

219 – Doctrinal manuals: ‘Regulations for Trench Warfare for All Arms’ series

Statements in the book

219: ‘Responding to the challenges of Verdun and the Somme, in autumn 1916, OHL drafted a new doctrine for combined arms battle... The new doctrine did not emerge from a void. Falkenhayn had issued guidance on trench warfare in autumn 1915, and in 1916 he launched the significantly titled ‘Regulations for Trench Warfare for All Arms’ series of manuals (Table 7.1). When Hindenburg and Ludendorff took over from Falkenhayn, they began a considerable expansion of this series to improve combined arms tactics (Table 7.2).’

238: ‘Between June and December 1917, OHL issued eleven new manuals in the ‘Regulations for Trench Warfare for All Arms’ series (Table 7.3).’

Update and comment

This series of doctrinal manuals, the ‘Regulations for Trench Warfare for All Arms’ [*Vorschriften für den Stellungskrieg für alle Waffen*], was begun in spring 1916 and continued to the end of the war. The series is sometimes called the *Sammelheft der Vorschriften für den Stellungskrieg*. I can’t find a translation for *Sammelheft*, but the whole expression is perhaps best translated as ‘Collected Regulations for Trench Warfare.’

The Bundesarchiv Abteilung Militärarchiv in Freiburg im Breisgau has made a good selection of the manuals available online at <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/login.xhtml>

When new editions of manuals were issued, the previous versions were to be destroyed. Some of these earlier versions therefore no longer exist. As a result, it has long been thought that there was no surviving copy of the first edition of the main manual in the series, ‘Principles for the Conduct of the Defensive Battle in Trench Warfare’ [*Grundsätze für die Führung in der Abwehrschlacht im Stellungskriege*], issued on 1 December 1916.¹ In fact one does exist: see my ‘The Introduction of New German Defensive Tactics in 1916-1917’, *British Journal for Military History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (October 2019), 85.

Many of the manuals were captured and translated by the British, then circulated in the Stationery Service (S.S.) series. My list includes details and the British translation of the manual’s title where known; if I haven’t given an S.S. reference, the translation is mine.

My source for the S.S. documents is Department of Printed Books Imperial War Museum, *S.[Stationery] S.[Service] Catalogue and Price List* (London: Imperial War Museum, July

¹ This is my translation of the title and what I’ve used in the book: in the list here, I’ve used the S.S. translation, ‘The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare’; I’m planning to blog about why this isn’t the best translation.

1996). In many cases it's not clear exactly which German document the IWM catalogue refers to, indicated in my list with a question mark at the end of the 'British translation and date' entry.

Supporting evidence

See below for the list.

Sources

Hermann Cron, *Geschichte des Deutschen Heeres im Weltkriege 1914-1918* (Berlin: Militärverlag Karl Siegismund, 1937).

Erich Ludendorff, ed., *Urkunden der Obersten Heeresleitung über ihre Tätigkeit 1916/18*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1921), 592.

Reichsarchiv, *Weltkrieg*, XII, 38.

Bundesarchiv (BArch), Invenio online catalogue.

BArch, RH61/1011 Anlage IX.

HSAS, M660/037 Bü 44.

Part	Title	Date	Source	British translation and date
1	Stellungsbau	20 Jun 1916	BArch, PH3/1902	SS 491, The construction of field defences, 16 Oct 1916 [?]
1a	Allgemeines über Stellungsbau	13 Nov 1916	WK12, 38	SS 558, General principles of the construction of field positions, 6 May 1917 ¹
1a	Allgemeines über Stellungsbau	15 Aug 1917	BArch, PH3/1903	SS 621, General principles of the construction of field positions, 12 Dec 1917 (Jan 1918 printing) [?]
1a	Allgemeines über Stellungsbau	10 Aug 1918	BArch, PH3/1904	[No SS] General principles of the construction of field positions
1b	Einzelheiten über Stellungsbau	15 Dec 1916	BArch, PH3/1905	[No SS] Details of the construction of field positions
1b	Einzelheiten über Stellungsbau	26 Aug 1918	BArch, PH3/1907	[No SS] Details of the construction of field positions
1b E	Betonbauten	15 Dec 1916	WK12, 38	[No SS] Concrete constructions
1b E	Betonbauten: Ergänzungsheft zum Teil 1b, Einzelheiten über Stellungsbau	15 Nov 1917	BArch, PH3/1906	[No SS] Concrete constructions: Supplement to Part 1b, Details of the construction of field positions
2	Minenkrieg ²	19 Apr 1916	BArch, PH3/1908	SS 540, Instructions for mine warfare: tactics, Jan 1917 printing [?]

¹ The IWM catalogue actually says 1916, presumably a mistake for 1917.

² No updated edition was issued, but there were two sets of amendments [*Deckblätter*] in May 1918: Ludendorff, *Urkunden*, 592.

Part	Title	Date	Source	British translation and date
3	Nahkampfmittel	7 Aug 1916	Cron, <i>Geschichte</i> , 23 fn. 75	SS 489, Particulars of German weapons for the close combat, 17 Oct 1916 [?]
3	Nahkampfmittel	1 Jan 1917	BArch, PH3/1909	SS 562, Weapons of close combat (“Nahkampfmittel”), 23 May 1917; SS 562A (extracts), 23 May 1917
4	Leuchtmittel	31 May 1916	BArch, PH3/1910	[No SS] Illuminating devices
5	Verwendung und Tätigkeit der Artillerieflieger im Stellungskrieg	1 Nov 1916	WK12, 38	SS 464, The employment and duties of the artillery flights in trench warfare, Aug 1916 [sic] printing
5	Verwendung und Tätigkeit der Artillerieflieger im Stellungskrieg	10 Feb 1917	BArch, PH3/1911	SS 560, The employment and duties of artillery aeroplanes in position warfare, 16 May 1917 (Jun 1917 printing)
5	Der Artillerieflieger und der Artillerieballon	10 Jan 1918	BArch, PH3/1912	SS 649, The artillery aeroplane and the artillery balloon, 1 May 1918
6	Der Infanterieflieger und der Infanterieballon	Jun-Aug 1916 ³	WK12, 38	[No SS] The infantry aeroplane and the infantry balloon
6	Verbindung der Infanterie mit Fliegern und Fesselballonen	1 Jan 1917	BArch, PH3/1914	SS 563, Communication between infantry and aeroplanes or captive balloons, 25 May 1917
6	Der Infanterieflieger und der Infanterieballon (Entwurf)	1 Sep 1917	BArch, PH3/1913	SS 619, The infantry aeroplane and the infantry balloon (provisional), 7 Dec 1917

³ The order in Reichsarchiv, *Weltkrieg*, XII, 38 suggests that the first editions of ‘Der Infanterieflieger und der Infanterieballon’ and ‘Nachrichtennittel und deren Verwendung’ were published at some date between ‘Stellungsbau’ on 20 June 1916 and Falkenhayn’s dismissal on 28 August.

Part	Title	Date	Source	British translation and date
7	Die Minenwerfer	15 Nov 1916	BArch, PH3/1915	SS 548, Extracts from the German official textbook regarding “Minenwerfer”, Mar 1917 printing
7	Die Minenwerfer	1 Jul 1917	BArch, PH3/1916	SS 624, “Minenwerfer” (trench mortars), 26 Dec 1917 (Jan 1918 printing)
7	Die Minenwerfer	5 May 1918	BArch, PH3/1917	[No SS] Trench mortars
8	Grundsätze für die Führung in der Abwehrschlacht im Stellungskriege	1 Dec 1916	HSAS, M660/037 Bü 44 WK12, 38	[No SS] The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare
8	Grundsätze für die Führung in der Abwehrschlacht im Stellungskriege. Neudruck vom 1. März 1917	1 Mar 1917	BArch, PH3/1918	SS 561, The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare, May 1917; SS 561A, Amendments to SS 561, 20 Nov 1917; 561B (extracts), 15 May 1917
-	Sonderheft zum Sammelheft der Vorschriften für den Stellungskrieg	10 Jun 1917	BArch, PH3/1929	SS 703, Special part: the experience gained during the English-French offensive in the Spring of 1917, 15 Oct 1917
8	Grundsätze für die Führung der Abwehrschlacht im Stellungskriege ⁴	1 Sep 1917	BArch, PH3/1919	[No SS, but see SS561A above] The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare

⁴ Note slight change in the German title.

Part	Title	Date	Source	British translation and date
8	Grundsätze für die Führung der Abwehrschlacht im Stellungskriege (Neubearbeitung Februar 1918)	Feb 1918 ⁵	BArch, RH61/1011 Anlage IX	[No SS] The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare (new edition of February 1918)
8	Die Abwehr im Stellungskriege ⁶	20 Sep 1918	<i>Urkunden</i> , 592 and 604-640	SS 749, The principles of command in the defensive battle in position warfare, 27 Oct 1918 (Nov 1918 printing) [?]
9	Nachrichtenmittel und deren Verwendung	Jun-Aug 1916	WK12, 38	[No SS] Signals equipment and its employment
9	Nachrichtenmittel und deren Verwendung	15 Dec 1916	WK12, 38	[No SS] Signals equipment and its employment. Note SS 626, The signal service (provisional), 25 Jan 1918
9	Nachrichtenmittel und deren Verwendung	15 Dec 1917	BArch, PH3/1920	SS 746, The signal service and its employment, 7 Sep 1918
10	Signalordnung	15 Jun 1917	BArch, PH3/1921	[No SS] Instructions for signals
10	Verkehrsordnung für Nachrichtenmittel ⁷	22 Jan 1918	BArch, PH3/1922	[No SS] Traffic orders for signals equipment
11	Schwerstes Flachfeuer (Entwurf)	Nov 1917 ⁸	BArch, PH3/1923	SS 769, Super-heavy [flat] trajectory guns (provisional), 20 Nov 1918 (Dec 1918 printing)
12	Verwendung und Einsatz von Schlachtfliegern	15 Oct 1917	BArch, PH3/1924	[No SS] Employment and action of battle aeroplanes [i.e. ground attack]

⁵ No exact date given.

⁶ Note further change in the title.

⁷ BArch, RH61/1011 Anlage IX confirms that this is a revised edition [*Neubearbeitung*] of *Signalordnung*.

⁸ No exact date published in the manual.

Part	Title	Date	Source	British translation and date
12	Verwendung von Schlachtstaffeln	20 Feb 1918	BArch, PH3/1925	SS 738, Employment of battle flights, 5 Sep 1918
13	Weisungen über den Einsatz von Jagdstaffeln	25 Oct 1917	BArch, PH3/1926	SS 750, Directions for the engagement of pursuit flights [i.e. fighters], 27 Sep 1918 (Oct 1918 printing)
14	Der Angriff im Stellungskriege (Entwurf) ⁹	1 Jan 1918	BArch, PH3/1927	SS 748, The attack in position warfare (provisional), 11 Oct 1918
15	Einsatz und Verwendung der Flaktruppe	16 May 1918	BArch, PH3/1928	SS 761, The employment of anti-aircraft troops, 27 Oct 1918

⁹ A supplement [*Ergänzungen*] was issued on 26 January 1918, and at least one set of amendments on 27 July 1918.