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“OS British Army training maps”

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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.

## ***Ordnance Survey British Army training maps 1906-1918***

***Derek Deadman***

Training troops in the British Army after the end of the Boer War in 1902 took place at all organisational levels, from the individual soldier receiving personal instruction, to manoeuvres and exercises involving upwards of 50,000 people and large groupings of different units. Map reading was seen as an important part of such instruction, whether it was for reconnaissance or scouting purposes, or for ascertaining the nature of the ground over which troops might have to move. Some units such as the Cavalry and Mounted Infantry would be expected to be better prepared to use maps than the infantry, with officers, perhaps, more highly trained in this skill than those of lower ranks. From an analysis of some of the training maps described below, however, it might be wise not to be too dogmatic on these points.

This article seeks to describe and illustrate some Ordnance Survey maps published between 1906 and 1918 explicitly intended to be used in training by the individual soldier or unit. Not covered here are the manoeuvre maps used for the large set-piece manoeuvres and exercises held in most years between 1902 and 1914. Typically, these maps have areas prohibited to the military marked on the face of the map. A recent history of these large scale activities can be found in Simon Batten.<sup>1</sup> Also not covered here are maps probably intended for training purposes such as those entitled *The Country Around Aldershot, Wareham and Surrounding Country* and the many maps of Salisbury Plain, or the maps produced for military purposes with direct printed covers that presumably found a use as training maps.

The most commonly encountered OS training maps are the half-inch maps of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland published between 1912 and 1915. For England and Wales, Hellyer<sup>2</sup> (Hi 36.B.4) indicates a virtually complete covering of England and Wales through training maps with 34 out of the 40 sheets available in the half-inch series known also to exist as training maps. A much smaller coverage is known for Scotland (Hi 37.B.3) and Ireland (Hi 39.A.3). All maps carry a price of 6d, suggesting that these maps were also made available for public sale. The maps are purely topographical with no military markings. To the information in Hellyer may be added a sheet 5 (Belfast) for Ireland and subcontracted printers for sheets 24 (White & Pike Ltd, Birmingham), and sheets 32 and 33 (Moody Bros, Birmingham). One copy seen of sheet 39 (Brighton) has a stamped overprint on the front cover for '2/5th The Queens RWS. Regt', that is The Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment. This suggests, as would probably be expected, that units bought their local sheets directly or on behalf of their troops for training purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Batten, *Futile Exercise? The British Army's Preparations for War 1902-1914*. Helion & Co, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Hellyer, *Ordnance Survey Small-scale maps indexes: 1801-1998*. David Archer, 1999.

The use of existing OS maps for training purposes with covers printed or stamped to show ownership was not uncommon. Both Oxford University Officers Training Corps (1911) and Cambridge University Officers Training Corps (1912) used their local one-inch third edition district maps in this way, in both cases with otherwise militarily unmarked maps. Hellyer (Hi 8.8.2) states that the 1913 *Windsor and Neighbourhood district map* was prepared specially for Eton College Officers Training Corps. It carries an ECOTC stamp at the top of the front cover, but otherwise has no military markings. Hellyer and Oliver<sup>3</sup> (p72) illustrate a selection of covers with a military training theme.

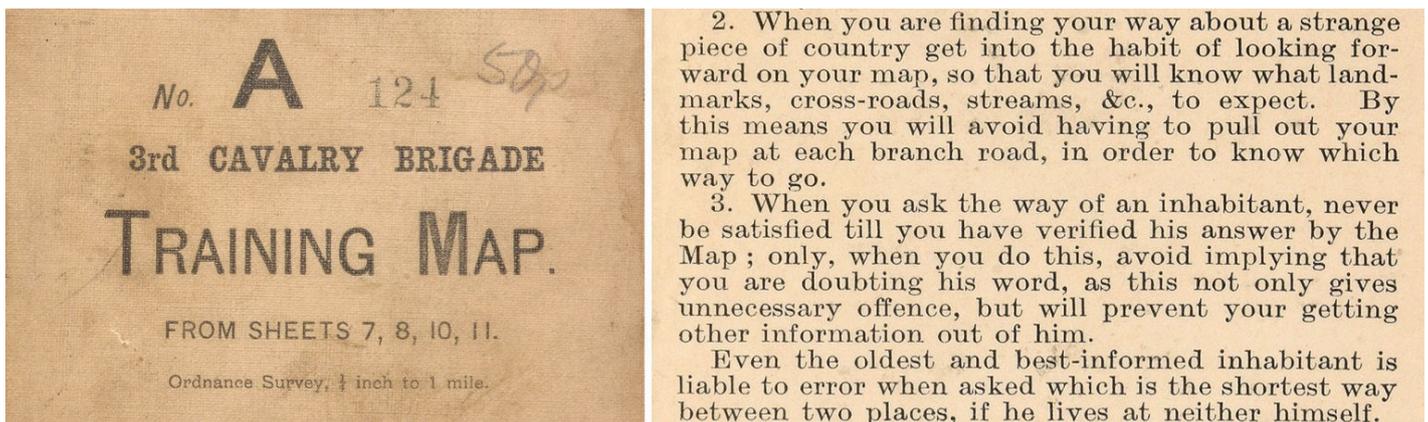
A map that does display military markings on the face of the map is the *Scottish Command training map* of 1911, consisting of parts of sheets 21, 22, 13 and 14 of the one-inch Scottish Third Edition (no-alpha numeric border). Hellyer and Oliver (p135) list this map which is probably an example of Hi 15.3. Similar to manoeuvre maps of the period, this shows Prohibited Areas such as fox coverts, warrens, Her Ladyship's Gorse, Ayr Race-course, and 'Pheasants reared here'. It would seem odd to have a specific date for a training map which, generally, could be thought of as being useful over a number of years. The manoeuvres in England in 1911 were cancelled, but whether this map was intended to play some part in wider military training seems unknown.



Two training maps that deserve more research share both concept and some text and should be considered together. Not previously noted, as far as the author knows, both exhibit some very unusual features as far as both OS training maps

<sup>3</sup> Roger Hellyer and Richard Oliver, *A Guide to the Ordnance Survey one-inch Third Edition maps, in colour*. Charles Close Society, 2004.

and other OS maps are concerned. As it appears that further examples of a similar construction and purpose are likely to exist for other units, members are asked to let the author know if they have such. The earlier map (1906) has a cover title *Hampshire Carabineers Imperial Yeomanry training map* and the later map (1913) has cover title *3rd Cavalry Brigade training map*. (The usual spelling of the name of the Hampshire unit is Carabiniers after the carbine rifles carried by their soldiers). Both maps are at the quarter-inch scale. The most unusual features of both are that they are maps made explicitly for named units in the British Army, and that both dissected maps have what could be termed a numbered page training manual for the individual soldier affixed in individual sheets to the reverse of the dissections. The text for the Brigade map manual actually mentions the Brigade by name, so the manual was clearly made for the map. The Hampshire map has an introduction addressed 'To the Yeoman Using this Map' so could have been appropriate for a wider group of units. Both units were mounted – mounted infantry and cavalry – and the texts of the associated manuals reflect this.



Like most of the maps discussed earlier, the maps themselves carry no military markings. The Hampshire map is a First Edition Quarter-inch map of England and Wales, coloured edition with hill shading, sheets 19 and 23 conjoined (Hi 51.2.2). It carries a date code of 12.05. The manual comprises sections on Field Days, Manoeuvres etc., Map Reading, The Principal Duty of Yeomanry in War, General Remarks on two of the Duties of Yeomanry. Observation and Protection, Crossing Rivers, Notes on Signalling, Time and Space, Notes on Supplies, Field Cooking, Care of Horses, Veterinary Hints etc, Health Hints for Use in the Field, Short Hints on First Aid and Tables of Weights and Measures. There are 30 dissected panels with pages 7-36 of the manual affixed to the back of the map. The map itself covers 24 dissected panels with pages 1-6 of the manual forming a row of six panels below the map at the front. The back cover dated 1 January 1906 contains the surprising statement that 'These Maps are the property of the Hampshire Carabineers Imperial Yeomanry. Every Non-commissioned Officer and trained duty man to be in possession of one [...] The map will invariably be carried on all Yeomanry duties. Each copy will be signed for by the individual to whom it is issued, and any loss or damage through want of proper care will be charged for

at cost price, viz 4/- per copy'. All maps were individually numbered on the front cover, presumably in case of loss. This was a map intended for the non-officer class, which is the opposite of the established view that it was the officer class that used maps. The idea that the lower ranks would all carry a map certainly seems unusual. Lists of required personal kit carried by troopers at this time do not mention maps. Furthermore, although the volunteer Hampshire Yeomanry strength would be smaller than a Brigade (Brigades were about 4000 men in 1914), it would still have been expensive to equip each soldier with a copy of the map.

The 3rd Cavalry Brigade was stationed in Ireland. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade training map does not explicitly mention the rank of soldier for whom it was intended, but the manual overlaps in great part with that of the Hampshire Carabineers map and the front cover of the map is also individually numbered. The map is displayed on 36 dissected panels except for two panels that have a map of Ireland at scale 1:50,000 marked up for the counties. The 36 dissections each have a page of text of the manual affixed to the back. Some sections are taken verbatim from corresponding sections of the Hampshire map, others are edited versions from that map rewritten to make them explicitly relevant for Cavalry rather than Yeomanry forces. The Cavalry version has no notes on signalling, semaphore and abbreviations, nor does it contain notes on field cooking. Unsurprisingly, given that a major role of the Cavalry was reconnaissance, it does have more extensive notes on scouting. As Batten remarks (p190): "Since the Boer War, the work of Robert Baden-Powell (Inspector-General of Cavalry) and Michael Rimington (Commander of 3rd Cavalry Brigade), which included the use of specially trained scouts, innovative training methods and a far greater emphasis on care for the horse, had resulted in a marked improvement in the performance of the cavalry in its reconnaissance role ..... (that was) commended in the manoeuvre reports for 1912 and 1913". The map is a quarter-inch map of Ireland coloured edition with hill shading (Hi 69.2.1) made up from sheets 7,8,10 and 11. It has no military markings apart from a broken red line following the Province boundary that presumably marks the training area of the Brigade. It carries a publication date of 1913. Batten (p149) notes that in that year, The Irish Command held manoeuvres involving 14,000 men.

The final training map considered here is different from those above in that it was produced by a private firm using Ordnance Survey maps. The Map of the Country Round Berkhamsted<sup>4</sup> is unusual in that a detailed account of how it came to be made and its specific features were published shortly after its publication, and the full text of this account is available online.<sup>5</sup> The Inns of Court Officers Training Corps was stationed at Berkhamsted for the duration of World War I. In August 1914 the actual strength of the Corps was 268. Its role was to train officers with a view to placing them in other units as needed. By the end of

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<sup>4</sup> *Map of the Country Round Berkhamsted Prepared from the Ordnance Survey for the Exclusive Use of the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps* by Sifton Praed & Co. Ltd, London, 1916.

<sup>5</sup> Col FHL Errington (ed), *Inns of Court Officers Training Corps During the Great War*, 1922.

the war, 13,000 men had passed through training, of whom between 11,000 and 12,000 had received commissions; 2100 of these officers were killed and three were recipients of the Victoria Cross.

The account of the way maps were used at Berkhamsted says that for the first eighteen months of the war, uncoloured Ordnance maps were available for training purposes but the preferred coloured Ordnance maps were in short supply. Whilst all men were required to have maps, instruction in the use of them was given 'incidentally rather than systematically .... (but) in the course of time it became a regular part of the curriculum to which more and more importance was attached'. The account states that 'When, however, the use of squared maps became general in France, it was necessary to accustom recruits to use them, and at the same time to familiarise them with the scales which they would find in use when they went abroad. Accordingly, in 1916, by the kind permission of the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, a special map of the Berkhamsted area was prepared by the well-known map publishers, Messrs Sifton, Praed & Co, on the scale of 1:40,000, and squared according to the system then in use in France. The map was produced by photographic enlargement from the Ordnance sheet, the contours being overprinted in red (with approximate form-lines at 50ft VI (vertical intervals). Owing to the enlargement, the contour-lines were necessarily rather large, and the red colour made them conspicuous .... For instructional purposes it was a clear advantage'. (Errington, p51). Peter Chasseaud<sup>6</sup> (p6) discussed this Berkhamsted map in his articles on Artillery Training Maps of the UK because of the system of squaring used on the map, but did not think it was used for artillery training. Hellyer and Oliver<sup>7</sup> (pp 8-10) consider several different military grids of this period.

*Thanks are given to Peter Gibson, David Howell and Rob Wheeler for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Remaining errors and opinions are those of the author.*

7. A Map on a large scale is much easier to follow than a small scale one. For this reason you will prefer the 1 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey Map to this; but remember that on service we shall hardly ever be able to use a larger scale Map than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to 1 mile. For one thing, think of the number of sheets we should have to carry about. *This 3rd Cavalry Brigade Training Map alone occupies no less than 56 different sheets of the 1 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey (see diagram on back of cover), and yet we should move right across it from North to South in four moderate marches.*

<sup>6</sup> Peter Chasseaud, *The Development of Artillery Squares and Artillery Training Maps of the UK 1914-1918, Part I. Sheetlines 10, 2-8, 1984; Part II. Sheetlines 11, 12-14, 1984.*

<sup>7</sup> Roger Hellyer and Richard Oliver, *Military Maps. The one-inch series of Great Britain and Ireland.* Charles Close Society, 2004.