

Gunnery.

The general knowledge of gunnery is not of such a high standard as in the Garrison Artillery Volunteers, but this is partly due to the want of a local drill-book containing questions and answers on gunnery, &c., as issued to the Garrison Artillery Volunteers; that is, however, being remedied by the issue of a similar book to the Field Artillery.

In many instances there were a number of men absent from the gunnery examinations, which further reduced the average marks.

The gun drill is fairly smart in most batteries, but a number of non-commissioned officers are weak in detailing drill and imparting instruction. It is not necessary for a Volunteer non-commissioned officer to be able to detail the drill off by rote, but he should have a good style and good word of command, and know his work thoroughly.

Officers commanding batteries should hold half-yearly examination of non-commissioned officers for re-drilling and imparting instructions, when, if any non-commissioned officers are not up to the standard, they should be replaced by better men.

Signalling.

With the exception of A, B, and D Batteries, the signallers had very little practice previous to the training-camps, consequently the marks awarded in this subject are low. Field sketching and reconnaissance have also been neglected. It is most important that these subjects should be thoroughly taught during the present year, as they are absolutely necessary for a field battery, particularly now that firing from behind cover is so much used. The winter months should be devoted to training special men in the above subjects, and every officer, non-commissioned officer, and man should be taught semaphore signalling.

Range-finding.

Three batteries are equipped with telemeters, and three with telemeters.

In most cases range-takers passed a good examination, but at service practice failed to give good results, owing to indistinct targets being used. The men apparently have always practised taking ranges to conspicuous objects. Some range-takers are bad riders, and unfitted for reconnaissance duties.

Gun-laying.

In A, B, D, and H Batteries the laying was very good. Too little attention has, however, been paid to laying instruction throughout the year in most batteries.

Trumpeters.

There are some very good trumpeters in all except I Battery, but their training in semaphore signalling has been in some cases neglected.

The calls sounded in each battery are different, owing to various trumpet and bugle call books being on issue. The 1903 edition must be used and strictly adhered to.

Drivers.

Several of the batteries are below the establishment in drivers, and consequently scored a low percentage of marks. The driving is generally good, but more care should be taken in enlisting men as drivers; they should be good horsemen before enlistment, as in a Volunteer battery there is insufficient time to teach men how to ride. They can be quickly trained to drive if they are good drivers.

D, H, and I Batteries had the use of twelve trained horses for the training-camp.

BATTERY TURN-OUT AND ROUTE MARCH.

The turn-out was fairly satisfactory as regards time, but several batteries were severely penalised for careless harnessing. For this test all teams were picketed to gun and limber as in bivouac. Four-horse teams were used. H and I Batteries had no wagons. B Battery had only two-horse teams for wagon-limbers.

Times were as follows: A Battery, 10 min. 20 sec.; B Battery, 9 min.; D Battery, 8 min. 50 sec.; E Battery, 9 min. 30 sec.; H Battery, 16 min. 20 sec. (no wagons); I Battery, 7 min. 15 sec. (no wagons).

The route march could not be carried out properly in accordance with conditions, excepting in D and E Batteries, owing to the men being unable to get leave from their employers. Short route marches were, however, held in all the batteries.

Battery Drill.

The battery drill in most cases was good until the officers were casualtied, when it was found that the senior non-commissioned officers had not been sufficiently well trained to take the place of officers.

More time should be devoted to training in fire discipline and application of fire under the varying conditions likely to arise on service; drills, like foot parades and ceremonial, should be limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Fire Discipline.

Very good throughout. Penalties have been made in several instances for slack camp routine, lack of smartness, &c., but the errors were chiefly due to want of training.