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BRITISH TACTICAL NOTES

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WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, *December 7, 1917.*

The following pamphlet, entitled "British Tactical Notes," is published for the information of all concerned.

[300.7 A. G. O.]

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

JOHN BIDDLE,
Major General, Acting Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

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The Adjutant General.

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I.

ASSAULT TRAINING.

September, 1917.

THE SPIRIT OF THE OFFENSIVE.

[Extracts from Field Service Regulations, Part I.]

"The essence of infantry tactics consists in breaking down the enemy's resistance by the weight and direction of its fire, and then completing his overthrow by assault. Although the enemy may not await the assault, infantry must be constantly animated with the desire to close with him. To drive an enemy from the field, assault, or the immediate threat of it, is almost always necessary." (Sec. 6 (2).)

"Decisive success in battle can be gained only by a vigorous offensive." (Sec. 99 (1).)

"The advance of the firing line must be characterized by the determination to press forward at all costs." (Sec. 105 (4).)

"Half-hearted measures never attain success in war and the lack of determination is the most fruitful source of defeat." (Sec. 99 (2).)

CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING.

1. CONCENTRATION.

To teach the soldier to apply on the battle field the lessons he has learned on the training ground is the essence and aim of all training.

It is by continued concentration only that any form of training can be so impressed as to become second nature.

If such training has been adequate, the soldier in moments of excitement and tension will automatically apply what he has learned.

2. Vitality.

Vitality of mind and body is essential to prevent staleness and monotony. Without vitality training is of little value.

All work should be done in short, sharp bursts and be as intense as possible.

3. The Offensive Spirit.

Every form of battle training must be founded on the offensive spirit.

The chief duty and thought of all should be to kill as many of the enemy as possible, and during periods of training the aggressive spirit and the desire to kill should be impressed on all ranks.

No pains should be spared by instructors to cultivate this spirit and to emphasize its importance in a vivid manner.

All training devices, such as dummy figures or targets for bullets, bomb, or bayonet, should be regarded as representing a real enemy whom it is the soldier's duty to kill in as expeditious a manner as possible with the weapon most suited to the purpose.

4. Bullet and Bayonet.

The bullet and the bayonet belong to the same parent, the rifle, which is still the deciding factor on the battle field. One must work with the other.

It is the spirit of the bayonet that captures the position, and of the bullet that holds it.

The bullet also shatters the counter attack and kills outside bayonet distance.

Bayonet training and musketry training are therefore complementary to one another and must be taught as one subject.

The bomb is valuable for clearing small lengths of trench and for close fighting after a trench has been stormed. It is, however, a weapon quite secondary to the rifle and the bayonet.

5. Fire and Movement.

Fire and movement are inseparable in the attack. Ground is gained by a body of troops advancing while supported by the fire of another body of troops.

This principle of fire and movement should be known to all ranks, and the one object of every advance, namely, to close with the enemy, should be emphasized on all occasions.

6. Assault Training.

Assault training may be divided into three stages:

First stage.—The training of the individual soldier in the combination of rifle fire and bayonet work in the assault and countercharge. (Chapter II.)

Second stage.—The training of the individual soldier in bullet, bayonet, and bomb with the idea of teaching him to use the weapon appropriate to the situation in which he may find himself. (Chapter III.)

Third stage.—The collective training of the platoon or company in the employment of all infantry weapons by means of a tactical exercise. (Chapter IV.)

Chapter II.

FIRST STAGE.

7. This stage is devoted to training the individual soldier in the combination of rifle fire and bayonet work in the assault and countercharge. When the class assembles every man should have explained to him the relation between bayonet and bullet in the assault. The principles of the assault and countercharge should also be made clear. Throughout the training the instructors should foster the fighting spirit and encourage the desire to kill.

8. The practices during this stage are divided into—

Bayonet practices.
Firing practices.
The countercharge.

The exercises to be carried out on each day should be selected according to the proficiency of those under training. Exercises of an elementary nature should be used until the class is familiar with the rifle and the bayonet. Later, the more advanced exercises should be undertaken to perfect the combination of bullet and bayonet. They should be carried out in the sequence (i) Assault, (ii) Bayonet, (iii) Bullet, the natural sequence of an assault.

9. Bayonet Practices.

[Bayonet Training, 1916.]

(*a*) POINTING.

(i) By word of command. Long and short point, with plenty of movement and vim.

(ii) Hand indication. Long and short point.

(iii) Target practice with "blob" or ring stick. All points.

Quickening practices should be carried out at the end of every individual practice with the class drawn up in a circle, first facing the instructor, later with backs to him.

(*b*) PARRYING.

The principles of offensive parrying should be explained and each man should be tested both in and out of a trench in the following:

(i) "On Guard" with rifle, to parry attack made with stick.

(ii) "On Guard" with stick, to parry attack made with rifle; attack to be made while advancing slowly.

(iii) "On Guard" with rifle, to parry attack made with stick from short-point position.

(iv) "On Guard" with rifle, to parry cut made with stick used as a sword.

(v) With rifle at "jab" position, to fend off attack made with stick.

(*c*) DISARMING AND DISABLING.

(i) Method of "knocking out" an enemy when an attack has been parried.

(ii) Method of dealing with enemy when the rifle has been seized, the bayonet broken or come off the rifle.

(iii) Method of disarming. To be practiced at first with sticks.

Quickening practices should be carried out at the end of each individual practice. The class should be drawn up in a circle and practiced in making a point and butt stroke, parry, fending off an attack, disarming, etc.

(*d*) ASSAULTING.

The class should be exercised in the following practices:

(i) Pointing at dummies on gallows or on the ground, first at a walk, and then with the pace quickened.

(ii) Method of getting out of a deep trench. Agility in jumping in, out, and over a trench.

(iii) Pointing at dummy when jumping into a trench.

(iv) Continuous assault over course, combined with rapid fire.

It should be pointed out that the high port is only adopted when actually preparing to assault. At other times the rifle is carried at the slope or trail or slung, according to circumstances.

10. Firing Practices.

[Firing practices to be dovetailed in with bayonet practices.]

In all practices the necessity of fixing the sights on the rifle at any required range should be emphasized. In the heat of action this is apt to be overlooked.

(*a*) Application of Fire.

Class in single rank and opened out. (See par. 16, Bayonet Training, 1916.)

The instructor explains that each man is to practice quick application of fire at the eye of the man opposite in the spirit and with the same enthusiasm as when using the bayonet. The man's eye should be about one yard from the muzzle of the rifle of the man aiming at him. The muscles and mind must be braced up with the determination to hit every time the trigger is pressed, care being taken that the trigger is not snatched. Opposite numbers should note if the aim is as "declared."

Odd numbers "Rest."

"At the left (right) eye of the opposite number, 5 rounds, Fire."

Accuracy of aim and correct trigger pressing must never be sacrificed. The instructor should check faulty positions, lack of grip, trigger snatching, and slackness in reloading after firing. The instructor should carry an eye disk and check the aim of a few men. The standing position will be used in this practice only when the ground is unsuitable for the prone position. Odd numbers will be exercised in a similar manner.

(*b*) RAPIDITY AND ACCURACY IN ALTERATION OF AIM AND RELOADING.

The odd numbers of the class act as targets for the even numbers and vice versa. The two ranks are extended to four paces interval and are 50 yards apart.

On the command "Load" both ranks assume the prone position and load. The odd (or even) numbers remain steady while the even (or odd) numbers take their orders from the instructor, i. e., "at the right-hand man (second from the left or any named man), ('number of rounds'), Fire." The ranks work for periods of two or three minutes alternately.

Single shots are fired with a view to developing quickness in handling the rifle, grip, change of aim, etc. Direction of rifles and faulty trigger pressing will be observed and checked.

(*c*) DEVELOPMENT OF POWER OF COMMAND.

The instructor orders the soldier to aim and fire at parts of his body, clothing, etc.

Method as for (*b*), except that every few minutes one of the soldiers takes the place of the instructor, gives the necessary orders, and so develops in himself the power of command.

(*d*) TO TRAIN THE EYE AND BRAIN TO WORK TOGETHER.

Half the class takes up a position in a trench and watches the front for appearances of the remainder posted at 100 yards distance and behind cover if possible. On the given signal the men behind cover take snapshots at those in the trench. Both ranks act independently, taking a shot whenever the men opposite expose themselves. After 8 or 10 exposures the men behind cover assault the trench, advancing at the high port in quick time. During the last 30 or 40 yards before reaching the trench the line will break into a steady double, finishing up the last 10 yards with a rush and jump into the trench. The defenders will deliver rapid fire until the attackers are within 50 yards of the trench, when they will spring out and wait "On guard" until the order "Charge" is given, each rank passing through the other and assuming positions from which fire could be opened at a retreating enemy. The point of aim at an advancing enemy under 100 yards is normally the waist line. The instructor will discuss each man's actions and the ranks will then change over and repeat the practice. The instructor

should be careful to see that men do not get into a careless way of holding their rifles when delivering rapid fire. Unless this point is emphasized rapid fire is unlikely to be effective.

If possible this practice should begin from a further distance, say, 300 yards, and two or three advances by alternate sections covered by the fire of the other should be made to get within assaulting distance.

During this time, i. e., before assaulting distance is reached, control should be exercised and the principles of fire and movement illustrated.

(*e*) IMPROVISED RANGE PRACTICES.

[An improvised range of 30 yards.]

Practice.	Target.	Method of conducting.
1. Application.....	Bayonet fighting disk. (To represent a German head.)	From cover.
2. Falling targets..	Improvised from tins, cartridge cases, etc., at 1 foot intervals.	Do.
3. Bayonet and bullet in attack.	Bayonet fighting disks. (To represent a German head.)	Class in extended order, 50 yards from targets. On the command "Fire" men snap 5 rounds, after which the instructor signals "Advance" when each man advances at top speed, bayoneting two prone dummies (sacks) on the way. On arrival at the final position rifles will be loaded and 5 rounds fired. Individual or collective fire will be used according to safety conditions.

These practices will be varied according to the men's proficiency. They are also suitable for competitions and suggested standards are as follows:

Practice 1. Rifle to be unloaded. Time to load and fire, 60 seconds.

Practice 2. Rifle unloaded. Time, 25 seconds.

Practice 3. Time from the command "Advance" to last shot, 50 seconds.

II. THE COUNTER CHARGE.

In order to prevent being taken at a disadvantage, the holders of a position, if without ammunition, must make a controlled and well-timed counter assault and push it home with all

the vigor, dash, and determination of fresh men against an enemy who has been subjected to an advance under trying circumstances.

Two lines advancing against one another with the bayonet will seldom meet. The one stimulated with the greater fury and confidence, by the force of its determination to conquer, will cause the other line to waver and turn.

When carrying out the exercises described below, the following qualities should be developed:

(*a*) *Determination.*—Each man as he advances must select an individual opponent to kill, and must concentrate all his thoughts upon that determination. He must keep his eyes upon the selected victim and upon him alone, and not upon the advancing lines as a whole.

(*b*) *Fury and dash.*—Every man must shout "charge" as he rushes in upon his opponent.

(*c*) *Control.*—While still keeping his eyes upon his victim, each man must develop a "collective sense" which enables him to keep touch to right and left.

FIRST EXERCISE.

Advance and charge toward the instructor in single rank with scabbards on bayonets. Length of advance and charge from 80 to 100 yards.

Points to be emphasized.

(*a*) Control while advancing slowly at the high port.

(*b*) Dash and fury during the last 20 yards.

(*c*) Resumption of control and opening of fire after completion of charge.

SECOND EXERCISE.

To be practiced after the principles of an assault have been grasped.

Two lines about 80 to 100 yards apart extended at two paces interval to advance and charge through one another passing right arm to right arm.

Points to be observed as in the first exercise.

THIRD EXERCISE.

One or more waves of several lines extended at two paces interval to charge through similar waves.

Waves about 80 to 100 yards apart. Distance between lines about 40 to 50 yards.

Points to be observed as in first and second exercises.

FOURTH EXERCISE.

Attack and counter attack.

ATTACKERS.

(*a*) Begin advance at the trail at about 150 yards from the position to be assaulted. (Firing from hip can be practiced.)

(*b*) Begin assault at the high port.

(*c*) When within 20 yards of the enemy, charge.

DEFENDERS.

(*a*) Lying in the open or in a trench. Fire until no more ammunition is left.

(*b*) Advance to front of position without loss of time, come on guard and

(*c*) Charge the enemy.

Points to be emphasized.

Before launching a counter bayonet attack endeavor to induce the attacking force to continue its advance as long as possible so that it may become disorganized and exhausted.

Judge the right moment for defenders to leave cover and allow just sufficient time for their charge to develop.

12. At Bullecourt a trench had been taken by two companies of infantry who had run out of bombs and ammunition. Four lines of Germans attacked this trench.

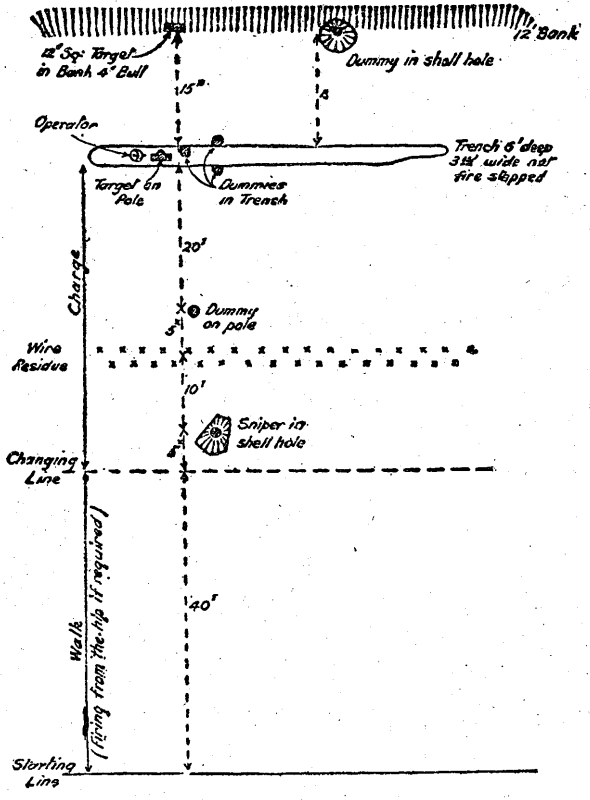
When the leading German line was about 200 yards distant our infantry came out with their bayonets. The enemy hesitated, thinking the infantry would surrender, but as they did not do so the Germans continued slowly to advance.

The infantry then charged with the bayonet, breaking the first two German lines and causing the other two to run away. A satisfactory feature of their flight was that they became entangled in their own wire and were then annihilated by the fire of our guns.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND STAGE.

13. A specimen exercise which can be varied to suit local conditions and considerations of safety is given below. It is to be looked upon as a guide rather than as a stereotyped exercise and is designed to make the individual soldier realize that he should be able to use his three weapons—rifle, bomb, and bayonet—with equal facility and to counteract any tendency to regard himself merely as a specialist in his section weapon.



EXERCISE.

(*a*) The soldier leaves the starting line as the barrage lifts and walks at a steady pace to the charging line. Firing from the hip may be practiced during this stage if considered desirable.

On reaching the charging line a whistle is blown and he breaks into a double. Then he sees a sniper hiding in a shell hole, bayonets him, and proceeds to get through the obstacle.

This accomplished, he is met by a German represented by a dummy, whom he at once bayonets. Whilst he is still engaged with this dummy, another German climbs on the parapet and is about to shoot him. The soldier turns immediately and puts a bullet through the target, which is held up by an operator in the trench at this moment. He then charges the trench with a shout and bayonets three dummies in the trench.

As soon as he gets into the trench he finds he is being bombed from a shell hole beyond, locates the shell hole, and throws two bombs into it. He then recharges his magazine and, finding he can not shoot over the parados, he overcomes this difficulty by making a fire step. As soon as this is complete, he fires five rounds rapid at the target on the bank.

If the man be a rifle bomber, he can be made to carry his cup attachment in his bomb carrier until he arrives in the objective trench, when he should be made to employ rifle bombs against a suitable target.

(*b*) The materials required are—

Five sack dummies.

Figure targets.

One target on a pole, representing a German shooting.

A 12-foot bank.

Two shell holes, which can be made by exploding a couple of 2-inch trench mortar bombs.

(*c*) The exercise should be carried out at first using blank ammunition for all firing before entering the trench, and bombs unloaded but fused.

Later on the exercise should be carried out with live ammunition, including bombs and firing from the hip.

CHAPTER IV.

THIRD STAGE.

14. A specimen exercise, which can be varied to suit local conditions and considerations of safety, is in Appendix III to Army Council Instruction 1230 of 1917 and in Appendix XIII C. of S. S. 152, "Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France." It is reproduced here.

FIELD PRACTICE—MUSKETRY AND BAYONET FIGHTING.

(*a*) This practice is designed to impress on the minds of all ranks:

(i) The necessity for the ready use of rifles.

(ii) The combination of fire and movement.

(iii) The cooperation between the bayonet and the bullet.

The practice may be carried out by sections, platoons, companies, or battalions, according to the ground and facilities available.

(*b*) The action of a platoon is taken as an example:

(i) Dress: Fighting dress (S. S. 135, Sec. XXXI).

(ii) Formation: Platoon in line or in column of sections.

(iii) The objective is pointed out.

(iv) The platoon advances toward the objective in artillery formation of sections, preceded by scouts.

(v) A surprise target appears (out of range of rifle bombs). It is signaled by scouts.

(vi) The target is engaged by rifle fire of the scouts.

(vii) The target is engaged by rifle fire of the platoon.

(viii) The platoon advances by alternate rushes of sections.

(ix) The target disappears.

(x) A target appears (out of range of rifle bombs) some few minutes later on the original objective.

(xi) The platoon deals with the target in the same way as in (vii) and (viii).

(xii) When within assaulting distance, the platoon delivers the assault.

For this purpose, if possible, a bayonet-fighting course should be provided; if this is not possible, some sacks to represent the enemy will suffice, but correct bayonet-fighting methods must be insisted on.

(xiii) The objective is gained, patrols pushed out, sentries posted, and consolidation begun.

(xiv) A surprise target is shown and rapid fire opened.

(*c*) The practice can be carried out over any distance from a 30-yards' range upwards, but naturally the more nearly the distance over which this practice is carried out approaches that which would obtain in battle the better.

It should be carried out, whenever possible, over rough ground and with ball ammunition.

In order to bring about the primary object of the practice, namely, the use of the rifle, no other weapons but the rifle should be used at first. At a later stage, when all ranks are proficient with the rifle and bayonet, the use of Lewis guns, rifle bombs, and bombs may be introduced.

Notes on Carrying Out this Exercise.

15. An exercise of this kind requires ingenuity and forethought to prevent it becoming a musketry-range exercise instead of a practical fighting exercise as intended.

16. Effort should be made to give life to the proceedings and to interest the men in their task.

This can be done by insuring that the schemes are interesting and varied, by explaining the conditions at the beginning, by discussing the execution at the end, and by letting the men see the results of their work.

Unless the interest of the men is aroused the results will not be satisfactory.

17. Details of any scheme can not be laid down. They depend entirely on the military common sense of the officer responsible for its preparation and on the ground available.

Principles, however, can be enunciated and are already set out in the textbooks.

18. There are three participants in any scheme who must all understand that their functions are quite distinct and can not overlap.

(*a*) The commander and his fighting men.

(*b*) The director and his assistants or umpire.

(*c*) The spectators.

19. As regards the spectators, it is only necessary to say that, whatever be their rank, they may not interfere in any way with the exercise, and are to be kept clear of the fighting men and the umpires.

The exercise should always be explained beforehand to the spectators.

20. As regards the other two participants, the distinction between commanding a unit and directing a scheme can not be too clearly emphasized.

(*a*) An officer commanding a unit should not attempt to command and at the same time to direct operations.

(*b*) Those whose duty it is to direct must be so dressed that the fighting troops recognize them as such and can not confuse them with those who exercise command.

(*c*) Section 550 of Musketry Regulations, Part I, lays stress on the principle that no criticism or interference should take place except for safety purposes until the exercise is concluded.

Unless a commander is given a free hand to carry out an exercise which has been set to him, he is bound to lose interest, and so will his men when their attention is distracted by outside interference.

21. Thus, should it be desired to carry out an exercise with a platoon, the platoon commander would be set the scheme by his company commander, or, if so desired, by the battalion commander or by an officer specially selected for the purpose.

The officer who sets the scheme, and who therefore can not be the platoon commander, acts as director and has, to assist him, anyone he requires, the fewer the better. The director and his assistants wear a distinctive mark or dress.

The musketry officer might be one of the assistant directors, and any men required to work the appliances are also assistants. These are all under the orders of the director and of no other authority.

The director and his assistants must deal with any emergency of danger or safety, but can not give any other orders to the fighting troops except through the platoon commander. The fighting troops must understand this and not be inconvenienced or allowed to feel that they are under two masters.

During the exercise it is wrong for a battalion commander or officer of any rank to interfere by giving orders or advice unless he is acting as a director or assistant director and the troops know him as such.

22. This system is well understood by all who play games. There is a close analogy between cricket and an exercise of this kind.

(*a*) The players play the game under the agreed laws, and under the orders of their captain. These are the fighting men and their captain is the platoon commander.

(*b*) The umpires and ground men intervene under conditions well recognized by the players. They do not tell the batsman how to bat or the bowler how to bowl, nor get in the way of the players. They also wear distinctive dress. These are the director and his assistants.

(*c*) The spectators have their allotted places, keep away from the pitch and do not interfere with their advice or by their presence.

23. Finally, the measure of success of the scheme is the measure of interest taken in it by the men.

Time and trouble spent in designing a realistic scheme are seldom wasted, and will bear good fruit on the battle field.

II.

NOTES ON TACTICAL SCHEMES.

May, 1917.

1. Object of tactical schemes.

(*a*) To increase the initiative of junior officers and N. C. O.'s.

(*b*) To teach them—

To grasp sudden situations.

To act quickly.

To give verbal orders clearly and concisely.

To write messages and reports.

No opportunity should be lost in impressing on them the value of prompt decision and bold action, and the consequent moral effect on both the enemy and neighboring troops.

(*c*) To cultivate in them an eye for ground and ability to read a map.

2. For schemes to be beneficial:

(i) The scheme should be simple and the setting clear to all taking part; that is, all must be told what they would know and be able to see or hear in the supposed situation.

(ii) Definite problems requiring definite decisions must be set, such as the action required of a commander of a particular unit (e. g., a section, a platoon, etc.) at a particular moment.

(iii) Definite solutions must be given by those taking part. Vague suggestions are of no value.

3. If the numbers taking part are more than 10, it will be found convenient to divide them up into groups of from three to four, each group working out the solution of the problem. Each group then in turn gives its solution. In this way the directing officer hears sufficient solutions to enable him to discuss different points of view. The same officer or N. C. O. should not act as spokesman for the group each time.

4. After the various solutions of the different groups have been given and discussed, the directing officer should give his own solution and explain the principles on which he has based it.

5. Groups should be given a time limit within which to decide on the solution. This will foster quick decision.

6. Constant practice should be given in illustrating solutions by rough sketches.

7. Advantage will be gained by indoor exercises on the same lines. These can be carried out by means of simple diagrams or on a large scale map. The use of the latter will at the same time afford useful instruction in map reading. Moreover, it will probably be found of great advantage to discuss many of the details of an outdoor exercise in billets before going out on the ground.

8. Suggestions for schemes are attached as appendices.

Scheme 1.

PLATOON EXERCISE.

1. Narrative.

The platoon is part of the leading wave of an attacking force advancing under a barrage in normal formation to seize and consolidate the third-line trench of a hostile front system.

So far there have been few casualties, and there is little hostile artillery fire, but there was delay in crossing the second trench and the barrage has got a little ahead; the platoon is then held up 100 yards from the hostile third line by a machine gun firing from opposite the next platoon on the right, which is also checked, as is the next platoon on the left. There is a communication trench leading from the front of the platoon on the right to the neighborhood of the hostile machine gun.

The ground affords a certain amount of cover to the platoon where it now is.

2. Note.

Almost any ground will do for this scheme.

The only requirements are some lines on the ground to represent the hostile trench and communication trench, thus:

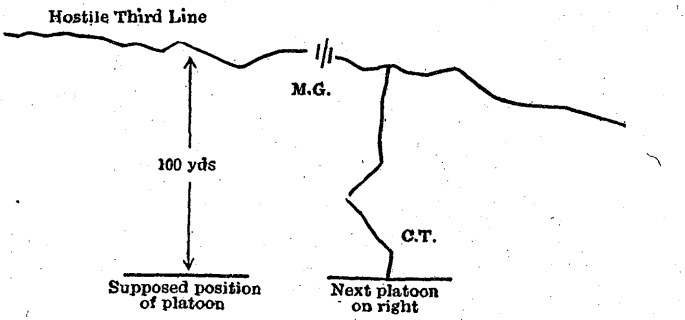
Roads, paths, fences, banks, ditches, or the boundary between two fields with different sorts of cultivation will serve the purpose of representing the trenches.

3. PROBLEM I.

What action should the platoon commander take when he finds his platoon held up?

4. NOTES.

(*a*) Quick decision necessary, delay may make the advance more difficult for the platoon itself, and also affect the other units on the flanks.



(*b*) Should he send back word to his company commander, reporting the situation, asking for help (artillery, reinforcements, etc.)? In this respect has he used all his own resources?

(*c*) What is the object of making the platoon the tactical unit? To allow riflement, rifle bombers, bombers, and Lewis gunners to be used in combination, i. e., the combination of fire and movement.

(*d*) If held up by a machine gun or strong point, what is the general principle on which commanders should act? Work round the flanks of the obstruction, barraging it at the same time with all weapons available.

(*e*) Can the platoon on the right assist? If so, how? Liaison between units.

5. NARRATIVE.

The platoon commander immediately organized his Lewis gun, rifle bombers, and all riflemen to bring fire on the hostile machine gun. At the same time he sent a message to the

platoon commander on his right, telling him the situation and asking him to cooperate by pushing bombers up the communication trench and trying to get a footing in the objective, so as to be able to work down on the flank of the machine gun.

By this means the trench and machine gun were captured and the platoon was still about 30 strong. The artillery barrage had advanced about 300 yards and was firing a protective barrage.

The platoon on the left was still held up.

6. PROBLEM II.

What action should the platoon commander take?

7. NOTES.

(*a*) He should—

Give all possible assistance to neighboring troops who have not got on.

Reorganize his platoon.

Protect himself against hostile counter attack.

Show his position by lighting flares. (See (*e*) below.)

Consolidate his position.

Report to his company commander.

(*b*) Can he help the platoon on his left by working down the trench with bombers? Does the ground allow him to work round and get into the trench from the rear with a small party?

(*c*) It is found that, owing to casualties, the composition of the different sections is now as follows:

Platoon H. Q., one runner, one signaler.

Lewis gun section, six men.

Rifle bombers section, one N. C. O. and seven men.

Bombers section, one N. C. O. and five men.

Riflemen section, nine men.

Would it be necessary to transfer any men from one section to another? If so, where would he take them from?

The Lewis gun section of six men is ample to work the gun. The understudy will automatically take charge of the section.

The rifle bombing section also has ample, and as the objective has been reached, it can quite well carry on and could even spare a carrier if necessary.

The riflemen section has not suffered much and could spare two men if necessary. The understudy will automatically take charge of the section.

The bombers section is short. Bombing will probably have to be resorted to in order to extend the front gained and assist the platoon on the left. It might, therefore, be advisable to increase its strength by taking two from the riflemen section and one from the rifle bombers section on temporary loan.

(*d*) Would he send out any "battle patrols"? What is the object of them? How would they be organized? What exact orders would he give them? How would he use his Lewis guns?

(*e*) When would flares be lit? How would he recognize his own contact patrol aeroplane?

Flares will be lit—

(i) By previous arrangement—
At specified times.
At specified places.

(ii) Without previous arrangement—
When called for by the aeroplane by Klaxon horn.
On the initiative of local commanders, who may wish to make their position known. In this case the order should only be given when the aeroplane working with the formation is flying in their vicinity.

Contact patrol aeroplanes have special markings, which should be known by all ranks.

In addition, they carry Klaxon horns and Very lights for the purpose of making themselves known.

(*f*) When is the enemy likely to deliver a counter attack? It may be launched within a few minutes by local supports or reserves. Necessity of quickly giving orders for protection and for work to be commenced. How is he going to organize his work and his protection? Emphasize the importance of getting as much work done as possible while the protective barrage lasts.

(*g*) How is he going to report to his company commander? Write down the exact message.

Scheme 2.

FOR PLATOON OFFICERS AND SERGEANTS.

OUTPOSTS.

[See F. S. R., Pt. I, secs. 80, 81, 82.]

1. Narrative.

The company is one of the outpost companies of a battalion forming a portion of the advanced guard of an advancing

force. It has been given a front from ——— to ———. (The position of the H. Q. of the outpost company is given.) No. ——— platoon is detailed to find a picket on the road straight in front of the outpost company. The line of resistance is pointed out, as well as the positions of neighboring pickets. Orders as to patrols are also given, whether to be furnished by the pickets or supports. Enemy detachments are believed to be within 10 miles, and a detachment of our corps mounted troops is out in front, but there are no other covering troops.

2. PROBLEM I.

What action should the platoon commander take on receipt of his orders?

3. NOTES.

Reconnaissance is of first importance. He should move his platoon forward to some convenient position under cover. He could then go forward with his section leaders. He would look for the most suitable position for his picket, which would normally be on the line of resistance, and the best line of approach to it. He would look for the approximate positions for his sentry groups and decide how many are required. He would get the general lie of the country and point out any important points to his section leaders.

In giving the solution, it should be given in definite terms (e. g., a suitable point to halt the platoon is ————, the best approach to it is ———, the advance should be covered by No. ——— section, which should move ——— yards ahead of the platoon; state number of sentry posts required and approximate positions).

4. PICKETS.

The party then move up to the position chosen for the picket. The number of positions of sentry groups will be discussed. The various duties and reliefs should be told off, the spokesman of the group giving out his instructions in the nature of definite orders.

What is the object of a sentry over the picket?

How will you bivouac your men to insure their getting as much rest as possible?

What points should every man of the picket know? Direction of the enemy, position of the pickets on the flanks of the supports, what is to be done in case of attack?

Should the position of the picket be dug in?

What arrangement should be made for liaison between neighboring pickets, etc.?

5. Problem II.

The exact position of one of the sentry groups should be chosen and discussed.

What should be the normal strength of a sentry group? How many sentries are required over it? What points should be considered when deciding on the best position for the sentry? The exact position should be pointed out. Should bayonets be fixed? On the approach of any person what action should the sentry take? What points should a sentry always know?

Scheme 3.

EXERCISE FOR PLATOON OFFICER OR SERGEANT.

WRITING REPORTS.

1. General Notes.

(*a*) A narrative giving a situation should be handed to the officer or N. C. O. under instruction, who should then draft a report to his superior officer.

(*b*) There should be nothing in the report which it is not of importance that the receiver should know.

(*c*) It is more important that the information contained in a report should be relevant and accurate, and should arrive in time to be of use, than that the report should be long and elaborate. (F. S. R. I, sec. 15, 3.)

(*d*) Negative information and the repetition or confirmation of information already sent are of importance. If in doubt forward the information. For a commander to know positively that the enemy was not or was still in a certain locality at a certain time may be of great value. It is often advisable that fixed times should be laid down for rendering reports containing information of this nature. (F. S. R. I., sec. 15, 6.)

(*e*) A plan (or panorama sketch) is a useful adjunct to a report. Clearness and relevancy are required, not artistic effect.

2. NARRATIVE.

A platoon commander has just reached his final objective, the third line of enemy's trench, with his platoon. The platoon escaped the enemy's barrage in crossing "No Man's Land," and were able to keep up fairly well with the friendly barrage until after reaching the second line, in which some of the enemy put up a good fight, and the platoon commander had to assist the moppers up who were following him. This delayed him a short time and as a result our barrage got a bit too far away. On resuming his advance he came under a certain amount of rifle fire from his front and lost some of his Lewis gun section with its section leader. He noticed this and shouted to some of the others to pick up the gun and bring it on. A few casualties were sustained in getting into his final objective. He has reorganized his platoon as far as he can, but the trench is almost obliterated. He thinks he has lost about 15 men out of the 35 he started with. He can not find the Lewis gun and doesn't know what happened to it. He finds the platoon on his left has not got on, and his bombers on this flank are holding their own without difficulty but can not progress.

Plenty of German bombs have been found in the trench. The platoon of the Royal Scots on his right has also reached the trench and he has got into touch with them. He has sent out a patrol of his three best riflemen to a position about 100–150 yards in front. The remainder of the platoon are digging, but the ground is very hard and difficult to work. As a result they are not getting on very well. In addition, any exposure is met by hostile machine gun fire from the left flank. He himself has been shot through the right arm, but is quite capable of carrying on. His position is in full view of the enemy's reserve line, and the hostile artillery fire, though not intense, is very accurate.

3. SUGGESTED MESSAGE TO BE SENT IN BY PLATOON COMMANDER TO HIS COMPANY COMMANDER.

A Co. 1/Bn. BUFFS.

1. Reached final objective—am O.K.—am consolidating, want 10 picks.

2. In touch with Royal Scots on right—No. 2 platoon has not got beyond second trench and no touch with it yet. My bombers have made block at X.18.C.3.2.

3. Trench under direct observation from TAFFY trench in X.25.A.

4. Enemy m.g. in SALLY trench about X.18.A.8.9, hostile artillery fire increasing from direction of HIGH COPSE.

5. Casualties about 15, including L. Gun and most of the section. 4 men badly wounded in final objective.

6. No sign of counter attack.

7. If more bombers and L.G. section could be sent up to me, trench on left could be cleared.

8. Sketch attached.

April 1st, 1917.
8.35 a. m.

(By Pte. J. Smith.)

Signature.
Rank,
Cdg. No. 1 Platoon,
1/Buffs.

N. B.—It must be impressed on the writer of the report that one of the most important points to remember is that the time the message was *written* must always be stated. The position of the writer must also be stated unless (as is clear from par. 1 of above message) it is stated in the body of the message.

SCHEME 4.

MAP READING.

1. GENERAL NOTES.

(*a*) Choose a site which affords a fairly extensive and varied view of country.

(*b*) Problems are of two kinds:

To identify on the map a spot pointed out on the ground.

To identify on the ground a place described from the map.

In conjunction with these problems useful instruction can be given in writing messages and giving orders.

2. EXAMPLES.

(*a*) You form part of a vanguard of a force moving from ——— to ———.

Identify your exact position on the map and explain how you arrived at your answer.

Two hostile horsemen are moving along the edge of that wood (pointing it out).—Write a message reporting it.

The enemy is firing from that hedge (pointing it out). Explain to your platoon sergeant how to move round behind them without being seen. Trace this out on the map.

The flash of a hostile field gun is seen behind that ridge (pointing it out). Write a message reporting it.

(*b*) You are ordered to send out a patrol to a village out of sight. Point out on the ground the route it should take.

You receive a message that your signalers are to look out for a visual station at ——— (give map coordinate or other description). Show them where to look for it.

The enemy is reported to be holding a certain line. Can you see anything of them?

SCHEME 5.

EXERCISE FOR A COMPANY COMMANDER.

PROTECTION OF A CONVOY.

[Reference 1/100,000 Abbeville Sheet and fig. 1.]

1. NARRATIVE.

(*a*) The British forces are operating in a hostile country and have reached a point above 30 miles southeast of AMIENS, where a battle is shortly expected.

Owing to the rapid advance the supply question has become acute and small horsed convoys are sent out to requisition in all directions.

(*b*) You are commanding one of these which consists of—

20 G. S. wagons, 4-horsed.

40 impressed farm carts and wagons—all with 2 or 3 horses each.

Escort:

1 company of infantry.

2 platoons of cyclists.

½ section of a M. G. company.

(*c*) For the last 24 hours you have been collecting supplies in neighborhood of FRANCIERES—AILLY-LE-HAUT CLOCHER—VILLERS, and have met with considerable opposition in your work

from the local inhabitants. You have had constant breakdowns with your wagons, and the impressed drivers have been giving a lot of trouble. You intend to collect more supplies in BOUCHON, park in the vicinity for the night, and move on to your supply depot at BELLOY-SUR-SOMME early next morning.

(*d*) At 3 p. m., April 2, the head of your convoy is about one-fourth mile northwest of BOULHON, coming from the direction of VILLERS.

2. PROBLEM I.

Draw a rough sketch showing the position of the convoy and the distribution of the escort.

3. NOTES.

(*a*) Necessity for advanced and rear guard.

(*b*) Should the remainder of the escort be distributed along the convoy, or collected on the dangerous flank in a handy formation?

(*c*) Is one flank more dangerous than the other? How can the River SOMME help in protecting your right flank? Can better observation be obtained on that flank?

(*d*) Cyclist patrols to give warning. Push well out.

(*e*) Machine guns kept in hand, available as a reserve of fire power.

(*f*) Some of the escort required distributed along the convoy to look after the impressed drivers and assist with wagons in difficulties.

(*g*) What is the main duty of the commander of the convoy? To conduct the convoy safely to BELLOY. The escort should therefore be used solely for its protection and not to seek out and fight the enemy.

(*h*) What orders have been given to the advanced guard as regards the inhabitants? Value of hostages—mayor of the village, etc.

4. NARRATIVE.

(*a*) The column is halted just outside the village, the O. C. convoy rides on into BOUCHON and interviews the mayor and makes arrangements for the collection of the supplies, which the mayor had been warned in advance to get ready. He finds the mayor reasonably amenable and a certain amount of sup-

plies had been got ready. He discusses with the mayor as to parking his convoy. The mayor offers him a billet for himself and says he can arrange for about 200 men under cover.

(*b*) At 4.30 p. m. the O. C. convoy receives the following message by D. R.:

O. C., No. 5 Convoy
B.23. 2nd.

"Hostile raiding party—1 squadron cavalry, 4 buses, 1 armoured car—passed through DOULLENS 3.15 p.m. today, moving on DOMART AAA Park convoy defensive position to-night AAA. Escort will be reinforced by 6 a.m. to-morrow AAA. Report location of Park."

Supply Depot, BELLOY. J. SMITH,
4 p.m. *Lieut.-Col.*

5. PROBLEM II.

On receipt of above message, what are you going to do?

6. NOTES.

(*a*) First object—defense of convoy; second object—collection of further supplies.

(*b*) Time, 4.30 p. m. Hostile force passed through DOULLENS at 3.15 p. m. Distance DOULLENS to MOUFFLERS, 16 miles. Rate of move of hostile raiding force, say, 8 miles per hour. Two hours for the journey—possible to arrive at 5.15 p. m. Therefore immediate decision must be made.

(*c*) Where is the best defensive place to park? Is your escort sufficiently strong for all-round defense against a force consisting of 1 squadron of cavalry and say 100 (half company) infantry? If possible, what spot could be chosen where ground will assist in economizing troops? The VILLERS-BOUCHON Valley will hide the park, but you must occupy the high ground east and west as well as block the road at each end. With cavalry and mobile infantry the attack could come from any direction.

(*d*) Is a hostile village a good place to camp in? Difficult to prevent information getting out.

(*e*) The reentrant southeast of Camp de César would afford concealment with a position commanding the approaches, and has the protection of the river on the south. The park would also be situated on a road, easy to protect, along which the march to BELLOY could be continued next day.

(*f*) Time. How long will it take to move the convoy and get troops into position?

Ten minutes to send back word?
Five minutes to get started?
Forty minutes to get convoy to park?
Total, 55 minutes.
In addition to this infantry have to be got into position.

7. Narrative.

The O. C. convoy decided at once he had no time to move and consequently parked in a reentrant practically where the convoy was halted. He put out a picket—two sections—on the high ground on either side of the road Bouchon–Doullens and a section blocking the road to the north and south. The remainder of his infantry with his machine guns he kept as reserve and supports.

He disposed of his cyclists as follows:

One section Villers-sous-Ailly.
One section La Folie.
One section Long.
One section Bouchon.

He sent out two sections on patrol, one patrol on Domart and St. Ouen, one patrol on Gorenflos and Ailly-le-Haut-Clocher.

Remaining platoon (less two sections) in reserve.

He arrested and took as hostages the mayor of Bouchon and three of the important local inhabitants, threatening to shoot them at once if any of the inhabitants moved out of the village.

After the wagons were parked and infantry pickets put out, he sent the horses into Bouchon to water, 25 at a time.

No fires were allowed in the camp or pickets.

Scheme 6.

MINOR OPERATION—NIGHT ATTACK BY A COMPANY.

[Reference 1/40,000 map, sheet 62D and fig. 2.]

1. Narrative.

The enemy has been driven back northwards across the River Somme at Corbie. A line of outposts to cover the bridgehead

has been thrown out by them on the line HAMELET—0.18.b. central—0.16.d. central. A hostile post, believed to consist of about 50 men, is entrenched at the crossroads in 0.18.b. We have pickets in position at 0.13.c.9.7 and 0.18.c.8.0, about half a mile from the crossroads. The reserve company of the battalion of the advanced guard finding the outpost is billeted in VILLERS BRETONNEUX. At 3 p. m. (date Apr. 1) the company commander receives orders that he is to capture the post at 0.18.b. by 6 a. m. next morning.

2. PROBLEM I.

What immediate steps should the company commander take?

3. NOTES.

There remained about four hours of daylight.

The distance to our nearest picket on the HAMELET Road is about 1¼ miles. Time, therefore, is important for reconnaissance. Collect platoon commanders and sergeants; company commander's horse to be ordered; company commander to tell platoon officers and sergeants what the allotted task is and briefly describe the situation as far as he knows it from the map.

Who would the company commander take with him on his reconnaissance, and why?—Probably his platoon commanders and a few scouts.

What would he tell his second in command, whom he left behind, to do?—Get the company ready with rations, water, ammunition, etc.

4. NARRATIVE.

The company commander with his platoon commanders and four scouts moved up the main road as far as our picket at 0.18.c.8.0. On arrival there he told the picket commander his objective, and was told there was another post in the wood in 0.17.c. He then decided on his plan of attack.

5. NOTES.

Was the company commander in view of the enemy's post in 0.17.c. as he rode up the road?

What should he do on arrival at the picket at 0.18.c.8.0? Reconnoiter the ground and formulate a plan of attack.

Would it be better to attack it frontally or pierce the outpost line and attack from the flank or rear?

What arrangements would he make for keeping direction? Compass, landmarks.

Could not the picket help by sending out patrols at dusk to act as guiding points?

If he decided to attack from the rear, would he be likely to meet hostile patrols? If so, what action should be taken?

6. Narrative.

The following was the plan adopted by the company commander:

To move up to the picket so as to arrive there at midnight. Thence to advance in a north-northwest direction, crossing the hostile line at 0.18.a.4.2, and then move northward to the Fouilloy road. On arrival there, the leading platoon would cross the road and after 100 yards turn to the right and move in section column south-eastward parallel to the road. The second platoon to move in the same formation astride the road, the third platoon 100 yards behind the second, and the fourth platoon 100 yards south of the road and to move southeast parallel to the road.

If, at any time, after passing the line of posts the company was alarmed, the company was to move direct on the objective. The bayonet only was to be used; no firing.

7. Notes.

Discuss the plan in detail. Difficulties of keeping direction. Moon sets 3.20 a. m.

How would the company move up the road from Villers Bretonneux to the picket? What protection would be required? Could it miss its way? What formation would be adopted by the company after leaving the picket?

8. Narrative.

On arrival with his company at the picket, the scouts whom he had left behind with the picket told him the enemy had a patrol moving between the post in 0.18.b. and the wood in 0.17.c. every half hour. One scout had been left out to watch. The company moved forward and found the scout by a haystack near Point 93. He told the company commander that the last patrol passed about 20 minutes before. The company com-

mander halted the company, which lay down. The hostile patrol passed in about five minutes and the company then moved on.

All went well until the leading platoon reached the road about 0.18.a.4.8, where it met a relief coming up the road from FOUILLOY. The company commander was at the head of the second platoon and heard noise and shouting and a few shots from the direction of the leading platoon; also one or two shots from the direction of the hostile picket.

9. PROBLEM II.

What action should he take?

10. NARRATIVE.

The company commander at once ordered the platoon (i. e., the second) he was with to advance direct on the objective. He then ran back to the third platoon and found it had already moved in the same direction. The fourth had halted, so he ordered it to move on to the road and advance in support of Nos. 2 and 3 platoons.

They had not moved far when there was a burst of fire from the hostile post; at the same time a man of the original leading platoon (which had met the relief) came running back and said they had met a whole battalion on the road.

What should the company commander do then?

11. NOTES.

Quick decision necessary. What reliance could be placed on the man's statement? It was fairly dark, the moon very low, and the chances were that he had exaggerated the enemy's strength. It was more probably only a platoon of about 50 men going up to relieve the post. The other three platoons had just got on the move toward the hostile post. What would be the effect of altering the orders? What was the object of the operation? Ought not the company commander to go for the hostile post and not be deflected from his original objective? Necessity of bold action.

12. NARRATIVE.

The company commander decided not to alter his orders and to continue his attack on the post. At the same time he thought the situation on the road behind him ought to be cleared up, so

he ran back to the platoon and found it had disposed of its opponents and captured 20 prisoners. He sent these off under escort by the route the company had advanced by, and moved with the remainder in support of the attack on the picket.

SCHEME 7.

FOR COMPANY AND PLATOON OFFICERS.

ADVANCED GUARD.

[Reference, fig. 3 and 1/40,000 sheet.]

1. NARRATIVE.

A battalion left ST. GRATIEN at 6 a. m., under orders to march and occupy the bridge over the River SOMME at DAOURS as quickly as possible. Information had been received that a hostile force of about two companies of infantry with a few cyclists was moving on DAOURS from the direction of MORÉUIL, which was passed at 5 a. m.

The battalion commander detailed one company as advanced guard and gave the company commander orders that he must brush aside any opposition met with, using all his company if necessary to do so.

At 6.45 a. m. the head of the main body reached the road junction at H.10.d.8.3.

2. PROBLEM I.

What was the disposition of the advanced guard at this time?

3. NOTES.

(*a*) Distance ahead of main body that the advanced guard marches must be sufficient to allow the main body time to deploy should the enemy be met with in force. This depends, among other things, on the strength of the force—the larger the force the greater must be the distance and vice versa. With one battalion probably half a mile would be sufficient.

(*b*) The principle that every unit is responsible for its own protection must be remembered.

The main body has an advanced guard, the main guard has a vanguard, the vanguard has a point, etc.

(*c*) What is the effect of the ground on the dispositions? On the right, open high ground under cultivation, not much opportunity for the enemy to conceal themselves. On the left, the River HALLUE, trees all along the banks and running in a little valley parallel to the QUERRIEU-DAOURS Road. More opportunity for concealment.

Both flanks must be watched, but most danger would probably come from the left flank.

(*d*) Discuss generally the duties of an advanced guard, and emphasize the importance of time. This must be impressed by the battalion commander on the advanced guard commander, and by the latter on his subordinate commanders.

(*e*) The Lewis gun will probably be a very important weapon in advanced guard actions. The principle of fire and movement must be considered. In order to allow the vanguard to clear the way for the main guard it should contain a Lewis-gun section. The platoon is now a self-contained unit, capable of tactical maneuver without outside help. The vanguard would therefore probably consist of a complete platoon.

(*f*) Although a few grenades might be carried, it does not appear likely that many would be required. The bombing and rifle bombers section would therefore be employed chiefly as riflemen.

(*g*) Figure 3 shows a suggested disposition of the advanced guard.

4. NARRATIVE.

The advanced guard met no opposition in QUERRIEU. When the section, acting as point to the vanguard, reached point (A), it was sniped from wood (B), and had two of its eight men killed. The remainder of the section lay down on the road, obtaining as much cover as they could. The section leader sent a man back to the vanguard commander with orders "to report to him what had happened." He ran back and found his platoon commander at the cemetery coming along with the remainder of the platoon. The message the platoon commander received was "The enemy has got about a company in a wood about 200 yards from us. They opened a very heavy fire and nearly all our men are killed." The vanguard commander, who was only about 400 yards behind, had heard only five shots fired altogether.

5. PROBLEM II.

What action should the O. C. vanguard take?

6. NOTES.

(*a*) The sequence should be—

Reconnaissance.
Decision as to action.
Orders to sections.
Report to advanced guard commander.

Everything must be done quickly to avoid checking those behind.

(*b*) *Reconnaissance.*—The tactical features of the ground must be studied.

The wood from which the fire came commands the road at short range. If there were even a section of the enemy concealed in the wood, it would be quite easy to hold up his vanguard with fire if it advanced along the road. The enemy would be difficult to locate exactly.

If he moved west of the road the advance could probably be made unobserved by moving wide, about 400 yards or more from the road with the high ground (C), which commands the wood, as objective. If he moved east of the road, there would be more cover and he would not have so far to go, but he would not have the advantage of the high ground commanding the wood.

(*c*) *Decision.*—Time is the important factor. Moving west of the road would be the longer in distance, but if high ground could be occupied, the enemy would be forced to leave the wood. Moving east of the road would be the shorter in distance, but if the enemy were holding the wood in any strength, it might be difficult to dislodge him.

(*d*) *Orders.*—When a decision has been arrived at, definite orders must be given by the commander.

(*e*) *Report.*—Report should come last. Generally the sequence would be "act first, report second."

7. NARRATIVE.

The vanguard commander made his reconnaissance and decided to move west of the road. He sent his Lewis gun section forward along the road and gave it orders to cover the advance of the remainder with fire. All available spare men of the sec-

tion were ordered to assist with rifle fire. Fire is to be distributed over the wood unless a definite target can be located. He reported to his company commander and moved round with the remaining sections west of the road by the eastern edge of the wood (D). He misjudges the lie of the ground and moves southeast direct toward the high ground at (C). He came under fire from the wood at (B) and ran down to get cover under the bank at (E), sustaining several casualties in doing so, and found he could not get on.

The company commander who had heard the firing moved up to the cemetery, where he received the report as to the action taken by his vanguard. He ordered his company to halt and lie down out of sight of the wood (B). He then made a brief reconnaissance of the country. He could not see any of his vanguard getting up to the high ground west of the wood, but heard considerable fire going on about the west end of the wood.

8. PROBLEM III.

What action should the company commander take?

9. NOTES.

(*a*) The company commander thinks that as the vanguard has not got up on to the high ground, and firing is still going on, that it must be held up.

(*b*) He considers the question of time and realizes that quick action is necessary.

(*c*) The attack west of the road has not been successful and he sees that a movement east of the road along the valley of the HALLUE would not only turn the enemy's position in the wood (B), but also be almost on the direct line of advance.

(*d*) If he decides on this maneuver, what force should be sent? Should he keep something in hand? He must make a certainty of it. Should he send one or two platoons, keeping the remainder in hand?

(*e*) Would he reenforce his covering fire by putting in the Lewis gun section of his reserve platoon?

(*f*) He must inform his vanguard what action he is taking.

10. NARRATIVE.

The company commander decides to move two platoons along the HALLUE Valley to work round the wood. He looks at his watch and sees the time is 6.50 a. m., when the battalion is

going to have a 10 minutes' halt. He keeps his reserve platoon under cover on the road north of the cemetery, except the Lewis gun section, which he orders to go forward and help with covering fire. He himself remains with his reserve, in a good position for observation, and sends off a message to his vanguard commander, telling him the action he has taken and ordering him to take the first opportunity possible of moving on. Just as the two platoons, which are to move along the HALLUE River, have dropped out of sight, he sees about half a dozen men run out of the wood (B) and go off toward DAOURS.

11. PROBLEM IV.

What action should he take then?

12. NARRATIVE.

He at once ordered his platoon to fall in; he sent out some scouts, and advanced along the road. No opposition was met, and on arriving at the top of the hill beyond the wood he saw nine cyclists just disappearing over the crest of the next ridge on the way to DAOURS.

He formed his reserve platoon into a vanguard and sent orders to his other platoons to incline inward to the road and form the main guard.

He sent back a report to the O. C. main body.

SCHEME 8.

ATTACK AGAINST AN ORGANIZED TRENCH SYSTEM.

[Reference 1/100,000 Map Abbeville Sheet and fig. 1.]

1. GENERAL.

(*a*) This type of scheme is to educate junior officers by giving them an insight into the problems constantly set to the higher commanders and to show them how the particular task assigned to their individual command is devolved.

(*b*) The scheme can be combined with smaller tactical situations requiring quick decision by junior leaders.

(*c*) It can commence with any size of formation (battalion, brigade, or division, as desired) and different phases can be taken on different days, until the whole is worked through. If this is done, those taking part gradually acquire the atmosphere of the situation, the results of the teaching benefiting accordingly.

(*d*) Sufficient points are given to give an idea of questions to ask; the majority of the answers to them can be found in S. S. 135, "Instructions for Training of Divisions for the Offensive;" S. S. 143, "Training of Platoons for Offensive Action;" S. S. 144 (40/W. O./3995), "The Normal Formation for the Attack."

2. Narrative.

A big battle took place during the late summer north of the Somme. The enemy's forces were thrown back in a westerly direction and were eventually able to entrench themselves and hold up our advance.

The enemy's line of entrenchments ran approximately northeast and southwest through Domart and just west of the Domart-Bouchon-Le Quesnoy road. During the winter plans were made to attack this line in April on a broad front, the center of the attacking forces advancing on Abbeville. The right of the division (to which the unit belongs) includes the village of Bouchon, the left resting on the river Somme, and other divisions are attacking on the flanks.

3. Preliminary Exercise in Billets.

(*a*) map reading.

River Somme.—Impassable ground about a mile in width—communication with troops on the far bank difficult—bridges presumably destroyed—ground on right bank very steep, that on left bank not so steep, with more valleys running perpendicular to the river than on right bank.

Situation on divisional front.—Deep valley between Camp de César and heights southwest of Bouchon—steep valley runs north-northwest from Bouchon village.

Stream runs down the valley from Bouchon to the Somme. Is it passable? Is there any flat ground on either side of it? How broad? Is it likely to be marshy? Does the stream run nearer to one side of the valley than the other?

High ground.—Which side of the valley has the higher ground? Visibility of different points.

Position of villages, woods, etc.—LONG in a valley.

Try and get an accurate picture of the ground from the map, and discuss all information that can be got off it, how it affects the operation, communications, assembly of troops, artillery, machine guns, fatigue of assaulting troops, etc.

(*b*) Discuss frontages generally. How they are affected by the nature of the enemy's defenses (he has had about five months to make them), the depth to which the division is to penetrate, the necessity for keeping a reserve in hand. Estimate from the map the approximate frontage allotted to the division, how many brigades would normally be required in front line, how many battalions, how many companies, etc.

(*c*) Discuss artillery action generally, preliminary bombardment, barrages, communications with artillery, visual signaling, cable communications, etc.

4. EXERCISE ON THE GROUND.

The party should assemble at some point in our own lines from which a good view of the country can be obtained.

(i) The ground should be studied and compared with the picture previously obtained by reading the map. Discrepancies should all be considered, whose fault was it, the map or the reader?

(ii) Imagination should then be fostered by picturing and discussing where the troops would actually have stopped in the fight which finished in November last. Where would the enemy have actually dug his line, where would ours have been dug? Trace the whole system out (the numerous chalk banks on the sides of the hills in the vicinity often assist the eye in picturing the trenches). Imagining our advanced troops actually got into the bottom of the valley in the fight, would they have been able to have dug themselves in there, and if so, would the wet season have driven them out? If so, where should we have dug our new line?

(iii) What advantages does the ground afford to either side for artillery fire, covering fire with machine guns, positions of command posts, points likely to attract hostile fire, etc.?

(iv) Discuss the relative difficulty of attacking the village of BOUCHON and the high ground south and west of it. How does this affect frontages? Should the village of BOUCHON be a dis-

tinct objective given to one unit; if so, a brigade, battalion, or what? If given to one brigade to deal with, can one brigade deal with the remainder of the front allotted to the division, or would more be required? If more, what effect on the strength of the reserves in the hands of the divisional commander, and the depth to which the division can go? Can the attack on the village be simultaneous with the attack by the brigades on its flanks, or should it be before? Difficulties of a frontal attack on a village; can it be avoided? Instances can be given from the SOMME fighting (e. g., FRICOURT, where the intention was not to attack it frontally, but to move round the flanks and nip it off; COMBLES).

(v) Having discussed the attack from a general point of view and decided on a plan, take one of the attacking brigades (say the left) and work down to smaller details. What is the frontage for the brigade, how many battalions required? What natural boundary exists which could be used to mark the flanks of battalions?

(vi) Next, take one battalion and discuss numbers and frontages of companies. After all the general details have been discussed the party might move forward to our assumed front line.

(vii) Discuss where our own front line would actually be sited. There is a steep bank rising about 10 to 12 feet above the flat ground of the valley. This would probably form the approximate line of our own front trench. Discuss with platoon and section leaders and get them to point out the exact spot where they would like the trench dug. Points to note would be, if sufficiently close to the front edge of the bank to avoid dead ground, the protection afforded will not be sufficient against shell fire. If 12 or 15 feet back from the edge there will be a lot of dead ground. How can this be dealt with? Obstacles pushed well out in advance, the front of the bank and dead ground flanked by machine guns, etc. Would you keep any advanced posts; where would you have them? Is the position of the front trench about the correct assaulting position, or would it be necessary to dig advanced trenches? If not time for this, could the first assaulting wave move out unobserved under an artillery barrage? Would smoke be useful? Where would the second wave be assembled? Reconnoiter the enemy's position and the intervening ground carefully. Discuss platoon frontages, points to march on to insure direction being kept. Likely positions of hostile machine guns. During the advance

across the open where will you come under dead ground from various points in the enemy's line? There is a deep ravine running perpendicular to the enemy's front line. How is that to be tackled? The enemy probably have a machine gun dug well in at the head of it. Supposing the brigade on the right fail to take the village, will it materially affect the attack? Can you help? What are the opportunities for covering fire with machine guns, Lewis guns and rifles during the advance to the enemy's front line, and subsequently? How would this be organized? Would the artillery fire be likely to mask direct observation of the movements of our own troops? Could visual signaling be employed? What sort of an obstacle is the stream; would it disorganize the assaulting waves, etc.?

(viii) One company front might then be chosen and the party move across to the enemy's position, noting any points in the ground en route, and checking their previous reconnoissance as regards dead ground. Imagine some situations for platoon and section leaders (e. g., wire not sufficiently cut; what is he to do?).

(ix) A position might then be taken in the enemy's line looking toward our own and the scheme discussed from the enemy's point of view. What could they see of our movements into assaulting position, how would they have sited their trenches, how far could the first wave be reasonably expected to advance, how does the steepness of the hill affect the men, where could they reform, would you attack on the leap-frog system or make the leading wave go to the furthest objective? Imagine some situations, such as a platoon being held up by a strong point or machine gun. What would the platoon commander do? On arrival at the objective of the platoon, what should the commander do (reorganize platoon, push out patrols, consolidate position, find out what units on the flanks are doing and see if you can help them, report to company commander, etc.)?

(x) The exercise can be extended ad lib., the advance against the reserve and intermediate lines with the fighting gradually assuming a more open nature. Any feature in the ground, however small, should be noted, and a full discussion initiated as to how the enemy would use it and how we should deal with it.

5. It will be seen from the above that an exercise of this nature, while allowing plenty of opportunities for the junior leaders to exercise their imagination and improve their initiative and power of coming to a decision, would tend to broaden their

views and throw light onto the general scheme and arrangements required for an operation.

While some pieces of ground are naturally more suitable than others, a scheme of this nature can nearly always be drawn up for a piece of ground in the vicinity of billets.

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III.

QUESTIONS A PLATOON COMMANDER SHOULD ASK HIMSELF BEFORE AN ATTACK.

1. Do I know exactly what objectives have been allotted (*a*) to my platoon, (*b*) to my company, (*c*) to my battalion? Have I a map showing them?

2. Have I explained them to my N. C. O.'s and men? And have I given my N. C. O.'s a sketch plan of the platoon's objective?

3. Do my N. C. O.'s and men understand exactly what formation the platoon is adopting for this attack and the various duties each one of them has to perform? How am I using my Lewis gun?

4. Do I know the bearings both of the left and of the right of my objective?

5. Do I know, and do my N. C. O.'s and men know, the names of the units on my flanks?

6. Do I understand the barrage lines and timing of lifts in the artillery program?

7. Have I impressed upon my men the great importance of keeping close up to our own barrage?

8. Is my watch synchronized?

9. Do I understand all orders sufficiently to be able to take command of the company if my company commander gets knocked out?

10. Have I told my platoon sergeant and N. C. O.'s everything I can to enable them to carry on if I get knocked out?

11. Are all my N. C. O.'s and men properly equipped according to orders?

12. Do I know who have (*a*) wire cutters, (*b*) Very pistols and lights?

13. Have (*a*) bombs, (*b*) flares been issued to each man, and orders about their carriage and use properly explained?

14. Do I know and does my orderly know (*a*) the best way to company headquarters now; (*b*) how to find my company commander during and after the attack; (*c*) where battalion headquarters is, and, if it is moving, at what stage and to what place?

15. Have I warned my men to shoot or bayonet anyone giving the order "Retire"?

16. Have I told them that slightly wounded men must carry back their equipment, and that men must on no account weaken the line by taking back wounded?

17. Do the stretcher bearers know their way to the advanced dressing station and the arrangements made for getting away wounded?

18. Do I know what to do with prisoners?

19. Have I detailed the patrol to be pushed out as soon as the objective has been gained, and explained to it exactly what to do?

20. Do my men understand the necessity of establishing touch with units on my flanks, or, if on gaining our objective we are not in touch, of establishing blocks immediately?

21. Do I understand that to consolidate a well-defined target exposes my men to heavy shelling afterwards? Have I thought out where and how it is best to consolidate the objective I am about to attack?

22. Do all my men know which are UP and which are DOWN communication trenches?

23. Do I know and have I explained to my N. C. O.'s the arrangements for supply of water, S. A. A., bombs, sandbags, wire, etc.?

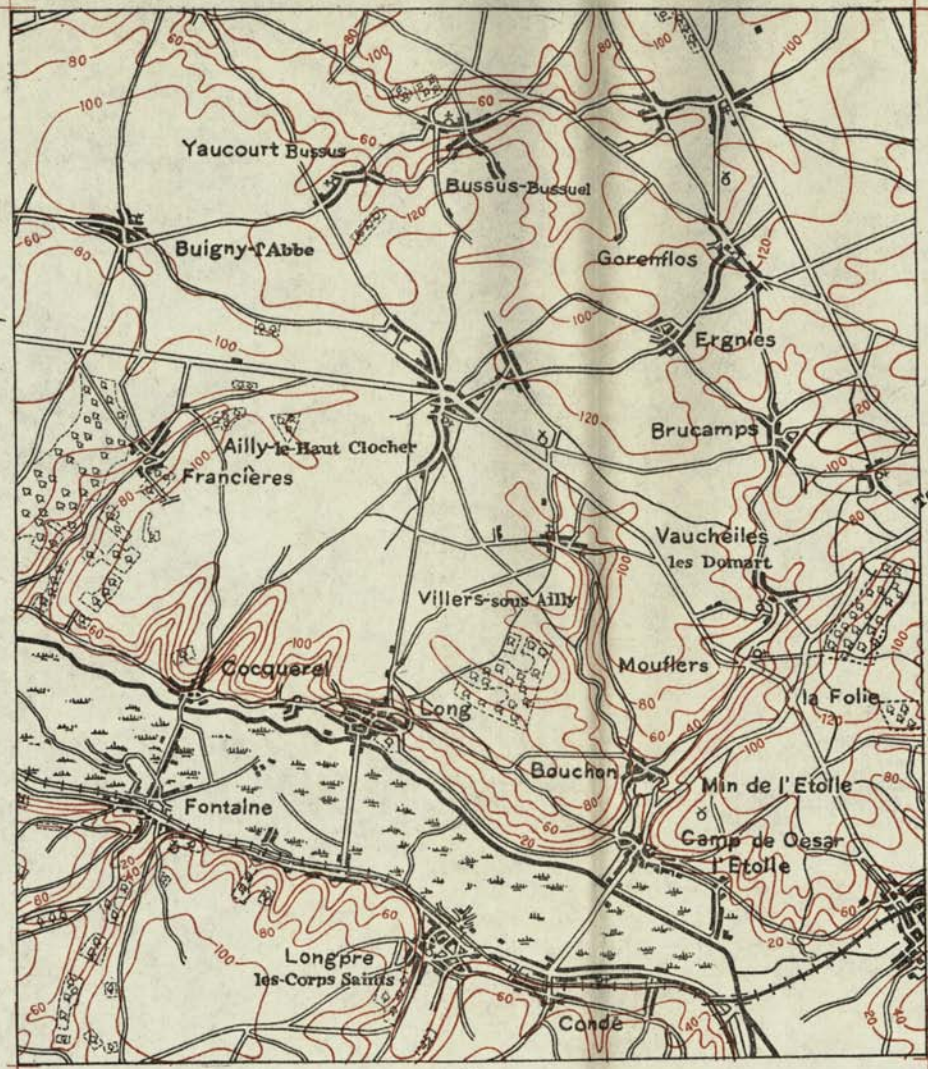
24. Have I made all possible arrangements for any special work required from my platoon after the objective has been gained?

25. What is the S. O. S. signal?

QUESTIONS A PLATOON COMMANDER SHOULD ASK HIMSELF WHEN THE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN GAINED.

1. Am I and my men where they were meant to be?
2. Have I reported my position and the situation generally?
3. Are flares being lit when called for by the contact aeroplane?
4. Is my platoon reorganized to resist counter attack?
5. Am I doing all I can to consolidate the position and am I consolidating in the best place?
6. Am I in touch with units on my flanks? If not, are blocks being established as quickly as possible?
7. Is the Lewis gun disposed to the best advantage? Does it cover a block?
8. Has the patrol been pushed out as I arranged?
9. Am I making the best use of my scouts and snipers?
10. What is the enemy doing? Am I doing all in my power to find out, and to let my company commander have the information as quickly as possible?
11. What special orders did I receive? Was I ordered to dig any part of a communication trench? If so, are the men told off for the work working at it?
12. Can I put up anything as a guide to our position for the artillery?
13. Do I appreciate that if my present position is unhealthy it is likely to be much worse if I try to withdraw?
14. Do I understand that bold and energetic action makes for success?

Fig.1

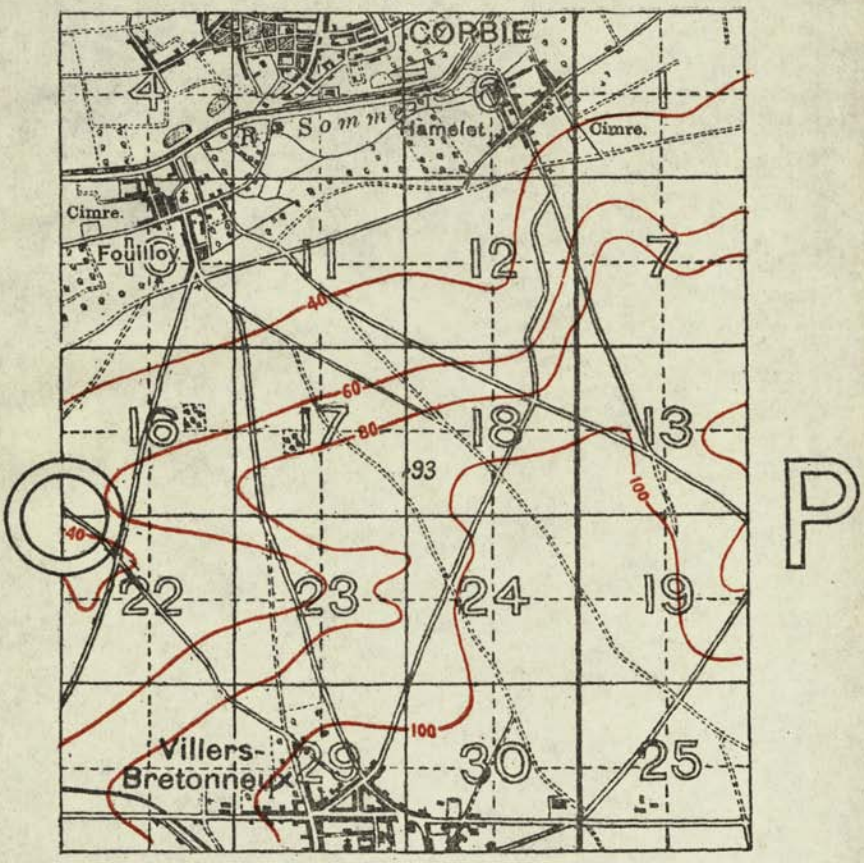


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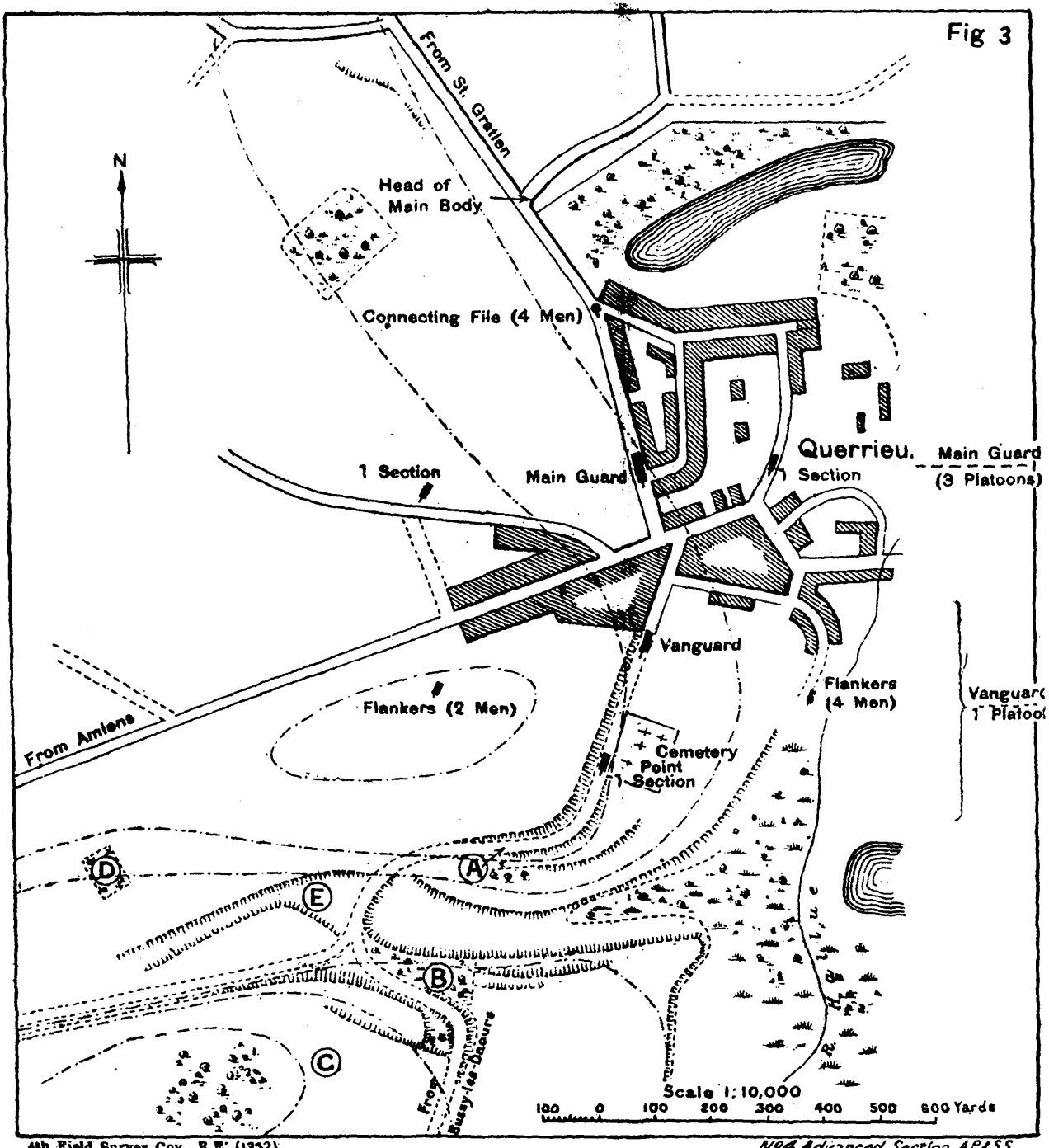
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Fig. 2



Scale 1 - 40,000.



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