

# **The great advance of the Royal Army Medical Corps since the South African War.**

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## The Great Advance of the Royal Army Medical Corps

Since the South African War. Directed by a Military Correspondent

Of the hundreds of older times a large proportion of those who fell had to meet up their hands to die, and if lucky they did so as soon as possible. In the majority of cases it was all up with the man who went down with a serious wound; he was beyond aid and at the best he would have formed part of the legion that

who was Wellington's principal medical officer in the Peninsula. It was he who first organized the British Army Medical Service as we know it today.

This has now developed into an autonomous corps under its own officers having full military rank and title, thus completing the process of evolution from battlefield primitive conditions when their forerunners were merely camp followers, dependant and treated as if an animal.

Both the South African and Russo-Japanese wars brought into glaring relief the truth, now recognized by modern times, that the concentration of the strength of an army in the field and eyes of the man-groove of the nation at war necessarily depend upon the efficiency of the Army Medical Service. Within the last decade, however, an enormous amount of energy, skill, and money have been concentrated upon the task of making our hospitals and ambulances work as well as the every more important provision and military efficiency of the British Army Medical Corps, worthy of the army to which it belongs.

The chief aims in this end has been the systematic increase and higher training of the personnel of the corps, both officers and men, but it is now that the progress in the South African War the official administrative side of the army doctor's task, together with the soldier's professional abilities, and when a new standard was set for the hospital and ambulance work not without reward by the simple process of providing men out of the ranks who were otherwise compulsory served in a civil hospital, and were given a chance to keep themselves in line with contemporary medical progress and practice, while the few who are opportunities were given to the military authorities in time training field hospitals and ambulances in time of peace. Now it is recognized that the medical department had a right to be heard on anything that should be completed, for its status, on the sanitary location of a proposed camp.

It is interesting to realize the rapid progress that has been made. The ten years since the South African War have formed a record in the medical history of our army and land, but to make our medical service the patient service among the armies of the world, by the last piece it is no longer merely understood.

Below the war there were 120 medical officers on our list. Since then there has been an increase of forty per cent. Secondly, as a prime cause of these more satisfactory conditions, the establishment in 1900 of the Royal Army Medical College in London for the higher training of the army doctor in contemporary medical



Soldier in Open-air Convalescent Department at Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot



Sick Soldier in Hospital with a convalescent ward in view

were taken into the field even in the days of the early Edward.

Till the sixteenth century the proportion of soldiers in the ranks of an army was very small. As for medicals, the surgeons were supposed to find all such themselves, the cost being met in the time of James I by a mortgage of two-pence from the pay of the soldier. Multitudes of somewhat improved medicals, but the place of honour must be given to the James McArthur,

## The Increased Marching Powers of the British Soldier.

Nothing has attracted the attention of military statesmen belonging to foreign military powers so much as the great advance in mobility of our troops owing to the increased marching powers of our men.

Previous to the South African War our infantry was considered one of the United Kingdom in none of our large towns, and generally speaking wherever battles happened to be fought, without any idea of concentration for mobilization purposes. Training was an enormous responsibility, difficult, and there was little opportunity for combined movements.

That such was the state of affairs at Aldershot is true, where a division of some seven troops of all arms was based, but in no other military stations in the United Kingdom was there any possibility of combined work with all the three arms, which is the basis of the present system of training.

It had come to be realized that the two essential most necessary to the soldier were, firstly, that he should be able to march long distances for purposes of manoeuvre.

The annual company training of one soldier now also endures frequent training by soldiers

of cross-country runs in marching order or over a proposed obstacle course as carried out at Aldershot in the Cambridgeshire. This competition is for a shield presented by the Duke



Sketch Map of the Operational and Command Manoeuvre Area of 1910

This map gives the chief points referred to in the text and is included in this issue

at Cambridgeshire and is completed for annually for the purpose of infantry. It is a very serious test of efficiency, as, amongst other things, to provide a hundred men with a suitable pro-

portion of officers and non-commissioned officers. The men have to traverse an obstacle course of about 10 miles in length in marching order.

The course consists of natural and other obstacles, such as hedges, walls, ditches, etc., which have to be negotiated at a rapid pace. The object of the competition is not so much to show the way a company of infantry composed of active and well-trained men can get over difficult ground.

The standard time for the completion of the course is now fifteen minutes, and the fact that this year one team finished the course in just over seven minutes shows how greatly the marching powers of our troops have improved. No doubt the large amount of 'light' work now being done by our troops at their physical training has had a great deal to do with this steady and continued improvement of the last fifteen years.

In 1891 the mile was considered a long march for our soldiers. In 1900 fifteen or more miles were traversed by our soldiers in the war.

In 1901 these distances were increased to eighteen or twenty miles, whilst in the present year twenty to thirty miles were easily covered by our men at the recent manoeuvres.

## MIMIC WARFARE IN RURAL ENGLAND.



ARTILLERY PASSING THROUGH COUNTRY LANE DURING MANOEUVRE SEASON

During the autumn manoeuvres the country roads are frequently taken by a long train of guns moving round the back of a line with much ringing of bells and shouting of orders.

