

Chapter VII

Advanced Training in the Field

In the routine of peacetime service, extensive concentration time was a luxury seldom afforded the great majority of corps; and so it was in wartime, when the dispersed companies and troops were concentrated in full regimental strength either in the encampments at home or in the field abroad, that the regiments at last enjoyed the opportunity to carry on intensive advanced training. We have seen that, as a rule, less than one-third of the regiments were fortunate enough to spend so much as a single season in the camps before embarking on board the transports for the overseas theatres of operations; and hence it was only when actually arrived in the theatres that the bulk of the army was able to devote itself to sustained advanced training.

The detailed firings and manoeuvres drawn from the regulations and from customary practice were now practised endlessly and vigorously by the regiments both individually and in brigade. We cannot too strongly stress how utterly commonplace this activity was in the field, from at least as early as the campaigns of Marlborough;¹ and it was as characteristic of the army abroad in wartime, as was endless repetition of the mechanical basics typical of the army in peacetime. Advanced training was carried on year-round, as weather permitted: it was done most intensively in the garrisons and cantonments late in the winter and through the spring as the army prepared to take the field with the coming campaigning season; and whenever opportunities arose during the campaigns themselves—as they very frequently did, given the generally slow pace at which operations were conducted—a great deal more was

¹ From the beginning of the century we find orders to this effect. Thus a general order given out by Orkney to 'all Commanding Officers of ye British Infantry' in Flanders, in the winter quarters of 1711-12, directed 'All Commanding Officers, to take Care that ye Officers Sarjents and Corp^{ls} of their Regim^{ts} be made p^rfect in ye Exercise as soon as possible, They likewise to have there Regiments out to Exercise Once a week.' BL Add. MS 29, 477, fo. 13. The 1755 *Standing Orders* (p. 194), reflecting the wartime practice of 1742-8, directed that when serving in the field the commanding officers of all corps were to 'exercise their Battalions, at least once a week.'

carried on. Nor was it only regulation and customary drill that corps practised in this fashion. The commanders of armies serving in the field—and, in one or two cases, of expeditionary forces assembling in England—often made additions to, or revisions in, the currently practised drill, in an effort to adapt the corps serving under their command to the peculiar tactical conditions prevailing in specific theatres. At the same time field engineering, the *petite guerre*, ranging service, and the like—activities with which most officers had heretofore been acquainted only in their studies—had now to be practised in earnest, where appropriate.

The regiments had need of this training. Most went to war well trained in the basics but insufficiently trained at the advanced elements of the drill; most went to war with little or no experience of manoeuvring in brigade, let alone in the lines and columns adopted on campaign by the army as a whole; and most went to war not long after taking in considerable numbers of drafts and new recruits, together with a half-dozen or so young and inexperienced subalterns. The peacetime training given the army was insufficient to enable it adequately to perform its tactical role, when first brought before the enemy; and many corps suffered, in consequence, during their initial encounters. Since only a minority camped before proceeding abroad, most were obliged to learn their business on the spot; and it was to require as much as two or three campaigns before the army became sufficiently expert at its business, and thus formidable.

We can illustrate this pattern by studying the performance of the regiments in initial engagements of the wars of our period, and by considering the training carried on during successive campaigns. Initial inadequacy followed by intensive practice was a general pattern, it will be appreciated, wherever the enemy was militarily competent; and such was the case in all the wars of the century save that of 1775–83, where the army was dealing initially with untrained amateurs and so was successful on the battlefield from the outset. Since the wars were so frequent, we cannot of course cover each of the many campaigns, much less in detail; and consequently we have limited ourselves to the key initial actions and successive campaigns of the Austrian Succession and Seven Years Wars. These wars

suit our purposes because, between them, they saw the army upon the most widespread and varied service—from Germany and the Low Countries to Scotland, and from New France and New York to the West Indies—and so between them embrace the full range of activities upon which the army was to find itself engaged during our period.

Where the training of the corps was concerned, the same overall pattern was to prevail in the field in both wars, although there were differences in detail. The training carried on over the years 1740–8 was based almost entirely upon the *1728 Regulations*, and on the several orders that had supplemented those regulations; and as we noted earlier (Ch. III), only by the closing years of the Austrian Succession war were some slight departures from this body of regulation drill being made—departures which were to be brought together and themselves made regulation practice at the mid-1750s. Whereas Cumberland in Scotland made slight modifications in the drill and countenanced the minor changes that took place in Flanders, c.1746–8, in general he saw to it that the regiments practised their drill quite ‘as the Book directs’; and in so doing he was only repeating injunctions given out by all the commanders-in-chief who served during the century.² The 1750s, however, were to be years of some change and innovation in the army’s drill, stimulated by the experience of the late campaigns and by the study of Prussian and French models; and innovation was to be further encouraged by the tactical demands of those widely flung theatres in which sizeable British forces were to be engaged, during the Seven Years War. The ‘fertile geniuses’ were to make their appearance in considerable numbers; and their innovations, although seldom more than practical adaptations of the regulation drill to fit specific circumstances, add a dimension to the campaigns of 1755–63 not seen in those of 1740–8. But none of this changed the overall pattern of initial incapacity and intensive practice.

By 1740 the army had passed through a quarter-century of peace interrupted only occasionally and briefly by brush-fire

² As early as Marlborough’s campaigns, a general order given out in Flanders ran: ‘[Regimental] Adjutants are constantly to keep to all the Rules and Forms of Discipline and Exercise established by Authority; and on no Pretence whatever are to change, or let fall, any of the said Customs without Orders.’ Anon., *Rudiments of War* (1777), 156. This was to be a general refrain in all British armies for the rest of the century.

action against the Spaniards and the Jacobites. Having been dispersed for so long, it was in the English camps of 1740 and 1741, and then in the Flanders cantonments of 1742 and early 1743, that intensive training at the level of the regiment was at last allowed to proceed little disturbed. The immediate results were, however, dismal—a powerful condemnation of the training carried out during the preceding quarter-century, and a graphic illustration of the influence of the friction of peace. During the early years of the new war it was the fire-discipline of the British foot that was found most wanting; and this was remarkable since, as we have seen, it was with the intricacies and the efficacy of the platoon-fire system that the drill-books and the regimental officers of the period had chiefly been concerned.

Dettingen, fought on 27 June 1743, was the first large-scale formal battle in which considerable numbers of British troops were engaged since Sheriffmuir in 1715—or perhaps since Malplaquet in 1709. It is the first of the three main actions in which we shall be considering the performance of the regiments; for those engaged at Dettingen had been out of the British Isles only a year.

At Dettingen the British foot held the left wing of the Pragmatic Army's order of battle, and the British cavalry made up the bulk of the mounted troops present.³ As the Allied lines advanced to close the 1,000 yards separating them from the French at the opening of the battle, there appeared the first fruits of a quarter-century of peacetime training followed by a year of intensive drill: ragged fire began to erupt here and there from the British battalions, although they were still far beyond effective range. Two officers likened it to a *feu de joie*, as other battalions down the line likewise opened fire, 'tho no Enemy was at that time almost within Cannon Shot of some Corps which Fired'; it was 'neither directed by officers nor regulated in platoons'.⁴ Several battalions 'popp'd at one hundred paces', doing little execution, observed an officer with Peers' 23rd of Foot.⁵ Jeffrey Amherst reported that 'our Foot fired too soon &

³ Of the several modern accounts of the battle, the best is M. Orr, *Dettingen, 1743* (1972).

⁴ Cumb. Pprs, Pt 4, ii, fos. 4 and 57.

⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1743), 381–7, contains several eye-witness accounts.

in too great a Hurry'.⁶ James Wolfe, then a young adjutant with Duroure's 12th of Foot, spent much of the day 'begging and ordering the men not to fire at too great a distance . . . but to little purpose. The whole fired when they thought they could reach them, which had like to have ruined us. We did very little execution with it.'⁷ When arrived within range, the French cavalry advanced upon the allied foot—prompting the officer commanding one of the English battalions ('who was probably prepossessed with Ideas of Actions collected from books, or Old Soldiers Accounts') to enquire of a general officer standing near by 'whether he shou'd Fire at them by Platoons or Ranks'. The reply was as follows:

Keep your Battalion in a Line with the Regiments on your Right and Left, if you perceive any of them to give way, look Sharp and Guard your Flanks, give great attention to prevent your Men from falling into confusion after they have Fired and are loading again . . . [and] as to Platoon or Rank firing I shall be glad to see you perform either in Action, but I own I never did yet on a Field day or at a Review.⁸

Such a reply may have been realistic, but can hardly have been comforting to an officer trained all his career to attempt controlled fire; but with 'our Men, being then Novices', as Maj. John LaFaussille described them, no more could be expected.⁹ And so the firing continued for the rest of the day, some officers in fact quite approving it. Lt.-Col. Charles Russell of the 1st Foot Guards wrote that the infantry

were under no command by way of Hide Park firing, but the whole three ranks made a running fire of their own accord . . . with great judgement and skill, stooping all as low as they could, making almost every ball take place . . . The French fired in the same manner . . . without waiting for words of command, and Lord Stair did often say he had seen many a battle, and never saw the infantry engage in any other manner.¹⁰

⁶ Kent RO Amherst MSS 01/1, 27 June 1743 NS.

⁷ Beckles Willson, op. cit. 37. The Austrian foot behaved in this fashion at Guastalla, in Sept. 1734, as an officer recounts in *HMC Clements MSS* (1913), p. 408.

⁸ Cumb. Pprs, Pt. 4, ii, fo. 4. Lt.-Gen. Jasper Clayton was referred to.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ M. Orr, op. cit. 65. Russell went so far as to observe that, in this manner, not the generals but rather 'our men and their regimental officers gained the day; not in the manner of Hyde Park discipline, but our foot almost kneeled down by whole ranks, and so fired upon 'em.' *HMC Chequers Court MSS* (1910), p. 260.

The running fire which the foot used that day was effective, fortunately, when the lines got within range; but it did not accomplish what Bland, Kane, and the rest saw in the controlled platoon system—that is, it did not keep off the French horse—and so the army courted disaster. The French cavalry broke into the lines of foot—some of them rode through Campbell's 21st and caught Huske's 32nd in the act of forming square (Huske's grenadiers kept them off long enough to complete the manoeuvre)—and most of the left-wing battalions seem to have been obliged to form square, until the British cavalry came to their assistance and restored the situation. Had the French foot closely supported their own horse, the British must have been defeated.

Though the cavalry made a number of timely charges during the course of the battle, their conduct too left much to be desired. When the *maison du roi* was among the British squares, The Blues, the 2nd, and the 8th Horse were sent to drive them off. Over-eager, they broke their order by advancing at a gallop, and then topped off this blunder by firing their pistols rather than falling on with their swords. The 2nd Horse actually collided with The Blues, and both had to fall back to reform.¹¹ The behaviour of all the cavalry—save for the 3rd Dragoons, who early in the battle sacrificed themselves by attacking the whole of the horse of the *maison du roi*—was thought to be very bad by most officers. 'Our Horse had like to have broke our first line in the confusion', wrote Wolfe.¹² Russell felt that the behaviour of the troopers of The Blues in particular 'was scandalous', adding that 'one general officer had ordered some platoons of his regiment to present and was going to fire upon the latter cavalry, but in consideration of the officers of that corps prevented it.' The Blues, he said, 'fairly one and all faced to the right about and never stood their ground', while the 2nd Horse 'pretty near followed their example' and the 8th Horse 'behaved the least ill, but bad enough'. In short, the cavalry in his estimation had not done their duty: 'our foot did their business for 'em, [and] they may properly be said to be routed and beat by the enemy's horse.'¹³ The dragoons seem to have behaved better, though the 4th and 6th Dragoons were twice

¹¹ M. Orr, op. cit. 59–60.

¹² Beckles Willson, op. cit. 36.

¹³ *HMG Chequers Court MSS* (1900), pp. 257, 266–7.

repulsed with loss by the French cavalry. Hawley's 1st Dragoons like Bland's 3rd, performed very well indeed; but neither Hawley nor Bland was likely to suffer anything less from his corps. During the later stages of the battle the whole of the British cavalry, now rallied, launched a series of effective charges—'but not with so much success, tho' they had vastly the advantage by weight of their horses', wrote Maj. Charles Colville of the 21st Foot.¹⁴

So went the battle of Dettingen, in which all the regiments after a year of advanced training in their Flanders and Rhineland cantonments showed themselves still to be poorly disciplined, tactically clumsy, and as yet inadequately prepared to perform the drill. They were however successful—though it was admitted that their success was due as much to Grammont's folly as to their own prowess.

Stair's forces at Dettingen, though not proficient, had at least the advantage of a year's training behind them; and most of those corps had been in the 1740 and 1741 camps. The regiments that fought at Prestonpans on 2 October 1745, the first engagement of the Jacobite rebellion, were not so lucky. Engaged under Cope at Prestonpans were the 13th and the 14th Dragoons, together with Murray's 46th, Lascelles' 47th, and 5 companies of Lee's 44th of Foot; two companies of Guise's 6th and one of the Black Watch were also present. None of these corps (save the handful from the 6th) had ever been in action. The 13th and 14th Dragoons had been raised in Ireland in 1715, and had been there ever since; only in 1742 had they been brought over to England. The 44th, 46th, and 47th of Foot were all new-raised, raising in Britain early in 1741 and doing duty there since. The Jacobite outbreak found them all in the usual state of dispersal that characterized the normal routine of the duty of Great Britain; and only from late August were they in concentration. 'All the few Troops of this Country are raw', Cope reported in consequence, 'and unused to taking the Field.'¹⁵

Prestonpans lasted about five minutes.¹⁶ The English line

¹⁴ J. O. Robson (ed.), 'Military Memoirs of Lt.-Gen. The Hon. Charles Colville', *JSAR* 26 (1948), 118.

¹⁵ R. Jarvis, op. cit. i, 11.

¹⁶ The best account of Prestonpans is to be drawn from the testimony given at the enquiry held later, at the Horse Guards, and published as Anon., *Report of the Pro-*

was drawn up with a dragoon regiment upon each flank and the foot in the centre. There was no second line, and only two squadrons in reserve. The position was a fair one—'There is not in the whole of the ground between Edinburgh and Dunbar, a better Spot for both Horse and Foot to act upon,' said Cope¹⁷—and since the opposing forces were about equal in numbers the day should have been decided by disciplined volley-fire. The foot drew up 'with Great Spirit, and the utmost Exactness,' testified Col. Peregrine Lascelles, 'in perfect good Order, to attack or receive the Rebels';¹⁸ and that done, said Lt.-Col. Halkett of the 44th, the field officers with the foot proceeded 'to divide into Platoons and Firings', telling off according to the 1728 Regulations, as was proper.¹⁹ The Highlanders now came rushing down upon the front and right of the English line ('with a Swiftness not to be conceived'); and with that the dragoons stationed upon the right flank, though ordered to advance, 'immediately turned their Backs, and ran off with the greatest Precipitation', said Lt.-Col. Whitefoord of the Train.²⁰ The panic of the right-flank squadrons immediately communicated itself to those upon the left and in reserve, and they followed suit—indeed, 'all of them so much at the same Instant, that it's difficult to say, which run first', testified Cope.²¹ The foot, meanwhile, had attempted to fire into the Highlanders coming down upon them, sword in hand; but they got off only one or at the best two very ragged discharges (hardly volleys). Cope testified—generously—that 'our Foot gave them their Fire'; more accurately Lord Drummore, who was observing the action from behind the English line, testified that 'the Fire of our Foot was infamous, Puff, Puff, no Platoon that I heard', and most other officers concurred.²² If the foot failed to fire by platoons, they broke and ran in that fashion: Maj. Talbot of the 46th, standing on the left of the line, saw 'the breaking of the Foot, come on regularly, as it were by Platoons, from the Right to the Left', and Maj. Severn of the 47th said

... of the Board of General Officers on Their Examination of Lieutenant-General Sir John Cope ... Colonel Peregrine Lascelles, and Brigadier-General Thomas Fowke ... in 1745 (1749). K. Tomasson and F. Buist, *Battles of the '45* (1967), is thoroughly trustworthy; and R. Jarvis, op. cit. i. 3-47, sets the scene in two excellent essays.

¹⁷ Anon., *Report of the Proceedings* ... 38.

¹⁸ Ibid. 69.

¹⁹ Ibid. 41.

²⁰ Ibid. 65-6.

²¹ Ibid. 50.

²² Ibid. 42, 139.

the same thing.²³ To sum up, said Cope, 'the Pannick seiz'd the Foot ... and they ran away, notwithstanding all the Endeavours used by their Officers to prevent it'; 'the Foot dispersed and shifted for themselves all over the Country.'²⁴

Braddock's 1755 expedition against Fort Duquesne was the first campaign of the new war; and the disaster that overtook his forces at the Monongahela, like the events that immediately preceded it, illustrates once again the pattern that so often prevailed in these initial campaigns.²⁵ The dispositions on the march towards the forks of the Ohio were excellent, as indeed they were on the day of battle. 'There Never was an Army in the World in more spirits than we were,' wrote an officer's batman of the day of battle; and 'So we began our March again, Beating the grannadiers March all the way, Never Seasing.'²⁶ But none of this availed. Braddock's regiments—the 44th and 48th of Foot, accompanied by some Provincial Companies—had not had sufficient time to train and were, furthermore, caught by the French and Indian irregulars in a difficult tactical situation. Attacked first in front while advancing in column through open woodland, Braddock's advanced party fell back in some confusion upon his van—rather than absorbing the initial shock and thereby allowing the main body to deploy. This confusion was compounded when the main body, coming forward along the woodland trail, became entangled with the disordered van. The French and Indians, meanwhile, moved down both flanks of the British column 'till they had Nigh Inclosed us in', and were soon pouring in from cover a heavy and destructive fire.²⁷ Some part of the column was sorted out—the colonel of the 44th, reported one witness, 'divided his men and fired some platoons by his own Direction'²⁸—but most of the troops simply blazed away into the bush. Confusion slowly gave way to terror, and that to panic; and although the

²³ Ibid. 57.

²⁴ Ibid. 50.

²⁵ A considerable literature surrounds this expedition, much of it excellent but more of it polemical. The best analysis of the campaign is in K. L. Parker, op. cit. 77-139; and without doubt the most carefully researched and balanced reconstruction of the battle is P. E. Kopperman, *Braddock at the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh, 1977). After these, see C. Hamilton (ed.), *Braddock's Defeat* (Univ. of Oklahoma, 1959); and R. L. Yaple, 'Braddock's Defeat: The Theories and a Reconsideration', *JSARH* 46 (1968), 194-201.

²⁶ C. Hamilton (ed.), op. cit. 28.

²⁷ Ibid. 29.

²⁸ Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 121.

troops kept up their uncontrolled and largely ineffective fire for over two hours,²⁹ neither could they be prevailed upon to counter-attack with the bayonet, nor could the officers concert among themselves such a tactic. 'The Pannock was so universal and the firing so executive and uncommon that no order could ever be restor'd', reported an officer;³⁰ and 'Such was the confusion', said another, 'that the men were sometimes 20 or 30 deep, and he thought himself securest, who was in the Centre'.³¹ The result was a bloody defeat and rout.

Whereas the corps caught up in the first engagement of the '45 Rebellion had experienced no previous intensive advanced training on campaign, those that fought in the first of the Pragmatic Army's battles and those with Braddock in the first battle of the Seven Years War had all had some, for what it was worth. We described earlier the manner in which Braddock's regiments were taken from peacetime Irish county cantonments, and their weak cadre strengths built up with drafts and recruits.³² These corps were sent to America innocent of camp experience; and they were in America only three months before the Monongahela battle. Facing a long and difficult march through a forest wilderness and liable to attack by a nimble and ruthless enemy who employed cover and used the tactics of irregulars, Braddock in the weeks available to him attempted to train his men to deal with the French and Indians. He 'lighten'd them as much as possible', leaving in stores 'their Swords and the greatest part of their heavy Accoutrements'; and he drilled them to form and fight in their accustomed companies, rather than in the platoons where many of the men, told off, would not know their officers. They practised a variety of the alternate fire, using the senior battalion-company in each regiment as a 'Second Grenadier Company upon the left', and leaving the other eight battalion-companies to form eight fire-divisions and sixteen platoons. This was all a very sensible modification of the current drill; and Braddock was pleased to report that the regiments 'behave very well and shew great Spirit and Zeal for the Service'.³³ The corps exercised repeatedly during the few weeks available to them, as the

²⁹ R. L. Yaple, art. cit. 195, 198.

³¹ P. E. Kopperman, op. cit. 76.

³² Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 82-3.

³⁰ Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 99.

³² See above, pp. 49-50.

surviving orderly books show: thus at Fort Cumberland camp the 48th, eight weeks before the battle, 'had a Field day', and together with the 44th had another field day a week later.³⁴ The Duke of Cumberland, in discussions with Braddock before the latter sailed, had stressed that 'the Strictest & most exact Discipline is always necessary, but can never be more so than on your present Service'; this the Duke thought essential 'to prevent any Pannick in the Troops from Indians, to whom the Soldiery not being yet accustomed, the French will not fail to make all attempts towards it'.³⁵ But a few weeks of intensive training were insufficient to prepare these corps, and Cumberland's warning proved prophetic.

The corps that fought at Dettingen had been on the Continent for a year before that battle, most of which time was spent in Flanders cantonments. No sooner had they arrived in these cantonments but they, like Braddock's regiments, began to practise the advanced elements of the drill. The journals and orderly books kept in the army in Flanders, Brabant, and Germany during the years 1742-8 are filled with daily entries sending corps out to drill or to be reviewed. Typical orders, selected at random, are the following taken from those issued in the brigades quartered at Ghent before Dettingen:³⁶

[18 June 1742]: The first Battn. of Guards to march to the place of Exercise next Monday morning at five of clock . . . The 2nd Regt. on Tuesday, the 3rd on Thursday, & Col. Duroure's [12th Foot] on Friday at the same hour & place, & to continue the same weekly.

[6 Sept. 1742]: [Ordered] That Sr. Robt. Rich's [4th] Regt. of Dragoons be under Arms . . . at Seven of clock, at their place of parade, & to go thro' their Exercise both on Foot & Horseback, & that they conform to the book of Exercise establish'd by His Majesty.

[11 Sept. 1742]: Genl. Hawley's Regt. [1st Dragoons] to go out to Exercise tomorrow at the same hour, & to observe the same orders given to Sr. Robt. Rich's Regt.

³⁴ C. Hamilton (ed.), op. cit. 15-16.

³⁵ Cumb. Pprs, Box 45, no. 103. J. Shy, op. cit. 127-9, makes some interesting remarks on the regulars' fear of forest fighting in the Seven Years War.

³⁶ Cumb. Pprs, O.B. 1, fos. 22, 64, 71.

Dettingen had shown up the unprepared condition of the corps; and so during the twenty-two months between that battle and the next major engagement—at Fontenoy, in May 1745—the army kept to its now established routine of constant, almost daily, practice. Typical once again are the orders given out in the brigades quartered at Ghent during the spring of 1745, of which the following are random examples;³⁷

[14 March 1745]: The weather now being warmer, the Corpls. of ye Several Regts. to have as many men out as they can, to perfect them in their marching & manual Exercise. The foot to take their motions from the first Regt. of guards, & the Dragoons from the Royal. The Awkard men to be out every day.

[21 Mar. 1745]: The Several Battns. in Garrison to be under Arms to morrow morning in order to fire four Cartridges pr. Man.

[25 Mar. 1745]: The Corpls. of the Several Grenadier Comps. to perfect themselves in ye grenadier Exercise, from ye first Regt. of guards, & care to be taken that there be no difference, or disparity in ye whole.

[28 Mar. 1745]: Majr. Genl. Howard's [3rd Foot], Huske's [23rd Foot], & Handasydes Regt. [31st Foot] to be out tomorrow . . .

[6 Apr. 1745]: Tomorrow & Thursday the draughts & recruits to burn six Cartridges pr. man.

[11 Apr. 1745]: The Several Regts. of Dragoons to be out . . .

At Fontenoy, on 11 May 1745, the performance of all arms was a marked improvement upon that shown at Dettingen, as was to be expected after so many more months of intensive training. The foot, indeed, performed admirably well; and if they had to be kept on a tight rein while closing the French,³⁸

³⁷ Ibid. O.B.6, fos. 116, 118, 120, 122, 126, 127.

³⁸ LaFausille, who was at both battles, said that the British foot not only 'threw away their Fire to no purpose' and 'at too great a distance', at Dettingen, but that 'the same would have happened had it not been prevented in time at Fontenoy' (Cumb. Pprs, Pt 4, ii, fo. 4). How the men were prevented from doing so at Fontenoy was described by an officer in one of the foot brigades, who heard its commanding general 'frequently giving directions to the Officers, to tell their Men to preserve their Ranks & keep their line; and to direct them to observe the word of Command, & not to fire till they were order'd.' SP 87/17, fo. 320.

they performed brilliantly when actually come to grips. The controlled volleys were so effective that the *Gardes Françaises* panicked and fled; indeed, even before engaging, the *Gardes* had feared to enter into 'une affaire de mousqueterie' with the English foot, knowing that it would have 'trop d'avantage par sa supériorité'.³⁹ Several charges were made upon the British front by the French horse, but were broken up by British musketry, none penetrating to within 20 paces of the line. The eventual withdrawal of the British foot was made possible only because they kept up their fire discipline, although under intense pressure; and when the army retreated the British cavalry behaved well too.⁴⁰

By the summer of 1745, then, that part of the army with two or three years' service in the Low Countries was very thoroughly trained at all aspects of the service, which had not been the case in 1742 or 1743; and it was in most respects superior to its Bourbon adversaries.⁴¹

Late in 1745 a large part of the army was hastily recalled to deal with the Jacobite emergency; but in the Low Countries, meanwhile, the same endless round was kept up in 1745 and 1746 among those corps that had remained there, and was taken up by regiments returning after Culloden to face the French once again. The British regiments that fought at Rocoux in 1746 and at Lauffeldt in 1747 behaved admirably well, being now veteran corps, blooded, used to the rigours of campaigning, and long since completely familiar with, and expert at, the advanced elements of the drill. When the heavily outnumbered British (and Hanoverian) foot covered the withdrawal from Rocoux they 'kept their order as if they had been on a review before His Majesty, at every halt facing where the

³⁹ J. Colin, *Les Campagnes du Maréchal de Saxe*, iii (Paris, 1906), 111, quoting the comte de Chabannes (who commanded that part of the line struck by Cumberland's battalions).

⁴⁰ Ibid. 113; and J. M. White, *Marshal of France. The Life and Times of Maurice, Comte de Saxe* (New York, 1962), 152-64.

⁴¹ This was demonstrated not only at Fontenoy but again, a few weeks later, in the desperate action at Melle. On Melle, which is tactically a most interesting affair, see H. Pichat, *La Campagne du maréchal de Saxe dans les Flandres de Fontenoy (mai 1745) à la prise de Bruxelles (février 1746)* (Paris, 1909), 30-87; and in SP 87/19, see the accounts from Cumberland to Harrington, 19 July 1745 (OS); Moltke to Königsegg, 9 July 1745; Bligh to Cumberland, 9 and 10 July 1745; and Abercromby to St. Clair, 10 July 1745.

enemy appeared,' wrote Ligonier; 'and let me tell you . . . they must be good troops that will do that.'⁴² Lauffeldt was very hard fought, the British cavalry in particular performing well, taking part in one of the largest cavalry encounters of the century, involving some 200 squadrons.⁴³

Even so late as 1747 and 1748, intensive training was still a daily feature. Thus in the camp of the brigades composed of Howard's 3rd, Huske's 23rd, Crawford's 25th, and Johnson's 33rd of Foot, typical orders were as follows:⁴⁴

[9 Apr. 1747, Bois-le-Duc]: The Regiments are to form to morrow in Battalions, and afterwards to march by in eighteen Platoons, Grenadiers included . . .

[7 May 1747, Westmael camp]: The 2 Battalions of the first, and the 2 Battalions of the 2nd. Brigade to be under Arms to morrow morning at 8 o'Clock, in order to be review'd by H.R.H. . . . 8 Field Pieces with their proper Officers and Men to joyn them in order to go thro' the fireings.

[22 May 1747, Schilde camp]: the British Artillery will exercise and fire to morrow . . .

A typical corps, Campbell's 21st of Foot, was going through a similar round in its Low Countries' cantonments that year; the lieutenant-colonel of the 21st noted the following in his journal, for example:⁴⁵

[31 Mar. 1747]: The whole Regiment assembled on a moor near the head quarters, and went thro' their exercises.

[14 Apr. 1747]: Yesterday the Regiment . . . went thro' all their exercise. The Duke [of Cumberland] being out riding, the firing drew him that way, and he came unexpected and reviewed the Regiment, which was lucky enough to have his approbation.

⁴² Rex Whitworth, *op. cit.* 141.

⁴³ For the 1746 campaign and Rocoux, and the 1747 campaign and Lauffeldt, see Rex Whitworth, *op. cit.* 126-67, and J. M. White, *op. cit.* 179-92, 204-29.

⁴⁴ Ipswich and E. Suffolk RO Albemarle MSS 461/99, 9 Apr. 1747; 461/100, 7 May 1747; and 461/101, 22 May 1747.

⁴⁵ J. O. Robson, *art. cit.* 27 (1949), 73-8, *passim*.

[16 Apr. 1747]: Orders came from the Duke that he was to review our Regiment and four more . . .

[28 Apr. 1747]: The Regiment was under arms, and went thro' all their exercise with powder.

[May 1747]: Our Regiment, the Welsh Fusiliers [23rd], Johnson's [33rd], and Flemings [36th] were reviewed by the Duke . . .

Even during the uneventful campaign of 1748 in Brabant, the drilling continued. The Duke of Cumberland, for example, reviewed several corps both British and Allied in July at the 'camp of Nestelroy', near Bois-le-Duc, where on 9 July he saw fourteen squadrons of British dragoons perform an intricate series of manoeuvres. At Eindhoven on 26 September he saw the 2/1st Foot Guards go through the whole of the review exercise, evolutions, and manoeuvres.⁴⁶ Lt.-Col. Colville and his 21st of Foot were still hard at it too, among these corps, for on 8 July he noted that 'H.R.H. had another course of reviews of all the Regiments and saw Lee's [44th Foot] and ours on a common about half way betwixt our two quarters . . . All the Regiments had exercise and firing once a week according to orders.'⁴⁷ For the regiments on campaign in the Low Countries, therefore, the war ended as it began, practising daily their advanced drill.

Endless training of this sort was typical in regiments campaigning on the Continent; and although they arrived in Germany quite forward in their advanced drill the same round of training was followed by the regiments that served in the Allied army under Ferdinand of Brunswick during the campaigns of 1758-62.⁴⁸ Most of these regiments went out from Britain with at least two seasons in the camps behind them; several had spent three seasons in the camps, and a few had spent as many as four. Of the seventeen battalions of foot sent

⁴⁶ Detailed plans of these reviews are in the Kent RO Amherst MSS 05/1-8.

⁴⁷ J. O. Robson, *art. cit.* 28 (1950), 79-80.

⁴⁸ These corps went out from Britain in two contingents: the first (The Blues; 1st and 3rd Dragoon Guards; 2nd, 6th, and 10th Dragoons; 12th, 20th, 23rd, 25th, 37th, and 51st Foot) arrived in Aug. 1758, while the second (2nd and 3rd Horse; 2nd Dragoon Guards; 1st, 7th, and 11th Dragoons; 15th Light Dragoons; 2/1st, 2/2nd, and 2/3rd Foot Guards; 5th, 8th, 11th, 24th, 33rd, 50th, 87th, and 88th Foot) arrived in the spring and summer of 1760. R. Savory, *op. cit.* 460-1, 477-8.

to Germany, twelve had in addition to camping already seen some active service on the French coastal raids of 1757 and 1758. Only a few days after disembarking at Emden—although troubled 'by extream long Marches, over very heavy sands, & no water to refresh them'—the soldiers of the first contingent were reported 'all so eager to join Prince Ferdinand before a Battle, that they make no complaints of any fatigue or difficulty.'⁴⁹ It was thought best to keep these corps in quiet quarters, however, while they continued their training; and so through the last three months of the 1758 campaign they were not engaged, nor were they drawn from their winter quarters in April 1759 to join in Ferdinand's advance into Hesse, which brought on the battle of Bergen. Only in June were the British regiments brought into the field to play a full part in operations. In the meantime the British had been training intensively, as the orderly books once again illustrate; the following are taken at random from the orders given out in the brigades in Munster:⁵⁰

[14 Feb. 1759]: His S.H. [Prince Ferdinand] permits the regiments to be out to fire when the commanding officer thinks proper . . .

[22 Mar. 1759] Napier's [12th Foot] will have a field day tomorrow.

[3 Apr. 1759]: Stuart's [37th Foot] a field day tomorrow.

[4 Apr. 1759]: Kingsley's [20th Foot] have a field day to-morrow.

[6 Apr. 1759]: Fusiliers [23rd Foot] and Stuart's a field day to-morrow.

[9 Apr. 1759]: Lord George Sackville has ordered three barrels of powder . . . for each battalion, each regiment is to keep 18 rounds per man . . . and may make use of the remainder to practise firings. The Welse Fusiliers have a field day to-morrow.

And so it went until early June. By 4 May the Duke of Richmond could report 'Hume's regiment [25th Foot] very near as good as Kingsley's [20th Foot]', which was to say 'vastly im-

⁴⁹ SP 87/32, Marlborough to Holderness, 9 Aug. 1758.

⁵⁰ HMC Clements MSS (1913), pp. 431-67, *passim*.

proved'; and 'the Welch Fuzileers and Stuards are steady under arms and march very well.' 'I assure you', he wrote to his brother, 'that the regiments in England must be very *alerte* and take a great deal of pains, or they will not be able to show with these regiments.'⁵¹ Three months after Richmond penned those words, the six battalions trained in the Munster garrison made the epic attack on the battlefield of Minden.

As in the Austrian Succession campaigns, the training was kept up until the end of the war; and orders given out in the spring of 1761, at Paderborn, are typical of this:⁵²

[22 Apr. 1761]: the Recruits both of Cavalry and Infantry are to be Drilled and Exercised at Fireings. The Regiments are also to practice the several Evolutions . . . particularly marching and Wheeling . . . and forming quick, after different methods.

[10 May 1761]: Commanding Officers of Cavalry . . . to have their Recruits exercised at Firing, and their Horses the same, in order to tame them as much as possible.

[13 May 1761]: no time [is to] be lost in discipling and perfecting the Battalions by having them frequently out at Exercise.

The Coldstream Guards, at Paderborn, were sent 'out to exercise' on 11, 12, 16, 18, and 26 May, and on 7, 12, and 13 June, within a period of five weeks; and that schedule was typical for the regiments stationed there and elsewhere in Germany.⁵³

Whereas there was little action in the colonies after the 1740-2 Cartagena expedition during the 1739-48 war, a great many corps, beginning with those under Braddock, were sent to the Americas during the Seven Years War. As we noted earlier, only a handful of the regiments sent across the Atlantic went out with any camp experience behind them, so that much intensive advanced training had to be carried on in the colonial theatres.

The feeble North American campaigns of 1756 and 1757 are, for our purposes, of little interest: the surrender to Montcalm

⁵¹ HMC Bathurst MSS (1923), p. 684.

⁵² Comb. Pprs, Pt 4, O.B.B, fos. 8, 15, 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fos. 17-39, *passim*.

of Shirley's 50th and Pepperell's 51st, besieged at Oswego in 1756, merely underlines the inefficiency of new-raised regiments.⁵⁴ Not until the summer of 1757 did considerable numbers of troops reach North America from the British Isles; and owing to the strategic situation it was not until the campaign of 1758 that they could be employed on major operations. The main events of that year were Amherst's siege of Louisbourg, Forbes's advance on Fort Duquesne, and Abercromby's engagement at Carillon. From the training standpoint, Abercromby's seven regular battalions represented a mixed bag. One, the 44th Foot, had been with Braddock and had by now amassed three years' of training time. The rest had seen no action: three (the 27th, 46th, and 55th) had come out without camp duty but had been in America for a year, by mid-1758, and were doubtless quite forward in their drill, while the rest (the 1/42nd, 1/60th, and 4/60th) had been on the scene for two years and may be considered fairly well trained. In the fighting at Carillon they all behaved extremely well, sustaining very heavy casualties while repeatedly storming the French *abatis* and breastwork.⁵⁵ At Louisbourg meanwhile, once Amherst's fourteen battalions had made good their landing—a difficult operation, but carried out successfully by picked light and grenadier companies—their ultimate success was assured, given their great numbers and powerful siege train.⁵⁶ The careful, methodical march of Forbes's small column on Fort Duquesne—carried out according to the system of the 'protected advance' laid down in Turpin de Crisse's *Art of War*—was a success too, a masterpiece of logistical planning.⁵⁷

By 1759 the forces engaged in North American operations were the equal of the French, the Canadians, and their Indian irregulars. Since Braddock's defeat, the regiments, after ar-

⁵⁴ On these campaigns, see K. L. Parker, *op. cit.* 140–213, and Pargellis, *Loudoun*. Pargellis, 141–6, describes these undisciplined and ill-administered corps and concludes that they 'were unfit to belong to an army composed of separate units, each one responsible for its own efficiency.'

⁵⁵ The best accounts are in Fortescue, ii, 322–32, and M. Sautai, *Montcalm au Combat de Carillon* (Paris, 1909). Abercromby's journal is in WO 34/76, fos. 154–7.

⁵⁶ Amherst's force consisted of the 2/1st, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 28th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 47th, 48th, 58th, 2/60th, 3/60th, and 78th. Of these, only the 15th had had camp training, but most had been in America for at least two years and were by now well trained; indeed only the 2/1st, 17th, 58th, and 78th were in need of further seasoning.

⁵⁷ K. L. Parker, *op. cit.* 252–92.

riving in the colonies, had taken advantage of every opportunity to carry on their advanced training; and the journals and orderly books kept in these corps show that the same endless practice that we have seen going on in the armies serving in Europe was characteristic too of those in America. A few examples of this activity will be sufficient. Thus, when early in June 1757 seven battalions from Ireland and six from New York assembled at Halifax, for that summer's projected siege of Louisbourg, advanced training began immediately; and the following entries illustrate the training going on:⁵⁸

[16 July 1757]: . . . the regiments take all opportunities to exercise.

[17 July 1757]: Some intrenchments are erecting on the left of the camp, in order to discipline and instruct the troops, in the methods of attack and defence.

[24 July 1757]: This morning the picquets of the line, with a working party from the army, marched to . . . where the intrenchments were thrown up; . . . one half carried on approaches, while the other defended; frequently sallying out to obstruct the workmen, when the covering parties attacked, repulsed, and pursued them. . . . This is in order to make the troops acquainted with the nature of the service they are going upon . . . and is to be continued until farther orders.

[31 July 1757]: This day the trenches were stormed by the picquets; some field-pieces were brought there for this purpose, and every thing was conducted with the greatest regularity.

These activities were aimed especially at preparing the troops for siege warfare; and although the Louisbourg operations were postponed until the following season, specialist training of this sort was invaluable.

It was to the linear, battlefield drill that most training time was devoted, of course, here as in Europe. The orders given out

⁵⁸ A. G. Doughty (ed.), *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America for the Years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760*, i (Toronto, 1915), 34–9, *passim*. This is an edited version of Capt. John Knox's journal of the same title, published in London in 1769. At Halifax were the 2/1st, 17th, 27th, 28th, 43rd, 46th, and 55th Foot, come from Ireland; plus the 22nd, 1/42nd, 44th, 48th, 2/60th, and 4/60th Foot, plus 3 coys of Rogers' Rangers, all from New York.

in Amherst's army in the winter quarters of 1758-9, and soon after in the field as the army moved down the Hudson-Lake Champlain route towards Montreal, are typical. The following are selected at random from that army's orderly books:⁵⁹

[18 Dec. 1758, New York]: the Genl. Commanding in chief orders that the Regiments Should be Exercised twice a Week when the Weather will permit, & that the Commanding Officers will Assemble them by Companies or Batalion as they Judge best.

[22 Jan. 1759, New York]: The Officers Commanding Battalions are to practice their Men at firing Ball, so that every Soldier may be Accustomed to it.

[5 May 1759, Albany]: The Regiments to practice marching by files . . .

[22 Nov. 1759, Crown Point]: The Regiments . . . when the weather permits [will] be assembled for Exercise.

Earlier, we followed a single corps, Campbell's 21st of Foot, going through a typical round of training in the Low Countries in the spring of 1747; and we can do the same with another such, Kennedy's 43rd of Foot, on North American service in the spring of 1759. Typical of the training going on in the 43rd, in garrison at Fort Beauséjour in Acadia, are the following journal entries:⁶⁰

[5 Apr. 1759]: The 43rd regiment are out daily at exercise, though the country still retains its winter habit.

[11 Apr. 1759]: The 43rd regiment are at exercise every morning, and discharge ammunition cartridges; in the afternoon the men are employed in firing at targets, in which they are encouraged by presents from their Officers, according to their several performances.

[14 Apr. 1759]: The 43rd regiment are now making the most of their time in exercising and firing at marks; in short, every man is employed in rubbing off the winter's rust.

⁵⁹ Kent RO Amherst MSS 016/1, pp. 1-3, 6-7, 161.

⁶⁰ A. G. Doughy (ed.), op. cit. i, 301, 304, 306.

[30 Apr. 1759]: The regiment daily out at exercise, and firing at the target; the Captain of the light infantry spares no pains to form his company, and render them expert for any kind of service.

Late in May Kennedy's joined the forces in Cape Breton, and four months later stood in the centre of Wolfe's line of battle on the Plains of Abraham, taking part in delivering what Fortescue described as 'the most perfect volley ever fired on a battlefield'.⁶¹

As a last example, we might look at the activities of the regiments training under Amherst on Staten Island in 1761, prior to their embarking with Monckton on the Martinique expedition late that autumn. In July and August eleven battalions came in from the quarters which they had occupied during the winter and spring (for the conquest of Canada was complete), and these encamped together on Staten Island across from New York.⁶² Here, formed in three brigades, they were drilled intensively under Amherst's direction from late in August until embarking late in November; and in this, once again, they resembled the corps in Europe in the 1747-8 and 1761-2 campaigns, drilling intensively for the last of the war's campaigns just as they had done in the preceding seasons. Typical orders, selected at random from the orderly books, are the following:⁶³

[28 Aug. 1761]: Amherst's [15th], & the 1st Royal Highland Battn. [1/42nd] to fire to morrow morning two Rounds of ball, man by man at a Butt . . . The Commanding Officers of the other Regiments will fix on places near their front by the Water side for Erecting butts to fire ball.

[30 Aug. 1761]: The Regimts. are to practice Exercising, drawn up three deep . . .

⁶¹ Fortescue, ii, 381. The musketry of the 43rd was excellent, as the above extracts will indicate. When in garrison at Annapolis in the summer of 1758, Capt Knox noted that the officers of Kennedy's 'for their instruction and amusement, fall into the ranks as privates, and practice all the evolutions and firings'. This was admirable. *Ibid.* 181.

⁶² Their winter quarters are in WO 34/74, fo. 6. On the movement of most of these corps down the Hudson to New York, see J. C. Webster (ed.), *The Journal of Jeffrey Amherst . . . in America from 1758 to 1763* (Toronto, 1931), 269-72. The corps that camped on the island, trained there under Amherst, and sailed with Monckton for the Caribbean, were the 15th, 17th, 27th, 28th, 35th, 40th, 1/42nd, 2/42nd, 43rd, 48th, and 3/60th of Foot. The 17th and 27th arrived quite late.

⁶³ Kent RO Amherst MSS 016/2, *passim*.

[5 Sept. 1761]: The three Brigades⁶⁴ to fire four rounds of Ball, by Platoons.

[22 Sept. 1761]: The Regiments that have been reviewed, to be out at Exercise only once a day.

Amherst held a series of major brigade reviews late in September and early in October, at which the corps went through an elaborate series of manoeuvres reminiscent of the best Dublin performances.⁶⁵ Among other manoeuvres the battalions of the 1st Brigade, for example, 'marched [forward] by subdivisions in Column', while those of the 2nd Brigade 'passed & forced a bridge, retreated over it, etc.'

It will be evident that target practice was given pride of place in the training carried on in North America by 1758-9, this being one of the fruits of experience in the campaigns against New France. 'Nothing steadys them so much to firing as by firing balls', observed Amherst in the Staten Island camp.⁶⁶ It was unfortunate that, with the coming of peace, this lesson should so quickly have been forgotten.

The preceding will be sufficient to illustrate the general pattern of initial inadequacy, followed by endless and intensive practice, imposed upon the regiments by the shortcomings of peacetime training. In order to complete our summary of the training carried on in wartime we have only to consider the revisions sometimes made in, and the additions occasionally made to, the current regulations and customary drill in certain regiments and field forces.

As we noted earlier, innovation and adaptation were more noticeable in the Seven Years than in the Austrian Succession War; innovation was stirred by the lack of success in the Low Countries battles and more so by the fighting in Scotland, and by the mid-1750s innovation had gathered momentum.

We have already described Prestonpans, which lasted five

⁶⁴ The regiments on the island were brigaded as follows: 1st Brigade: 15th, 28th, 1/42nd, 2/42nd; 2nd Brigade: 17th, 35th, 43rd, 3/60th; 3rd Brigade: 27th, 40th, 48th. The light and grenadier companies formed separate composite battalions. Kent RO Amherst MSS 015/10, 'Troops that form the main Expedition'; and 016/2, 28 Aug. 1761.

⁶⁵ J. C. Webster (ed.), op. cit. 273. Detailed summaries of the review performances and manoeuvres of the 1st and 3rd Brigades are in WO 34/100, fos. 56-60, 64-5.

⁶⁶ J. C. Webster (ed.), op. cit. 273.

minutes. Falkirk, the second engagement of the Jacobite rising, was hardly more successful.⁶⁷ After Prestonpans and Falkirk, matters had to be taken in hand. During the three months that elapsed between Falkirk and Culloden, intensive drilling helped the army to restore confidence in itself.⁶⁸ Cumberland busily exercised the forces in Scotland and the North, and sent frequent orders to the commanders of outlying divisions to follow the same regimen. One such was Lord Albermarle who, reporting to the Duke's ADC from Strathbogie on 4 April, wrote:

... before I had your letter about exercising ye troops I had seen ye six Batt^s out and exercise ye Manual & go throw ye Firings, but had not ordered anything more, but gave out this morning H.R.H.'s commands (viz.) one Batt. out every Day, ye Parade to exercise in ye morning, the Pickets at night & ye Recruits and awkward men twice a Day in ye presence of Officers.⁶⁹

Cumberland had laid down a new method of bayonet drill for all to practise, too; but it was so unrealistic as surely to be no more than a morale-booster.⁷⁰ All this paid off at Culloden, of course, where the army behaved well. It was upon the platoon fire and bayonets, not upon the cavalry, that Cumberland depended;⁷¹ and the event showed him to be right. Constant drill and minor innovations had sharpened the army: 'Sure never were soldiers in such a temper,' wrote the Duke just after the battle: 'silence and obedience the whole time, and all our manoeuvres were performed without the least confusion.'⁷²

After Culloden, there was much training going on in the camps of the Great Glen. Blakeney, who commanded the troops there, was practising a new method 'for a Battalion to Fire Advancing, and retreating', and he sent along to Napier 'a sketch of explanations' for the Duke's perusal; and Cumberland gave out a few modifications in the manual and firings,

⁶⁷ For Falkirk, see K. Tomasson and F. Buist, *Battles of The '45* (1967), 99-127.

⁶⁸ Only three days after the battle Hawley, with the army now at Edinburgh, wrote that 'every wheele is at worke to gett the Engine in motion again. The Foot recover theyr spiritts, they owne to their Officers they all deserve to be hanged, some Regts. have shooke hands and vowel all to dye nexte time'. Ibid. 127.

⁶⁹ Cumb. Pprs, Box 13, no. 149, fo. 1.

⁷⁰ K. Tomasson and F. Buist, op. cit. 164-5.

⁷¹ E. Charteris, *William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland: His Early Life and Times, 1721-1748* (1913), 247-8.

⁷² BM holograph display case, North Library.

though as usual 'all other Parts of the Exercise [were] to be performed as the Book directs without diminution from it'.⁷³ Here in the 1745-6 Jacobite campaign, then, were presaged some of the alterations soon to be introduced generally as the 1748 *Regulations*.

Despite the several sound reforms initiated by Cumberland at the mid-century, and despite his preparation and issue of the 1748, 1756, and 1757 *Regulations*, there were several intelligent field and general officers who were no longer satisfied either with the platoon-fire system ('Hyde Park firing', as it was derisively labelled), or with the superfluous and elaborate formalism (the 'one-two', as it was contemptuously described) which attended so much of the drill, and of the arms exercises in particular. On the eve of the Seven Years War a few of these officers had taken to training their regiments to perform both the regulation platoon-fire system (to please authority), and the alternate-fire system (which they intended actually to employ in the field).⁷⁴ One such officer was Lt.-Gen. Sir John Mordaunt who, when given command of the 1757 Rochefort expedition, took the bit between his teeth and openly proceeded not only to tell off and train his battalions at the alternate fire, but also to cut back on the time spent on the manual and on much of the 'one-two' of the service.⁷⁵ Mordaunt's action was to prove a catalyst, for the alternate system was to spread quickly from his 1757 camps at Dorchester and the Isle of Wight to the armies both in Germany and America, and was by 1764 to become regulation practice.

⁷³ Cumb. Pprs., Box 16, no. 320; and Pt 4, ii, fo. 60.

⁷⁴ We described in detail the difference between platoon fire and alternate fire on pp. 318-21 above, where the two systems, as practised in the 20th Foot under James Wolfe's direction, were shown.

⁷⁵ Writing to his brother on 9 Sept. 1757, the Duke of Richmond—now lieutenant-colonel commanding the 33rd Foot, and a partisan of these innovations—reported on Mordaunt's activities. 'He has broke through all the absurd regulations that General Napier [Cumberland's appointee] has been puzzling the army with since he has been Adjutant-General. He has abolished the manual exercise both old and new, and draws up all the regiments as Kingsley's [20th] used to do [under Wolfe's direction, as on p. 319 above]... and practises no other firing but by companies from right and left; and they practice the same kind of evolutions as Kingsley's used to do and no such absurdities as squares, etc.' *HMC Bathurst MSS* (1923), p. 681. Richmond had served as a young subaltern and captain in the 20th, where he had been befriended and much influenced by Wolfe. As lieutenant-colonel of the 33rd, Richmond was at this time attempting to establish Wolfe's training and drill in that regiment. R. H. Whitworth (ed.), art. cit. 72-6.

We can trace the spread of this innovation from Mordaunt's camps, where it was found effective and well received;⁷⁶ but it was only the Kloster Zeven convention and Cumberland's subsequent resignation from all his military appointments, which occurred late in October of 1757, that made this possible. Mordaunt's activities were 'all against orders', contrary to the current drill regulations. There had been hope that Cumberland, as Captain-General, would approve Mordaunt's innovations, and fear only that 'if he listens to those blockheads Napier and Dury... we shall return to *one two*'.⁷⁷ But Mordaunt's work had been reported to Cumberland in Hanover, and had brought forth a sharp rebuke. The Duke wrote late in August to Barrington, the Secretary at War, with orders to

acquaint... all General officers commanding Corps, Sir John Mordaunt not excepted, that I am Surprised to hear that my orders... approved & confirmed by His Majesty, are changed according to the Whim & Supposed Improvements of every fertile Genius; and that therefore, it is my positive order, that in the Forming & Telling off of Battalions, they conform exactly to those Standing orders, which they have all received; and that no one presume to introduce new Schemes, without their having been approved of by His Majesty or by my orders.⁷⁸

This was given out by Barrington and Ligonier;⁷⁹ but events in Hanover overtook Cumberland, and the innovations were then able to spread.

Of the six marching regiments that formed the first contingent sent to join the army in Germany in the summer of 1758, three—Kingsley's 20th, Home's 25th, and Brudenell's 51st—had been in Mordaunt's encampments; and while training in Munster quarters during the winter of 1758-9 and into the following spring, all six continued to practise telling off and

⁷⁶ Kingsley's 20th was already with Mordaunt and, Richmond reported to his brother, 'you have no idea how much it has improved the other regiments'. *HMC Bathurst MSS* (1923), p. 681.

⁷⁷ Ibid. It was in fact these very 'blockheads'—Robert Napier and Alexander Dury—who, as Adjutant-General and lieutenant-colonel of Cumberland's 1st Foot Guards, respectively, had assisted Cumberland in the preparation of the current regulations, which Mordaunt was contravening. On their activities in this regard, see above, pp. 199-200.

⁷⁸ Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 398.

⁷⁹ WO 4/54, p. 433.

firing according to the alternate-fire system.⁸⁰ Again, it was the presence of the 20th Foot that counted for much: the other corps, it was reported, 'have indeed had great advantages in being together with Kingsley's and the Germans.'⁸¹ It was alternate fire that these six corps employed with such extraordinary success soon after at Minden.

Meanwhile, Amherst's army had assembled at Halifax in the spring of 1758 to prepare for the siege of Louisbourg, and Abercromby had taken over the American command from Loudoun. Loudoun, 'whose management in the conduct of affairs is by no means admired', wrote Wolfe to Sackville, 'did adhere so literally and strictly to the one—two and the firings by the impracticable chequer, etc, that these regiments [i.e. the 2/1st, 17th, 22nd, 28th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 47th, 48th, 2/60th, 3/60th, and 78th, already in America under Loudoun's command when Amherst's forces arrived from home] must necessarily be cut off one after another.'⁸² Among the regiments newly arrived from England was the 15th Foot, another of those which had camped and trained under Mordaunt; and when in the following 1759 campaign Wolfe himself led ten battalions—including the 15th—up the St. Lawrence for Quebec, it was the alternate firing that was being practised in all of these corps. Typical of these was the 43rd Foot, which had been in garrison in the Bay of Funday posts since coming to Nova Scotia from Ireland, mid-way through 1757. The 43rd, as we have seen, had during these years been following the regulation platoon-fire system, as was natural; but after joining Wolfe's force it was ordered to adopt the new procedure. On 15 July 1759, while lying before Quebec, the regiment was reviewed by Wolfe (who had 'never had any opportunity of seeing the forty-third regiment, before they rendezvoused at Louisbourg'); and Capt. Knox of that corps recounted that 'the method we were ordered to observe did not admit of any confusion, though we fired remarkably quick; our firings were from right and left to the centre, by platoons; and afterwards

⁸⁰ See the orders of Lord George Sackville, who commanded at Munster—and who was a friend of Wolfe's and in agreement with him on tactical matters, not to mention having himself been proprietary colonel of the 20th from 1746 to 1749—to 'practise chiefly the alternate firing', in *HMC Clements MSS* (1913), pp. 560–1.

⁸¹ *HMC Bathurst MSS* (1923), p. 684.

⁸² Beckles Willson, *op. cit.* 368–9.

by subdivisions.'⁸³ The 43rd was already well trained, as we have seen; and that they should have found alternate firing to permit them to fire 'remarkably quick' and without confusion is a testament to its utility and superiority. This same alternate fire was doubtless that employed by the battalions on the Plains of Abraham.

There had been another innovation, the work of Amherst himself, introduced early in 1759 in the regiments serving in America; and it was practised both in the forces under his immediate command moving upon Montreal along the Hudson—Lake Champlain route, and in the army commanded by his subordinate Wolfe lying before Quebec. This consisted of a simple and speedy means of reducing the depth of the battalion line from three to two ranks, and of preserving in three ranks the same frontage allowed by the two-deep firing line. Amherst had adopted the thin, two-deep line because (as he informed the men) 'the enemy have very few regular troops to oppose us, and no yelling of Indians, or fire of Canadians, can possibly withstand two ranks, if the men are silent, attentive, and obedient to their officers.'⁸⁴ Probably introduced late in January 1759, it was being practised late in May by some of the corps among those preparing at Cape Breton for the up-coming Quebec expedition; and on 9 July the practice was made regulation drill for all units serving in America by a Standing Order of that date.⁸⁵ Thus was introduced the thin red line made famous fifty years later by Wellington, in the Peninsula; and its first use in battle was upon the Plains of Abraham on 13 September 1759.⁸⁶

⁸³ A. G. Doughty (ed.), *op. cit.* i, 422. See also p. 451, entry for 31 July, where a tactical disposition to fight by companies (rather than in platoons or other divisions which would have broken up the company structure) 'afforded the highest satisfaction to the soldiers [since] this method . . . does not admit of confusion.'

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 487–8. The absence of cavalry, of course, made such a disposition practicable in America.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 348–9, for Cape Breton; and see pp. 487–8 for the Standing Order. The clearest description of the technique by which the rank reduction was effected is in BL Add. MSS 21, 661, fo. 80, 'Ordres du G. Amherst pr. la revue'. A short description of this review—put on by the 1/ and 2/42nd, the 55th, and the 77th of Foot at Oswego on 4 Aug. 1760, is in J. C. Webster (ed.), *op. cit.* 224.

⁸⁶ D. Grinnell-Milne, *Mad. Is He? The Character and Achievement of James Wolfe* (1963), 247–55; and see 'General Orders in Wolfe's Army during the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence, 1759', in Anon., *Literary & Historical Society of Quebec. Manuscript Series 4* (Quebec, 1875), 35–6 and *passim*.

The last and most significant of the innovations made during these years, in response to the tactical conditions imposed in the field, was the formation of light units—both horse and foot—and the development of specialized equipment, tactics, and training for the light service. In this the British were behind-hand, in comparison either with the Hapsburg forces or with their Bourbon adversaries; and during the Low Countries campaigns of 1742–8 (where corps like the *Arquebusiers de Grassin* had taken such a toll of British lives, notably at Melle and Fontenoy), and again to a lesser extent during the campaigns in Germany of 1758–62, the British had been obliged to rely on the light forces of their several German allies. By 1759 it had become abundantly clear that Britain herself must raise light troops, and send these to the army in Germany;⁸⁷ and so in the autumn of that year Keith's Highlanders (soon after ranked as the 87th Foot) was formed for the purpose and sent out to serve under Ferdinand. In June following another such corps, Campbell's Highlanders (88th Foot) was sent to join Keith's; and together with the new 15th Light Dragoons,⁸⁸ which corps arrived in Germany two weeks after Campbell's had landed, these regiments played an important part in the outpost work, ambuscades, and skirmishing of the army.⁸⁹

Whereas in Germany the burden of the light service could be borne by the assorted *Freikorps*, *Jägers*, hussars, and legions of the Hanoverians and Hessians, in America the British had themselves to make a major effort, and to rely on their own resources. The Canadians and their Indian allies were past-masters at the *petite guerre*, while the nature of the country made them formidable; and the forces from metropolitan France—the *troupes de la marine* in particular—showed themselves adept at many aspects of the light service.

Braddock's disaster had pointed the need for specialist units capable of protecting the flanks and the march security of the

⁸⁷ Single troops of light dragoons had already been attached to each of the regiments of Dragoon Guards and Dragoons, in Britain, in 1756.

⁸⁸ As early as 5 Sept. 1759, when Keith's corps was still raising, Granby had written from Germany asking 'that some of the light Dragoons might be sent over, to act in Concert with the Highlanders, as I am confident they would be of the utmost service, on many occasions in this Country'. SP 87/32, Granby to Holderness.

⁸⁹ For a narrative of their activities, see C. T. Atkinson, 'The Highlanders in Westphalia, 1760–2, and the Development of Light Infantry', *JSAHR* 20 (1941), 208–23.

heavy infantry; and it had shown too the need to devise tactics at which the foot could be trained in order to deal with irregulars—'the manner of opposing an enemy that avoids facing you in the open field', it was now clear, 'is totally different from what young officers learn from the common discipline of the army'.⁹⁰ Rangers for long-distance scouting were needed too. These requirements were met in several ways. As early as December 1756, the Duke of Cumberland had advised the commander-in-chief in America to 'teach your Troops to go out upon Scouting Parties: for, 'till Regular Officers with men they can trust, learn to beat the woods, and to act as Irregulars, you never will gain any certain Intelligence of the Enemy', nor screen and protect a marching column.⁹¹ Loudoun acted on such advice, and in the training of the four battalions of the new 60th Foot he ordered that

they are then to fire at Marks, and in order to qualify them for the Service of the Woods, they are to be taught to load and fire, lying on the Ground and kneeling. They are to be taught to march in Order, slow and fast in all sortes of Ground. They are frequently to pitch & fold up their Tents, and to be accustomed to pack up and carry their necessities in the most commodious manner.⁹²

Loudoun meanwhile increased the number of ranging companies first raised in 1755, and at the same time sent parties of officers and picked men from the regular marching regiments out with the ranging companies, in order to learn the service and carry its principles back with them to their battalions.⁹³

Other action was taken with the corps of marching foot. Soon after Braddock's disaster a battalion of Highlanders, the 1/42nd Foot, was dispatched to America; and by the opening of the 1759 campaign three more Highland battalions—the 2/42nd, 77th, and 78th—had all joined the forces there. For the 1758 campaigns each of the battalions of foot in America was ordered to form its own company of light infantry: these were kept up in the regiments until the reductions consequent upon the 1763 peace, and they were often detached from their parent

⁹⁰ *HMC Stopford-Sackville MSS* (1910), ii, 2.

⁹¹ Pargellis, *Military Affairs*, 269.

⁹² Pargellis, *Loudoun*, 299–300.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 304. On the discipline used in Rogers' Rangers, see K. L. Parker, *op. cit.* 214–40. The series of 'rules for the ranging-discipline' which Rogers prepared for the instruction of regulars attached to his corps, are in Rogers's *Journals*, *op. cit.* 60–70.

battalions and brigaded in a composite Light Infantry Corps.⁹⁴ These light companies were dressed and accoutred for their service—long coatskirts were cut away, small caps were provided, leggings were worn, hatchets and powder horns were supplied—and by the later stages of the 1759 campaign, notably at Quebec, they were putting in good service.

Proper light infantry took more time to train than did the hatmen, not less—which is why the Americans proved to be of little use to the army, and why the army had thus been obliged to form its own rangers and light troops.⁹⁵ 'It is not a Short Coat or half Gaters that makes a light Infantry Man,' Lord Townshend was to write to Amherst many years later, 'but as you know, Sir, a confidence in his Aim, & that Stratagem in a personal conflict which is derived from Experience.'⁹⁶ This the light infantry companies of the marching battalions had truly acquired by 1763; and their brilliant performance in quelling the 1763–4 Indian uprising led by Pontiac, in which the tactics and the expertise displayed in Bouquet's engagement at Bushy Run stand in such marked contrast to the performance of Braddock's men, eight years earlier, clearly attests this fact.⁹⁷

Such was the training pattern characteristic of the army in the field, in wartime. Hard, intensive training at the advanced elements of the drill was carried on endlessly, and of necessity. Where circumstances were particular, or where the tactical situation proved to be unexpected or peculiar, innovation took place; and wartime innovation sometimes became doctrine after peace was made. But innovation was the exception, where as a rule the majority of corps were busy enough mastering the complexities of their peacetime drill. With the end of a war, the friction of peace once again began its operation among the regiments; and with that the spirit of innovation had to give way to the simple need for uniformity. In the lull after Culloden

⁹⁴ On these light companies, see A. G. Doughty (ed.), *op. cit.* i. 303, 306, 379–80; and ii. 281, 337, 347, and 351. See also Kent RO Amherst MSS 016/1, pp. 2–3, 6–7.

⁹⁵ Pargellis notes that Loudoun had expected that 'the provincials themselves could serve as irregular troops, until he discovered that the average provincial soldier knew less what to do if he fell into an ambush than a British regular, for he had never been trained, either in the discipline of arms or in frontier warfare.' Pargellis, *Loudoun*, 300–1.

⁹⁶ Kent RO Amherst MSS 073/21, fo. 1.

⁹⁷ On Bouquet's tactics and Bushy Run, the best study is K. L. Parker, *op. cit.* 292–342. J. Shy, *op. cit.* 111–25 and *passim*.

the always inventive Maj.-Gen. William Blakeney (he of the 'Pasteboard images . . . which the Wags of those Days called Puppets') had had time to show to Cumberland, in Kensington Gardens, special 'Performances' of new 'Firings and Evolutions' of his own design. The Duke had expressed his 'approbation'; and Blakeney,

finding that they answer'd with a large Battalion beyond my Expectation . . . made some Progress in writing the Words of Command, Signals by beat of Drum, and the Explanations, to which I design'd annexing very curious Draughts, with the Platoons number'd in such a manner, as to make the whole intelligible to young Officers. But Blakeney, at this time in command of the forces in Minorca, 'stopt proceeding any further', when after Aix-la-Chapelle the old garrison of that island was replaced by new regiments sent out from the army in Brabant. 'The Officers lately arrived informed me that they had Orders to follow the Discipline they were taught in Flanders last Campaign,' he wrote to the Duke from Mahon in August 1749, 'which I shall take great Care to make them observe Strictly.'⁹⁸ Peace, and with it the need to stick to the uniformity of the new 1748 Regulations, spelled the end of Blakeney's innovations.

⁹⁸ Cumb. Pprs, Box 43, no. 294, fo. 1.