

September 1921

## PROFESSIONAL NOTES

THE following problem and solution were prepared by Captain LeRoy P. Hunt, U.S.M.C., Instructor in the Department of Military Tactics, Field Officers' School, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va. This problem, under date of May 27, 1921, was used in the school.

### CONFERENCE PROBLEM (TL-3)

#### " NIGHT COMBAT PATROL "

(Taken from an actual situation of the World War)

Map: French Plan Directeur.

*Chateau-Thierry.*

1-20,000.

#### GENERAL SITUATION

The General Situation is that of the World War as of 26th June, '18.

The 4th Brigade U. S. Marines, 2d Division A.E.F., has been holding the general line point (174.0-263.45)—northern edge of *Bois de la Brigade de Marine-Bouresches* (exclusive), since 26th June, '18. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, is holding that portion of the line on the extreme left of the Brigade, extending from point (174.0-263.45), along unimproved road to road fork at point (174.7-263.3), thence across open field to point (175.5-262.8), with two companies in the front lines and two along the Battalion Reserve line. The left front line company holds that portion of the line from point (174.0-263.45) to road fork at point (174.7-263.3). The Germans are holding a line to the front along the road point (174.0-263.8) . . . Crossroads point (174.8-263.5)—Southern edge of the town of *Belleau*.

#### SPECIAL SITUATION

Recent activity in the enemy's line indicates that he is preparing for an offensive and the Observation Posts and Airplanes report the arrival of new units on the front opposite the 4th Brigade. Considerable movement of small groups has been observed around barn at crossroads point (174.8-263.5). At 9.00 A.M., 29th June, '18,

Major A, commanding 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, receives orders from the Regiment, to make every effort that night to capture prisoners for identification.

*Required:*

1. Major A's Action and Orders.

2. Captain B's Action and Orders.

(Note): Captain B commands Company A, the left front line company of the Battalion, from which the patrol is sent.

3. Lieutenant Y's Action and Orders.

(Note): Lieutenant Y is the Lieutenant of Company A, detailed by Captain B as patrol leader.

A SOLUTION—CONFERENCE PROBLEM

"NIGHT COMBAT PATROL"

Map: French Plan Directeur,  
*Chateau-Thierry Sheet,*  
1-20,000.

*Required:*

1. Major A's action and Orders.

Upon receipt of orders to make every effort to capture prisoners that night for identification, Major A estimates the situation and decides to send out an officer's combat patrol that night from Company A, the left front line company of the Battalion. He decides upon Company A on account of its position in line opposite the red barn at crossroads (174.8-263.5) where the movement of small enemy groups has been observed from time to time.

From the nature of the mission of this patrol, it will probably result in combat. Major A therefore decides it inadvisable to send the Intelligence Group on a patrol of this kind. He does, however, detail two men of the Intelligence Group to accompany the patrol to aid the patrol leader.

At 9.20 A.M., 29th June, '18, Major A dispatches the following message to Captain B of Company A by runner:

CP 1st Bn 5th Marines,  
Point (174.0-261.5),  
29th June, 18, 9: 20 A.M.

To Captain B:

Your company will send out an officer's combat patrol tonight to capture prisoners for identification. Report to this CP immediately

with Lieutenant you select as patrol leader, for further instructions.

A,  
Major.

Upon the arrival of Captain B and the patrol leader at the Battalion Command Post, Major A holds a conference, and together they carefully go over the map and intelligence reports. Major A then issues the following verbal order to Captain B at 10.30 A.M.:

"You are familiar with the enemy situation and our own.

"You will send out a combat patrol tonight to our immediate front under an officer, to capture prisoners for identification.

"Considerable movement by small groups of the enemy has been observed in the vicinity of the barn at crossroads point (174.8-263.5). I suggest that your patrol go to vicinity of this barn.

"The size of your patrol should be about 15 men.

"Start your patrol out at 11.00 P.M. and instruct it to return by 1.00 A.M.

"Notify the companies on your flanks of the size, time of departure and probable return and the route of the patrol. I will notify our Regimental Commander, the Battalion Commanders on our flanks and the supporting artillery of the same.

"Synchronize your watch with mine now.

"If there are no questions, that will be all."

*Required:*

2. Captain B's Action and orders.

Captain B, the Patrol Leader, and the two men from the Intelligence Group return to the company command post after receiving orders from Major A. Together they pick the men who are to constitute the patrol. (They pick 15 men as the Major suggested.)

Captain B sends for two sergeants, who are to go with the patrol and they, together with Patrol Leader and Intelligence Men go to the best available observation post and carefully study the ground to the front with field glasses, pick the route for the patrol and note the compass bearing.

At dusk (8.30 P.M.), Captain B goes to the front line and assembles the patrol leader and other platoon leaders and issues the following verbal order:

"Enemy activity has increased on our front.

"Our troops along the front remain the same.

"This company will send out an Officer's Combat Patrol of 15





men tonight at 11.00 P.M., under Lieutenant Y, to capture prisoners for identification.

"Route of patrol will be from this point (indicates) to the barn at the crossroads to our front. The patrol will return by 1.00 A.M.

"The following men will go on the patrol . . .

"Uniform for the patrol will be overseas caps or covered helmets and shirts. All articles of equipment of clothing that are bright or loose will be removed. Identification tags and all insignia of organization will be removed. Pockets will be emptied of all letters or other articles which are liable to give valuable information to the enemy.

"Equipment will be:

2 men—automatic rifles plus usual ammunition.

13 men—pistols and trench knives.

2 Intelligence Men—pistols and trench knives.

Each man will carry two hand grenades. The patrol leader, two sergeants and two Intelligence Men will be equipped with luminous compasses and watches.

"The password for entrance to our line will be . . .

"Inform your platoons fully of the patrol and password and have the men of your platoons who are to go on the patrol report here to Lieutenant Y at 10.15 P.M., properly equipped and uniformed.

"Lieutenant Y assemble, inspect and instruct your patrol in time to clear the point of departure (indicates point) at 11.00 P.M.

"If there are no questions, that will be all."

Captain B then dispatches runners to the two flank companies informing them of the size of the patrol, time and place of departure, probable time of return and the password for entrance to our lines.  
*Required:*

### 3. Lieutenant Y's Action and Orders.

After receiving verbal orders from Captain B, Lieutenant Y returns to his own platoon and informs it concerning the patrol. He notifies those of his platoon who are to go on the patrol and makes known the uniform of the patrol to them. Shortly before 10.15 P.M. he turns his platoon over to his senior sergeant and leaves with those of his platoon who are to accompany him on patrol, to report at point designated by Captain B at 10.15 P.M.

When all men of the patrol arrive Lieutenant Y assembles them and carefully inspects them for uniform and equipment and makes

any necessary changes. He then gives them the following verbal order at 10.30 P.M.:

"You are familiar with the enemy situation and our own. As you know, small groups of the enemy have been observed on several occasions in the vicinity of the barn to our front.

"This patrol will go out and capture prisoners for identification in that vicinity.

"We will leave this point at 11.00 P.M. in the following formation: Sergeant C and the two men from the Intelligence Group will precede the Support as point, at 15 paces. The Support will form a skirmish line, crescent shape, with a two-pace interval between men and with the automatic rifles on either flank.

"The Battalion Intelligence Men will direct a course to the barn ahead by compass.

"I will regulate the rate of advance and the guide will also be on me.

"No one will open fire or make any unnecessary noise without orders from me.

"In case any enemy is located information will be communicated to me and I will give the necessary orders.

"If it becomes necessary to withdraw hurriedly I will give the word, whereupon each man will make his way individually to our lines, using the password for entrance.

"All casualties will be brought in.

"Communication to the scouts will be maintained by Sergeant D and communication along the line by whispering from man to man. Sergeant D will accompany me.

"Every one note the position of the North Star.

"The password is . . .

"My position will be two paces in front of the centre of the Support.

"Take your positions and await my orders to proceed."

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