

The HOME GUARD POCKET MANUAL

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Tenth Edition.

THE HOME GUARD POCKET MANUAL

BY

CAPT. A. SOUTHWORTH, M.B.E.

20th Bn. (SEVENOAKS) KENT HOME GUARD

Ex Warrant Officer Instructor

Small Arms School, Hythe, 1922 to 1938

FOREWORD BY

BRIGADIER J. S. DAVENPORT, M.C.

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CAPABILITIES OF A GOOD INSTRUCTOR.

1. A thorough knowledge of the subject to be taught.
2. Must be able to impart that knowledge in a clear and concise manner.
3. Able to give perfect demonstrations. It is much easier to learn by the eye than by the ear.
4. Quick to detect and correct faults. This should be done by force of example.
5. Be patient and avoid sarcasm.

January, 1944

INDEX.

	Page
Capabilities of a good Instructor	Inside Front Cover
Suggested Syllabus of Training	4
Pattern 17 Rifle	5
Daily Cleaning	5-6
Cleaning after Firing	6-7
Loading and Unloading. Trigger Pressing	7
Aiming	8
Lying Position. Kneeling Position	9-10
Standing Position. Fire Discipline Training	11
Visual Training. Judging Distance	12-13
Fire Orders. Range Practices	13-18
Range Safety Precautions	19
Bayonet Training Instruction	19-25
Respirator Drill	25-26
Sten Machine Carbine... ..	27 & 30
.300 B.A.R.	28 & 31
Tests of Elementary Training	32 & 42
Squad Drill	43
Platoon and Company Drill	44-46
Grenades	47-51
 FIELD TRAINING—	
Use of Cover. Types of Cover	52
Field Signals. Signals with the Rifle. Section Formations	53-54
Scouts. Fieldcraft	55-56
Messages. Verbal and Written	56-58
Patrols	58-60
Road Blocks	60-62

FOREWORD

This Pocket Manual has been compiled by an expert Instructor in Weapon Training, who is also a very highly skilled shot with the Rifle, Revolver and Light Machine Gun.

Capt. Southworth has been a 'key' member of the Sevenoaks Battalion of the Home Guard since its inception and understands fully the difficulties of training. His qualifications and experience are, therefore, of the highest order and this Manual will be of great value to all Home Guard Members.

It contains a useful Syllabus of Training and includes from the Official Manuals useful material for training in those subjects which are essential to the Home Guard.

J. S. DAVENPORT,

Brigadier,
Commanding Home Counties Area.

20th October, 1940.

SUGGESTED SYLLABUS OF TRAINING.

This syllabus is given in the hope that it will be of assistance to those who are devoting their time in instructing members of the Home Guard.

It endeavours to give the essential points of training and deals with the various subjects in their order of priority.

The time that can be devoted to training is limited, therefore all men should reach a high standard of efficiency in these subjects before further training is attempted.

Too much ceremonial drill is neither desirable nor necessary, and it is well to remember that a skilled shot who is well versed in fieldcraft will be far more useful than a man who is expert in "Presenting Arms" but cannot shoot.

WEAPON TRAINING.

Daily Cleaning ; Cleaning after Firing ; Loading and Unloading ; Charging Magazines ; Aiming Instruction ; Trigger Pressing ; Lying, Kneeling and Standing Positions ; Visual Training ; Judging Distance ; Indication and Recognition of Targets ; Fire Orders ; Fire Discipline Training.

FIELD TRAINING.

Formations—File, Single File, Extended Order, Arrow Head, Use of Cover ; Field Signals ; Scouts ; Fieldcraft ; Road Blocks.

FOOT DRILL.

Position of Attention ; Stand at Ease ; Easy ; Turnings ; Marchings and Halt ; Falling In ; Dressing ; Dismiss.

RIFLE DRILL.

Position of Attention ; Stand at Ease ; Easy ; Slope and Order Arms ; For Inspection—Port Arms ; Examine Arms ; Dismiss ; Procedure for Challenging.

PATTERN 17 RIFLE.

Characteristics.—When cared for and handled correctly, the rifle is :—

- (i) Capable of a high and accurate rate of fire.
- (ii) Suitable, with the bayonet, for hand to hand fighting.

Training.—This should be designed to make the soldiers :—

- (i) Able to take a quick and accurate shot at service targets appearing for a short time at any distance up to 200 yards.
- (ii) Use cover correctly so that he can shoot without undue movement or exposure.

4. Daily Cleaning.

TO REMOVE BOLT. Push forward safety catch (on right side of body), with the thumb of the right hand, raise the bolt lever and draw it back as far as possible. On left hand side of body is a BOLT STOP operated by a spring. Press this outwards and the bolt is released.

TO REMOVE THE MAGAZINE. On the underside of the magazine is the magazine plate which has a small hole at the end nearest the trigger guard. Inside this hole is a spring catch which when depressed will release the magazine.

NO OTHER STRIPPING MUST BE ATTEMPTED.

In the butt of the rifle is kept an oil bottle and a pull-through. A note should be made when removing the pull-through of how it is rolled up and it should always be replaced in the same way—the bottle should be replaced with the cork towards the muzzle of the rifle.

TO CLEAN THE BARREL. Straighten out the pull-through and place a piece of flannelette (4ins. by 1½ins.) and slightly oiled in the centre loop. Drop the weight of the pull-through behind the back-sight and through the barrel from BREECH to MUZZLE. Hold the rifle with the heel of the butt on the ground and pull through in one movement. This will remove grit and dirt from the barrel and also leave it slightly oiled—this prevents rust.

REMAINDER OF RIFLE. Clean thoroughly with slightly oiled rag. Slightly oil bolt but leave face of bolt and magazine platform dry.

TO REPLACE THE MAGAZINE. Place the magazine spring in the magazine way, insert the lip in the front recess and press downward and forward.

TO REPLACE THE BOLT.

Ensure that

- (i) The safety catch is forward.
- (ii) The number on the bolt corresponds with that on the rifle.
- (iii) The extractor stem is turned to the right.

Place the bolt in the boltway, depress the magazine platform, close the bolt, press the trigger, and press down the bolt lever with two fingers of the right hand and pull back the safety catch with the first finger.

5. Cleaning after Firing.—First of all clean in the same manner as for daily cleaning, but with dry flannelette. This will remove surface fouling. Then there are two methods of continuing:—

- (i) **Boiling Water.**—Place a funnel in the breech of the rifle and pour boiling water down through the barrel. Dry the barrel with flannelette and then oil in the usual manner. It will be noticed that the barrel will “sweat” for two or three days. Thorough cleaning with flannelette will remedy this.

- (ii) **Gauze.**—Clean the barrel with dry flannelette to remove surface fouling. Place a piece of gauze in the pull-through. The gauze must be well oiled, fit the barrel tightly and all rough edges turned in. Pull through a few times. Remove the gauze, clean with dry flannelette and leave slightly oiled.

6. Loading and Unloading.—Speed in loading is essential and can only be attained by continued practice. Hold the rifle in any convenient position **with the muzzle pointing upwards.**

TO LOAD. Push forward safety catch—raise and draw back bolt—place charger in guide—place right thumb on top and near to base of cartridge and press down until all cartridges are in the magazine. Close the bolt and pull back the safety catch.

(NOTE.—The magazine holds 5 rounds only and when empty the platform is raised. This prevents the bolt from being closed until the magazine platform has been depressed by hand.)

TO UNLOAD. Open the breech and work the bolt backward and forward (WITHOUT pressing the trigger) until the magazine is empty. Close the bolt; press the trigger—**MUZZLE POINTING UPWARDS**—and apply safety catch.

TO CHARGE MAGAZINE. This is an extra safety measure and allows rounds to be placed in the magazine but NONE in the chamber. Load as before up to placing rounds in the magazine. Before closing the bolt, press down the top round with the thumb of the left hand and slide the bolt forward OVER THE TOP of the round. The bolt can now be closed WITHOUT a cartridge going into the chamber. Press the trigger and apply the safety catch. (NOTE.—This method is strongly advocated when the rifle is not likely to be required for immediate use because the trigger has a light pressure and accidents therefore will be avoided.)

TO LOAD FROM A CHARGED MAGAZINE. Push forward safety catch, open and close bolt sharply and the rifle is ready for firing.

7. Trigger Pressing.—The trigger has two pressures. The first should be taken when the rifle is brought to the aim, then align the sights and take the second pressure.

(NOTE.—An accurate aim will be spoiled if the trigger is pulled or jerked.)

8. **Aiming.**—The back-sight has TWO aperture sights. With the leaf DOWN one aperture is used as a battle sight up to 400 yards. For distances above this, raise the back-sight and adjust the slide for the required range.



RULES OF AIMING.

1. Sights upright.
2. Close the disengaged eye.
3. Look through the aperture at the target—get the tip of the foresight in the centre of the aperture and on the centre of the target. Look at the target.

TESTING. Before starting the test the instructor must see that there is no ammunition in the rifle or in the pockets—neither may dummies be used.

A convenient method is for the instructor to hold the target at barrel's length in front of the rifle and looking through a pinhole made at the point on the above diagram where the foresight touches the bull he can then ascertain that the sights are correctly aligned, and also that on pressing the trigger the sights remain "put," i.e., maintaining aim. Any snatching or jerkiness in trigger pressing will immediately be shewn.

FIRING INSTRUCTION.

GENERAL. The sequence of instruction is:—

Explanation—what is to be taught.

Demonstration—demonstrate the phase of the lesson.

Imitation—instructor details each movement, and squad imitates.

Practice—squad practise and instructor checks faults.

Inspect rifles, pouches and dummies, extend squad to two paces and point out targets.

THE LYING POSITION. (See pages 33-35).

1. **To lie down.**—Place the left foot a **good** pace forward in front of the right foot and hold the rifle at the balance in the left hand with the butt of the rifle resting on the right thigh just below the hip: place right hand on the ground (in front of the body) and lower the body, keeping right foot perfectly still, sliding the left foot well to the left. Slide rifle well out in front of the shoulder, grip small of butt tightly with the right hand, finger off the trigger, elbows well in and heels flat on the ground. The body should now be oblique to the rifle, the latter being in front of the shoulder and the barrel pointing towards the target.

2. **To get up.**—Place the right hand on the ground below the right shoulder, draw the rifle under the right arm and draw the left leg up. Push the body upwards, place the left foot under the body, bring the right foot forward, order arms and stand at ease.

3. **Loading and Unloading.**—Previously taught. Practise in lying position.

4. **Aiming Position.**—Push forward the safety catch. Keep the elbows still, bring the butt into the shoulder and take the first pressure. Lower the cheek on the butt and align the sights.

The rifle must be held firmly with both hands.

To elevate or depress the muzzle move the body backward or forward on the elbows. Lower the rifle to the ground and take the finger off the trigger.

5. **Firing.** When the sights are correctly aligned, restrain the breathing and take the second pressure.

Immediately the rifle has been fired reload by opening and closing bolt sharply without taking the rifle from the shoulder. During this movement the rifle should be tilted slightly to the right as this aids the extraction of the case. Take first pressure again at once, but if there is no immediate object in the sights release pressure and lower rifle.

Continual practice at these movements is essential. If there are no dummy cartridges for use when practising reloading remove magazine. This will enable the bolt to be moved backward and forward without having to push down the magazine platform.

NOTES.—

- (i) The normal rate of fire is 5 rounds a minute.
- (ii) On the number of rounds being named the safety catch is pushed forward.
- (iii) On the command "Stop," apply the safety catch and await further orders.
- (iv) Points to note in lying position :—Heels flat on the ground ; legs well apart ; body oblique ; elbows close in ; hand gripping rifle tightly ; butt, clear of right shoulder ; eyes, watching the front.

When in the loading position—

Finger off the trigger.
Rifle resting on the ground.

KNEELING POSITION. (See page 36).

1. To kneel down.—Take a pace forward with the left foot bringing it in front of the right. Place the rifle in the left hand.

Sink down on the right knee turning it outwards. The body should be evenly balanced on the left foot, right knee and right toe. Sit back on the right heel if possible. Left forearm resting on left leg. Butt in right groin. Rifle held firmly with muzzle pointing upwards.

2. To get up.—Rise up ; bring the left foot back to the right and place the right hand at the band. Order arms and stand at ease.

3. Loading and Unloading.—As in the lying position.

4. Aiming and Firing.—Slide the left forearm along the left leg until the butt comes to the shoulder. The left arm resting on the left knee. The elbow in front or in rear of left knee cap. The right arm slightly below the level of the right shoulder. All other points as in the lying position.

STANDING POSITION. (See page 38).

1. To Adopt the Position.—Turn half right ; carry off the left foot to the left front and bring the rifle to the right side with the muzzle pointing upward.

2. To Return.—Bring the left foot back to the right ; order arms and stand at ease.

3. Loading.—Aiming and Firing as previously taught.

FINALLY.—If you have to shoot, remember the following points :—

1. Is the rifle loaded and the safety catch forward ?
2. Lie down if possible. You are much steadier and also present a small target for your enemy to fire at.
3. A deliberate shot which finds its mark is much better and quicker than a number of hastily fired shots which may miss. Ammunition is limited.
4. If a target is moving aim a little in front of it.

FIRE DISCIPLINE TRAINING.

Object :—To teach men to obey orders accurately and quickly and when left to themselves to make the best use of their rifles.

First Stage.—At the halt.

Squad extended to two paces ; general line of direction pointed out. Instructor orders load and gives fire order.

Check the following points :—Correct position adopted ; quick loading and correct use of safety catch ; adjustment of sights and recognition of target ; correct rate of fire ; action on order "Stop" and "Go on" ; re-charging of magazines.

Second Stage.—On the move.

BRINGS OUT :—Movement ; use of ground and cover ; judging distance—when range omitted from fire order ; initiative ; alertness to orders ; passing of orders.

As proficiency increases, targets indicated should be more difficult, and incomplete fire orders should be given.

VISUAL TRAINING.

Object.—To develop the powers of observation. Owing to indistinct uniforms and the use of camouflage it is often necessary to make a thorough search of the ground before a target can be located.

Military Vocabulary.—To teach men the names of various objects so that they will each describe an object by the same name, e.g., viaduct, fir tree, ridge, valley, etc.

Searching Ground.—Point out boundaries; divide an area into foreground; middle distance and background, and systematically describe the ground, pointing out objects of military importance.

Men with rifles in aiming rests, lay aims on these objects to test recognition.

Locating Service Targets.—Silhouette figures or fatiguemen placed out in an area of ground against various backgrounds and presenting a varying degree of difficulty in location.

Men search the ground and describe targets seen. Bring out the reasons why they are easy or difficult to see.

JUDGING DISTANCE.

Object.—To teach how to estimate the range to a target.

Unit of Measure.—This method cannot be used beyond 400 yards or when the whole of the ground is not visible. Flags placed out 100 yards from a central point and in different directions.

Men adopt the lying position; look at the flags and memorize the distance of 100 yards.

Men now ordered to place themselves 100 yards from a named object and errors discussed.

Practise at distances up to 400 yards.

Appearance Method.—Fatiguemen placed out under cover at 100 yards interval from 200 yards to 600 yards.

Fatiguemen appear in turn and squad note the amount of detail that can be seen.

Practise on various objects, the range to these having been previously ascertained by the instructor.

Halving.—Select a point half-way to the target; judge to this point by unit of measure or appearance method and double estimate.

Bracketing.—Estimate the longest and shortest possible distances to the object and take the mean.

Unit Average.—Call for an estimate from each man and take the mean. Leave out any obvious incorrect estimates.

Key Range.—A method of estimating the distance to various objects from a known range.

FIRE ORDERS.

(NOTE.—This is written assuming "H.G.'s" have L.M.Guns).

Fire Power of Section.—Main fire-producing weapon of the Section is the light machine gun.

Snipers—skilled rifle shots.

Remainder of Section armed with rifles to augment the fire of the L.M.G. if required and to protect gun.

Control of Fire.—Section Commander controls the fire of L.M.G.; allots a task to snipers but does not directly control their fire. Fire may be concentrated or distributed according to type of target.

Individual Fire.—When control is no longer possible owing to battle conditions, each man will apply his fire to the best advantage.

Rates of Fire.—Normal method with L.M.G. is by bursts, but single round firing will be used when target does not call for volume.

This (i) Conserves ammunition.

(ii) Conceals presence of gun until favourable target appears.

(iii) Obtains surprise effect.

Requirements for Effective Fire.—

- (i) Section Commanders must be trained to select and indicate targets and to open fire at the right time.
- (ii) Men trained in judging distance and recognition.
- (iii) Good fire discipline combined with intelligent fire control.
- (iv) Accurate shooting.

Fire Plan.—Made by Battalion and Company Commanders.

Fire Direction.—Platoon Commanders orders to Section Commanders dealing with application of fire according to fire plan.

Fire Control.—Section Commanders orders to Section for opening of fire.

Considerations in Opening Fire.—Before opening fire, Section Commanders must consider :—

- (i) Range—The shorter the range the more accurate the shooting.
- (ii) Visibility and vulnerability of the target.
- (iii) Surprise effect.—Will this be obtained ?
- (iv) Best weapon or combination of weapons to use.
- (v) Automatic or single rounds. This depends on type of target and ammunition available.
- (vi) Kind of fire—Slow or rapid.

Fire Control Orders.—Good indication of targets essential ; orders brief and clear ; and aids used only when necessary. Orders given calmly, loudly, concisely, with sufficient pauses to allow men to understand and act.

Concentrated Fire.—Used when target has little width—not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ ° or width of foresight block. Section directs all its fires to the same point.

Distributed Fire.—Necessary to engage a wide target such as enemy section in extended order. L.M. Gunner fires bursts or rounds at irregular intervals between limits of target. Riflemen fire at approximate points between limits of target corresponding to their own position in the section.

Enfilade Fire.—Most effective and employed whenever possible.

Sequence of Fire Control Order.—

DESIGNATION.—To draw the attention of those to whom the order is to be given.

RANGE.—Limits the area to be searched and prevents looking away from the front once the sights have been set.

INDICATION.—Direction and description.

NUMBER OF BURSTS OR ROUNDS.—Controls ammunition and gives lull for further orders.

KIND OF FIRE.—Single rounds ; automatic ; slow or rapid—depends on target and situation.

Types of Fire Control Orders.—

Normal.—Given when time permits.

EXAMPLE.—“ No. 1 Section—400—Quarter left, prominent gap in fence—at right end—5 bursts—fire.”

Brief.—Used when target is obvious and situation does not allow time for a normal order.

EXAMPLE.—“ Stop ”—“ Sights down—slightly right—rapid fire.”

Anticipatory.—Used in attack or defence when it is possible to make all preparations, but the opening of fire is withheld until required.

EXAMPLE ATTACK.—“ No. 1 Section—450—House—immediately below—gate—when No. 2 Section start to advance—open rapid on my order.”

EXAMPLE DEFENCE.—“No. 1 Section—400—large gap near right end of wood—the enemy may cross that gap—open rapid on my order.”

Individual.—Allows an individual to open fire when a target appears. Normally used at close ranges.

EXAMPLE.—“No. 1 Section—250—slightly left—group of buildings—watch that area and fire when you see a target.

NOTES :—

- (i) Each firer will make the necessary allowance for wind in all fire orders.
- (ii) No. 1 Section means that the L.M.G. only will fire. When the riflemen only or both L.M.G. and riflemen are required, the order “ Riflemen only ” or “ Gun and Riflemen ” will be given after the Section has been named.

- (iii) Rates of fire.—Slow fire means 5 rounds or 5 bursts a minute. Rapid fire is a man's best rate combined with accuracy.
- (iv) If "Rapid fire" is ordered, the fire will be controlled by the order "Stop" and "Go on."

Practice of Fire Orders.—

- Object** (i) To practise Section Commander in indicating targets and framing fire orders.
- (ii) To practise men in recognition.

Training starts with simple fire orders, progressing to the indication of difficult targets.

Lessons, whenever possible, will be carried out in open country. If this is not possible a landscape target can be used.

Method—

- (i) Each man should have an aiming rest.
- (ii) Instructor gives normal fire order.
- (iii) Men lay aims on point they would fire at.
- (iv) Check aims and discuss fire effect.

Direct Method.—Used when indicating easy targets.

- (i) Point out area and general direction.
- (ii) Indication of obvious targets.
- (iii) Indication by direction, e.g., slightly, quarter, half or three-quarters right or left, either from last target or general direction. Men turn in the direction named when recognising.

Aids.—Used when the target is more difficult to indicate.

Reference Points.—Must be prominent and unmistakable objects of different kinds and a reasonable distance apart. The reference point will be named before describing the target.

Vertical Clock.—The reference point is taken as the centre of the clock hanging vertically. The direction is named first, e.g., "Right 4 o'clock."

Finger Method.—The instructor measures with left arm at full extent, the number of fingers' breadth, right or left, from reference point and indicates target.

Men measure in a similar manner.

Degrees.—Measured with left arm at full extent.

From little finger to tip of thumb, with hand extended=19°.

From first finger to little finger, with hand extended=12°.

Hand clenched=8°.

RANGE PRACTICES.

Owing to the difficulty of suitable ranges, targets, etc., it is anticipated that firing will often be confined to 25 yards range.

Binoculars are most useful for range practices and should be used if possible.

Assuming that ammunition will be available at the rate of 10 rounds per man the following practices should be fired.

1. **Grouping Practice.** 5 rounds. Sights at 200 yards. Fired with rifle rested if possible. Sandbags (or improvised rests, lugs, etc.) will be needed for this.

Object.—To test the man's ability to hold, aim and press the trigger correctly and to get a close group by taking the same aim for each shot.

If the rifle is correctly zeroed the group should form about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. above the point aimed at.

Standard 5 shots in

1 in. group, i.e., covered by a halfpenny. Marksman.

2 in. group—1st class shot.

3 in. group—2nd class shot.

The position of the group is **not** taken into account for scoring purposes.

(NOTE.—Should a good group be obtained which forms, say, 2 ins. away from the correct place, it is possible that the rifle is not correctly zeroed.)

2. **Application.** 5 rounds. Sights at 200 yards.

Object.—To apply the knowledge previously gained from the grouping practice so as to get a group of shots into the highest scoring surface of the target.