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BAYONET TRAINING

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M. & D. Dept.



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BAYONET TRAINING, 1916.

SECTION 1.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE BAYONET.

1. To attack with the bayonet effectively requires **Good Direction, Strength and Quickness**, during a state of wild excitement and probably physical exhaustion. The limit of the range of a bayonet is about 5 feet (measured from the opponent's eyes), but more often the killing is at close quarters, at a range of 2 feet or less, when troops are struggling *corps à corps* in trenches or darkness. Essential points of the bayonet.

The bayonet is essentially an offensive weapon. Go straight at an opponent with the point threatening his throat and deliver the point wherever an opening presents itself. If no opening is obvious, one must be created by beating off the opponent's weapon or making a "feint point" in order to make him uncover himself.

2. Hand-to-hand fighting with the bayonet is individual, which means that a man must think and act for himself and rely on his own resource and skill; but, as in games, he must play for his side and not only for himself. In a bayonet assault all ranks go forward to kill or be killed, and only those who have developed skill and strength by constant training will be able to kill. Hand-to-hand fighting.

3. The spirit of the bayonet must be inculcated into all ranks so that they go forward with that aggressive determination and confidence of superiority born of continual practice, without which a bayonet assault will not be effective. The spirit of the bayonet.

4. The technical points of bayonet fighting are extremely few and simple. The essence of bayonet training is continuity. Continuity of training.

SECTION 2.

METHOD OF CARRYING OUT BAYONET TRAINING
AND HINTS TO INSTRUCTORS.

5. An important point to be kept in mind in bayonet training is the development of the individual by teaching him to think and act for himself. The simplest means of attaining this is to make men use their brains and eyes to the fullest extent by carrying out the practices, so far as possible, without words of command, i.e., point at a shifting target as soon as it is stationary, parry sticks, &c. The class should, whenever possible, work in pairs and act on the principle of "Master and Pupil." This, in itself, develops individuality and confidence. Sharp jerky words of command which tend to make men act mechanically, should be omitted. Teach rapidity of movement and alertness by competition in fixing and unfixing the bayonet and by other such "quickenings movements."

6. As the technique of bayonet fighting is so simple, long detail is quite unnecessary and makes the work monotonous. All instructions should be carried out on common sense lines. It should seldom be necessary to give the detail of a "point" or "parry" more than two or three times, after which the classes should acquire the correct positions by practice. For this reason a lesson or daily practice should rarely last more than half-an-hour. Remember nothing kills interest so easily as monotony.

7. Arouse the spirit of the bayonet by describing the special features of bayonet and hand-to-hand fighting. Endeavour to make the men practice bayonet fighting in the same spirit and with the same enthusiasm which animate them when training for their games and look upon their instructor as a trainer and helper.

8. Create an interest in the work by explaining the reason for the various positions, the method of handling the rifle and bayonet and the uses of the "points." Question the men to find out whether they understand these reasons. When

Development
of the
individual.

Duration of
lessons and
practices.

Spirit of the
bayonet.

Work made
interesting.

men realize the object of their work they naturally take a greater interest in it.

9. Progression in the training is regulated first Progress on. by obtaining correct positions and good direction, then quickness. Strength is the outcome of continual practice.

10. In order to encourage dash and gradually strengthen the leg muscles from the commencement of their training, classes should be frequently practised in charging short distances. Cultivate dash and vigour.

11. All company officers and N.C.Os. should be taught how to instruct in bayonet fighting in order that they may be able to teach their platoons, &c., this most important part of a soldier's training, which must be regularly practised during the whole of his service at home, and during his periods of rest behind the firing line. Officers' and N.C.Os. classes.

12. Sacks for dummies should be filled with tightly packed straw, sods, leaves, mill shavings, leather scrapings &c., in such a way as to give the greatest resistance without injury to the bayonet. A realistic effect, necessitating a strong withdrawal as if gripped by a bone, is obtained by inserting pieces of hard wood $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick (old cheese cases, laths, staves &c.), between the stuffing and the sack—broadside on facing the attacker with the grain vertical. Sacks.

These sack dummies can be made to stand on end by fixing a wooden cross or star (two or three pieces of wood about 2 inches broad and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick nailed across one another) in the base of the sack before filling it. They can also be placed with good effect on rough tripods, or tied to improvised stools. Dummy sacks should be hung from gallows by a double suspension from the cross-bar to the top corners and tethered to the ground from the bottom corners.

13. The greatest care should be taken that the object representing the opponent and its support should be incapable of injuring the bayonet or butt, and only light sticks must be used for parrying practice. Care of weapons.

The chief causes of injury to the bayonet are insufficient instruction in the bayonet fighting lessons, the bayonet not being withdrawn clear of

the dummy before advancing and the dummies being placed on hard unprepared ground.

14. The upkeep and proper filling of dummies, the repair of assault practice courses, &c., form part of the duties of Staff and Assistant Instructors.

15. For practising direction there must always be a mark to aim at on the dummy. Old playing cards or pieces of stout paper pinned on the sacks make good marks. By continually changing the position of the mark the "life" of the dummies is considerably prolonged. Should the supply of cards and pins fail, five or six numbers can be painted on the dummies as marks.

SECTION 3.

BAYONET LESSONS.

16. Open ranks for bayonet practice as follows:—"Rear Rank—About turn"; "Odd numbers of the front rank and even numbers of the rear rank—Six paces forward—March," "About turn"; "The whole, one pace right close—March."

Small classes should be opened out from single rank.

Classes should always work with bayonets fixed.

When teaching a new position, face the class to a flank and let them "rest." First show them the position, explaining essential points, and giving the reasons for them. Then show the position a second time, making the class observe each movement, so that, from the very commencement of the bayonet training, a man is taught to use his eyes and brain. Face the ranks and order them to assume the position explained and shown. Pick out the man who shows the best position and let the class look at and copy him. Remember, his may not be an ideal position, but it is more correct than those shown by the remainder who, being beginners, cannot distinguish the difference between a good position and an ideal one. Many instructors err by trying to get a class of beginners to idealize at once.

17. The Recruit's Course consists of five lessons. Recruit's Each lesson takes about half-an-hour, and the course. course, with daily instruction, should last from five to six weeks. The training should be carried out chiefly in a "free and easy" kit, but men should be accustomed to use their bayonets when wearing belt and pouches, and packs may be worn when required to carry out an efficiency test. For the "pointing" and "parrying" practices a light stick about 5 feet long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to 3" circumference must be provided for every two men.

18. Half-an-hour a day, at least five days a week, should be devoted to the daily practice in bayonet fighting for trained soldiers. In the practice, good direction, quickness, and strength are developed, and a soldier is accustomed to using the bayonet under conditions which approximate to actual fighting. This half-hour should be apportioned to (1) Pointing at the body; (2) Pointing at paper balls on light sticks at varying distances and directions; (3) Parrying light sticks; (4) Dummy work and, when sufficiently proficient (5) The Final Assault Practice.

LESSON 1.

19. Point of the bayonet directed at the base of the opponent's throat, the rifle held easily and naturally with both hands, the barrel inclined slightly * (about 30°) to the left, the right hand over the navel grasping the small of the butt, the left hand holding the rifle at the most convenient position in front of the back sight so that the left arm is only slightly bent, *i.e.*, making an angle of about 150°. The legs well separated in a natural position such as a man walking might adopt on meeting with resistance, *i.e.*, left knee slightly bent, right foot flat on the ground with toe inclined to the right front.

The position should not be constrained in any way but be one of aggression, alertness, and readiness to go forward for immediate attack.

*For the Ross Rifle and Bayonet the vertical position of the blade is recommended.

Common Faults.

1. Leaning body back.
2. Left arm too much bent.
3. Right hand held too low and too far back.
4. Rifle grasped too rigidly, restraining all freedom of movement.

"Rest."

19. Assume a position of "rest" in the easiest way without moving the feet.

"Long Point."

20. Grasping the rifle firmly, vigorously deliver the point from the "on guard" position to the full extent of the left arm, butt running alongside and kept close to the right forearm. Body inclined forward; left knee well bent; right leg braced, and weight of the body pressed well forward with the fore part of the right foot; heel raised if necessary.

The chief power in a point is derived from the right arm with the weight of the body behind it, the left arm being used more to direct the point of the bayonet. The eyes must be fixed on the object pointed at. In making points other than straight to the front, the left foot should move in the same direction as that in which the point is made.

During the latter stages of this lesson the men should be practised in stepping forward with the right foot when delivering the point.

Common Faults.

1. Rifle drawn back before delivering the point.
2. Butt of the rifle held as high as or against the right shoulder.
3. The eyes not directed on the body aimed at.
4. Left knee not sufficiently bent.
5. Body not thrust sufficiently forward.

REMARKS.

The long point is made against an opponent at a range of about four to five feet from the attacker's eye.

21. To withdraw the bayonet after a "long point" has been delivered, draw the rifle straight back until the right hand is well behind the hip, and immediately resume the "on guard" position. If the leverage or proximity to the object transfixed renders it necessary, the left hand must first be slipped up close to the muzzle, and when a pupil has reached that stage of the lesson when he delivers a point advancing on a dummy, he will adopt this method.

After every "point," a rapid withdrawal, essential to quick work with the bayonet, should be practised before returning to the "on guard" position.

PROGRESSION.

22. Men should always be made to point at a 1st practice target—e.g., at a named part of the body of the opposite man: "At the right eye" (long pause to commence with), "point" (a pause), "withdraw." Oblique "points" should be practised by pointing at the men to the right and left fronts.

As progress is maintained, the pause between the "point" and the "withdraw" should be shortened until the men reach a stage when they "withdraw" and come "on guard" directly after making a "point," judging their own time. They should be taught to point at two or more parts of the body as "First at the nose, then at the right thigh—point."

To practice action against a retreating foe, turn the inside ranks about and let them "rest." Show the position of the kidneys (small of the back, either side of the spine), and make the outside ranks point at those of the inside ranks, and *vice-versâ*.

23. If possible, the point of the bayonet should be directed against an opponent's throat, especially in *corps à corps* fighting, as the point will enter easily and make a fatal wound on penetrating a few inches, and being near the eyes, make an opponent "funk." Other vulnerable and usually exposed parts are the face, chest, lower abdomen and thighs, and the region of the kidneys when the back is turned. Four to six inches penetration is

sufficient to incapacitate and allow for a quick withdrawal, whereas, if a bayonet is driven home too far it is often impossible to withdraw it. In such cases a round should be fired to break up the obstruction.

24. The class, working in pairs, with the Instructor supervising, should be practised in pointing in various directions—(1) at the opposite man's hand, which he places in various positions on and off his body; (2) at balls of paper tied on the end of a stick.

This practice should be done without word of command, so that the eye and brain may be trained.

25. First teach the men to transfix a disc or number painted on a dummy, at a distance of about five feet (*i.e.*, the extreme range of the bayonet), then advancing from three or more paces from the dummy. The advance must be made in the most practical and natural way, and should be practised with either foot to the front when the 'point' is delivered.*

The rifle must never be drawn back before making 'long point' in a forward movement. The impetus of the body and the forward stretching of the arms supply sufficient force.

The bayonet must be withdrawn immediately after the 'point' has been delivered and a forward threatening attitude assumed to the side of or beyond the dummy.

Unless the rifle is firmly gripped it is liable to injure the hand.

To guard against accidents the men must be at least five feet apart when the practice is carried out collectively.

The principles of this practice should be applied when pointing at dummies in trenches, standing upright on the ground, suspended on gallows, &c., at first slowly and deliberately, for no attempt must be made to carry out the Final Assault Practice before the men have been carefully instructed in, and have thoroughly mastered the preliminary lessons.

*But the habit of delivering the blow left foot forward is to be encouraged.

LESSON 2.

THE RIGHT AND LEFT PARRY.

26. From the 'on guard' position force the rifle forward far enough to the right (left) to beat off the adversary's weapon, straightening the left arm without bending the wrist or twisting the rifle in the hand.

In making a low parry, care should be taken that the point of the bayonet is sufficiently deflected to ensure the opponent's weapon being beaten off and not missed altogether.

The eyes must be kept on the weapon which is being parried.

Common Faults.

1. Wide sweeping parry with no forward movement in it.

2. Eyes taken off the object to be parried.

N.B.—Men should be taught to regard the parry as part of an offensive as well as defensive movement, and that it is really part of the 'point' which should immediately follow it.

27. The class forming the parries should be made to observe carefully the movements of the rifle and should not be kept longer at this practice than is necessary for the men to grasp the controlled vigorous action required.

Working in pairs with scabbards on bayonets, one man pointing with the stick and the other parrying; the 'on-guard' position being resumed after each parry. At first this practice must be slow and deliberate, but never allowed to become mechanical, and progressively increased in rapidity and vigour. Later a 'point' at that part of the body indicated by the opposite man's hand should immediately follow the parry, and, finally, sticks long enough to represent the opponent's weapon in the 'on-guard' position should be attached to the dummies and parried before delivering the 'point.'

The men must also be taught to parry points made at them (1) by an 'enemy' in a trench when

2nd practice.
Pointing at
changing
targets.

3rd practice.
Pointing at
discs on
dummies.

Right (left)
parry.

1st practice.
Parries by
word of
command.

2nd practice.
Parrying light
sticks.

they are themselves on the parapet; (2) by an "enemy" on the parapet when they are in the trench, and when both are on the same level fighting at close quarters in a deep trench.

LESSON 3.

THE SHORT POINT.

The short point.

28. Shift the left hand quickly towards the muzzle and draw the rifle back as far as the left arm will allow, the butt either above or below the right elbow, according to whether a low or a high point is to be made, and deliver the "point" vigorously to the full extent of the left arm.*

N.B.—The "short point" is used at any range under four feet and in close fighting is the natural point to make when the bayonet has just been withdrawn after a "long point." If a "strong withdrawal" is necessary the right hand should be slipped forward to the handguard after the "short point" has been made.

PRACTICE.

29. The principles of the 3rd practice of Lesson 1 should be observed so far as they apply. By placing two marks on a dummy the "short point" should be taught in conjunction with the "long point," the first mark being transixed with the latter, the second with the former. On delivery of the "long point" if the left foot is forward, the "short point" would take place with the right foot forward, and *vice versa*.

LESSON 4.

JAB OR UPWARD POINT.

The "jab" or upward point.

30. From the position of the "short point" shift the right hand up the rifle and grasp it at the handguard, at the same time bringing the rifle to an almost vertical position close to the body, and from this position jab the point of the bayonet into the throat or under the chin of the opponent.

*Care must be taken at first not to drive too hard with the right arm or the left elbow will be "pulled."

Common Faults.

1. Rifle drawn backward and not held vertically enough.

2. Rifle grasped too low with the right hand.
N.B.—The jab can be employed successfully in close-quarter fighting in narrow trenches and when "embraced" by an opponent.

LESSON 5.

METHODS OF INJURING AN OPPONENT.

31. It should be impressed upon the class that though a man's "point" has missed or has been parried (or his bayonet broken), he can, as "attacker," still maintain his advantage by injuring his opponent in one of the following ways:—

32. The butt can be used effectively by bringing The butt. it up with all possible force against the jaw, stomach, fork, &c. It can also be banged down on the knee or instep. The butt should be employed when it is not possible to use the point.

33. Smash the magazine or trigger guard violently Magazine or trigger guard. into the opponent's face.

34. When gripped by an opponent and unable Use of the knee. to use the point, the knee brought up against the fork or the heel stamped on the instep will momentarily disable him and make him release his hold.

35. When wrestling, the opponent can be tripped Tripping. by forcing his weight on to one leg and kicking that leg away from under him.

N.B.—The above methods will only temporarily disable an enemy, who must be killed with the bayonet, &c.

PRACTICE.

36. When the class have been shown the methods of using the butt and the knee they should be practised on the dummy. Fix several marks on a dummy and make a point at one, use the knee on another fixed low down, jab a third, and so on.

Light dummies incapable of breaking it should be used for practice with the butt.

SECTION 4.

TACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE BAYONET.

Practical use of the bayonet.

37. A bayonet assault should preferably be made under cover of fire, surprise, or darkness. In these circumstances the prospect of success is greatest, for a bayonet is useless at any range except hand-to-hand.

Night work.

38. At night all these covers can be utilized. On the other hand, confusion is inherent in fighting by night, and the execution of a successful night attack with the bayonet, therefore, requires considerable and lengthy training. Units should be frequently practised in night work with the bayonet.

Bayonet an offensive weapon.

39. The bayonet is essentially a weapon of offence which must be used with skill and vigour or it has but little effect. To await passively an opportunity of using the bayonet entails defeat, since an approaching enemy will merely stand out of bayonet range and shoot down the defenders. In charging short distances across the open in *close* formation the rifle should be carried at the "high port"—the safest position in this formation.

No firing during an assault.

40. In an assault the enemy should be killed with the bayonet. Firing should be avoided, for in the mix-up a bullet, after passing through an opponent's body, may kill a friend who happens to be in the line of fire.

FINAL ASSAULT PRACTICE.

41. Only to be carried out after the men have been thoroughly trained in all the preliminary lessons, and have acquired complete control of their weapons; otherwise injury to rifles and bayonets will result from improper application of the methods laid down in the foregoing instruction.

The Final Assault Practice must approximate as nearly as possible to the conditions of actual fighting.

Nervous tension due to the anticipation of an attack reacting on the body, as well as the dash across the open by fully equipped men, results in the arrival of the assaulting party in a more or less

exhausted state, and it is only by their physical fitness and superior skill in the use of the bayonet that they can overcome a comparatively fresh foe.

Therefore quick aim and good direction of the bayonet when moving rapidly or even surmounting obstacles, the accurate delivery of a point of sufficient strength and vigour to penetrate clothing and equipment, the clean withdrawal of the bayonet—which requires no small effort, especially should it be fixed by a bone—are of the greatest importance, and need the same careful attention and constant practice as is devoted to obtaining efficiency with the rifle.

In the Final Assault Practice the charge brings the men to the first trench in a fairly exhausted condition, and the accuracy of the aim is tested by the mark, which can only be "carried" by a true and vigorous thrust and a clean withdrawal.

For this practice the men should be made to commence the assault by getting out of a trench six or seven feet deep, as well as from the open, and they should not shout until close up to the "enemy."

42. A reproduction of a labyrinth of trenches, with dummies in the "dug-outs," shelters between the trenches, &c., forms an excellent Final Assault Practice Course, and it should be assaulted from all four sides to give variety. The edge of the trenches should be protected by spars or baulks anchored back, otherwise constant use will soon wear out the course. Cinders scattered over the course prevent the men slipping. The number, length, and construction of trenches is regulated by the ground available and by the ingenuity of commanding officers. If gallows cannot be erected, sack dummies should be placed on tripods or standing on end, as well as lying in trenches or on the parapets, with soft earth free from stones under them, &c.

Final Assault Practice Course.

Staff and Assistant Instructors are responsible for the upkeep of Final Assault Practice Courses.

43. Extremely interesting and practical schemes in trench warfare can be arranged by combining the Final Assault Practice with other branches of Tactical schemes.

training. In these schemes bayonet work should be dove-tailed with bombing, building up of sandbags, entrenching, the duties of "bayonet" and "observation" men, &c.

Competitions.

44. Competitions can be arranged by allotting marks for (1) number of discs transixed and carried on a bayonet, (2) time taken from signal to charge until the last man of the team passes the finishing post, and (3) style.

Competitions should never be carried out until the men have completed their lessons in bayonet training and thoroughly mastered the handling of the bayonet in the Final Assault Practice.