

Composition of Night Patrols

Patrols should consist of as small a number of men as possible, when the mission is reconnaissance. There should be very limited use of officer patrols. The number of infantry officers is limited, officer casualties are high, and they cannot be expected to perform aggressive duty all day and go out on patrols for several hours at night.

Division headquarters should not prescribe the composition of a patrol. They should order that certain information be obtained, allowing the unit furnishing the patrol to decide its composition.

Training New Men

New men should not be attached to a reconnaissance patrol for the purpose of gaining experience. Their presence will endanger the safety of the patrol as well as the possibility of the successful accomplishment of its mission.

Send new men out on practice patrols to gain experience. These practice patrols should be sent out a very limited distance at first, even as little as 100 yards. The distance can be increased each night until they have acquired considerable experience.

Miscellany

There are many other factors important to the success of infantry actions, particularly the behind-the-lines and shock-troop actions of TOG teams. A few important considerations follow.

The Herd Instinct

Major R. Wilson, Artillery Observer, British Army, North Africa: Our troops showed a decided tendency to bunch under fire. This was observed on several occasions. One prisoner of war, a German forward observer for an 88-mm battery, was interrogated concerning his technique of adjustment.

It seems he had been told that troops congregated under fire. When he saw troops advancing, he was to call for one or two rounds in their vicinity and then observe the area in which they congregated. Fire was then shifted to this area. The prisoner stated that he had conducted very effective fire in this way on several occasions in Libya.

Teamwork

Lieutenant Colonel T. F. Michelle, British Army, North Africa: We would have a rifleman point out pillboxes using tracer ammunition. Then an antitank gun would take them under fire with HE. Oftentimes the pillbox crew would attempt to evacuate to a safer place, and a machine gun would mow them down.

Artillery vs. Tanks

Lieutenant Colonel F. Q. Goodell, Field Artillery, British Eighth Army, North Africa: Direct fire with concentrated 76-mm antitank guns is credited with repelling Rommel's latest push. One battery

knocked out five tanks with six individual rounds at a range of two to three hundred yards.

Radio Discipline

First Lieutenant C. Place, RAF, North Africa: Fliers coming into the combat zone had no conception of radio discipline. New pilots used the radio indiscriminately. Men returning from missions used interplane radio unnecessarily, which jammed up the band for other planes still on the mission.



The average "Heer Soldat" or German Army soldier.

German Radio Countermeasures

Sergeant E. Deckett, Communications, British Army, North Africa: The operating frequency of the transmitters was changed twice a month in North Africa, but the Germans often jammed the band. We had no alternate frequency set up in the event one was thoroughly jammed, because permission was not given to companies to carry the alternate crystal to the front lines.

Twice we even encountered German Talents who could jam radios, but luckily their range was limited to a few hundred yards.

Booby Traps

British Eighth Army Report, North Africa: A Luger pistol was found lying on the ground. An Australian infantry lieutenant carefully tied a long cord to it and, getting into a ditch, pulled it to him. Later in the day while examining the pistol he attempted to remove the magazine. The explosion killed the lieutenant and two other men and wounded six soldiers.