

sanitary duties within their districts, if to be occupied by troops." But it is already his first civil duty to "inform himself as far as practicable respecting all influences affecting or threatening to affect injuriously the public health within the district," and to take all necessary steps and give all necessary advice to his council in these matters, whether concerning residents or others in his district; and this would certainly apply to troops.

Such co-operation involves, it is true, the goodwill and some expenditure of time and trouble on the part of district medical officers of health, whenever they may be asked to contribute their share of local knowledge, or to assist in the preparations for a summer's camp. But the basis of national defence by a citizen army must ever be that each should contribute according to his ability; and we may be confident that our professional brethren, as civilian officials, will be glad thus to play an important part in providing for the defence of the home country.

DUTIES OF SANITARY COMPANIES, TERRITORIAL FORCE.

BY MAJOR CALDWELL SMITH.
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THE Sanitary Companies of the Territorial Force have, as such, no equivalent in the Regular Forces, and possibly in consequence of this there are no definite Regulations laid down for their guidance in either instruction or work in the field.

That this has been, to some extent, a hindrance to the Sanitary Companies, I think there is no doubt; but fortunately, speaking for my own company, no serious objections have been taken by higher authorities, both combatant and otherwise, to the methods carried out by the officers commanding for the training and efficiency of these units. Some difficulties have, however, arisen, and I shall endeavour to point these out and to suggest the measures which might be adopted to remove them.

For the past three years I have been endeavouring to persuade the War Office to carry out some changes in the personnel and to supply some necessary equipment, but so far nothing has been done with regard to the personnel, although some equipment has been supplied.

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With regard to the personnel of the companies, this consists in each company of five officers, four serjeants, five corporals, and eighty-six men, five of these latter being batmen.

In my opinion, and in this the Officer Commanding the 1st Sanitary Company concurs, although the number of officers is satisfactory, yet the number of N.C.O.'s is not sufficient for the work which we have for the past four years been endeavouring to carry out.

It was suggested by us that the N.C.O.'s should consist of one Staff-serjeant, eight serjeants and eight corporals. This would allow for the splitting up of the company into eight sections, each section consisting of a serjeant, a corporal and eight men. Four of the Officers would supervise the work of these sections, one officer to two sections, while the Officer Commanding with the Staff-serjeant could supervise the whole.

This scheme, however, did not appeal to the War Office, and was not approved. Some of the reasons which prompted me to put forward these alterations were: (1) that in the work of sanitary inspection it is absolutely necessary to have the men split up into small sections or squads; and (2) that it is necessary for each squad to have a serjeant in command, this N.C.O. to have a thorough grasp of his work, and preferably he should be in civil life a Sanitary Inspector, who is accustomed in his daily work to deal with the abatement of all kinds of nuisances, the inspection of food, the prevention of infectious diseases, skilled disinfection, and other sanitary matters which would, in the field, also be dealt with by the companies. In my own company all the four serjeants and several of the other men of the company are sanitary inspectors in civil life, and I can speak most highly of their work at the annual training during the past three years.

Another point in connexion with the personnel of the company is the absence of a permanent staff.

Even in a small unit the amount of correspondence and other clerical work is very great, and taxes not only the time but the patience of a Commanding Officer. The number of returns of all kinds to be filled in, the keeping up to date of all attestation forms, of the clothing ledger and equipment ledger, and all the other numerous details which are necessary, if the work is to be done satisfactorily, means that the Commanding Officer has to be quartermaster, adjutant, clerk, and general utility man for the unit. As can be readily understood, this prevents the Officer

Commanding from devoting his energies to the more important work of the company, viz., the supervising and personally taking part in the technical instruction of the unit.

It is quite possible that this may be remedied when proper Headquarters are available.

With regard to the training and work of the unit I should like, in the first place, to mention what I have tried to carry out during the past three years when I have been in command of the company, and this may be conveniently divided into (I) Training and work during the year, (II) Training and work when at camp.

With regard to (I) I need only mention that company drill and instruction in first-aid have been carried out as satisfactorily as could be done in a small unit. I wish more especially, however, to mention the technical training carried out by means of lectures and practical instruction.

Until recently no equipment has been in the possession of the unit, but, after a considerable amount of correspondence, I have been able to secure the provision of certain equipment which will prove of great assistance in carrying out our work.

It has been suggested, I think by Colonel Firth, that a Sanitary Company should be in possession of the following special equipment :—

- (1) Filter water-cart.
- (2) Apparatus for distilling water.
- (3) Chemical agents for clarification of water.
- (4) Picks and shovels, six of each.
- (5) Apparatus and chemicals for analysis of water.
- (6) Portable disinfecter.
- (7) Disinfecting sprayers and disinfectants for use in these.
- (8) Bacteriological and microscopic outfit.
- (9) Carpenter's tools.

Picks and shovels, carpenter's tools, and apparatus for the analysis of water have been supplied, and I have had the use of a filter water-cart for instructional purposes.

Lectures and instruction have been given to the unit on :—

- (1) Water and water analysis.
- (2) Infectious diseases and their prevention, including the use of disinfectants and disinfecting apparatus.
- (3) Camp sanitation generally, including the construction of latrines, urinals, destructors, and grease traps.
- (4) Sewage, its composition and purification.
- (5) Inspection of food.

(II). Work at Annual Training.

The instruction in the above has been put to practical tests in camp, and speaking for my own company, I think I may say that the training given has been of some use to the division generally.

The special work carried out in camp has been generally of a supervisory and advisory nature, but when necessary the men in the unit have done a large amount of practical work in the construction of various forms of destructors, urinals, and grease traps for other units. These should of course be made by the sanitary squads of the various units, but until last year hardly any of the combatant units had sanitary squads, or rather, regimental sanitary detachments, and the men detailed to carry out these duties had little or no knowledge of the proper methods to be adopted.

Generally speaking a day's work of the company in camp was as follows:—

(1) 4.30 to 5 a.m. Inspection of meat at supply depot before issue. This was carried out by an officer and six men of the company. As in the company under my command, several of the N.C.O.'s are Sanitary Inspectors and possess the Meat Inspector's Certificate from the Sanitary Institute, this inspection ensured that the meat provided was sound and in good condition.

(2) 6 to 7 a.m. Squad or company drill.

(3) 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Inspection of camps. Two or three squads, according to the size of the camp, consisting of one officer and six or eight men were detailed to make a complete inspection of all the camps and to note any defects in the sanitary arrangements, and to make a report to the Officer Commanding.

As a rule, during inspection, if any grave nuisances were detected the attention of either the Rgtl.M.O., or the Q.M. was called to the matter, and this officer was advised as to the best methods to be adopted to remove the nuisance.

This work was of great importance and I think I may say appreciated, not only by the various units, but also by the G.O.C.

As the Officer Commanding the company was not given any executive power, the reports made to him were not officially sent to Headquarters, and so their work did not interfere with the duties of the Sanitary Officer to the Division.

I am glad to say that during the last three camps no friction of any kind has been caused by these inspections, and I attribute

this to the fact that the officers of the Sanitary Company have always endeavoured to secure the co-operation of the Rgtl.M.O.'s or the Q.M.'s of the various units.

(4) 3 to 4 p.m. Lecture to men on sanitation, or practical instruction in field work.

(5) Route marches with instruction on the march on the sites for camps and bivouacs.

The above course of work and training will, in my opinion, be of the greatest value in the duties which the company may be ordered to carry out on mobilization, although it is extremely difficult to say exactly what duties Sanitary Companies may be called upon to perform.

If they are to be employed on lines of communication it is possible that they would be formed into sanitary sections and squads, and their duties would be similar to those laid down in Field Service Regulations, para. 72, but in addition there is no doubt that they would require to act as Sanitary Inspectors over the whole area of the sections, and supervise the sanitation generally among the civil population, carrying out any schemes which might be drawn up by the members of the Sanitary Inspection Committee for the co-ordination of the military with the civil sanitary organization.

If, as is more than likely, no lines of communication existed, how could the services of these companies be utilized? I think that in all probability as soon as mobilization is ordered large concentration camps will be formed, consisting of two, three, or even more divisions, and in these concentration camps the company might carry out similar work to what I have described as being carried out at Annual Training in camp, as well as perform all the duties of sanitary squads under the direct supervision of their own officers.

It may reasonably be asked, will the duties of these Sanitary Companies interfere with those of the Divisional Sanitary Officers or of the Medical Officers of Health of the areas in which the camps are situated.

I think not. There is no reason why the co-operation of all these officers should not be secured. With regard to the latter, I have had practical experience of this in at least one camp where the assistance of the Civil Medical Officer of Health was cordially given and proved of the greatest value, not only to the officers of the Sanitary Company, but also to the whole of the troops encamped.

For the greater efficiency of these Companies I would suggest :—

- (1) That the number of N.C.O.'s be increased.
- (2) That assistance be given by a member of the permanent staff, or by the appointment of one for each Sanitary Company and the two General Hospitals in each Division to carry out the clerical work.
- (3) That additional special equipment be provided, such as disinfecting apparatus, bacteriological and microscopical outfits, and a filter water cart, so that the men can be properly instructed.
- (4) That a distinction should be made in the uniform of these Companies from that of other units of the R.A.M.C., so that their services may not, as has been done in the past, be requisitioned for work other than they are trained to carry out.
- (5) That members of the unit who possess certificates of proficiency in sanitation from some recognized body, and who are employed as Sanitary Inspectors in civil life, should, if qualified for corporals, be appointed lance-serjeants and be paid as second class orderlies.

I shall leave to others, and especially to those who have seen the work of the companies at camp, to decide whether these companies have justified their formation or not.

It may be argued that the sanitation of camps should be supervised by every C.O. and by the Divisional Sanitary Officer, that at any rate in peace the work of the Companies is superfluous, and that if any additional inspection were necessary this could be carried out by N.C.O.'s from the R.A.M.C. trained with the field ambulances, but attached during training camps to divisional headquarters, and who would be directly supervised by the Divisional Sanitary Officers.

It might also be argued that sanitary squads and sanitary sections could be trained by the field ambulance, and be part of their personnel, as is the case with the R.A.M.C. men for water duties.

Another point which I would like to mention is that the services of the Sanitary Companies might be utilized by other divisions than the 1st and 2nd London Divisions. As they are Army troops and only attached to the London Division for administrative purposes, there is no reason why one or both of the companies should not carry out their annual training with a different division each year, and become educational factors in the sanitary instruction of all the Territorial troops.

On these and other points I am sure the officers of the Sanitary Service will be glad to have the opinion of those present.

DISCUSSION.

Major E. B. WAGGETT, R.A.M.C. (T.F.), said that he hoped that the Territorial Force would not be collected in large concentration camps on mobilization; even in the small camps at the annual training there was a good deal of unnecessary sickness at the end of the camping period, which he attributed to the defective sanitary conditions of the camp, from a lack of knowledge on the part of the Territorial officers of the principles of camp sanitation. One great source of trouble was the civilian contractor, who was, in his opinion, a most dangerous person; it was enough to make one's hair stand on end to see a cart containing urine and excreta dragged right through a big camp slopping its contents on the way. He agreed that it was very necessary for the Army to keep in close touch with civilian sanitarians who knew their own districts intimately.

Brigade-Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel BEATTIE thought that in time the Territorial Force would act as a great training school in sanitation, and that from it one would be able to draw trained sanitary inspectors for civil work.

Colonel HARPER, R.A.M.C. (T.F.), laid great stress on the need of a small manual on military sanitation for the use of regimental medical officers of Territorial units. They were busy men, and it was difficult for them to wade through the larger training manuals and pick out those things which applied to their particular job. His experience was that it was almost impossible to enlist men for the water duties; there was not sufficient prestige attaching to the position, and as a matter of fact when troops depended entirely on piped water supplies as they did in the annual camps, there were no water-duties to perform in peace time by which men might learn their functions in war. In the absence of sanitary squads, who could not be got to enlist in the 1st London Division, detachments of the sanitary companies had been attached to each brigade for advisory duties and inspections; the actual work was done by regimental fatigue parties. If the sanitary companies were so split up, it was necessary to have a very high proportion of N.C.O.'s in them. In the 1st London Division the men, while performing sanitary duties, wore a yellow brassard, which served to secure that they were not commandeered for other work.

Lieutenant-Colonel B. M. SKINNER, M.V.O., R.A.M.C., said that he wished to thank the officers who had provided two such interesting papers. The Territorial Force seemed to have a different idea of sanitation from the Regular Army, where the combatant officers had to know about the sanitation of their units and to keep it in order. It was

impossible to force sanitation on people from outside—they must themselves be interested in it and themselves carry out the necessary measures, acting under the advice of the expert medical and sanitary officers. The idea that one could depend on the civil arrangements for the maintenance of health was wrong; water supplies and sewage schemes would not remain as in peace; the whole arrangements would break down in a few weeks after war started, either by the action of the enemy or by the necessities of the army itself, and one must be prepared to carry out sanitary measures as if no arrangements whatever existed beforehand.

The PRESIDENT said that he thought there was very little hope of getting combatant officers of Territorial units to carry out their own sanitary arrangements.

Major FREMANTLE, in reply, said that he was not hopeless about the sanitary training of the Territorial officers and men; he agreed with Colonel Skinner that it was necessary to work through people themselves, and the main thing was to train the combatant officers and men; the sanitary company could provide this training by lectures and by the practical example of their work in the field. He thought it was a very bad thing for Territorial troops to march into camp and find their latrines and other sanitary arrangements ready made for them.

Major CALDWELL SMITH, in reply, agreed that the education of the people to be cared for was a first essential; he himself had given periodic lectures to this end. He suggested that the regimental medical officer should give one lecture annually on elementary sanitation to each company in his regiment. He objected to the splitting up of the sanitary company which was suggested by Colonel Harper; such an arrangement destroyed all connection between the C.O. of the sanitary company and his men, and it was not necessary as it was quite possible for the company to live together and to be detailed from day to day for whatever tasks were needed in the division.
