

INFANTRY – THE QUEEN OF THE BATTLE

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INTRODUCTION

That the Infantry is the Queen of the battle is not only an Infantryman's ego. It is in fact so because of its importance in battle and, as such, on it rests the entire structure of the armed forces. The idea here is not to belittle the importance of other arms. It is only to seek for the Infantry a more serious thought so far as its characteristics, employment, organisation and training is concerned, so as to bring it to the peak of its efficiency.

There is a surprising tendency to treat the employment of Infantry as something too simple to need serious thought. This is probably so, because though its unique characteristics indicate its handling in battle to be a fine art, somehow it has now degenerated into mere mathematics. On paper it looks quite simple. If attacking, concentrate three to one superiority on the enemy and then assault on the objective, dressed up in assault formation under cover of artillery fire. Defence means building strong fortifications in which the Infantry lives and fires its weapons when the enemy assaults. In advance, if in the plains, march on both sides of the roads. In the mountains, trudge along tracks with more than 100 lbs weight on the back of each Jawan, as self contained mobile (?) columns. This rule of the thumb thinking has not only earned the infantryman the lowest rates of pay, but also general neglect in training. Our Infantry equipment has seen little change since the days of World War II.

We in India have all the more reason to focus particular attention on the Infantry. Firstly, it is the Infantry alone that can see us through to victory in our border areas along the Himalaya and, secondly, a large and well trained Infantry may well offset any material handicaps that a poor economy, like ours, may impose on us during a prolonged war. Most Asian countries that developed independent military thought have relied mainly on the efficiency and artful employment of their Infantry when pitted against more sophisticated armies.

CHARACTERISTICS

Infantry is the oldest arm of the army and its characteristics as laid down today have been evolved through ages of experience. It is not intended here, therefore, to suggest any new characteristics. The basic characteristics have not changed and are not likely to change in the future. It is, however, intended here to put these characteristics across in a way that would suggest the correct emphasis on their various aspects and to bring them out in their correct perspective. Consequently the characteristics of the Infantry may be considered in their order of importance as under:

- (a) Mobility
- (b) Close combat
- (c) Concealment
- (d) Ability to hold ground
- (e) Self reliance

Mobility

By far the most important characteristic of the Infantry is its mobility; a characteristic which gives its commanders the greatest latitude of action and opportunity for exploiting their originality and ingenuity, making employment of Infantry in war a thrilling art. Encirclement, out-flanking moves, operations behind enemy lines, infiltration, raids, patrols etc. are all by-products of mobility. Of course the greatest contribution of mobility towards the employment of Infantry is 'surprise'; a single decisive factor in battle. Mobility in short makes Infantry ideally suited for offensive action. Even during defence it enables the Infantry to reach out at the superior enemy and destroy him before he can close in.

Mobility, however, cannot be taken for granted. Probably it could be taken for granted at the time when the foot soldier with his musket and bayonet was all that constituted the Infantry. The varied items of equipment, he has now to carry have greatly hampered the mobility of the infantryman. Giving transport to the Infantry, with its restrictions on movement over "all types of terrain, at times defeats the very purpose for which it has been provided. On the other hand, the load that a jawan carries now is so great that his mobility virtually means the ability to get transported; or the form of "restricted mobility", which means the ability to operate in a limited range from a firm base, where his extra equipment can be dumped temporarily. There is, therefore, a great need today for a critical examination of Infantry equipment to ensure that the soldier is burdened with only such equipment as is worth carrying, so that his mobility is not affected.

Mobility does not mean merely the ability to move, the speed is also important. The degree of mobility is a variable decided by the degree of endurance of the Infantryman, provision of transport, and type of terrain that he is operating in. The Infantryman's endurance is not unlimited, but not so the scope for ingenuity in providing appropriate transport to assist him in overcoming the handicap of the terrain. What is required today is flexibility of thought in this regard by those who went to the extent of organising motorcycle and cycle battalions or provision of wheelbarrows to the Infantryman to carry his equipment in mountainous terrain along mule tracks like the Japanese did.

Close Combat

The other important characteristic of the Infantry is its ability to undertake close combat. This characteristic enables the Infantry to fulfil its role of closing with the enemy and destroying him in detail, or evict the enemy from fortifications and capture ground physically.

It is surprising, therefore, that this characteristic has not been included as such in the official list. Even some academic students of military science, in their fanciful imagination of the nuclear era, have completely lost sight of the use of bayonet in a future war. It virtually amounts to a failure to visualise the possibilities of employment of Infantry itself; for Infantry means bayonet and bayonet – Infantry. Even in this nuclear era conventional war goes on. During the 1965 conflict, Pakistan paid bitterly for their Infantry's reluctance to engage in a close combat with us, and relying too much on superior weapons and equipment. Let us not, therefore, underestimate the importance of the bayonet in a future war. Did not the bloody thirsty bayonets of a small band of infantrymen at Kohima completely turn the tide of a war?

Concealment

The ability of the Infantry to break up into sub units, sub sub-units and even down to pairs and individuals, gives it the characteristic of concealment. Concealment of the Infantry boils down to concealment of the individual, which should be no problem if intelligent and instinctive use of the ground is made – be it digging down a fox hole, making use of natural folds in the ground or using artificial means to blend with the ground. However, what makes this

characteristic really unique is the ability of the individual to advance in a concealed manner. Concealment is aided by mobility, which enables it to disperse over a wide area while still retaining its ability to concentrate rapidly when necessary. Concealment gives Infantry the following potentials:

- (a) Surprise – by itself the greatest weapon of the Infantry.
- (b) Infiltration.
- (c) To overcome its vulnerability by not presenting itself as a target to the enemy even while on the move.

Ability to hold Ground

The characteristics of close combat and concealment give Infantry the ability to hold ground. Infantry is the only arm that possesses this ability. Since holding of ground is necessary in all operations of war, this characteristic gives Infantry a unique importance in battle and makes it indispensable in all operations of war. It must, however, be remembered that it cannot hold ground indefinitely. It can probably hold out till the enemy is able to muster up numerical and fire power superiority against it. It, therefore, needs to be borne in mind that holding of ground by itself is likely to make Infantry a sitting duck. In a passive type of defence the Infantry loses all initiative and its dislodgement is only a matter of time.

Self Reliance

Although Self Reliance is officially considered to be the most important characteristic of the Infantry, it also happens to be the most misunderstood. It is mostly taken to mean self reliance in fire support, by making the supporting weapons an integral part in its organisation. This is not correct. These supporting weapons are utterly inadequate to make the Infantry self-reliant. Neither are they the Infantry's basic weapons, which could be expected to make up its characteristics. It is more a convenient arrangement so that the Infantry does not have to beg for artillery support in skirmishes at platoon, or maximum company level. This is evident from the fact that the mortar platoon provided to the Infantry, with a beaten zone of only 150 yards, is unable to support more than a company. The same goes for the Infantry anti-tank weapons. The best answer for the tank still remains to be the tank itself. For any action, requiring fire support, therefore, the infantry battalion must be supported by other arms. The question of making the Infantry self reliant in fire support does not arise.

Self reliance as applied to Infantry should only be taken to mean its ability to operate without supporting arms to the extent that its characteristic of concealment permits, through the expert use of the ground.

EMPLOYMENT

Offensive Action

Irrespective of what the Infantry is being engaged in, the cardinal principle of its employment should always be offensive action. Its three main characteristics – mobility, close combat and concealment – dictate this. These characteristics have striking resemblance to those of Armour, and offensive should be as important to the Infantry as it is to the Armour. Mobility is common to both with the Infantry having an edge over the Armour due to its ability to move over all types of ground; close combat gives Infantry the necessary striking power; and protection is achieved through concealment. This aspect of Infantry employment is, unfortunately, is not always borne in mind, and a tendency has crept in to treat Infantry as, primarily, a defensive arm. This is, probably, due to an over emphasis on its peculiar

characteristic to hold ground. But even a defensive position cannot survive without offensive action.

Advance

Speed and security are the two requirements of the Infantry during advance, and all possible assistance must be given to it to increase both. Though generally speaking these two are considered to be inversely proportionate to each other, they can be made complementary too. Increased security in the plains through support from armour, long range artillery and the air force, enable the Infantry to move with speed; depending, of course, on the transport being made available to it. Likewise, making the Infantry light and quick-footed in the jungles and mountains, would not only increase its speed but also, automatically, its security.

In jungles and mountains, where limited support from other arms can be expected, speed and security of advancing Infantry pose a special problem. The problem is that of making the Infantry light, which, besides enabling it to move faster, would also give it the ability to move off the tracks to carry out a degree of search and provide flank protection for greater security. The three main burdens of the Infantry in the jungles/mountains are:

- (a) Supplies
- (b) Supporting weapons
- (c) Equipment.

Supplies

They say army marches on its stomachs, and there is probably little that we can do about reducing the supply requirements of an advancing column; either in terms of rations or ammunition supply. On the other hand over-loading a foot soldier in an attempt to make him self-contained in supplies may defeat the very purpose for which he is to carry these supplies. There is, therefore, the necessity for providing porters, ponies, or any other modes of carrying supplies depending on the tactical situation. Where the long turn round of such modes of conveyance make their use uneconomical, an Infantry battalion should be fully supported by air; not as a matter of favour but as a matter of right based on dire necessity.

Supporting Weapons

Supporting weapons must be really worth carrying if they are to be carried at the cost of speed and security of the advancing Infantry. The supporting weapons of the Infantry at present may not be worth suffering the handicap every time. The mortar platoon, for instance, is totally inadequate for any battalion operation. Besides the beaten zone being sufficient only to take on a platoon target, the limited ammunition that can be carried by a mobile column further decreases its effectiveness. The ranging difficulties add up to the problem. With the limited fields of fire in mountains and jungles, the usefulness of the MMGs is also not commensurate with the burden they impose on the Infantry. On the other hand surprise, which could be achieved through ease of movement over a difficult and unexpected approach without the heavy supporting weapons, may well off-set the handicaps of lack of fire support.

If fire support is needed, then all such support should be provided through offensive air support by the air force, or by very long range artillery both of which would obviate the necessity for the supporting weapons to closely follow the advancing column.

Equipment

It is not possible for the Infantryman to carry all his loads on his back. Even the requirement of porters or animal transport for carrying the entire equipment would be stupendous: this, even forgetting for a moment the tactical restriction that such transport is likely to impose on the advance. There is, therefore, a necessity for an Infantry battalion to operate

from a firm base where equipment not immediately required for an operation could be dumped. Of course adequate number of porters and animals would then have to be provided for the sufficient leapfrogging of the firm base to match the advance of the mobile column. Because of the danger of infiltration and out-flanking moves, these firm bases would be very vulnerable to enemy raids. Their defence would, therefore, need special consideration. The consequent reduction in the fighting strength of advancing column would have to be accepted.

The scale of equipment to be carried into an operation on the Infantryman's back must be decided by the nature of the operation and the necessity of that equipment in that particular operation, than the comprehensive load tables for all occasions presently prepared by meticulous staff officers.

Attack

Attack is the most difficult operation of war for the Infantry, besides being the costliest in terms of casualties. It, therefore, needs careful consideration. There can, of course, be little hesitation in launching the attack if it promotes offensive action. Containment of an enemy defensive position making him immobile and ineffective, outflanking it and threatening his rear, or infiltration through his defences and surprising his command and control set up, may well achieve at a lower cost which a head-long attack may not achieve even at heavy cost. The legendary successes of the Japanese in World War II were the rich fruits of such employment of the Infantry.

Offensive action through other means must not, however, make the Infantry shy of a direct attack. A direct attack may be necessary to liquidate a firm base from where the enemy may be conducting a mobile defence. Such an attack although to a great extent mathematical, does afford opportunities to use one's ingenuity. In such an attack the following factors need consideration:

- (a) Surprise
- (b) Protection during move
- (c) The bayonet charge.

Surprise

The normal teaching that Surprise is the domain of higher commanders only, had made battalion attacks not only dull but also very costly. A certain amount of surprise is always possible to achieve even at lower levels by exploiting mobility and concealment. It should, therefore, be ensured that all such possibilities are thought of during planning. This could probably be ensured by including surprise among the various headings for verbal orders of junior leaders.

Protection during move

Ground is the Infantryman's greatest friend for protection during move. The practice of abandoning its use after leaving the start line is debatable. The Infantryman feels most helpless while covering the distance from the start line to the assault line and there should be no reason why he should be deprived of his right of the use of ground. The use of ground at this stage will no doubt tax the leadership of junior commanders to the maximum, but it is better to prepare the junior commanders for this rather than expose the Infantryman unduly.

Covering fire support also protects the Infantry while on the move to the objective. If the Infantry is to move solely under protection of covering fire support then it must be ensured that "adequate fire support is arranged before the Infantry is made to enter the assault. The term "adequate" has been used to differentiate it from the term "maximum" as commonly used: for

the term "maximum" may be stretched to mean "maximum available" which may not be "adequate".

The "adequate" fire support will no doubt tax the artillery resources of ammunition considerably. Extensive use of smoke for covering Infantry move is, therefore, worth considering. Use of smoke can also facilitate the achieving of the much wanted surprise. Unfortunately, this aspect is not receiving sufficient attention from Infantry commanders although the Infantry organisation provides for smoke even up to section level.

Bayonet Charge

The bayonet charge of the Infantry will always remain the most important aspect of an attack and must be accorded its due status. Besides the fact that nothing can shake the enemy morale as much as a frenzied bayonet charge, it is THE ONLY way to dislodge a determined defender. Fortunately we belong to an army that is world renowned for its bayonet fighting and we must exploit this great quality of ours.

To be effective, however, the bayonet charge must be made, firstly, with a strength of conviction as to its efficacy as a deadly weapon of war, and, secondly, with the maximum weight of bayonet strength. Well planned attacks may well fizzle out at this last stage as much due to lack of determination as insufficient bayonet strength. The former is a matter for training, the latter a matter for planning. There is at present a dangerous tendency to use the foot-soldier on other jobs at the cost of the unit's bayonet strength. To check this, commanders at all levels must work out their bayonet strengths while planning an attack in the same manner as they work out fire support, so as to avoid units/sub units going into the assault with ridiculously low figures. No job can be more sacred to an infanteer than the bayonet charge and only an unavoidable number should be deprived of their proud privilege.

Defence

Offensive action is as much a principle of Infantry employment in defence as it is in attack. In defence, however, this is likely to be forgotten and, therefore, needs emphasis. Offensive action will automatically get its due place in defence provided the aim of defence is clearly understood. In simple language it should be to 'prevent' the enemy from advancing along a particular axis. It is, however, commonly misunderstood to mean to 'block' the enemy axis of advance. Whereas 'prevent', which would of necessity mean destruction of the enemy, gives defence an offensive outlook, block makes it passive in nature. It hardly needs to be emphasised that liquidation of a passive defensive position, aimed at blocking the enemy advance, is just a matter of time, irrespective of the nature of its fortifications. This was a lesson of World War I, re-taught in World War II. It is hardly any use trying it out in the next war.

The offensive nature of defence can only be achieved if each defensive position maintains a sizeable striking force, not committed to the physical holding of the ground. Some of the offensive tasks that can be performed are: -

- (a) To prevent the enemy from by-passing or outflanking a defensive position by making the advance unsafe for him and thus forcing him to go about his task the hard way i.e. by attacking.
- (b) To dominate such ground, which, though important, may not be possible to hold due to paucity of troops.
- (c) To prevent the enemy from closing in for reconnaissance.
- (d) To force the enemy to dissipate his energy in elaborate arrangements for his security during the planning stage of the attack.

- (e) To inflict heavy losses on the enemy in terms of men and material by organising large scale raids, spoiling attacks and even meeting attacks, (attacking the enemy while he is assaulting)
- (f) To augment the bayonet strength at the defensive position during the hand to hand fight stage of the battle.

The nature of the task that may be allotted to this striking force amply illustrates the necessity for holding of strong and uncommitted reserves within a defensive position. Strong for them to be able to be effective and uncommitted so that lifting of such a strong force from the defensive lay out does not compromise the position. The present restrictions on holding of uncommitted reserves at lower levels will have to be waived off; if not for all units and sub units of the Infantry, at least for those units/sub units holding independent areas of defence. Finding of such reserves at all levels even to the extent of one half of the troops allotted to the defensive task should not be difficult, if troops now being deployed for giving depth to the defensive position are utilised for this purpose. The apparent loss of depth to the defence is actually no loss if these reserves are to be used for preventing the enemy from coming in contact with the defensive position.

There can, perhaps, be no better example of the offensive employment of such type of reserves than those employed by Finland against over-whelming numerical and material superiority of the Russian army during World War II. The Russians were given no respite while they were on Finnish soil. The Finnish ski patrols so threatened them that rather than concentrating on their attacks the Russians had to indulge in quite a bit of shadow chasing. The Finnish army lost only when they got outnumbered to the extent of 1:100. Our aim should be to conduct such offensive action from our defensive positions.

Organisation

Infantry has, obviously, to be organised so that its inherent characteristics can be exploited fully. Its organisation must, therefore, further its mobility, its ability to conceal and its capability for close combat. It is in this context that the present organisation needs to be assessed and revised. Unfortunately we have inherited a very orthodox way of thinking which shuns change. It must be remembered that the British victories of the past have never been due to their superiority either in tactics or in organisation; but through sheer weight of material and man power resources. We who can never aspire to build up such a weight of resources against our potential enemies, must rely more on our superior organisation so as to make the best of the limited resources available. It may be necessary in certain respects to break from the past. One more thing that needs to be borne in mind is that while organisations in other countries can help us in our thinking, total adoption of such organisations for our Infantry would be futile. Our varying circumstances dictate that we think for ourselves.

Present Drawback

The main drawback of the present organisation is the over-emphasis on standardisation. No doubt there must be a standard basic organisation but such an organisation should not be made to cater for all eventualities. The basic organisation of the Infantry which could be standardised should only pertain to such components as, basic weapons, personnel and their equipment, and unit equipment including the communication system. As our Infantry today is required to operate on varying terrain, it would be futile to cater for all types of terrain in one standard organisation of the Infantry. This appears to have been accepted in principle but in practice we still find the standard Infantry battalion holding on to all sorts of supporting weapons

to cater for all types of terrain: be it in a limited way. Therefore, the Infantry is not able to operate on any particular type of ground without suffering some organisational handicap or the other.

Basic Weapons

The two basic Infantry weapons are the Light Machine Gun and the rifle with a bayonet. These can be standardised as, irrespective of where the Infantry has to operate, their requirement will remain constant. While we should try to give the Infantry a maximum of both, there is also a requirement for maintaining a balance between the two. The increase in LMGs besides reducing the bayonet strength would entail administrative problems of ammunition carriage and supply, thereby restricting the mobility and the offensive character of the Infantry. On the other hand, bayonet strength on its own can neither ward off an enemy assault nor can it successfully close with the enemy without the intimate support of the LMGs. The present proportion within the two has probably been maintained with this end in view. However, the jungle and mountain requirements of LMG sitting do not agree with the triangular sitting of the plains which has been the basis for our present organisation. For jungle and mountains there is definite requirement for having two LMGs per section. So as not to limit the bayonet strength in a section or impose restrictions on its mobility, it is suggested that every section should have one automatic rifle modified with a light aluminium bipod. These can be used to cover the invariable gaps that are left in the triangular interlock of fire, when applied to defence in the jungles/mountains.

To ensure maximum bayonet strength every Infanteer must be either issued with a bayonet or a Khukri/Dah in case his personal weapon does not permit the use of a bayonet.

Supporting Weapons

The aim in integrating some supporting weapons with the Infantry battalion was obviously to obviate the necessity of it having to look constantly over its shoulders for help from the supporting arms. This has not been achieved by its present organisation. The Infantry still has to depend on other arms even in operations up to company level. Even if we were to accept that a mortar platoon could support one company in operation, the long range of the present Infantry mortars would appear superfluous. For company actions range of 1000 yards for mortars should be adequate. The reduced acceptable range, and a smaller shell just adequate to take on the enemy in the open or in lightly constructed defences, would help in reducing the weight of the Infantry mortars considerably. Records show that the Japanese had an 81mm mortar weighing only 56 lbs, but having a range of 2000 yards. At the platoon level they had a grenade launcher weighing only 10 lbs but capable of discharging grenades up to range of 700 yards. These weapons are ideal for the Infantry battalion in mountains and jungles even today. Four such 'light mortars' organised into a mortar section can be incorporated into the organisation of a rifle company. Other heavy supporting weapons normally required by the Infantry should be centralised at the brigade level for use where necessary.

Transport

The mode of transport may vary with the variations in the terrain, but wherever it may operate the Infantry does need transport. In the plains conveyance is provided for its equipment and sometimes even for the men. But in the mountains/jungles none is provided; at least not for its invariable movement off road. Perhaps too much has been made of the self contained mobile columns of the Infantry. During an exercise it may be possible for the foot soldier to carry heavy loads on his back, because in an exercise he has nothing else to do but in a war he has to fight too. It is not possible to standardise the scale and mode of transport as it will vary not only from theatre to theatre but also, sometimes, within the same theatre. No mode of transport should be

thought of as undignified. Any thing like mules, ponies, horses, yaks, bullocks, porters and even sheep should be utilised according to what suits best. It is, however, not enough to leave the Infantry at the mercy of the locals for procurement of such transport. It must be available at brigade level to be attached to battalions when required.

Wireless Communication

The characteristic of concealment demands dispersal by the Infantry. Dispersal on the other hand raises the problem of command and control: and wireless communications are vital for maintaining this command and control. Lack of adequate wireless communications, therefore, adversely affects Infantry employment. Not should a battalion go to war with its requirement of wireless equipment fully met, such equipment should also cater to communication within a rifle platoon. As many times wireless sets are used secretly in close proximity of the enemy, the Infantry should have a proportion of sensitive transmitters for carrying on low pitch talk.

The Infantry Brigade

At present the basic Infantry formation, self contained in all respects, is the Infantry Division. The Infantry battalion, which is its basic component, has to draw on the Division's resources for fire and other forms of support. This, naturally, amounts to looking too far over the shoulder for the Infantry battalion – all the more so in mountains and jungles where quick switch-overs are not possible. The basic Infantry formation in such terrain, with integrated supporting arms and services, should be the Infantry brigade. The Infantry brigade could also free the Infantry battalion from its shackles, by taking over, temporarily or even permanently, heavy weapons and equipment on to its own organisation. Such a brigade should, however, have four battalions – the fourth battalion being required for establishing a firm base, from where the enlarged brigade headquarters could operate in safety. A suggested organisation of a mountain brigade is given at appendix 'A' to this article.

Infantry Division

For the plains the Infantry division should continue to be the basic Infantry formation. Such a division should, however, have an added regiment each of medium armour and medium artillery, integral to its organisation. Our experiences in 1965 should justify such reorganisation.

Training

Infantry training by, itself, constitutes a vast subject and it is neither possible nor intended to deal with all its aspects. What is intended here is to touch on an important aspect of it - the aptitude training. That an Infantryman requires a special aptitude is at times not realised. This aspect is normally ignored during his training. As a matter of fact his mental qualities have all along been taken for granted. All such qualities were acquired by the erstwhile martial races from their family environment even before they joined the Infantry and could justifiably be taken for granted in the bygone days. Now, however, with the prevailing fashion of denouncing the martial races, and the general awakening among such races, who now find jobs other than infantry service more profitable, they no longer feel obliged to join the Infantry. With such entrants into the Infantry now, who have no heredity to take inspiration from, it is necessary to take effective measures during training to inculcate in them the infantry like qualities. Some qualities which must be imbibed by every Infanteer are given below: -

- (a) The great desire to close with the enemy; feeling an unquenchable thirst for his blood so that he does not fight purely in self-defence.
- (b) Love for adventure that makes him bear extreme physical strain with feeling of enjoyment.
- (c) An ambition for the satisfaction of his sense of achievement which makes him

which makes him to give off his best during war. The sprit of the infantryman to outwit the enemy and to accept nothing short of success will enable him to fight against the temptation to avoid action enemy even when an opportunity to do so exists.

In order that the above qualities may be instilled in our infantry soldier, who may not now have the heredity to acquire them automatically, a special effort to this effect needs to be made during training. Some of the points that need to be borne in mind are as under: -

- (a) Objectiveness in training
- (b) The will to fight.
- (c) Adventure training.
- (d) Training for close combat.
- (e) Supreme leadership

Objectiveness

Hardly any one would dispute that infantry training should be objective, yet today we cannot vouch for our training to be entirely so. How often we fall prey to the glamour of subjective training. How often we run this training dispassionately producing at the end of it only documentary proof of it having been carried out and how very often this documentary proof is accepted up the chain of command without any questions. Training in order to be objected has not merely to be 'run' but also to be 'imparted'. Running of weapon training courses, for instance, be meaningless if they do not improve the training standards. This is so in other fields also. In collective training too the object would not be served if the 'enemy' in the exercise is made to act in a stupid manner just to make the exercise a success or to made to act in a humorous manner just to keep the interest of the trainees alive. Training to be objective must aim at certain standards and no infantry officer should feel satisfied until he satisfies himself at the end that these standards have been achieved.

The standards to be achieved during training should be made specific; something that is attainable and which can be tested, so that the instructors at all levels may go about their jobs in an objective manner. For instance while laying down the standard for weapon training a specific group which every individual is expected to make from a particular range could be laid down and men easily tested in it at the end of the training. Similarly for physical endurance it could be specifically laid down how much a soldier is expected to march/climb, in how much time and with how much weight on his back. This again can be easily tested. A specific standard which can easily be tested could be laid down like this for all subjects.

Will to Fight

Although it is not considered advisable to introduce too much of politics in the army, the cause for which the soldier is fighting must sufficiently arouse his conscience, for him to fight to the last and give his life if needed. But it would be futile to go into the various 'isms', for he may not be able to understand all the details. Moreover with too much of reasoning he may start questioning. We must tell him in simple language that he is fighting for the honour of his motherland. This is a purpose that he will understand and appreciate. His thinking has been moulded like this by his environment. Besides, his moral binding to fight at the great risk of his life still draws strength from his great fighting tradition built over many generations within good number of communities. This quality of our soldier we must continue to exploit, even if it means continuance of the present communal base of our Regimental system, if we are to make the best of such unique resources of fighting manpower. Political aloofness, however, must not make the

soldier an easy prey to political subversion. The imperialistic designs of China need to be explained to him so that he sees through their alluring political slogans.

The will to fight in a soldier amounts to his ability to fight the fear of death. While every soldier needs training to fight the fear of death, this is of particular significance to the infantryman for not only has he to face death fearlessly when it comes, but he also needs the courage to invite death. In a materialistic world today, where man has developed too much of individualism, spiritualism, religion and belief in God is a must for the soldier. The regimental places of worship must, therefore, should be effectively utilised towards this end by laying due stress on the fearlessness aspect of religion that promises immortality through death in service of the motherland and singing songs relating to our fighting heroes in our traditional way.

Adventure Training

Adventure in Infantry life can become its greatest charm provided the infantryman develops love for adventure. Love for adventure, though dormant in some, is generally instinctive and easy to acquire. It, however, needs an effort all the same. Adventure training should be no problem for troops in field areas. Patrolling carried out in areas like NEFA can easily be converted into adventure training by allowing greater freedom of action to the patrol parties and by making their tasks more lively. Adventure training can also be imparted in peace stations by taking out patrols in the form of hikes; again permitting the parties freedom of action. Such training should particularly be organised in the Regimental Training Centres to 'catch them young'.

Training for close Combat

Besides proficiency in the use of bayonet the infanteer needs to be trained to come to grips with the enemy. His confidence in being able to manhandle his adversary needs to be built before he is expected to go all out for it. Unfortunately the soldier of the bygone days who too much pride in his body, and consequently in maintaining it, is getting rarer and rarer. Our physical training is certainly scientific but carried out in a parade-like manner it does not appear to be effective. To ascertain, see what the soldier looks like out side his clothes. The traditional interest in body building and the traditional methods of maintaining it through *malish* and *dand baidhik*, therefore, need to be revived. Similarly our present day close combat training, which of necessity has to be not too realistic, for fear of casualties needs to be supplemented with our traditional wrestling; making it compulsory for every one.

Supreme Leadership

Infantry tasks in battle are fraught with great immense dangers and, therefore, demand a supreme type of leadership from its officers. Many books have been written on the theory of leadership. It is not intended here to go into details but just to stress some very pertinent aspects.

A very important aspect of leadership is a gradual building up of reputation by the leader; reputation of his professional superiority and trustworthiness by virtue of which the men follow him unquestioningly. This reputation is built as a matter of a continued process during his entire career and cannot be taken 'out of the hat' when required during the battle. A leader must always remain conscious of the fact that he has no private life and his daily actions, both private as well as official, are an investment towards this reputation on which he can draw in time of need. The other important aspect of leadership is personal example. There should not be a tendency on the part of the leader to acquire too many benefits on the pretext of privileges. The only privilege of the leader is to sacrifice and to this effect alone must he exercise his write.

Yet another important aspect of leadership is the responsibility of a leader to build up the soldierly character of his men during peace, so that they react favourably during battle. The ideal would be that a leader should so influence the life of his men that they voluntarily give up all that is un-soldierly – in the form of self discipline, which leaves no chance of the men sliding back even when there is no ‘rod’ over them. To prepare such a soldier the parade hours are, obviously, not enough. The leader must constantly keep them under his vigilance during whatever they do, so that they can be checked as soon as they give any un-soldierly indications. A once spoilt soldier is very difficult to mend: Prevention should, therefore, be considered better than cure.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this article to evoke serious thought as regards the characteristics, employment, organisation and training of the Infantry. A tendency has crept in whereby the Infantry is taken for granted. Besides being the supreme reigning arm in view of our defence commitments along the Himalayan borders, it is the only hope of a developing country like our, with its stringent economy. Infantry, therefore, needs more serious thought than is give to it.

Its characteristics though unchanged even through the changing patterns of war, need to be interpreted correctly. We must acquire the art of Infantry employment aimed at defeating our enemy by merely out witting him, even when we are not able to match his material resources. Its unique characteristics of mobility, close combat and concealment make it ideally suited for offensive action and it must be employed as such. Its organisation should be suitably revised so that it helps towards this end. While training the Infantryman, due consideration must be given to his aptitude training; for he does need a special aptitude. The aptitude training must be a continuous process and naturally needs time. Infantry must be provided with sufficient time just as is provided to all the other arms. This may mean an end to indiscriminate demands for “workings” on the Infantry.

A great responsibility lies on the Infantry leader during peace time. He must avail of this time to train his men not only physically but also mentally. Besides working for the creation of a reputation for himself through day to day dealings to command unflinching faith of his men, he must also develop the soldierly character of his men to make his task of leadership easier in battle. However, while the Infantry leader is building up the prestige and self respect of his men, he needs to be helped, by all, in his endeavours. No Infantryman would be able to boast of the nobility of task after receiving the lowest rates of pay. In the olden days a little praise for the fighting qualities of the martial races sufficiently induced them to join the Infantry at any terms. Times have changed now and we need to make fresh efforts at building for the Infantryman an atmosphere where not only his job is treated as noble but he himself is treated with respect; not only in war but also during peace.

INFANTRY THE QUEEN OF THE BATTLE

Appendix 'A'

SUGGESTED ORGANISATION OF A MOUNTAIN BRIGADE

BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS

SIGNAL COMPANY

