

**CAVALRY OUTPOST  
DRILL. WITH A  
CHAPTER ON  
CAVALRY SKIRMISHING**

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Cavalry Outpost Drill. With a Chapter on Cavalry Skirmishing by M. W. Smith

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**M. W. SMITH**

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# CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

WITH A CHAPTER UPON

## CAVALRY SKIRMISHING.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL M. W. SMITH, C.B.

LATE OF THE 15TH HUSSARS AND 3RD DRAGOON GUARDS,  
MAJOR-GENERAL COMMANDING THE OSMANLI IRREGULAR  
CAVALRY DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR, ETC. ETC.



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The first part of the paper discusses the general theory of the
 subject, and the second part discusses the application of the
 theory to the case of the present study. The theory is based on
 the assumption that the system is in a state of equilibrium, and
 that the forces acting on the system are balanced. The application
 of the theory to the case of the present study shows that the
 system is in a state of equilibrium, and that the forces acting
 on the system are balanced. This result is in agreement with the
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## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE general principles, as well as the details of outpost duties, are clearly and concisely pointed out in our Cavalry Regulations, Section XVI., page 220. There are also many good works published on the subject of outposts, and a young officer has every facility of making himself acquainted with this part of his duty, that is to say, with as much of it as reading can teach him ; but, many years ago, it struck me that there was a want of a preliminary drill for the non-commissioned officers and men, which should bring the general training up to the point from which the present instruction commences; and to supply this want I wrote, and subsequently published, this little book, which I now republish. There is nothing in it which militates in any way against the present regulations. It has been in use in several regiments for some years, and has been approved of by the commanding officers as being a quick and simple way of instructing their men in outpost duties. There is no duty upon which men and officers can be employed where the ignorance or stupidity of one individual may work so much mischief as that of

outposts, and consequently it seems to me that not only should those in command be fully acquainted with the general principles and details, but those acting under them should know their work thoroughly well. I have had many years' experience in instructing men in these duties, and I have found that, having to deal with men of various capacities, there is nothing like an actual drill—teaching the movements and words of command &c. in all their details, and proceeding gradually from one subject to another, one being mastered before the other is entered upon; in short, upon the system of our present regulations with reference to all matters except outpost duties. In the first instance, a certain number of non-commissioned officers should be thoroughly instructed in all the details of the drill, working themselves in the ranks, acting as videttes, forming the patrols, &c. &c. By this means they will become practically acquainted with the system in all its details. They will then in their turn become instructors. The preliminary portion of the outpost drill can only be taught to small bodies of men at a time. If there were only one or two instructors much time would be occupied in teaching the men; but when a body of instructors is once formed who are well and practically acquainted with the system, having worked in the ranks themselves, many parties of men can be instructed at the same time, and the work will go on rapidly.

I have added a chapter on CAVALRY SKIRMISHING. I know it has been the received opinion for many years that



cavalry skirmishing is ineffective and useless, and that it is not considered correct to doubt the accuracy of this opinion established by long experience: however, judging from what I have seen myself, I cannot altogether subscribe to this doctrine. I think that, with some modifications of the present training and equipment, the cavalry skirmisher may be made more efficient than is generally supposed; and at the present time it is necessary that we should look about us and seize upon every means of opposing the preponderating power of the artillery, by increasing the efficiency of the other arms of the service. Greater efficiency in cavalry skirmishing might tend to this result; for if cavalry skirmishers can venture far enough, each man feeling confident of being able to defend himself independently in his retreat, being also able to use his weapons quickly and efficiently, they may do much mischief by sudden and daring attacks, and thus, to a certain extent, cripple and impede the action of the enemy's artillery. We also know what has been done by cavalry skirmishers acting on foot during the late American wars; \* and this would lead to the conclusion that cavalry skirmishers should be so trained and equipped that they should be able to dismount without difficulty, to act on foot; mount quickly if necessary, and have the full and efficient use of their arms when mounted in retreating upon the supports in the event of their being pursued. If this could be accomplished it would give the cavalry skirmisher much

\* See Colonel Havelock's *Three Main Military Questions of the Day*. 8vo. Longmans.

confidence in his own resources, and being able to retreat more quickly, he can approach nearer to the enemy than the infantry man, and if well-armed and trained, can act with nearly equal efficiency when the ground for action is reached. Whether this is the case or not, so long as we admit cavalry skirmishing into our regulations as a mode of fighting, it must be admitted that the cavalry skirmisher should be made as efficient as possible; and to this end I should propose some changes in our present system, which will be found detailed in the chapter alluded to.

## CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

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### LESSON I.

#### PATROLLING.

**A**BOUT a dozen men fall in, in two ranks, on the usual drill ground, the Non-Commissioned Officers in one rank in the rear by seniority from the right, dividing the ground equally, Serjeants and Corporals numbering off from the right of each rank. The Instructor then gives the word, 'No. 1 Corporal to the front,' upon which the senior Corporal reins back if necessary, moves round to the front, and halts opposite to, and facing the Instructor, ready to receive his orders. The Instructor then gives the Corporal the following order:—'Take out one file from the right flank as a patrol.' Upon receiving this order, the Corporal turns towards the party and gives the word—'One file on the right advance, march,' upon which the men move to the front. The Corporal then gives the word 'halt; spring arms;' and upon the arms being sprung, and having inspected the men, he goes to the Instructor of the drill, halts opposite to him as before, reports the patrol ready, and waits his orders.

The Instructor then gives him his orders as to the distance he is to go, according to the size of the drill ground, the direction he is to follow, and the pace at which he is to proceed.

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