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# THE MOST COMMON SHORT-COMINGS IN THE TRAINING OF BATTALION AND REGIMENTAL S-2 PERSONNEL, AND SOME SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THESE

*by*

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The following pamphlet, Training of Regimental and Battalion S-2 Enlisted Personnel, by Private Frank B. Sargent, 34th Infantry Division, is published for the information of all concerned.

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This pamphlet was written by Private Sargent as an aid to training in his unit. Its excellence was noted by his division commander, Major General Charles W. Ryder. General Eisenhower was so impressed by it that he published it to the Allied Forces in North Africa. A copy was brought to the United States by General Marshall personally, who ordered it distributed to the Army at large.

While Private Sargent's paper is devoted primarily to the training of intelligence personnel, its significance extends far beyond the limits of that subject. This fine soldier has had a great deal of battle experience. He was formerly in the Combined Commando Unit. He has studied his experiences, and in effect is pleading with his comrades everywhere to take their training seriously, to realize that war is a kill-or-be-killed affair, and to take advantage of every opportunity to become battle-worthy against enemies who are fighting desperately for their lives.

The technical procedures discussed by Private Sargent in large measure are contained in training publications, but he emphasizes the fact that training in them has not been

sufficiently thorough—a condition which is not confined to intelligence training.

His suggestions as to psychological training are eloquent, sound, and applicable generally. They will be used in the training of all combat units of the Army Ground Forces. If we are frank, it must be admitted that the fighting spirit of American troops in general still is inadequate for the inevitable desperate fighting ahead.

The italicized references in parenthesis have been inserted at this headquarters in order to connect Private Sargent's comments with War Department training publications.

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# *THE MOST COMMON SHORT-COMINGS IN THE TRAINING OF BATTALION AND REGIMENTAL S-2 PERSONNEL, AND SOME SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THESE*

## 1. BATTALION INTELLIGENCE.

The work of Battalion Intelligence personnel may be roughly organized into the following divisions:

a. Manning of OP's.

b. Patrolling. This again may be divided into:

(1) Scouting, singly or in pairs.
(2) Small patrols.
(3) Large patrols with Intelligence Personnel attached.

c. Communication.

d. Planning (enemy).

To point a:

It was found that personnel manning OPs often let enemy patrols slip through. (*Since "an observation post located by the enemy may become ineffective" (FM 30-10, Par. 9d(4)), it will often be better*

*to let hostile patrols slip through than to give away the position of the OP. In such cases these patrols should be reported to units in the rear.)* This was confirmed from captured documents (Patrol reports). OP personnel have to know the ways in which enemy patrols operate; how they would go about camouflage and cover; what they consist of, and what weapons they use.

Personnel would have to be thoroughly familiar with different noises (trucks, tanks, mortars, M.G., etc.) in order to distinguish enemy positions and materiel by sound, when they are unable to see them. *("Observation is difficult at night and the information which you acquire will depend largely on your hearing and your ability to interpret sounds," FM 21-45, Par. 62, see also Par. 15, FM 17-20.)* Too often reports are sent to H.Q. that mention noises at night without the personnel being able to form identifications or an estimate of numbers.

Personnel should be thoroughly trained in observation and the art of camouflage because if they are familiar with methods of camouflaging they would be more able to detect enemy camouflage.

Personnel must also be familiar with enemy organization in order to send back accurate reports on enemy concentrations and movements.

To point b:

This point is the most important. It has been seen, at units in training, that the training received in the training camps in the United States, as far as patrolling and scouting is concerned, is not at all sufficient for frontline needs.

On some problems in Ireland I have seen patrols go out in the following manner:

The patrol leader had a vague idea about his mission, while the rest knew nothing at all. The leader did not check his men before they left for equipment that would reflect light, or rattle. The patrol followed a road without even considering investigating bushes or hedges on the sides of the road. The patrol marched in a helter-skelter formation, in columns of two, no scouts, no point, no organization whatsoever. The patrol never left the road. The patrol was plainly visible from surrounding hills, but no thought was given to possible enemies. The patrol finally established an OP, again in plain sight, and commenced to relay fictitious messages by visual signalling. All this was sanctioned by responsible officers and okayed. This is only an example, but the same things were seen too often, both in Ireland and

on the front. *(Compliance with provisions of Par. 232b, FM 21-100, the Soldier's Handbook, would avoid these errors.)*

It also has been noted that patrols do not have any conception of what is asked of them. They report back things that were easy to note, while matters of interest required for operations were not even thought of. For instance; enemy troops were concentrated on the opposite side of a bridge. The presence of this concentration was duly reported, but no thought was given the following points:

Bridge, how long, how wide, mined, accessible for what M.T. traffic?
Terrain, before and beyond this bridge, what cover before and beyond, how far this cover reaches toward and away from the bridge?
River, how wide, how deep, are the banks steep, or can they be climbed easily? If steep, where can they be climbed, how far is this spot from the enemy, is there any cover in or about the river bed, by what routes is the bridge approachable, are these approaches suitable for M.T. traffic, and if so for what vehicles, etc.?
Hills, what hills are along the way, how high, are there any enemy O.P.'s on the way, etc.?

The training for personnel who will go out on patrols could consist of, besides the regular training:

(1) Thorough knowledge of enemy (uniforms, insignia, order of battle, organization, weapons, capabilities, use of cover, distribution of men and materiel, habits of small unit tactics). They have to be impressed that the best way is not the shortest, or along a road, but the best way is the hardest, along long detours and over hills and chains of mountains *(For the details of how to select a route see Pars. 48 and 54, FM 21-45)*. I have seen the truth of this again and again in actual combat. We lost a complete troop once because they insisted on marching along a road which led through a pass where the Germans had machine guns set up. The Germans have always M.G. nests along roads and on the lower slopes of hills, overlooking roads. In patrolling it is always true that a pint of sweat saves a quart of blood, and brains save both. Patrols have to put themselves in the place of the enemy and imagine what the enemy would do, where he would be. It has to be hammered into patrols that they are vitally necessary. That they have to outsmart a very smart enemy.

(2) They must be trained to follow certain basic rules. For instance:

Before they start they have to be checked thoroughly. Every man has to know the mission. They have to leave behind every piece of unnecessary equipment. This includes helmets most of the time (a knitted head comforter offers much more camouflage and does not rattle or impede the sight or hearing). On longer patrols only a minimum of rations should be taken, preferably only such as can be carried in the pockets. Much ammunition, not in bandoliers, but in pockets, many hand grenades, smoke grenades, perhaps, an incendiary grenade. They have to know their route to and from their objective by heart.

(3) The formation of the patrol depends on the circumstances. They have to know that on patrols through villages every man has to follow in the footsteps of the one ahead, along walls, under the best cover. They have to know how to avoid snipers, enemy riflemen around corners. They have to know how to investigate buildings without being seen. And most important of all, be it on patrols through villages, or through any terrain, a

patrol has to have a scout or two ahead of it. While this scout investigates the terrain ahead of him, the patrol must lie low, under the best cover possible. They must then advance, one at a time, carefully, while all of the terrain is being observed minutely. The patrol must advance only by leap-frogging, and every man, before he advances, must make sure that he notices the best cover ahead and behind him. Every man, at all times must think subconsciously of cover alongside him, before him, and behind him, of cover that he could take in an emergency. This point does not only apply to patrols. This has been learned in actual combat.

(4) Patrols must learn to be tenacious and aggressive. They must learn to investigate every rock in their way, they must want to know everything enroute. These things they have to know in order to survive. They must also learn to bear up under strains, learn to lie low for hours, learn discipline, learn to wait. *(For additional information see Par. 232b, FM 21-100, Soldier's Handbook.)*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING.

For their theoretical training it may be useful to let personnel study captured documents

containing reports of enemy patrols. Out of these they can also learn a few pointers, like the common practice among German patrols of wearing sacking, or innertubes, wrapped around their boots.

They have to learn enemy small unit tactics by actual demonstration. To give them the best possible training in basic patrolling the following training may be used:

One man sits at a certain spot, blindfolded. At his side are a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. The men training have to approach the first man and sign their initials on the paper, without being heard.

The man in training rides in a jeep. Behind him sits his instructor. The man's job is to direct the driver to a certain spot on the map, making the best possible use of cover. From time to time the instructor will ask questions:

> "How many persons did we pass just now, men or women, how were they dressed? We just passed a building. What was it? Any signs on it?" and the like.

Map reading as taught in the training camps proved to be not at all sufficient here. Often enough I encountered patrols who were unable to orient themselves in terrain as it is found in this theatre. Training in map reading should, if possible, be carried out in terrain approaching that of the next campaign.

*(If a soldier can orient a map by methods prescribed in Par. 34, FM 21-25, he should be able to do it any place.)*

While troops are in training in rear areas, leading of units on problems or marches should be left to intelligence personnel. Personnel should be left to themselves in mountainous terrain, on extremely difficult places and forced to make their way back. Commando training included such things, and we had to find our way without maps sometimes. This develops an acute sense of orientation.

## SCOUTING.

The importance of good scouts for larger units cannot be exaggerated. It is up to scouts to bring a unit through safely. Scouts should be trained to develop a strong sense of responsibility. They have to be ahead of their units, perhaps 100 to 150 yards. The first scout is far ahead of second one just in sight of the first one. They have to learn to investigate every rock, every bush. They have to be excellent observers of distant objects and places. A scout must be immensely suspicious of everything. He should know that the enemy will let a scout go, and wait for the unit to follow before firing. The scout must insist that the unit keep the proper intervals *(distances?)*, that the men make no noise. *(This is the duty of officers and noncommissioned officers.)* The scout must be able to see

in three directions at the same time. Two scouts must be a team that arranges its signals and each guesses the others intentions. *(For full information regarding duties of scouts see Par. 142d, FM 7-10 and Par. 231, FM 21-100, Soldier's Handbook.)*

## TRAINING OF SCOUTS.

Commando training produced excellent scouts. The training insisted on:

(1) Thorough schooling in map reading and orientation without maps by landmarks, and of stars at night. *(Par. 44, FM 21-45.)*

(2) Scouts were trained to be untiring, to stand up under the greatest strain. They had to be on their feet and alert even while their units rested.

(3) They learned enemy tactics, they learned how an enemy M.G., for instance, would work, and from where, because when they led their units they had to estimate possible enemy positions. They had to know semaphoring. They had to be experts with tommy guns and grenades.

(4) Scouts can only be schooled by, first of all, marching them to death, letting them climb mountains or hills, by making them so hard physically that they will bear anything. Then they should learn to investigate anything that could possibly conceal enemies. *(Par. 231, FM 21-*

*100, Soldier's Handbook.)* Then they must know enemy capabilities.

To point c.

Intelligence personnel must be familiar with communications. They must know how to handle field telephones, must have an idea how to operate a radio, must know semaphoring. The last thing was found handy when the British troops in our outfit mistook the American troops for Germans, on account of their helmets.

To point d.

Intelligence personnel must know how the enemy operates. They must know the system of enemy patrols, of enemy weapons, of enemy small unit tactics. They must know the enemy thoroughly.

## 2. REGIMENTAL INTELLIGENCE.

The same system of patrolling as discussed for the Battalion intelligence, applies for Regimental Intelligence, only on a larger scale.

This time, however, patrols in force, must be included. These patrols, consisting of at least 20 men, are for a two fold purpose, reconnaissance and fighting. *("Patrols are assigned either reconnaissance or security as their primary mission." Par. 232, FM 21-*

*100).* These patrols must be organized for both purposes. The system for these patrols as evolved from actual experience in Commando units, seems to be the best. Roughly it consists of a patrol of 2 sections (10 men each, 1 H.Q.). This point consists of 3 tommy gunners, 1 BAR man, 2 scouts tommy gunners, about 100 yards ahead of the patrol.

The first scout approximately 100 yards, the 2nd scout approximately 50 yards ahead of the tommy gunners. 50 yards behind the point comes the unit. Each section on one flank. 2 BARs are with each section, their field of fire overlapping. H.Q. is at the end. Covering this besides are riflemen. This whole formation keeps at least 15 or 20 yards interval between men.

In motorized patrols, personnel must learn not to rush headlong into their objectives. *("No vehicle should proceed from one observation point to the next without first, by observing the terrain, estimating where enemy antitank guns and other weapons might be located and siting weapons to cover these spots," Par. 15, FM 17-20.)* The same principles of cover, investigation of ground ahead, etc. can be applied to this type.

Personnel must learn again that the best way is the longest, and must learn to approach their objective from the far flanks. They must learn to work in all kinds of terrain; woodland, mountains, flats. One thing that must be hammered into them is: "Everybody

and everything is expendable except materiel and information." It is less important that the whole patrol returns than that the whole information comes back.

Regimental Intelligence personnel must know the enemy even more thoroughly than Battalion Intelligence. Study of captured documents by them, complete knowledge of enemy tactics and dispositions, and handling of P.W. are essential. They must know how to set up a C.P. *(O.P.?)* with the least delay and the most cover. They must know how to protect it, how to run it efficiently, and how to have it guarded against surprise raids.

Personnel must have a thorough understanding of security and counter espionage. It is better if they see the enemy where he is not, than not to see him at all. They must be thoroughly suspicious. They must learn that no papers can be left around. They must know natives. They must know tricks of enemy agents and spies. They must learn to cooperate with other agencies.

Most of all, they must learn to "do something about it." If they read captured documents they will learn about enemy's psychology. Then they will realize that this is war, and re-adjust their own psychology.

## Training.

The main thing in training of intelligence personnel is to keep them training all the time. To make them understand the larger points

of their jobs, and to teach them not to overlook the smaller ones. They have to be kept interested all the time. They "have to do it themselves." They must repeat and repeat these exercises, (e.g. of moving noiselessly).

They should be shown a certain terrain, given an assignment and asked to explain how they would go about it, down to the last details.

They have to learn what terrain features could hold enemy O.P.s or M.G. positions.

When they are sent out on practice patrols they should be trained to notice everything, every last detail. They should not just take notes, but do it. Some group should do certain actions at a designated place, and another (as a patrol) should be sent out to observe and report back these actions, the composition of the other group, etc., in all details.

They should learn about the enemy from captured documents. Two patrols, one representing the enemy, should be sent out against each other, to see what the reactions of the patrols would be when they suddenly encountered each other. (It would be a good thing if this "enemy" patrol could wear some sort of enemy equipment.)

If it were possible, actual firing should go on, to teach them the necessity of taking cover. That is, marksmen should fire over the head of any man that can be seen during the exercise. All the training should be as near to actual combat as possible.

It must not be taught half heartedly, as it is being done in training camps in the States, but it must be drilled in to the men that they have to learn in order to survive.

The men also have to know that by their mistakes they not only endanger themselves, but also their units. They must learn not to adopt an "I don't give a damn" attitude, but must feel a great responsibility. They must know the complexity of the Intelligence system and feel that they are an important cog in it.

A great number of our casualties have been caused by mistakes that have been discussed here.

But most of all, in training they must be made to feel as much as possible an actual nearness to combat. They must know that they will be casualties if they don't learn now. In training camp one gains too much the impression that all this is a kind of sporting war, a game. The men must realize that the enemy will be after them.

## *THE SUGGESTED PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAINING FOR INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL*

In the training of the American soldier there is one point which, unfortunately so far, has been overlooked. We may call it "psychological preparation for combat."

We had the general impression, at the front, that newly arrived American soldiers did not

realize the nature of war; neither did they have a conception of the psychology of the enemy. American soldiers are innocent and trusting; good-hearted and confiding. They are not at all aggressive. Unlike the British and French, Americans have never seen enemy actions in the raw. Maybe they saw ruins of bombed buildings in England, but they used to regard them as if they were remains of ancient Pompeii, or Carthage. The young soldiers could never visualize the human beings who used to live in those buildings and who were now dead. Americans never had to drag the torn bodies of loved ones out of smashed buildings, or to fight for survival. Unlike the French, they were never subjected to terror. In other words, Americans never had any reasons to hate anybody. When American troops first come to the front they did not hate their enemy. But if you don't hate your enemy you will fear him if *his* determination to kill you is stronger than your determination to kill him.

*Psychology of hate.*

The British and French know what they are fighting for because they have been in this war a long time, and the Germans believe that they do too. The British fight for their very lives; they fight to stop the Germans from bombing their homes; to stop them from killing their families. The British front line soldier slashes forward without mercy. He

hates the enemy. The American soldier is different. He is fair minded and thinks that the enemy will be fair too. He does not really want to kill, because he does not hate, *yet*. Subconsciously he thinks of war as a game where the umpire's whistle will stop it before it gets too rough. He cannot imagine anybody wanting to kill him, and so he commits all the mistakes which have cost so many lives already. Enemy prisoners marvel at the thoughtlessness with which American soldiers move. They cannot understand why Americans never even think of taking cover; why they don't follow through; why they can be bluffed and trapped so easily.

I know so well those men who were cut to ribbons at the KASSERINE PASS, and I knew why they were thrown into confusion, panicked by attacks, and accepted their fate almost paralyzed. When they jumped into foxholes to let the tanks roll over them, and were bayonetted in these foxholes by the Infantry that came behind the tanks, they died with an astonished look on their faces, as if they wanted to ask: "Could that be possible, would they really do that?"

We are prone to regard the Italians with a mixture of contempt and pity. But the boys I knew, who were blown to bits by Italian hand grenades would not think so. If they could come to life again they would not feel pity for the poor, coerced Italians; they would go after them, until they had killed every last one. So

would the medical orderlies I knew, who wanted to treat German casualties and lost their arms by booby traps.

The psychology of hate is such:

Until John Doe learns to hate he will be no good. As long as he regards his opponent as a good fellow, a man who, after all, does not really want to fight and kill him, John Doe will go into combat carelessly and not aggressively. He won't go and look for the enemy; he won't want to kill, to destroy; to win. When the enemy proves to be stronger, John Doe will not hold out and counter attack; try to beat the enemy with the last ounce of energy, beat him by his stronger will. John Doe will probably give way, get panicky, and want to leave alone in order to be let alone. He will fall into traps and never lay any traps himself. He will trust anybody and never suspect. His slogan will not be "go *(get?)* the B. . .s," but "lets not give away our positions." When lead starts flying thickly, he'll want to run.

It is in the nature of hate that it can be instilled or acquired. It was instilled into the German, Italian, or Japanese soldiers until it became a habit with them. The American soldiers acquired it after they had been at the front for awhile. Then, of course, they went ahead and nothing could stop them. Then they whistled when they threw hand grenades. But then it was late, and we had lost so many unnecessarily.

Hate is like gin. It takes awhile, and then, suddenly, it hits you. After you have seen your buddies killed; after you see bodies, or what's left of them, piled up for burial; when you realize that they are after you, too; when it finally connects in your mind that moral code does not exist in this way, then you will begin to *hate,* and want to retaliate. A soldier has to develop the primitive instinct to kill anybody who threatens him or his own. Beyond that he must learn to kill before the other can get at him.

Until he hates the enemy with every instinct and every muscle, he will only be afraid.

This is primitive psychology, a cruel and inhuman one. But war is all that. Hate must become first nature to a soldier and make him want to use every trick. We went out for days to look for the enemy, we fired at anything that moved, we laid booby traps all over the front, because we wanted to kill. We only had to remember. . . .

In the training of intelligence personnel, this psychological factor is of greatest importance. Intelligence personnel, being of intellectually higher standards, must realize that their job will be to know and outwit the enemy. As counterintelligence personnel they will have to detect and neutralize the enemy and his agents. They must learn not to trust. They must be able, through their specialized training, to warn the men in the lines.

As an example we could mention the numer-

ous casualties suffered due to Arab espionage. Our men trusted the Arabs, made friends with them, tolerated them near positions. Then the bombs and shells came and fell right into those positions where the Arabs had previously been. Dead men don't need to hate any more, but the survivors learned their lesson.

Intelligence personnel *must* be trained not to trust anybody, to suspect lies in firm assurances of friendship. They cannot afford to make fine distinctions between good and bad in native populations. They must understand that the lives of other fellows depend on them. The boys in the foxholes like to live too, and hate to die just because some intelligence men had big hearts and could not understand that spies and agents are ostensibly friendly people.

It would be a good thing if newly arrived intelligence personnel could be given a chance to visit hospitals, and hear some of the stories our casualties would have to tell. They should be given talks by *experienced* intelligence and counterintelligence men (American, British, French). They should read casualty lists and be told why these men had to die, and how they died. They should be given the shock of their lives, now, in the rear areas, in order that they be prepared psychologically to such a pitch that they want nothing else but to get in and retaliate. After that, they should be taught how.