Morale.

A paper on Kalenchan and Discipline. 34.
Note on above (A.V.M. 3.9)
" - morale (A.R.M. 3.9)
Discipline Quetta Conference.
The Soldier's Fault.
Staff College, Quetta.

1922.

NOTES ON STUDENTS CONFERENCE No. 4.

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION.

Do our methods of obtaining and maintaining discipline in the Army require improvement?

If so, how can they be improved?

CONCLUSIONS.

It was agreed that—

(a) The object of military discipline is to enable the will of the commander to be carried out by all ranks of the force under his command.

(b) The cultivation of military discipline aims at inducing an attitude of mind in the soldier which ensures ready and prompt obedience to the orders of his superiors and guarantees that he will, at all times, make every effort to carry out these orders not only in the letter but also in the spirit.

2. (a) Both syndicates agreed that one of the basic principles of discipline is “Fear”—one syndicate also considered that “the ingrained habit of willing and cheerful obedience” formed another basic principle, while the other syndicate included—

(i) Goodwill;

(ii) Patriotism;

(iii) Self subordination;

(iv) Loyalty to cause, comrades, superiors, inferiors and unit.

(b) With regard to our methods of obtaining and maintaining discipline, opinions were rather varied. Both syndicates agreed as to the necessity of—

(i) Drill;

(ii) Education;

(iii) Punishment.

One syndicate considered the following should be included—

(i) Maintenance of the chain of responsibility;

(ii) Maintenance of interest both on and off parade.

(iii) Difference between “on” and “off parade”, i.e., avoiding unnecessary interference with the men when “off” parade;

(iv) Inculcation of self-confidence and of mutual confidence amongst all ranks;

(v) Inculcation of self respect;

(vi) Informal methods carried out with the tacit concurrence of the CO, e.g., the unwritten responsibility of the senior Subaltern;

(vii) Family claims;

(viii) Games;

(ix) Rewards;

The other syndicate worded their views rather differently, namely—

(i) Punctilious observance of orders;

(ii) Good relations between officers and their subordinates;

(iii) Education in “playing the game”.

3. It was unanimously agreed that our present methods are suitable to the varying characteristics of British, Indian and Dominion troops, and also that no improvement could be obtained by adopting the method of foreign armies.

It was however considered that improvements could be gained by developments of our present methods, namely by—

(i) The enforcement of a stricter standard of discipline amongst B.O’s of Indian units;

(ii) I.O’s, on promotion, being sent away from their units to a school for one year so as to obtain a clean cut from their previous surroundings;

(iii) Further mixing of B.O’s, with their subordinates—(One syndicate was against this proposal);

(iv) Improved comfort and conditions of service;

(v) A wider adaption of the habit of explaining to subordinates the reason of orders, when possible;

(vi) In the Indian Army by combatting parochialism.

4. One syndicate was of opinion that no new methods were required. The other syndicate recommended—

(i) The inculcation of a national spirit throughout schools and other institutions, such as “Boy Scouts”;

(ii) Scrupulous care on the part of the Government to avoid injustice or the appearance thereof.
As a result of evolution, our methods of maintaining discipline have become more and more humane, and more effective. Flogging abolished, detention barracks in place of prisons, etc. Can we go a step further? In view of

(1) The standpoint of the British Public towards the Army.
(2) The change in the National outlook.

In regard to (1) Before the war the B.P. had 4 idols. The R.N. the LONDON Fire Brigade, the Metropolitan Police and the P.O. The Army was looked on as a lot of hard drinking, hard swearing blackguards. The war has changed this, and we must see that the change remains.

In regard to (2) There is a higher standard of education, great spread of democracy, higher wages and resultant higher standard of living, a demand for greater comforts, for more recreation. You can't leave the Army out of the common aspirations. Therefore we must think more of the psychology of the soldier than we did in the past. How much longer are we going to surround him with petty restrictions. The only people marched to Church are convicts, lunatics, and soldiers.

THEREFORE,

(1) We must train him on interesting lines.
(2) We must provide entertainment for him.
(3) We must stimulate competition.
(4) We must take him more into our confidence.

In the British Army, the Officer must be a member of the team, but the leader of it.
In the Indian Army, he must be the patriarch of the tribe.