

A Complete system of Bayonet Exercise, by Richard F Burton, 1853

Burton's system for the bayonet is without doubt one of the most influential manuals on the subject. In 1852 Burton turned his back on writing about his Indian experiences and wrote *A Complete System of Bayonet Exercise*. It was an attempt to revive his tarnished reputation & further his military career.

The thirty six page pamphlet went far beyond the bayonet training standards of the day, which extended to little more than fixing & unfixing the blade. Although taken up in large quantities abroad, especially Germany, it was ignored or criticised at home.

It was only after the Crimean War, that the British realised the value of the work, and reprinting it for general use. As a serving officer, Burton was entitled to the payment of only one shilling for his services. Burton went in person to the war office to collect this derisory amount, and when he received it from the bemused officials, he gave it to a beggar outside.

"Lord love yer, sir," said" said the beggar

"No, my man, I don't expect Him to do that," Burton replied.

The copy from which the text is drawn is unfortunately missing the first page of the introduction (page 5) but is otherwise complete. I have as far as possible used the original layout & syntax. However any spelling mistakes are probably my own.

Nigel Plum, 15/04/2005

References

*A Complete System of Bayonet Exercise, Richard F Burton, 1853*

*The Devil Drives, A life of Sir Richard Burton, Fawn Brodie, 1967. ISBN 0 907871 23 2*