

INKERMAN BARRACKS AND THE SENIOR OFFICERS' SCHOOL

Woking Prison

A prison, primarily for invalided male convicts, was opened on the common, two miles from Woking Station, in April 1859.

Ten years later, the first purpose-built female convict prison in Britain, adjacent to the male invalid prison, was opened in April 1869, bringing to a close the use of prisons at Brixton and Parkhurst for women. The combined prisons covered 63 acres and was documented, during construction, to have a wall 18 feet high. It held, on average, 650 inmates at any one time and contained both a hospital ward and an insane inmate ward.

The male prison was closed in March 1889, as the decline in the convict population made it unnecessary to maintain a separate prison for invalids. The female prison closed in November 1895 when the female prisoners were transferred to the new female prison at Aylesbury; the buildings were handed over to the War Office.

Inkerman Barracks

In 1892, the buildings of the male prison were converted into barracks capable of accommodating two infantry battalions, and initially became the home of the 2nd Battalion, the Royal West Surrey Regiment. The barracks were named after the 1854 Battle of Inkerman, a battle during the Crimean War.

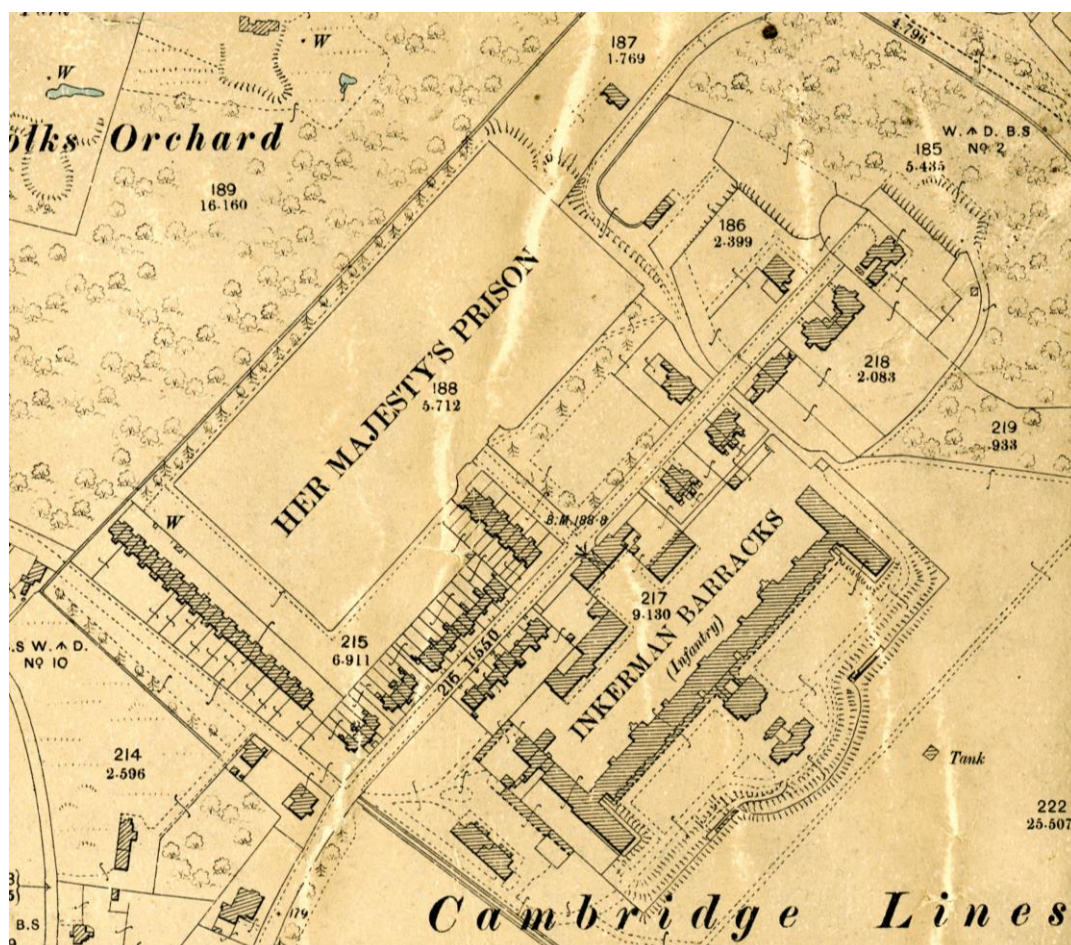


Figure 1. Ordnance Survey plan, 1896

Senior Officers' School

The Senior Officers' School was a British military establishment, established in 1916 by Brigadier-General Reginald John Kentish, for the training of Commonwealth senior officers of all services in inter-service cooperation.

The School was intended for senior officers of the British Army who aspired to battalion command and to ensure that all such candidates received suitable training. It was taken as an affront by some senior officers of the day, who resented the implication that they were incapable of delivering the necessary training.



Figure 2. Brigadier Reginald J Kentish

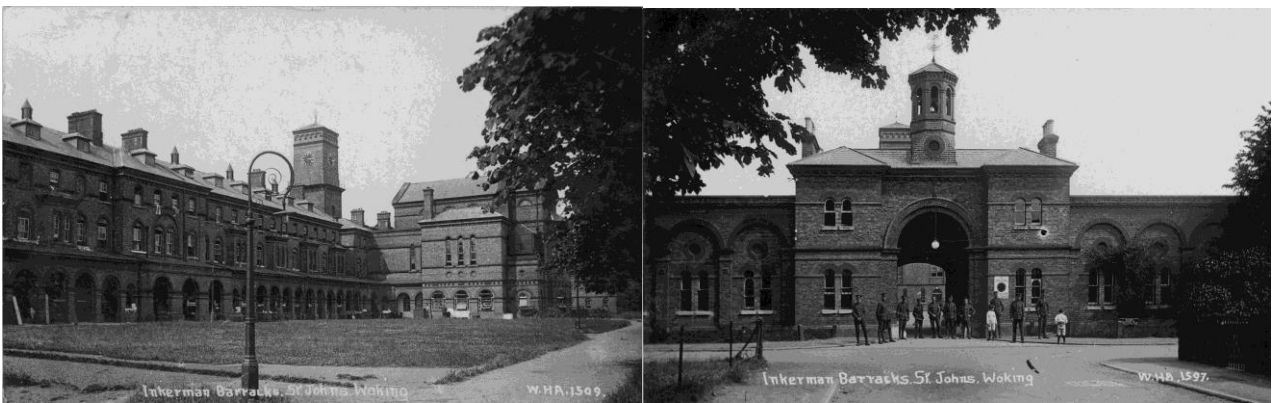


Figure 3. Inkerman Barracks, c1915

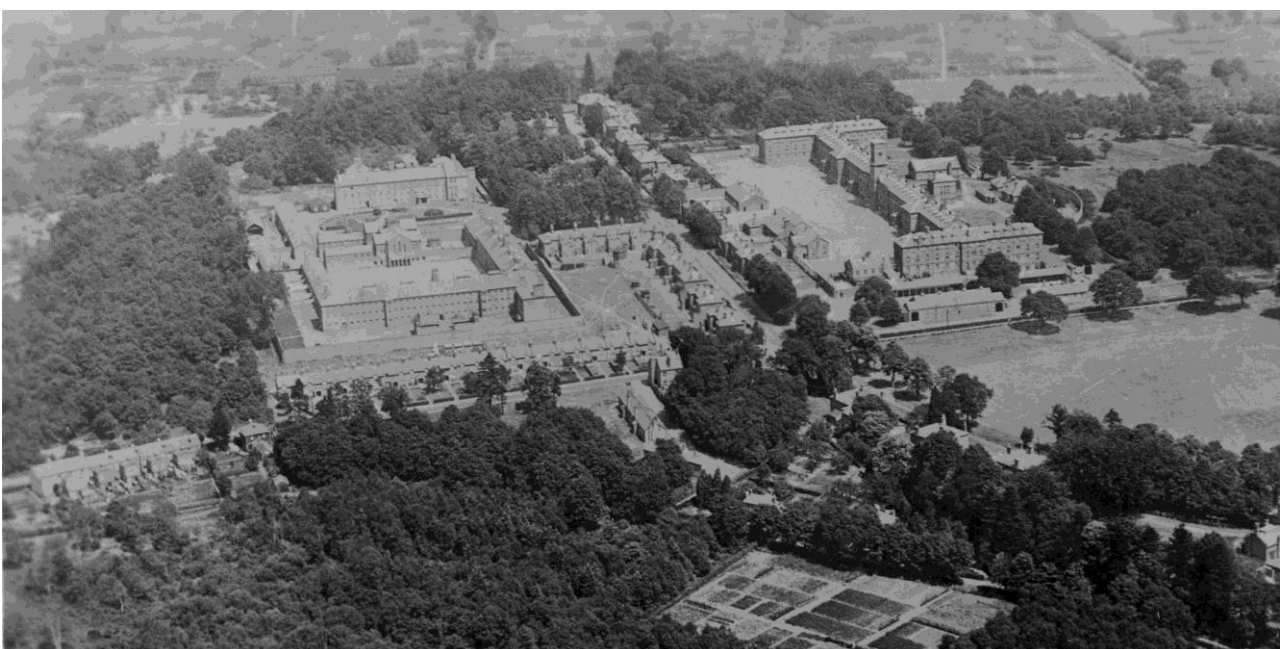


Figure 4. Aerial view, 1920

The School was originally based at North Camp, Aldershot during the First World War. It moved to Inkerman Barracks, in 1919, where the first course was held between 15th October and 28th November. Subsequent courses lasted three months.

Senior Officers' School.

The Senior Officers' School which was formed at Aldershot during the war has now moved to Woking. It was primarily intended for the higher training of those young officers who found themselves in command of, or likely to command, battalions in France. I hear that this institution will remain as one of the instructional schools of the New Army. It will be the finishing school for senior majors before being selected for the command of their regiments, and the course there will take the place of the old tactical fitness examination which was the nightmare of so many officers in the days before the war.

Figure 5. Pall Mall Gazette 1 Nov 1919

It was usual for a golf match to be played between courses at the school and members of parliament from the House of Commons.

Senior Officers' School.

Those officers who rose to the rank of major and above during the war will, I feel sure, be interested to hear that the Senior Officers' School has been established at Inkerman Barracks, near Woking. Apart from any other considerations, few better places could be chosen. The barracks are close to a very fair-sized town which can be reached easily from London, and the country round is some of the finest in Surrey, whether one looks at it from the point of view of the military man or a lover of picturesque places.

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The course is to last three months, and during that time officers who attend will have an opportunity of learning all that they should know in the administration of a command. It will serve another useful purpose, in that it will enable the higher grade officers to discuss from individual viewpoints Army matters and those thousand and one little details which mean so much to the junior officers and other ranks.

Figure 6. Pall Mall Gazette 7 Apr 1920

SENIOR OFFICERS' SCHOOL v. HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A match between teams of the House of Commons and the Senior Officers' School at Woking was played on the Worplesdon course on Saturday, and once again the Parliamentary golfers were beaten. The singles were won by the Officers' School by five matches to two, while the foursomes were taken by the same side by two matches to nil, thus on the day the Officers' School team beat the House of Commons by seven matches to two. Details:—

SENIOR OFFICERS' SCHOOL.		HOUSE OF COMMONS.	
Lt.-Col. W. Green (4 and 3)	1	Hon. P. S. Jackson	0
Lt.-Col. Gibbons (1 hole)	1	J. R. Remer	0
Lt.-Col. Jones (7 and 6)	1	Capt. R. Kennedy	0
Lt.-Col. A. H. Roberts (1 hole)	1	Harcourt Johnston	0
Lt.-Col. Bullock	0	L. Worthington-Evans (1 hole)	1
Maj. W. W. Hayley (5 and 2)	1	Maj. Hennessey	0
Lt.-Col. W. J. Shannon (halved)	0	Maj. Lambert Ward (halved)	0
Lt.-Col. C. W. M'Lean	0	Col. Assheton Pownall (2 holes)	1
Total	5	Total	2
FOURSOMES.			
Lt.-Col. Green and Lt.-Col. Gibbons (4 and 3)	1	Hon. F. S. Jackson and H. Johnston	0
Lt.-Col. Jones and Maj. Hayley (halved)	0	J. R. Remer and Capt. Kennedy (halved)	0
Lt.-Col. Roberts and Lt.-Col. Shannon (halved)	0	L. Evans and Maj. Hennessey (halved)	0
Lt.-Col. Bullock and Lt.-Col. M'Lean (4 and 3)	1	Maj. Ward and Capt. Pownall	0
Total	2	Total	0



Figure 7. C E Corkran

The cost of running the School at Woking was reported to be £24,000 per year.

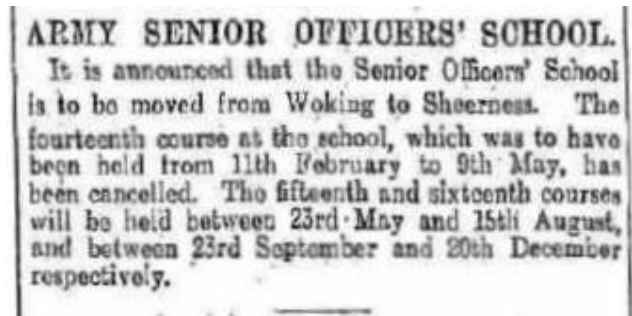
The Commandant of the School was Brigadier Charles Edward Corkran. The instructors for the first course comprised three colonels and six lieutenant-colonels. There were numerous guest lecturers. A list of the lectures given on the first course is reproduced as an appendix at the end.

The objects of the School¹, as laid down by G.H.Q., H.F.², were:

- (a) To disseminate and inculcate sound tactical principles as laid down in Official Manuals, and to insure [sic] uniformity of method in their application throughout the Army.
- (b) To give higher tactical training to Senior Regimental Officers of all arms than they would normally obtain with their unit or formation.
- (c) To remove, by graduating at this School, the need for tactical fitness examinations.
- (d) To give both practical and theoretical instruction, with which will be combined demonstrations with, and actual command of, troops of all arms.

In 1921, the 5th course was opened up to also admit officers from the Navy and Royal Marines.

In 1924, the School was evicted from Inkerman, as accommodation was needed for troops; it was transferred to Sheerness, Kent.



Finally, the School moved to Erlestoke Park in Wiltshire in 1939, where it continued to operate until its closure in 1961.

Today, equivalent officer training is conducted on the Higher Command & Staff Course, at the Joint Services Command & Staff College at Shrivenham.

¹ Report on the First Course Senior Officers' School Woking, 1920

² General Headquarters, Home Forces

THE SENIOR OFFICERS' SCHOOL, SHEERNESS

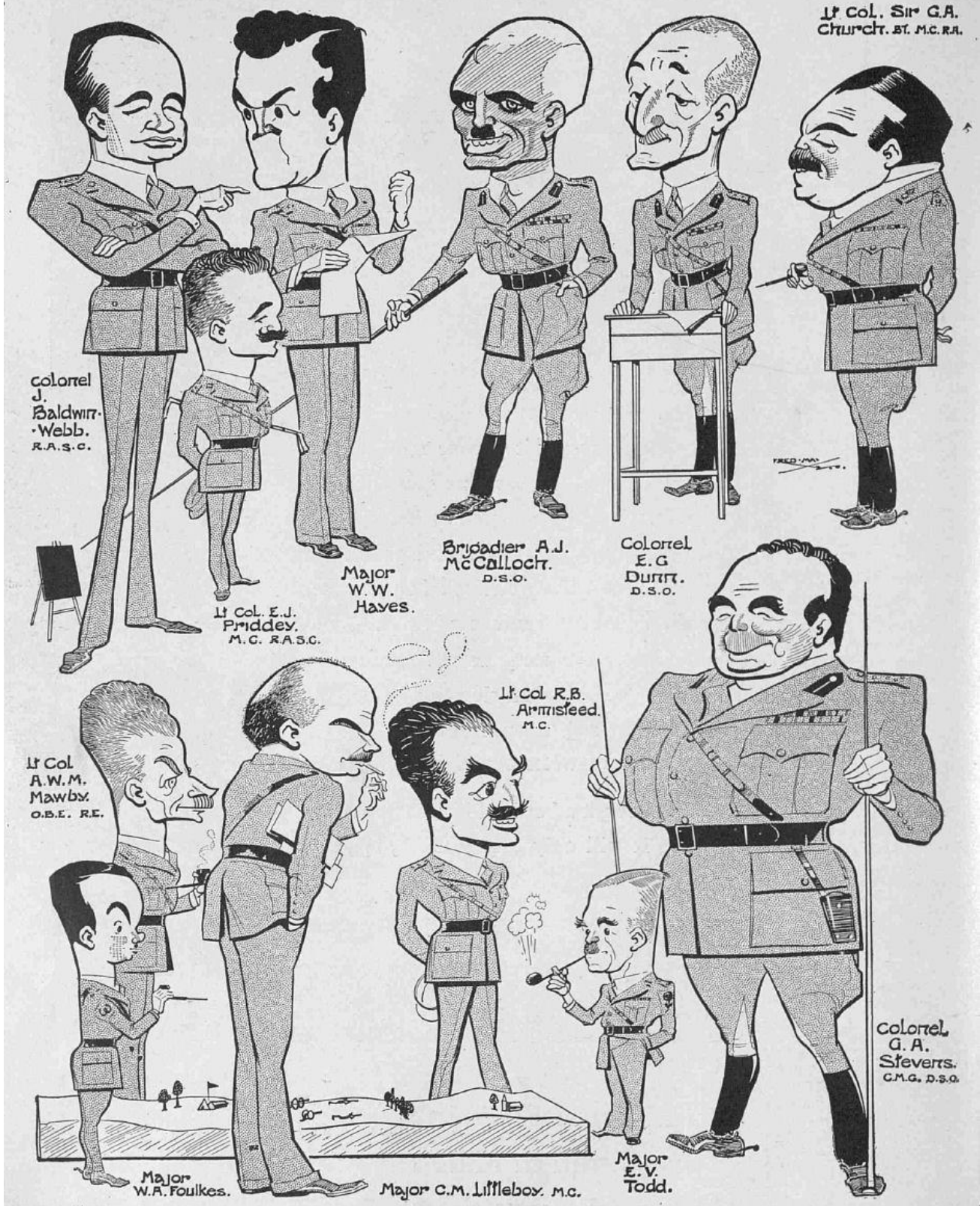


Figure 8. From *The Tatler*, October 1930

After the School

The Royal Military Police, who had previously been based at a hutted camp at Mytchett, made Inkerman Barracks their depot in 1947. It remained the location for all military police training until a new depot was established at Chichester in 1964.

After the barracks closed in 1970, the site was sold to the local council and developed for residential use. Today all that remains are the original prison staff houses (used as Married Servicemen's Quarters by the military), now private residences.



Figure 9. Former prison staff houses / Married quarters, 2020

LIST OF LECTURES GIVEN AT THE FIRST COURSE.

October—November, 1919.

1.	Oct.	17	Col. J. F. C. Fuller, D.S.O., Staff Duties, War Office.	The Science of War.
2.	"	18	Lieut.-Col. H. W. M. Wat- son, C.M.G., D.S.O.	The Senior Officers' School during the War.
3.	"	20	Col. R. J. Kentish, C.M.G., D.S.O.	" Moral."
4.	"	21	Lieut.-Col. G. R. Harrison, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Protection.
5.	"	21	Prof. F. Adkins	The Expansion of America.
6.	"	21	Maj.-Gen. Sir J. H. David- son, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.	Social, Economic and Political Matters.
7.	"	22	Lieut.-Col. R. Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Artillery.
8.	"	22	Col. G. C. Hamilton, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Advanced and Rear Guards.
9.	"	23	Lieut.-Col. C. S. Rome, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Cavalry (1).
10.	"	23	Col. R. J. Kentish, C.M.G., D.S.O.	" Moral."
11.	"	23	Capt. Egerton, R.N. ...	Naval Operations in the Pacific.
12.	"	24	Ditto	Ditto.
13.	"	24	Col. J. W. G. Burnett, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Infantry Formations.
14.	"	24	Col. Lord Gorell, C.B.E., M.C.	Educational Train- ing.
15.	"	25	Col. J. Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O.	The Offensive in Posi- tion Warfare.
16.	"	27	Col. H. S. J. L. Winter- botham, C.M.G., D.S.O., Ordnance Survey, South- ampton.	Maps in War.
17.	"	27	Commander Hall, O.B.E., Staff College.	Submarine Warfare.

18.	Oct.	28	Commander Hall, O.B.E., Staff College	Submarine Warfare.
19.	"	29	Maj.-Gen. Sir H. C. C. Uniacke, K.C.M.G., C.B.	Artillery Co-operation.
20.	"	30	Lieut.-Col. C. S. Rome, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Cavalry (2).
21.	"	30	Col. T. G. Dalby, D.S.O., Small Arms School.	Musketry Training.
22.	"	31	Lieut. - Col. Hoysted, D.S.O., Royal Engineers.	Military Engineering.
23.	"	31	Flight Commander C. R. J. Brand, D.S.O., M.C., D.S.C.	Flights by Night.
24.	Nov.	1	Lieut.-Col. R. Bastard, D.S.O.	Position Warfare.
25.	"	1	Lieut.-Col. Etches, O.B.E., Small Arms School.	Ground and Formations.
26.	"	3	Lieut.-Col. C. S. Rome, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Cavalry (3).
27.	"	4	Gen. Sir F. I. Maxse, K.C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O.	Training.
28.	"	5	Lieut. - Col. F. Willan, C.M.G., D.S.O.	Defence.
29.	"	5	Lieut.-Col. A. Moberley, D.S.O.	Counter Battery Work.
30.	"	6	Maj.-Gen. Sir H. B. Walker, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.	The Administration and Command of a Battalion.
31.	"	7	Maj. F. E. Hotblack, D.S.O., M.C.	Tanks.
32.	"	7	Maj.-Gen. Sir C. H. Harrington, K.C.B., D.S.O.	Army Organization.
33.	"	8	Maj. F. E. Hotblack, D.S.O., M.C.	Tanks (2).
34.	"	8	Col. H. W. S. Rawlings, C.M.G., D.S.O.	The History of Artillery during the War.
35.	"	12	Maj. Dunn, D.S.O. ...	Siege of Kut.
36.	"	12	Maj.-Gen. Tudor, C.B., C.M.G.	Artillery Co-operation.
37.	"	12	Lieut. - Col. Edmonds, D.S.O., O.B.E., Staff College.	Aircraft.
38.	"	13	Prof. F. Adkins	Art of Teaching.

LIST OF LECTURES

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|-----|------|----|--|---|
| 39. | Nov. | 14 | Maj. Ackerman, D.S.O.,
M.C. | Artillery in Mesopotamia. |
| 40. | " | 14 | Col. L. F. Renny, C.M.G.,
D.S.O., Commandant,
M.G. School. | Evolution of the M.G. Corps during the War. |
| 41. | " | 14 | Col. J. F. C. Fuller, D.S.O. | The Rôle of Tanks in a Future War. |
| 42. | " | 15 | Col. J. W. V. Burnett,
C.M.G., D.S.O. | Woods and Village Fighting. |
| 43. | " | 15 | Maj.-Gen. T. Pitman, C.B.,
C.M.G. | Cavalry during the March Retreat in 1918. |
| 44. | " | 17 | Lieut. - Col. Finlayson,
C.M.G., D.S.O. | Artillery. |
| 45. | " | 18 | Col. J. Kennedy, C.M.G.,
D.S.O. | Experiences during the March Retreat, 1918. |
| 46. | " | 18 | Capt. Cuffit, School of
Cookery, Aldershot. | Regimental Messing. |
| 47. | " | 19 | Field - Marshal Sir H.
Wilson, G.C.B., D.S.O.,
Chief of the Imperial
General Staff. | Our Next War. |
| 48. | " | 19 | Lieut.-Col. Kelly, D.S.O.,
M.C., Staff College. | Frontier Warfare. |
| 49. | " | 20 | Lieut.-Col. Landen, D.S.O.,
D.C.M. | Quartermaster's Duties. |
| 50. | " | 20 | Lieut.-Col. P. R. Worrall,
D.S.O., M.C. | Smoke Tactics. |
| 51. | " | 21 | Lieut.-Col. C. S. Rome,
C.M.G., D.S.O. | Cavalry (4). |
| 52. | " | 21 | Brig.-Gen. H. Hartley,
C.B.E. | Gas Warfare. |
| 53. | " | 21 | Col. G. Lindsay, C.M.G.,
D.S.O. | Machine Guns. |
| 54. | " | 22 | Ditto | Ditto. |
| 55. | " | 22 | Col. R. Campbell, D.S.O. | The Value of Games in Training. |
| 56. | " | 24 | Wing Commander Joubert
de la Forte. | Air Reconnaissance. |
| 57. | " | 25 | Col. R. J. Kentish, C.M.G.,
D.S.O. | The Prevention of Crime in a Battalion. |
| 58. | " | 26 | Lieut.-Col. C. S. Rome,
C.M.G., D.S.O. | Cavalry (5). |

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|-----|---------|--|--|
| 59. | Nov. 26 | Capt. Snoxhall, M.C.,
Small Arms School. | Lewis Guns with
Special Reference
to Anti - Aircraft
Work. |
| 60. | „ 26 | Maj.-Gen. Anderson, C.B.,
Commandant, Staff Col-
lege. | The Relations of the
Staff and Regi-
mental Officer. |
| 61. | „ 27 | Lieut. - Col. Finlayson,
C.M.G., D.S.O. | Artillery. |
| 62. | „ 27 | Col. J. F. C. Fuller, D.S.O. | The Principles of War
with Special Refer-
ence to the Late
War. |