liability in peace beyond his annual training. This should greatly facilitate the entry of candidates who wish to start their civil career without delay.
7. At the conclusion of the period of probationary training, the officers commission is confirmed, with the date from the day on which he was appointed on probation, if the commanding officer of the unit with which he has performed this training certifies that he is in all respects fit to do his duties of his rank in the field.
8. The annual training of officers of the combatant branches is 14 or 25 days; and, in addition, 6 days' musketry, or 2 days' gun-practice according to arm. Officers of Special Reserve units train with their units, supplementary officers train with a Regular unit of the regiment or corps to which they belong. The principle to be borne in mind is that supplementary officers should train annually, and, if required, go on active service, with officers whose acquaintance they made during their probationary training. Certain obligatory courses are also required.
9. Promotion is, generally, by establishment; but, failing this, promotion by time (5 years to Lieutenant, 10 years to Captain) is allowed.
Officers must qualify before promotion to the rank of Captain (and for officers of Special Reserve units to the rank of Major) as laid down for Regular officers, in subjects C (i.) (ii.) and (iii.), (*vide* Kings regulations, App. Xi 1).

* The exceptions are:-- Two regiments of Irish Horse, two Royal Garrison Artillery units (Antrim and Cork), two Royal Engineer units (Anglesey and Monmouthshire).

Officers on the supplementary list are not promoted above the rank of Captain.

10. On reaching the age of 35, supplementary officers cease to be borne on the supplementary list. They can either transfer to a Special Reserve unit, or to the general reserve of officers (retaining their liability in case of war), or resign their commissions. In the case of the supplementary list of Royal Field Artillery, officers transferred from the recently disbanded Special Reserve units of Royal Field Artillery, may be admitted up to the age of 40.
11. The pay of officers of the Special Reserve of Officers is as follows:--
 - 40ℓ. outfit allowance (part to be refunded if the officer fails to serve 4 years)
 - 20ℓ. a-year retaining fee, which may be withheld if annual training is not performed in two successive years.

Whilst on military duty or attending an authorised course of instruction, pay and allowances, generally speaking, as for Regular officers of the same rank and arm, together with 4s. a-day messing allowance; 50ℓ. gratuity if called up during an emergency.

A cadet of the Officers Training Corps in possession of Certificate B, who takes a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers, receives a gratuity of 35ℓ.

12. From the foregoing paragraphs it will be seen that the conditions of service and the duties of a Special Reserve officer need not, in peace, time hinder a young man in his civil profession, nor involve him in expense. In war he may at any time be called to command Regular troops, and to fight side by side with the Regular officers with whom he has preformed his training in peace time.
13. It should be borne in mind that the provision of officers for the Special Reserve is the primary object with which the Officers Training Corps has been started.
14. Cadets desiring information as regards the procedure to be followed with a view to obtaining commissions in the Special Reserve of Officers, can, if they belong to a contingent of the senior division, obtain this from the adjutant of the contingent; if they belong to the junior division they should ask the Regular officer detailed to assist in the training of the contingent.

Officers Training Corp