

SCOUTS!!

Information Please

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INFORMATION! Every commander must have it. Every commander must take the necessary steps to get it. Then, he must make intelligent use of it. Else, according to history, success will not be associated with his name.

From Moses to Franco successful leaders of expeditions have unceasingly dispatched emissaries to procure essential information of their opponents and the terrain occupied by them. It appears, without exception, that the degree of ultimate success of these leaders, in the conquest of their foes, has been directly proportional to the proficiency of their scouts.

Let us come closer home. Closer to the present moment. Let us open the door to our own educational structure. Are we to learn that a commander needs information? Do our teachings entreat us to lean heavily upon this factor in our decisions and actions?

Let us look into one of our pamphlets dealing with tactical doctrines. What do we find within the various paragraphs about information? Here are a few extracts:

"In order that the commander may have full liberty of action, it is **necessary*** that he be **informed**, not only of the outline of the enemy position . . . , but also the depth of the enemy position and his activity."

"To cope with these dangers, there **must** be a constant search for **information**."

"A commander bases his dispositions upon timely **information** of the enemy."

"It is evident that **information** of movements of an enemy mechanized detachment **must** reach the commander. . . ."

"Each commander **must**, therefore, have agencies at his disposal which will permit him to gather **information**. . . ."

"The decision **will** depend largely upon available **information**."

"**Information** must be transmitted promptly from front to rear and from rear to front."

"The decision to attack, defend, or to avoid conflict is governed by . . . (2) The capabilities of the enemy based on the latest **information**."

"The selection of the form of attack is made after a consideration of the situation as determined by **information** obtained as a result of thorough reconnaissance."

Thus it is that such statements appear some twenty times in as many pages of an instructional pamphlet dealing with offensive combat. We note, too, that these are given to us as **MUSTs** and not as **SHOULDs**.

It is not to belittle the necessity for information in the defense that excerpts were taken from our instructions for offensive combat. Rather, it is because we all know the part that offense plays in the gaining of victory in battle. Knowing this, we can very rightfully conclude that to win battles, and thereby wars, commanders must have proper information if they are to make sound decisions. Certainly, this is the kind of decisions upon which successful maneuvers are based.

Granted, that adequate information **must** be obtained, just what is the essential information needed for an operation, or phase thereof, that the commander has decided to execute? The commander must decide this, assisted by the recommendations of his intelligence officer. Once decided, the intelligence officer must consider the agencies available for the obtaining of this information, and the capabilities and limitations of these agencies. He then must assign to them missions for the collecting of certain specific data.

With the advent of modern warfare, there has come a great increase in the kinds of agencies that are capable of obtaining information of the enemy and the terrain. Some of these are: radio goniometry, aircraft (observation and photography), sound and flash batteries, and submarines. However, just as the modern supporting arms have not replaced the infantry as the backbone of an army, these modern collectors of information have not replaced the age-old scout. On the contrary, they have probably increased his importance. He must now be used to seek information for corroboration of the reports of these new agencies. Within the battalion, regiment, and brigade, he will be indispensable far into the future.

It is from the units in contact with the enemy that the flow of the bulk of essential information will originate. It is the scouts that will gather this information. That armies realize this is evidenced by the fact that they have the greatest number of scouts in the battalion, decreasing the number in the higher echelons.

You have only to browse among the recent service publications and you will find editorial comment regarding the added impetus that is being given to the matter of scout-training in our military forces today. There is just one logical interpretation to place upon this. That is, that the importance of the scout has been realized. The necessary

steps are being taken to assure that when THE time comes, there will be an adequate number of the proper type of men well trained in the fundamentals of scouting. Experience has taught the futility of making requisition for such personnel on M-day. And, alas! for the Marine Corps, the spread between M-day and D-day may prove extremely short.

Strip the scout of the romantic haze which often times obscures his real reason for being, and we have simply an information-gatherer. The scout is a specialist. As such, he requires special training. Of what does this special training consist? It consists of school and field training in many and varied subjects. Our training guides enumerate the many things the scout must know and the tasks he must be able to perform. Of necessity, a great amount of the scout's advanced training must be performed in the theater of hostilities. Yet, all the basic and fundamental training must be mastered by the scout prior to entering the combat zone. Of the many things that he must know, it would be highly presumptive to say that any one of them was the **most** important. All are necessary to being a valuable scout and must be a part of the very inclusive education that is his. There is one extremely important subject, however, which can and should be taught the scout long before H-hour. Once mastered, this subject is not easily forgotten. It is called Map Reading.

How important is map reading to those that are to be entrusted to gather vital information for us? Let us again turn to our training guides. These are some of the things we see:

"Scouts must be taught the following:
... **Map Reading** ..."

"Information which is difficult to describe may be shown accurately on a sketch or overlay. ... Overlays are made from the **map** in possession of the scout. ..."

"The scout **must** be well trained in **map reading**. **Maps** may be used to select covered routes, observation points, and to plan his actions in advance."

"To make an intelligent and useful sketch giving information of the enemy, the scout **must** be thoroughly trained in the art of **map reading**."

This, then, gives us an indication of the connection of map reading to scouting. Note that this relationship is also written with **MUSTs**.

If scouts are the principal source of information which is so vital to the commander in his effort to see through the "fog of war" and win battles, and if map reading **must** be mastered by these scouts, then it is our duty to take the necessary steps to painstakingly train these men, **NOW**.

What is the present condition of **your** outfit in this respect? There follows a simple test that will help you to get the necessary information to answer this question. This test can be readily mimeographed for your use. And, to further assist you, the solutions are included.

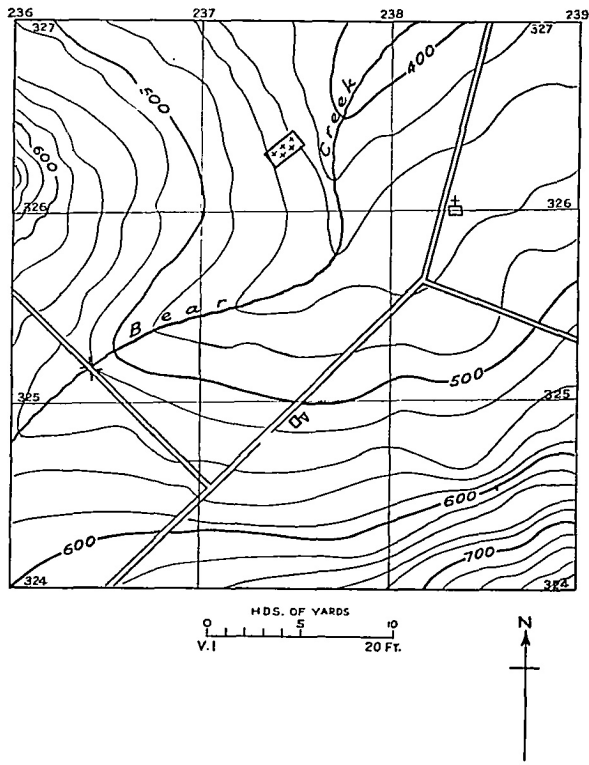
Be a good scout. Get this information by giving this test to your scouts and NCOs. Evaluate the information thus gained and base your decision upon it. Conclude by taking the necessary action.

A MAP READING TEST FOR SCOUTS

The Requirement.

On the attached map:

1. Give the co-ordinates (two decimals) and the approximate elevation of each of the following landmarks:
a. Church d. Bridge
b. School e. Road Intersection (SE of Bridge)
c. Graveyard f. Road Fork
2. The right flank of your unit is at (237.5—325.5) and the left flank is at (238.0—326.0). Draw a line indicating this position and an arrow showing the direction of the front.
3. Draw an unimproved road from (238.20—325.65) to (237.20—325.80).
4. In what general direction does Bear Creek flow?
5. From the road intersection (237.1—324.6) northwest along the road to the bridge place conventional signs indicating a smooth wire fence on the northeast side of the road and a barbed wire fence on the southwest side of the road.
6. Draw a trail from the graveyard to the church. Two points on this trail must be exactly 400 feet in elevation.
7. How far is it (yards) from the church to the school by road?
8. You are at the graveyard. What is the approximate azimuth of (a) the school, (b) the church?



NAME _____ RANK _____

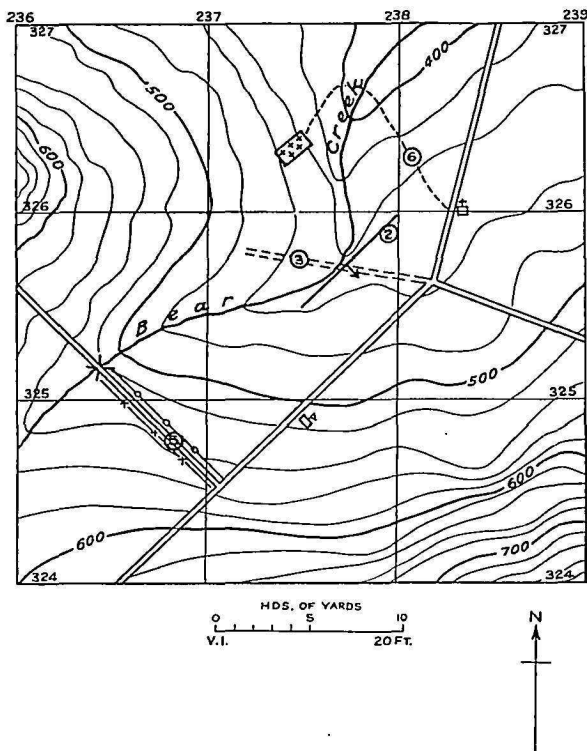
(For solution see page 63)

A MAP READING TEST FOR SCOUTS

(For original problem, see page 23)

The Solution.

- | | <i>Elevation</i> |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Co-ordinates | |
| a. (238.35—326.00) | 455 feet |
| b. (237.50—324.90) | 515 feet |
| c. (237.43—326.37) | 450 feet |
| d. (236.45—325.20) | 520 feet |
| e. (237.09—324.55) | 550 feet |
| f. (238.20—325.65) | 458 feet |
| 2. See attached map. | |
| 3. See attached map. | |
| 4. Bear Creek flows generally northeast. | |
| 5. See attached map. | |
| 6. See attached map. | |
| 7. Approximately 1,450 yards. | |
| 8. (a) 178 degrees; (b) 100 degrees. | |



NAME _____ RANK _____

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