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MANUAL OF POSITION WARFARE FOR ALL ARMS.

PART 3.

WEAPONS OF CLOSE COMBAT

("Nahkampfmittel").

1st January, 1917.

ISSUED BY THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE FIELD ARMY.

BERLIN, 1917.

N.B.—The original is marked :—

"Not to be taken into the front line."

Secret.

"This manual takes the place of the one dated 7-8-16 which is to be destroyed."

GENERAL STAFF (INTELLIGENCE),
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.
23rd May, 1917.

NOTE BY GENERAL STAFF.

The new edition of "Nahkampfmittel," dated 1st January, 1917, is considerably fuller than the earlier one of the 1st August, 1916.

The most important change is contained in the announcement that there are now only two hand grenades in the German service; only two, the "Stick" and the "Egg," are mentioned in the text. It is stated, as in the earlier edition, that no more rifle grenades will be manufactured, as, owing to their inaccuracy, no real effect can be obtained with them.

Details of the duties of parties for bombing along trenches, with diagram, are given for the first time. Whilst stick grenade throwers engage the enemy's bombers, egg grenade throwers are to bomb the carriers behind them. There are no bayonet men, the leader of the party is in front and guards it with rifle or pistol.

It is laid down that the best weapons for repelling an enemy are the machine gun and rifle, but that the hand grenade is specially suited to get him out of shell holes. Every man of the fighting troops of all arms is to be trained in the use of hand grenades.

There are new sections on the use of stick hand grenades as charges for demolition purposes.

HAND GRENADES.

GENERAL.

1. For close combat, hand grenades are in every way as important as rifles and pistols. Every man of the fighting troops of all arms must be trained in their use and thoroughly understand the nature of hand grenade fighting.

2. For success in this, the decisive factors are:—The accuracy, length and quickness of throwing of the individual bombers, and a well-arranged supply of grenades. A short but heavy and unexpected volley of grenades is often sufficient to stop the enemy.

3. The cylinder hand grenade with stick (stick hand grenade) has only concussive effect: the egg grenade produces a large number of useful fragments and can be thrown farther owing to its more suitable form and smaller weight. Egg grenades, in view of their fragmentation, should be thrown from cover if possible. At the present moment, all the hand grenades used in the German Army are time grenades.

ATTACK.

4. In the attack, the special use of hand grenades is to cause the destruction or the surrender of the enemy, if he is behind or under cover where he cannot be reached by rifle fire.

5. The equipment of bombers varies with their task. The following is often suitable:—Steel helmet; slung rifle or carbine, or pistol; two sandbags containing hand grenades slung round the neck or over both shoulders, or two special hand grenade carriers; entrenching implement; gas helmet; haversack with four iron rations; two water bottles; no valise nor pouches (cartridges being carried in the pockets or in the haversack).

6. As a rule, each man, including the commander of the party, should carry 6 to 8 stick hand grenades or rather more egg grenades. Detachments and men employed on special tasks where very heavy close fighting is taking place, should be given larger quantities.

7. If it happens in an attack that the attackers are fired on from a hostile trench beyond hand grenade range, they must all close on the trench at full speed, throwing their grenades, lie down whilst the grenades burst, and then rush into the trench without hesitation.

If, in the course of this, the men come upon an obstacle which has not been completely destroyed, a continuous stream of hand grenades must be kept up whilst it is being cut.

In an attack on special points in the enemy's line, *e.g.*, a flanking emplacement, or in rolling up the enemy by working along a trench, only a few men as a rule should throw, the others should supply hand grenades and protect the throwers.

8. Special enterprises carried out by means of hand grenade attack, *e.g.*, fighting for identifications, occupation of shell craters, capture of a particular piece of trench, seizure of blockhouses, copses and farms, etc., generally require a thorough preparation by the fire of other arms (machine guns, trench mortars, artillery), and also their support during the attack.

9. Special measures must be taken to secure the maintenance of the supply of hand grenades.

DEFENCE.

10. To repel an assault, the best weapons are machine guns and rifles. If time hand grenades are thrown at assaulting infantry, they will not as a rule explode until the enemy has passed beyond them, and so do him no damage.

The use of hand grenades becomes valuable only when firearms cannot be employed; or when the enemy has got a lodgment in a dead angle, in shell holes, etc., close to our position, where he cannot be reached by firearms; or when he has broken into our trenches anywhere.

11. Skilled bombers should be stationed under cover at places where communication trenches run into fire trenches, alongside the trench blocks, near flanking machine guns, and near the company or platoon commander to act as his reserve.

12. Hand grenades should be available at such places; but care must also be taken that they are ready to hand in every other part of the position.

13. In the dumps nearest the front, they should be kept "fuzed"—that is, with the detonator or fuze in them. They should be packed in watertight boxes, and stored in recesses in the casing of dug-outs, or in the front slope of the trenches. In critical situations, hand grenades should be issued to every man detailed to the front line.

Patrols and listening posts should always be supplied with hand grenades.

14. Further supplies should be kept in the rearward lines and positions, and in communication trenches, stored in hand grenade recesses and in special shell-proof dumps. Sign boards, visible both by day and night, to indicate the position of the dumps, are desirable.

15. There must be a good supply of hand grenades stored in the dug-outs occupied by the supports and reserves, so that there are sufficient to issue to troops for a counter-attack.

16. Command and observation posts, emplacements for guns detailed for repelling assaults, batteries, and trench mortar positions should be allotted a certain number of hand grenades for their defence.

STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION.

[Sections 17–21. There is nothing of special interest in these sections.]

TRAINING.

[Sections 22–40. Of these, Sections 37–39 are translated below. In Sections 22–36 and 40, the only points of special interest are that the following are taught:—

- (a) Throwing over a wire netting fence 13 ft. high to secure a good angle of descent.
- (b) Throwing from one sap head into another.
- (c) Throwing from shell holes.
- (d) Throwing between trees and tree stumps.
- (e) Method of using the enemy's hand grenades.]

37. The prescribed course of instruction should be followed by exercises with a definite objective, *e.g.*, attack of blockhouses and machine guns, and working along a trench.

38. **For working along trenches**, the practices should take place first in straight trenches, then in wavy ones, and finally in zigzag ones and in connected shell holes.

The practices can be arranged in the following manner:—

For the distribution of the group, see Figs. 5, 6 and 7.

Only the two bombers, "a," throw; one throws stick grenades over two traverses, the other throws egg grenades farther into the enemy's trench, so as to interfere with his supply of grenades. The group commander, "b," observes the throwing, standing to a flank, and gives direction and range. Armed with a rifle or pistol, he also guards the group against a hostile rush. The connecting files, "c," pass the hand grenades forward. The rest of the men in the group, at "d," are carriers; they stand near the traverse behind the bombers; two of them, armed with rifles or pistols, guard the flanks from a hostile attack. If the enemy's grenades fall into the trench, the men are so far apart that they have room to get clear.

The exercise can be carried out with two parties, with umpires. When casualties are adjudged, the spare men must take over the duties of the numbers who have fallen out. Every man of the group must be trained in all duties.

39. **Attack of a blockhouse or machine gun emplacement.**—For this exercise the ground must be prepared as in Fig. 8.

Whilst a machine gun or 1 or 2 snipers keep up an uninterrupted fire on the loopholes of the objective, the remaining men of the group, making use of the ground and shell holes, work round towards the flanks and rear of the enemy, until they get within bombing distance. They then bombard the loopholes and entrance with grenades until the enemy is disabled and the objective can be captured.

DESTRUCTION OF OBSTACLES.

41. In an emergency, when other explosives are not available, hand grenades can be used for the destruction of obstacles. They are not suitable for mining.

42. A lane through a wire entanglement can be cleared by means of a "long" charge. For this purpose, a number of the cylinders of the stick grenade should be made fast to a pole or narrow plank corresponding in length to the depth of the entanglement. There should be about six inches interval between the cylinders. All the openings of the cylinders must be in the same direction (see Fig. 9).

To ensure detonation, there must be a detonator in each cylinder. It should be wedged in securely by means of a wooden match.

The charge should be carried up by two men crawling on their hands and knees, and pushed or thrown into the entanglement. The charge is prepared for firing by screwing on the wooden handle, with the detonator in it, to the last cylinder (see Fig. 9). It is fired from cover by means of a long string.

43. A "concentrated" charge can be made up by securing the cylinders of six stick grenades round a complete grenade. It is unnecessary in this case for every cylinder to have a detonator (see Fig. 10).

One man should crawl up to the obstacle that is to be destroyed. He should then arm the grenade, pull the cord and throw the charge into the middle of the obstacle.

44. If the obstacle is formed of wire network, a small "long" charge should be pushed in at about half the height of the entanglement above ground, and then fired.

If this is not possible, single hand grenades with hooks attached should be thrown at the entanglement.

Wire net obstacles and abatis can also be destroyed by "concentrated" charges thrown just in front of, or under the obstacle.

"GRANATENWERFER" (STICK BOMB-THROWERS).

45. *Granatenwerfer* are used in the front line against targets which cannot be reached with hand grenades. Their maximum range is 330 yards, and their rectangle of error 3·3 to 5·5 yards wide by 55 yards long. They should therefore be employed in groups of 2 to 6, in flanking positions. Rate of fire, 6 rounds a minute. The *Granatenwerfer* has the great advantage over the *Minenwerfer* that the enemy has more difficulty in detecting its position.

46. In defence, *Granatenwerfer* should be dug in—either in, or better still, behind the front line. Their task is to keep down the enemy's fire, to cause him daily losses, and to hinder work. For these purposes there should be continuous fire from one *Granatenwerfer* at a time, or surprise bursts by many, by day and night.

If the enemy attacks, a barrage should be made with *Granatenwerfer* to prevent him from reaching our position; if he has penetrated into it, fire should be directed at the trenches he has captured to compel him to evacuate them.

Frequent change of position is necessary.

47. In attacks by our own troops, *Granatenwerfer* have proved most valuable for the preparation of the places chosen for the assault, about two or three minutes before its delivery. This has been particularly the case where, on account of the proximity of the two positions, our artillery has not been able to engage the enemy's front line satisfactorily.

In the attack, *Granatenwerfer* follow up the assaulting columns; they should be dug in, either in the captured line or in adjacent shell holes, to deal with the enemy's rearward lines and to assist in repelling counter-attacks.

48. For training in the use of the *Granatenwerfer*, see the manual "*Der Granatenwerfer 16*."*

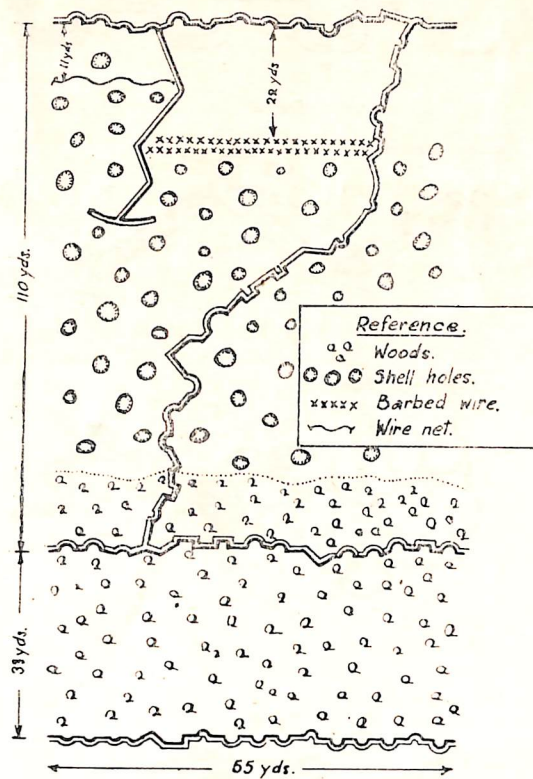
RIFLE GRENADES.

49. [This section states that the manufacture of rifle grenades has been given up.]

* The essential portions of this manual have been translated and issued as S.S. 546, "The 1916 Pattern Bomb-thrower."—G.S.I.

TRAINING GROUND.

FIG. 1.



GROUND FOR INDIVIDUAL THROWING.

FIG. 2.

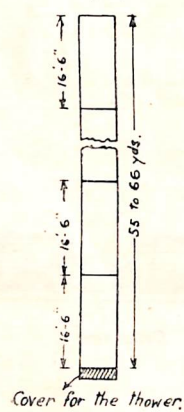


FIG. 3.

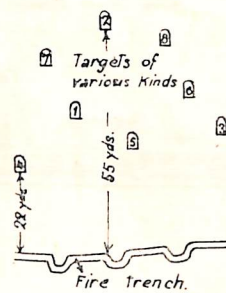


FIG. 4.

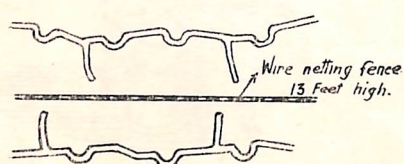


FIG. 5.

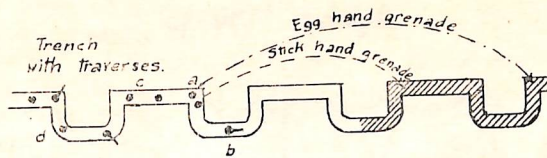


FIG. 6.

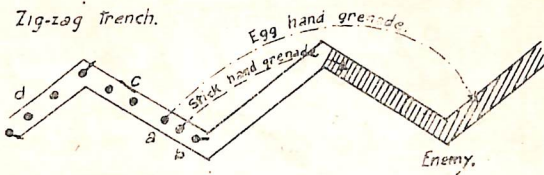


FIG. 7.

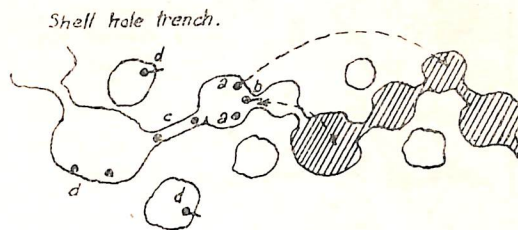


FIG. 8.

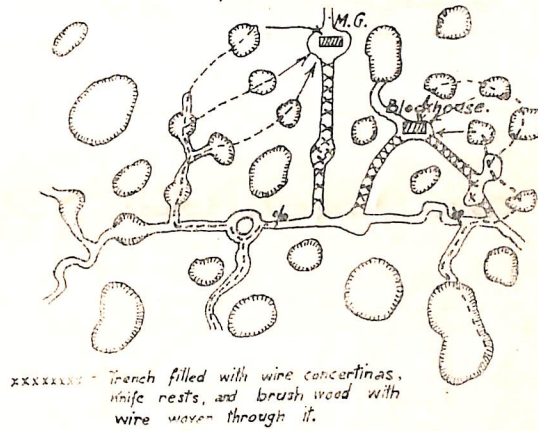


FIG. 9.

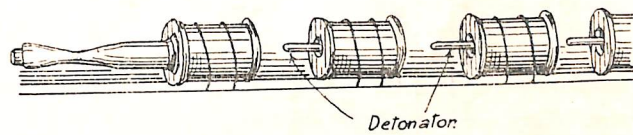


FIG. 10.

