AN ACCOUNT OF THE ANNUAL TRAINING OF A CAVALRY FIELD AMBULANCE (1938).

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Some five years ago the 170th Cavalry Field Ambulance—at that time the only Cavalry Field Ambulance in the Army—was entirely re-organized and given a form which differed completely from anything hitherto in existence. Those who recollect the old Cavalry Field Ambulance of war days will remember that it was ill-adapted for the collection of wounded from cavalry units, and in consequence it was partially re-organized for the later Palestine campaign.

The new establishment was adopted with enthusiasm by the unit since it was realized that it was now possible to keep up with and evacuate the wounded of cavalry units in an efficient manner. Whether this will apply when mechanized forces have to be dealt with is another matter.

During the last four years, even with the inadequate equipment at our disposal, we have been able to realize to some extent the possibilities of our new formation, while the work put in and the trouble taken by the late Commanding Officer, Colonel Sandiland, T.D., in organizing the basic training of the unit has enabled us to take some steps forward.

This year, the unit found itself with junior officers who had little or no experience in field work, and the seniors felt that the annual camp should be utilized especially for the training of these officers and our programme was drawn up accordingly.

The peace establishment (plus 10 per cent increase) of the Cavalry Field Ambulance is 7 officers and 68 other ranks; 7 officers and 60 other ranks came to camp. The equipment allows us to form one more or less complete A.D.S. and a second very skeleton A.D.S., just the barest bones. Two bearer sections were formed, though our allowance of motor vehicles rendered their transport difficult.

With the equipment and transport at our disposal, the formation of even a skeleton M.D.S. is quite impossible. The study of the use of ambulance cars is equally impossible though it will be appreciated that this factor is even more important with us than it is with an ordinary Field Ambulance (mechanized).

Our basic training therefore is limited to schemes for the instruction of personnel in A.D.S. formations and the duties and tactical use thereof.
While this is quite satisfactory for the instruction of junior officers whose duty it will be to handle these sections in war, it does not give the necessary tactical experience to the seniors in the command of the ambulance as a whole and they have to fall back on the less satisfactory alternative of T.E.W.T.s. This is particularly unfortunate when we have to cope with an entirely new type of unit where experience in the last war is of little help.

The following table shows our programme of training for the annual camp of 1938:

### FIRST WEEK.

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>MORNING</td>
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<td>Isle of Man</td>
<td>Settling in</td>
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<td>Preliminary</td>
<td>As Wednesday</td>
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<td>Reading of Army Act, etc.</td>
<td>A.D.S. demonstrated</td>
<td>A.D.S. and bearer exercises under section commanders</td>
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<td>AFTERNOON</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Lecture to officers on messages</td>
<td>Lecture to officers on A.D.S.</td>
<td>Officers' treasure hunt</td>
<td>Officers' map-reading exercise</td>
<td>Officers' road reconnaissance report</td>
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<td>-- Medical inspection of all ranks</td>
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<td>-- Anti-gas training</td>
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<td>-- Pay parade</td>
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### SECOND WEEK.

|          | Sunday       | Monday          | Tuesday        | Wednesday      | Thursday       | Friday       | Saturday     | Sunday       |
|----------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| MORNING  | Church Parade | As on Saturday | As on Saturday | Late reveille   | Heavy rain     | Heavy rain   | Men required | Left at 8.40 a.m. for Liverpool and Bebington |
|          |              |                 |                | Lectures and squad drill |               |             | packing up   |              |
|          |              |                 |                |                 |                |             | Officers on schemes |              |
| AFTERNOON| Nil          | Officers' M.D.S., Report | T.E.W.T. for N.C.O.s | Unit Sports | Packing up |              |              |
|          |              |                 |                |                 |                |             |              |              |

|          |              |                 |                |                 |                |             |              |              |
The unit was unlucky in the weather. There were several days of heavy rain and nights of gales and rain which cut down the time available for training, and this prevented us from attempting a medical scheme for combined landing operations based on an excellent command administrative exercise which two of us had the good fortune to be able to attend.

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday require no discussion.

The preliminary exercises carried out on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are as follows:

**Bearer Exercises.**

1. Loading and unloading of a Bearer Section lorry, including mounting and dismounting of personnel of Section.
2. Movements in extended order.
3. Movements of individuals and single squads over an area of ground (a) not under fire; (b) under fire.
4. Front line treatment of wounded in the open (a) under fire; (b) not under fire.
5. Removal of wounded.
6. Various hand carries.
7. Tethering and coupling horses.
9. Carrying verbal messages.
10. Passing verbal messages along a line of bearers.
11. Carrying of loaded stretchers across hedges, ditches, streams, walls and rivers.
12. Carrying loaded stretchers over rough country.
13. The use of hand carries for evacuating wounded over rough country.
14. Loading and unloading of ambulance cars with reduced number of bearers.

**A.D.S. Exercises.**

1. Loading and unloading A.D.S. Section lorry, including mounting and dismounting personnel and moving off in column of route.
2. Construction of latrines, urinal pits, kitchen, etc.
4. Instruction in contents and uses of medical and ordnance panniers and other stores of A.D.S. Section.
5. Clerical duties.
6. Carrying verbal messages.
7. Pitching, running and stocking A.D.S.

These preliminary exercises are more or less standardized but the fact that ground can be chosen by officers commanding sections prevents the
exercises becoming mere routine. They were given variety this year by the imaginative capabilities of the junior officers.

In the afternoons of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and Monday of the second week, a number of exercises were arranged for junior officers and those R.M.O.s able to attend.

(1) Treasure Hunt.

With reference to this, full details are given in an article by Lieut.-Colonel E. R. Lovell, T.D., 164th (W.L.) Field Ambulance. One treasure hunt for officers was carried out in cars without a hitch. They were, however, somewhat mystified by the first map reference (a "misprint") which would have meant a swim of several miles. This was speedily corrected by the directing staff, who pointed out that errors of this kind should be spotted before moving out of camp to look for the reference.

(2) Map Reading.

This exercise took the usual form. It was interesting to note that the outstanding feature, Snaefell, with a hotel on the summit, was at first missed by everyone.

(3) Road Reconnaissance Report.

A road was chosen which started as a tarmac road fit for two lines of traffic, but with a dangerous bridge and hill requiring great caution in the first hundred yards. It deteriorated into a narrow one-way track after three miles. There were a few buildings on either side. The officers were asked to write a general report on the road and to answer certain specific questions:

(1) How far two-way traffic could be used.
(2) How far beyond this one-way traffic could be employed.
(3) Methods of traffic control to be used.

It was assumed that this road would be used solely by the medical services.

This exercise led to a useful discussion on methods of traffic control in the front line area. It also brought out the importance of a knowledge of apparently insignificant details, e.g., on account of the narrowness of the road in two places it was essential to know the breadth of the ambulance cars and lorries to determine whether they could use the track.

The R.M.O.s failed to realize the capabilities of six-wheeled ambulance cars and six-wheeled 30-cwt. lorries over rough ground. This offered no difficulties to the young officers of the field ambulance, who, as a result of their training, are never optimistic enough to expect to have the use of tarmac roads.

(4) Report on M.D.S.

A farm with many out-buildings was chosen and officers were asked to inspect it and submit a scheme for the use of the buildings as an M.D.S
The officers showed commendable enthusiasm and all solutions approximated closely to the "official" one.

**A.D.S. Exercises.**

In these exercises one of the directing staff acted as an umpire and drove with the O.C. of the section, keeping him posted at the requisite times and places as to all happenings—heavy fire, gas attack, etc.—on which the O.C. section had to decide what to do and issue orders accordingly. All exercises were designed to teach the necessity for rapid appreciation of situations, issuing of clear orders to deal with such situations, and the importance of adequate reconnaissance of minor roads before committing sections to them.

The sections of a cavalry field ambulance are extremely useful for the training of young officers and N.C.O.s in that they only require a small number of men and vehicles and the nature of their work ensures that they must be capable of acting independently. In war they will have to deal in the main with the casualties of a regiment, and it will be observed that these schemes are set from the point of view of a single cavalry regiment. Criticism may be offered to the effect that these schemes are scrappy and unorthodox, that a very important person, the O.C. Field Ambulance, never figures, let alone that man of power, the A.D.M.S. When one considers, however, the mobility of this unit and the long distances over which it will have to work, it is obvious that the O.C. of an A.D.S. section will often have to act on his own responsibility without orders from higher authority. He must, however, keep that authority fully informed as to his movements and the situation in general from his point of view, and thus the importance of intercommunication is emphasized as a primary necessity. This was made quite plain in all our exercises by the sending and receipt of many messages.

In these exercises the units or sub-units consisted of an A.D.S. section with bearer section attached.

**A.D.S. Exercise No. 1.**

Preliminary narrative handed to A.D.S. Commander before leaving camp.

The Isle of Man is an important outpost of Anglia. Hibernia, to enforce a trade treaty, decides, without declaring war, to occupy the Isle of Man, the defences of which have been very much neglected. The Anglian naval forces are fully occupied in the Mediterranean and the North Sea and this unexpected attack will be a complete surprise.

The main force is landing on the west coast of the island, but a small

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1. The map used in all the exercises is the 1 inch Popular Edition (Isle of Man), Sheet 17.
D. Stewart, J. J. O'Dwyer and J. H. Donnelly

cavalry force has landed at Ramsay, consisting of two regiments: 3rd and 4th of cavalry, 170th Cavalry Field Ambulance, and auxiliary services.

It is now advancing on Douglas in two columns.

**Column 1.**—4th Cav. Regt. via Laxey to Onchan. The coast road is completely blocked at Old Chapel (909050) and road South Cape (9106)—Pt. 568 (902063) is only passable for cavalry. The force reached Laxey at 06.00 hrs., July 2, and meeting with little resistance, it is now advancing towards Onchan.

**Column 2.**—3rd Cav. Regt. is advancing along main road Ramsay—Pt. 1384 (872087).

Inter-column boundary:—
Ballure (935159)—Pt. 738 (927125).
Pt. 978 (912122)—Pt. 742 (889096).
Cronk-y-Vaare (8808)—Ballacowin (8807)—Inn (8604)—Slagaby (8603).

A.D.S. will evacuate the wounded from Column 1.

The R.V. for this exercise is the Queen’s Hotel at Laxey, and you will arrive there in time to move off at 09.30 hrs.

**The Exercise.**

(1) On arrival at R.V., A.D.S. Commander is handed the following message: Have opened R.A.P., Farm (888042). Twelve casualties for evacuation. Regtl. Hqrs. moving forward to Begoade (885046). R.M.O.

(2) As A.D.S. passes Lonan Church Yard Gate (906055) a small group of wounded is found.

(3) Between Lonan and Chibbyr Pherric (898058) the A.D.S. comes under gas spray from aeroplane.

(4) A.D.S. arrives at Farm (888042). It pitches A.D.S. and clears the area round Garoo (8804). Meanwhile, information is received that the road is blocked at 887038.

(5) Towards the end of the evacuation, the following message is received from the R.M.O. 4th Cav. Regt. Have opened R.A.P. Begoade (885046). Fifteen casualties await evacuation. Regt. advancing to Onchan (8700).

The following are the official solutions for the situations described above:

(1) On receipt of the message, the A.D.S. moves off to the R.A.P. mentioned in the message by the best available route. The block in the main road mentioned in the narrative made it necessary to turn off by a side road through Lonan. This turning could easily be overlooked by a harassed A.D.S. commander.

(2) O.C. A.D.S. should have the wounded dressed, if this has not already been done, and send D.R. back to Laxey to the M.D.S.
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a message giving the location and number of these wounded and should tell the D.R. his destination and also to return at once. He should delay his A.D.S. for as short a time as possible.

(3) Put on respirators, remain seated in lorry and cover the exposed parts with ointment.

(4) As mentioned in the problem.

(5) On account of the blocking of the road, it will be necessary to proceed down two poor farm tracks so as to avoid block. These he should reconnoitre personally before taking his Unit along them. On arrival at Begoade (885046) he will again pitch A.D.S. and clear wounded.

A.D.S. Exercises No. 2 and 3.

These exercises have one preliminary narrative: Owing to the treacherous activities of disloyal persons, the Government of the Isle of Man has declared its separation from the parent government and, encouraged by imports of arms from sympathetic continental countries, has a small army well trained to resist any attempt at coercion.

The mother country has landed a force of 3 Brigades of Cavalry at Douglas to quell the rebellion; this force is advancing in three columns northwards towards the seat of the rebel government at Ramsay.

COLUMN 1.—Along coast road Douglas—Derby Castle (8799)—Inn (8900)—Laxey (9106)—Cardle (9312).

COLUMN 2.—Along road Strathallen Park (8700)—Onchan (8700)—Cronk-Ny-Mona (8601)—Keppel Gate (8604)—Bungalow Sta. Hotel (8709).

COLUMN 3.—Douglas—Quarter Bridge (8498)—Strang (8300)—Baldwin (8203)—Injebreck (8307).

COLUMN 1 is responsible for area:

Right flank boundary: Road Onchan—Laxey.

Left flank boundary: Road Pt. 357—Begoade (8802)—fork road (8803)—Pt. 856 (8805)—line to Pt. 590 (8907)—Clagh Ouyr (8911).

COLUMN 2 is responsible for area on left flank of COLUMN 1 to excl. Road Cemetery (8599)—incl. Strenaby (8403)—Dhoon (8506)—Beinn-y-Phott (8508).

COLUMN 3 is responsible for area on left flank of COLUMN 2.

Exercise 2.—The A.D.S. is responsible for COLUMN 3 and will R.V. on Injebreck road, 100 yds. north of Quarter Bridge Hotel (843987).

(1) A.D.S. Commander receives the following message from O.C. Cav. Fd. Amb.: Cav. Regt. is in action in region of Injebreck House and R.A.P. has been opened at the house itself. You will advance to Injebreck House with your A.D.S. and evacuate casualties to the M.D.S. at Douglas.

(2) A.D.S. advances, and north of Strang (8300) has warning of aeroplanes in neighbourhood.
(3) Untreated wounded gathered in a clump are found at the roadside at Pt. 416 (831022).
(4) The high ridge south of Baldwin is found to be under fire.
(5) At the south end of the reservoir A.D.S. comes under shrapnel fire. The A.D.S. Serjeant and Bearer Section Corporal are severely wounded.
(6) A.D.S. arrives 200 yds. south of Injebreck House and cannot get nearer on account of road block.
(7) Regiment advances and R.M.O. leaves his wounded in charge of A.D.S. Commander. He informs A.D.S. Commander there are more wounded to the north of Injebreck House.
(8) While the treatment and evacuation of wounded are going on at A.D.S., O.C. receives message that the bridge south of Baldwin has been bombed and destroyed by aeroplanes.

Official Solutions of Above.

(1) On receipt of message, A.D.S. Commander moves off with section to Injebreck.
(2) On receipt of warning, puts on speed and rushes to a clump of trees a short distance ahead. As the aeroplanes are not yet in sight, this is better than stopping in the open road.
(3) Gives first aid treatment to the wounded but does not attempt to evacuate them and, as in the previous exercise, sends back D.R. to the M.D.S.
(4) Passes across the ridge at speed.
(5) This situation has been put in to give practice to the more junior members of the section. A.D.S. Commander should report these casualties to the O.C., Cav. Fd. Amb.
(6) O.C. pitches A.D.S. at this point and sends the bearers forward to the house on foot to bring back the wounded by hand carriage.
(7) A.D.S. Commander asks R.M.O. for all the information he has regarding location of the wounded and as by now his bearers will probably have evacuated the casualties from the R.A.P., he sends them forward to bring back the wounded in the open. A.D.S. Commander will also find out from the R.M.O. the probable lines of advance of his regiment.
(8) If he is too busy himself, which is very probable, he will send his D.R. back to reconnoitre the side roads shown on the map. The latter will find that, although these are shown as poor third-class roads, they have actually been repaired since the map was made and there is an excellent line of evacuation back to Douglas which avoids the damaged bridge south of Baldwin.

Exercise 3.—You are attached to the 2nd Column and will evacuate their casualties.

The road Strathallen Park (8700)—Onchan (8700)—Cronk-Ny-Mona
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Bungalow Sta. Hotel (8709) is reserved for fighting troops and supplies.


1. On passing cross roads (873023) he receives aeroplane warning.
2. Arrives at Grange. R.M.O. tells him he is going on with his Regt. He has 20 wounded in his R.A.P. and some are lying out in area north of R.A.P. He informs A.D.S. Commander that the road to the north is impracticable for motor vehicles.
3. When evacuation nearly complete, A.D.S. Commander receives the following message from R.M.O.: I have opened R.A.P. at White House (882052) and have a number of wounded.
4. Proceeds to White House (882052). Finds the Regt. has advanced, the M.O. has been killed and the only orderly is stupid.

There is no need to go through again the official solution of all the situations in this exercise, but an interesting situation developed in the advance from Grange to White House. The O.C. should do a personal reconnaissance in front of Grange despite the fact that the R.M.O. has told him that the road is impracticable. That worthy gentleman may not realize the sort of ground over which it is possible to take Cav. Fd. Amb. vehicles. Actually, the reconnaissance reveals that the R.M.O. had spoken the truth and it was necessary to try some other route. It turned out that there was only one possible route, the one which had been reserved for fighting troops and supplies only. With all humility, the directing staff suggests that this is one of those occasions where orders should be disobeyed and this route taken. In the exercise, when the A.D.S. took this route, the umpire turned himself into an infuriated and liverish senior Staff Officer, who wanted to know, with many expressive adjectives, why this unit was on that road. On getting a satisfactory answer, he allowed the unit to proceed. In all these exercises, although it has not been mentioned, emphasis has been laid on the fact that messages describing any incident of importance had to be sent back to the O.C. and the M.D.S. either by ambulance car or, if absolutely necessary, by D.R.

Minor points noted by the directing staff:
1. That it is most important to keep N.C.O.s and men fully informed of the situation.
2. All N.C.O.s must read a map with intelligence and care.
3. Personal reconnaissance is essential. The importance of this was clearly demonstrated during this camp. The condition of many of the roads, etc., has altered considerably since the map was last amended.
(4) The motor cycle D.R. of the A.D.S. must not be detailed for minor duties which could be carried out by a runner or returning ambulance car. He must be kept for really important and urgent messages.

(5) The D.R. must be thoroughly well trained in map-reading. (In actual fact, our transport section from 2nd Cav. Div. R.A.S.C., was a most capable one; the members of it drove well and had a sound knowledge of map-reading.)

(6) Section Commanders must realize that when pressed they must ask for vehicles, which will not be sent to them unless full information is given as to why they are required. The exact numbers of casualties and their location must be stated.

(7) All personnel must be thoroughly conversant with signals for convoys of vehicles.

ORDER FOR MARCH ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 5-6 BY 170TH CAVALRY-FIELD AMBULANCE.

(1) From camp to R.V. Union Mills (831004) by road Onchan—Quarterbridge (8498)—Union Mills.

(2) Move from rendezvous at 23.15 hrs. and proceed by road Strang (8300)—Castleward (8401)—Bridge over River Glass (8401)—Glenville (8502)—Cronk-Ny-Mona (8601)—Gobnagear (8603)—Inn (8604)—Pt. 856 (8805).

(3) Reassembly point, immediately west of the Road Junction Brundal side road and main road (896057). Vehicles facing towards Laxey. Time of reassembly will be communicated later.

(4) The column will consist of No. 1 A.D.S. Section, less D.R. with No. 1 Bearer Section and Ambulance car attached. Officer commanding will move in four seater car in front of column accompanied by two D.R.s. 2nd in command will move in rear of column in four seater car accompanied by one D.R.

(5) O.C. No. 1 A.D.S. will be responsible for the pace of the column which will be a maximum of fifteen miles an hour from R.V. and twelve miles an hour from R.V. forward.

(6) The column will move in two blocks, 1, A.D.S. Section and attached, and 2, A.D.S. Section and attached; an interval of fifteen yards between vehicles and an interval of forty yards between blocks will be maintained by the column.

(7) At the halt there will be two yards' interval between vehicles and twenty yards between blocks.

(8) Inter-communication will be by D.R.

(9) The halt signal will be two short blasts. The start up signal one long blast. Signals will be passed down the column.
(10) **Use of Lights.**—Head lights may be used as far as R.V. From R.V. forwards side-lights and rear lights only will be used.

(11) **Action if Vehicles break down.**—2nd in command will inform O.C. by D.R.

(12) Return from reassembly point to camp will be by road Lonan (9005)—Ballabeg (9004). The same formations and order will be observed as on route from R.V. to Pt. 856.

*Task for No. 1 A.D.S.—* Pitch A.D.S. at road junction (884047). Treat wounded found there and the bearers will evacuate by hand carriage to road junction (882048), where they will load them on ambulance car which will evacuate them to Pt. 856, ambulance car returning to take second load. On completion of the exercise the A.D.S. and Bearer Section will move to reassembly point.

*Task for No. 2 A.D.S.—* No. 2 A.D.S. will enter field by gate in the west side of road 150 yards south of road junction (894054) and pitch A.D.S. The Bearer Section attached will collect wounded from the ground to the west of the A.D.S. On completion of the exercise No. 2 A.D.S., with Bearer Section, etc., will move to reassembly point.

*Night Operation.*—As this was the first night scheme for some years, it was made as simple as possible. The scheme was devised as a test for the transport section, and despite somewhat aged vehicles went through without a hitch and a high average speed of 12 m.p.h. was maintained. Side lights had to be used as the roads could not be kept free of civilian traffic.

The A.D.S. scheme proved most instructive, and the following points were noted for future guidance:—

(1) The necessity for personal reconnaissance; 1 mile to 1 inch ordnance maps, especially when they have not been recently revised, cannot be trusted in the matter of third-class roads and tracks.

(2) The ease with which an A.D.S. can be pitched on a dark, wet night without a light.

(3) The ease with which all lights inside the pitched A.D.S. could be screened from observation provided that the A.D.S. lorry was turned towards the front line. It has been our custom to face the lorries the other way round to make it easy to bring wounded in and to enable the section to make a quick getaway.

(4) The difficulty many find in correlating distance on the map and on the ground in the dark.

(5) When the O.C. in his car halts, the A.D.S. must also be halted. One A.D.S. left its O.C. far behind.

The following points have, as in the past, once more been noted during the recent Annual Training:—

(1) The necessity for lengthy reconnaissance of training areas and the
country around before annual training. This saves much time and ensures that the O.C., 2nd in Command, and Adjutant will have a few leisure hours in the fortnight.

(2) The average farmer and landowner appreciates a chat, and with a few kind words is willing to place his land and farmyards at the disposal of a medical unit.

In the future years, it is hoped that the responsibility for devising A.D.S. exercises will devolve entirely upon the Section Commanders, which will give more opportunity to the N.C.O.s in handling these sub-units. This will have the additional advantage of allowing time for the senior officers to devise exercises for the Field Ambulance as a whole, which will occupy the latter part of the camp.

As various articles in the Journal have shown, the training of Territorial Medical Units is at present exciting a certain amount of interest. It is not claimed that any new ideas have been introduced into this communication, but we do feel that the work which was carried out this year was of practical importance and had a definite significance in the training of the personnel of the Cavalry Field Ambulance, and it has been unnecessary to introduce extraneous exercises, interesting though they may be, which had little bearing on Field Ambulance duties and which it is highly improbable would ever have to be done on active service.