

## PROFESSIONAL NOTES

THE following problem and approved solution was prepared by Major Ralph S. Keyser, Instructor in the Department of Military Tactics, Marine Corps Schools, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va. This problem, under date of June 2, 1921, was used in the school.

### CONFERENCE PROBLEM (TL-4-rrmc.)

“NIGHT CONSOLIDATION OF NEW FRONT LINE”

(Taken from an actual situation of the World War)

Map: French Plan Directeur.

Chateau Thierry Sheet,\*

1-20,000.

#### GENERAL SITUATION

The 4th Brigade, 2nd Division, is holding the general line points (174.0-203.45)-(174.7-263.3)-edge of woods from point (174.3-262.6) to (174.6-262.4)-edge of *Bois de la Brigade de Marine* from points (175.4) to *Bouresches* exclusive.

At 5:00 p.m., 25 June, '18, the 3rd Bn., 5th Marines, completed the final capture of the *Bois de la Brigade de Marine* and was consolidating a new line along the northern edge of that wood. The 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, commanded by Major A., was holding the centre to the westward of the *Bois*, disposed as follows:

Bn. CP at points (174.0-261.5); Co. E from points (174.0-263.45)-(174.7-263.3); Co. F edge of woods from points (174.3-262.6) to (174.6-262.4); Co. G in reserve in woods at points (173.7-262.4) and Co. H in reserve at points (174.7-262.0). The enemy is holding the general line along improved road 500 metres south of *Torcy* and *Belleau*.

#### SPECIAL SITUATION

At 7:00 p.m., 25 June, '18, Major A Commanding 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, receives the following written message from Regt. Hq.:

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\* See MARINE CORPS GAZETTE, September, 1921, for map.

5th Marines,  
*La Voie du Chatel Farm,*  
 25 June, '18, 6:30 p.m.

Message No. 206.

To CO, 2nd Bn., 5th Marines:  
 (By runner.)

"The attack of 3rd Bn. was a complete success. You will under cover of the darkness tonight push your front line forward from the road fork at point (174.6-263.2) to connect up with the 3rd Bn.'s new line just east of *Double Tree Road* at point (175.45-162.8). The Artillery will put on a slow rate interdiction fire on the enemy's lines on our front from 10:30 p.m. until you report the work completed."

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 Col.

*Required*

1. Major A's action and orders.
2. Captain B's (the CO of Company detailed to dig the new line) action and orders.
3. Captain C's (the CO of Company detailed to furnish protecting patrols) action and orders.

AN APPROVED SOLUTION—CONFERENCE PROBLEM  
 "NIGHT CONSOLIDATION OF A NEW FRONT LINE"

*Requirement:*

- (1) Major A's action and orders.

Major A makes a hasty mental estimate of the situation. He realizes that time is an essential factor if he is to complete his mission that night, as it is not dark until 10:30 p.m. and is light by 3:30 a.m., so he has five hours to complete the work; that the new position is an exposed one and complete concealment for the new line is important. He decides to use Co. G for the work, and to establish a temporary forward CP at the CP of Co. F. He leaves the Adjutant in charge of old CP with instructions to notify the information agents of neighboring Bns. of our activities and the CO Co. H and E. He orders CO, Co. G, to meet him immediately at the new CP. He goes forward to CP, Co. F, with Bn. Intelligence Officer and one-half of the HQ Group, where after a conference with CO, Cos. G and F, he issues the following verbal orders:

"You are familiar with the enemy's situation on our front. There is no change in it.

“ Our 3rd Bn.’s attack this afternoon was a complete success. They are now consolidating their new position.

“ We dig a new front line tonight to conform to their new position.

“ Captain B, at 10:30 p.m., you will conduct your company down the ravine to the position now held by Co. E and from the road fork here (indicated on map), you will deploy your company and dig a new line on compass bearing of 135 degrees to connect up with the 3rd Bn. just east of *Double Tree Road* at this point [indicating on map]. In order to assure that your company will be extended uniformly over the entire line, I will have the Bn. Intelligence Officer establish the line by stationing four of his men along it to mark the limits of each platoon sector. He will be responsible that it follows the correct compass bearing.

“ In addition to regular arms and equipment, each man will carry two (2) grenades, four sandbags and one-half of the men picks, and the other half shovels. The sandbags will be filled as soon as the line is established so as to afford some protection in case of enemy opposition. The strictest precautions will be taken that the enemy does not discover your activity. The entire work will run through a wheat field, so there is excellent facilities for camouflaging the line. No attempt will be made tonight to dig a continuous trench, but men, working in pairs, will dig, kneeling or standing, pits as time permits. Dirt will be scattered in the wheat.

“ Our artillery will put on a slow interdiction fire on the enemy’s lines while the work is in progress.

“ If there is no enemy interference to prevent, I will send hot food to your company about 2:00 a.m. You will find sufficient tools at the Engineer Dump.

“ Report to me here by runner when you have completed the work and are secure for the day.

“ Capt. C; you will detail four combat patrols, consisting of two squads each and commanded by a Gy. Sgt. or Sgt. to protect front of Co. G while it is at work.

“ These patrols will leave your front line at 10:30 p.m. and secretly take up a fighting formation about 100 yards in advance of the line to be dug. By getting in touch with the Intelligence Officer and his men they can be guided in locating this line. Their mission is to protect the working company from attack and they are not to withdraw from this position until ordered by Capt. B. Capt.

B, you will see that all your men know about these patrols and their mission. In case of attack they are to do the fighting and your men will let nothing prevent them from digging the line.

"In addition to their other arms, see that they have two automatic rifles for each patrol and that every man carries four grenades.

"Lieut. D [Bn. Intelligence Officer], select four of your men, and as soon as it is dark go to the road fork here [indicating on map], and from that point lay out a line on a compass bearing of 135 degrees to the *Double Tree Road*, stationing your four men at equal intervals along it; then be at the road fork to meet Capt. B and conduct him on the same compass bearing over the line. Report to me here when the Co. is in position and starting to dig in."

Major A receives reports when the work is begun and when it is completed and transmits this information to Regt.

*Requirement:*

(II) Capt. B's action and orders.

Capt. B returns to his Co. and orders carrying parties to obtain the necessary tools and sandbags, and after issuing a warning order in which he states the equipment to be carried, assembles his platoon commanders and issues the following verbal orders:

"You are familiar with the enemy situation on our front. There is no change in it. The attack of our 3rd Bn. was a complete success and they are now consolidating their new position. Our battalion pushes its front line forward tonight to conform to the 3rd Bn.'s new line.

"Our Co. will under cover of darkness tonight dig and occupy a new line from here to here [indicating on map]. This line is on a compass bearing of 135 degrees. Platoons will be assembled by 10:30 p.m. and march in normal order down ravine to this road fork [indicating on map]. I, with Company Hq., will march at head of column. The march and the digging will be done without noise; everyone will be cautioned about this. At this road fork [indicating on map] the Intelligence Officer will meet us and conduct the company to the line. Be sure you all have your compass in case anything should go wrong with the plan. The Intelligence Officer will have four men stationed along the line to mark the limits of each platoon. You will locate this man and distribute your men uniformly on this front. Each platoon will have about 250 yards. The men will pair off one with pick and one with shovel and unite in digging a kneeling or stand pit, according to time. Each man will carry

four sandbags to be filled at once and used for protection against enemy fire. The entire line runs through tall wheat, so I want the position well concealed by scattering the dirt and covering pits with cut grain. Four combat patrols from Co. F will be about 100 yards to our front to protect us during the operation. In case of enemy interference they will do the fighting. Our mission is to dig the new line and we must allow nothing to interfere with our carrying it out. See that you have your pyrotechnics. Hot food will be sent to us at 2:00 p.m."

*Requirement:*

(III) Capt. C's action and orders.

Captain C sends for Platoon Commanders and gives them the following verbal orders:

"You are familiar with the enemy situation on our front. There is no change in it. The attack of our 3rd Bn. was a success and they are now consolidating their new position. Our battalion pushes its front line forward tonight to conform to the 3rd Bn.'s new line.

"Co. G is to dig in a new line from here to here [indicating on map] tonight and we are to furnish protection while the work is being done. You will each detail one Gy. Sgt. or Sgt., your best man, to command a combat patrol, and send him to me at once for instructions. You will each select two squads—16 men—two of them to be automatic riflemen and see that they are ready by dark. Each man in addition to his other equipment will carry four grenades."

When the patrol leaders report to Capt. C, he shows them the map and instructs them as follows: "No change in the enemy on our front. You will each lead a combat patrol of 16 men out tonight as soon as it is dark to protect Co. G, that is digging in a new line along here [indicating on map]. Sgts. W and X, you will conduct your patrols out from our lines down to the *Double Tree Road* and then along this road until you get to about here, where you will find one of our intelligence men. That will be the new line to be dug. You will advance about 100 yards beyond this point. Sgt. W, you will stay near the *Double Tree Road*, and you, Sgt. X, take your patrol to the left (west) of the *Double Tree Road*, about 300 yards, and in a line with the other patrol. When you get in position, deploy your patrol so as to be in the best formation for fighting. Sgts. Y and X, you will lead your patrols out of our lines at dark and conduct them to the road fork [indicating on map]; from this point you

will have no difficulty in locating where the new line is to be formed, as we have men stationed along it. You, Sgt. G, will go along this line, passing by the first man, and when you get to the second one advance to the front about 100 yards, and take up a fighting formation. Get in touch with the patrol on your right. Sgt. Z, you proceed along this line until you come to the first man, then advance to the front about 100 yards and there take up a fighting formation, get in touch with the patrol on your right and the front line troops of Co. E on your left rear. Now men, your mission is to protect Co. G while it is at work. You are not to look for a fight, but if the enemy attempts to interfere with the working company you are to engage him and prevent it. You are not to leave your position until you receive orders from Captain B. In case you do not receive such orders before it is time for you to get safely within our lines before daylight, send back to Capt. B for instructions, as he might forget you. Our Artillery will be firing on the enemy's lines while the work is going on. If you understand your orders return to your platoons and get ready."