

Lectures on Patrols, Advance Guards, and Outposts

By

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INTRODUCTION

Last May at Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, was held a convention of the officers of the National Guard of that State.

During the winter, in their correspondence school, they had studied patrolling, advance guards, and outposts. At their convention it was proposed to go over these subjects again and clear up misunderstandings.

General Boardman who organized the whole scheme of instruction asked me to come up and help. The idea was for me to make a short talk on each subject and then *on the ground* explain fully each point, after which a map problem was given out for solution.

Of course there was no set lecture; my notes were very brief; it was largely conversational, asking questions and answering more of them. Ground was selected that illustrated the different points. My work was in no way a substitute for Security and Information and the Field Service Regulations but was supplemental thereto.

I have since been asked to write out these lectures or talks. On trying to put them in such shape that the ideas will be clear to one reading them I find many difficulties. They were intended for a different use.

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PATROLLING

“A commander may be excusable for being defeated but never for being surprised”.

In talking on this important subject, it is not deemed necessary to repeat what is in the manuals in unmistakable terms, but merely to add something in the way of explanation and interpretation.

The importance of this part of our work has greatly increased in late years.

As an example, take our outposts. Under present conditions, we no longer contemplate, except in very rare cases, an unbroken line of sentinels, but rather a great deal of patrolling and fewer sentinels. This is less exhausting to our men and more effective.

While on the march, whether forward or in retreat, we must have information that can be obtained only by patrolling.

We must have information of our enemy before a combat. Fifty years ago such information could be more easily obtained; ranges were shorter.

To-day much of success depends on keeping the enemy in ignorance of our movements and location, and still more in knowing his every move.

With the present tendency in the color of uniforms and the enemy's efforts to keep us in the dark as to his location and movements, how are we to gain this information, how prevent the enemy from gaining more than is unavoidable? Primarily by patrols, more or less backed up by larger bodies. Much of this work must and will be done by the cavalry. It

will do the patrolling at a distance and until armies come into close contact.

But after the armies are in contact the infantry patrols will have to be numerous and industrious.

Patrols may be sent out to gain information of the enemy, or to prevent the enemy from gaining information, or it may be a combination of the two. Besides there are many occasions for sending a patrol on a special mission of some kind. The leading and conduct of the patrol must vary with the conditions of the problem. There can be no fixed form, no hard and fast rules to be learned that will make us efficient patrol leaders.

Let us first look at the problem of the commander who sends out the patrol.

Patrols should be used freely. This does not mean sending out patrols that can be of no value. It is much better to use patrols to gain information than to butt in with a larger force and have it butchered. A good patrol can with less risk get you information without which you may sacrifice a large part of your command.

In determining the number of men to be sent in any given patrol, you should bear in mind that the smaller it is the better, provided it is strong enough to carry out its mission.

The work is often hard and dangerous and such work should never be required unnecessarily. The smaller the party the more easily it can be concealed when necessary. On the other hand it must be large enough to accomplish its mission. If messages are likely to be sent back before the patrol finishes, enough men must be in the party so that after deducting these messengers, there will still be enough left to finish the work. If it be only to gain some point, look around, and return with no idea of fighting two men will probably answer better than more.

If the patrol is to drive back, or resist hostile patrols, if met, more men must be sent.

Before sending out a patrol, have clearly in your mind what you expect of it, what it will probably have to do; then determine the minimum number of men necessary for such work and assign that number.

Less than two men should never be sent.

Next, select the man to lead the patrol.

Patrols differ greatly in their importance and in the difficulty of leading them. On outposts, much of the patrolling between groups and along parts of the line is simple in its nature, and leaders can practically be taken from a roster. Any average soldier should be able to act as such leader. The same is true of many of the patrols sent out from an advance or rear guard. But sometimes the flanking patrol in an advance guard will have a task of greater difficulty. The leader will have to cover considerable space with few men; the correct leading will require an eye for ground, judgment as to what features are necessary to be examined, and ability to read "indications." He will generally need good judgment, courage, endurance and tactical ability in handling his patrol.

Again, a patrol is pushed out on a road simply to watch and give warning. No great ability is required for this, nor very special training. But a patrol is sent out to gain information. It must push far from support, in country where the enemy is close; it may be just before a battle. The leader must be able to estimate the strength of hostile commands (often not easy), to judge of dispositions, to read indications of various kinds, and be accurate and reliable. He must also possess judgment, courage, and endurance. Such patrol leaders can not be detailed by "roster."

In giving your orders to the patrol leader, make them clear and full enough so that he can fully grasp

the situation, know what he is to do, and know all that is known of the enemy so far as it affects his problem.

The occasions when patrols will be detailed are too many to be all given. Their use with the covering detachments (advance and rear guards and outposts) are known to you all. In combat of small isolated commands, if the exact location of the enemy is unknown, and you are in doubt as to the lay of the ground, reconnaissance must be made before attacking. This will often call for patrols. During such a combat patrols should cover your flanks both in the offense and defense. As in large commands cavalry or detachments of some strength are posted so as to guard against flanking movements by the enemy, so in small commands you must do the same, but with patrols varying from two or three men to a squad or section.

When armies remain in contact—that is, with their outposts close, as often happened in our Civil War—much patrolling of a different kind will be required. Each side will endeavor to learn everything possible about the other, as much as possible of his movements, and early information of his intentions. Cavalry will be working to the flanks and rear, but it will be infantry along the line.

As to patrol leaders:

You are all familiar with the elements of patrol leading; but there are some points which, though you know them, have not made the impression on your mind that they should. They are among the things you vaguely know, but don't apply.

The first thing I want to call to your attention is this—whenever you have to lead a patrol, know positively your “mission.” You receive an order to go somewhere for some purpose.

This may, or may not be sufficient. Be sure you

fully understand the situation—exactly what is expected and wanted. Remember that a patrol is often very much in the same situation as a detached force whose commander must act on his own initiative for the general object. You cannot in general wait to receive more definite instructions; you must determine whether your mission calls upon you to go ahead or back out when an unexpected great risk presents itself, or, in fact, how to act in many emergencies.

Bear in mind that, as a general rule, patrols are sent out to gain information—not to fight. Little combats between individuals, or patrols, can have no real effect on the greater issue; so as a rule you should avoid fighting. But don't apply this rule too generally; it has numerous exceptions. In all these cases, if you have fully grasped your mission, you can promptly answer for yourself, when you meet a hostile patrol, "Shall I shoot it up or let it go by?"

Another point to consider in connection with patrols is the messages to be sent back.

We all recognize the fact that the sooner information reaches headquarters, as a rule, the more valuable it is. But this only applies to information that has value. If in doubt as to whether information would be valuable or otherwise, give headquarters the benefit of the doubt and send it in. If you have fully grasped your mission, you can generally tell whether the information you have gained should be reported or kept until the patrol returns.

Messages must be carefully expressed; be sure that they are accurate. This does not mean that something told you should not be reported, but it should be reported, not as a fact, but as it is—a statement by somebody else. It is well to add any information about your informant, such as his credibility, the probability of his having correct informa-

tion, etc. This sometimes helps at headquarters in determining the probability of the report.

Observe everything and remember that even apparent trifles may be of great value. The finding of a shoulderstrap showing a man's regiment may enable the chief of staff to determine that the enemy has been reënforced, etc.

We find plenty of instructions as to what a patrol leader must carry, but not enough stress is laid on the things he must not carry. Nothing must be carried which, in case you fall into the hands of the enemy, either dead or alive, will give him valuable information. Among the prohibited articles should be orders giving dispositions or other information that would be valuable; maps that the enemy may not have of the country, and especially such maps as have the locations of troops marked thereon. The Japanese even remove all insignia from the uniforms of the men.

Another thing, a patrol for important work in close proximity to the enemy should be carefully selected and instructed not to give information to the enemy if captured.

Prisoners taken in battle can generally give little information of importance to the enemy—the final clash clears up doubt; but a patrol taken before a battle, while so much is still dark, may give information of vital importance.

Let us try to illustrate some of these points. See the two-inch map of Fort Leavenworth and vicinity.

A Northern army is at Atchison, thirty miles north of Leavenworth; a Southern army at Kansas City, thirty miles southeast of Leavenworth. All the country shown on the map is Northern territory.

The Southern army commander has sent out a regiment of infantry to seize and hold Weston, his

latest information being that there are no hostile troops south of Atchison. The Northern commander has sent two battalions of infantry to Weston to hold the place. He knew of no movement of troops from the south.

The Northern detachment reached Weston October 1st. The Southern detachment reached Platte City the same evening.

On the morning of October 2d the Southern regiment resumed its march on Weston, in ignorance of the proximity of hostile troops. As the head of the advance guard reaches 27, hostile patrols are seen to the front, and on both flanks, withdrawing in the general direction of Weston. The colonel determines to halt until, by means of patrols, he can find out something of what is in his front. He calls up Lieutenant B and gives him the following order:

“Hostile infantry patrols have been seen on both of our flanks and to our front. You know that the inhabitants are hostile. I do not care to advance beyond this ridge until I know more about what hostile troops are in the vicinity. I am sending a patrol well to the south of the road, another well to the north. You will take 8 men from the 1st battalion and follow the general direction of the road as far as Weston if possible. Major A has been ordered to furnish you with the men.”

Lieutenant B assembles his patrol and inspects it to see that they have what they should carry, that they have nothing they should not carry and that the men are all in good physical condition. At the same time he determines his mission.

He is to gain information. That is plain. Hostile troops must be near by for infantry patrols do not extend very far. These hostile patrols have probably been watching the Southern troops. The inhabitants are hostile to the South and friendly to

the North; and from the patrols and inhabitants, the Northern troops probably know all about the Southern force. There is little object in the patrol's trying to prevent them from gaining information. The regimental commander knows hostile troops are near; there is no need to inform him of that fact. What he does want to know is where they are, how many there are and what they propose to do.

Lieutenant B then studies the ground, and selects his route so as to follow generally the road, but in such a way to give him concealment when desired. He then starts out.

Near 29, Lieutenant B sees a hostile patrol about 600 yards to his right front. He watches it from concealment for some time and determines that there are only 4 men in the party; that they are moving towards the Southern main column.

Two questions now present themselves to Lieut. B. First, should he attack these men? He answers it in the negative, for these reasons, the noise will attract attention to him and decrease the chances of his gaining the desired information; this hostile patrol, even if it sees the Southern regiment, will gain no valuable information other than what they already have; the chance of his getting a prisoner is not sure enough to warrant such a move at this stage; there remains no other reason then for an attack except to kill or wound that many of the enemy, and, in the meantime, he may have some of his own men hit. These small combats, of themselves, do no good. Second, should he send back word to the regimental commander that he has seen this patrol? He answers this also in the negative. The colonel knows there are patrols about; this should be reported when he returns, of course, but men should not be detached to hurry back with the information.

Now let us assume that Lieutenant B later gets

a view of the road leading northeast from 31, and sees what he estimates as a battalion of infantry marching northeast thereon. What should he do? Does he go back with the news, or send word back and continue on? He must not quit yet, he must make sure there are no more troops, and he must find out also where these are going. But this much news is important, so he promptly writes a message stating what he has seen and sends it back to the colonel by 2 men. He then proceeds on towards Weston. Another question arises at this point. He knows of that road turning north at 35. Is this battalion which he has seen moving towards 37 to get on the flank of the Southern main body, or is it going north, probably retreating via 35? He knows that there was another patrol sent to the north that should see and report this. But its importance is so vital, and accidents to patrols are so liable to happen, that Lieutenant B should take no chances. He, therefore, detaches the corporal and one man with orders to conceal themselves where they can see 35 and watch; and as soon as they determine which route the battalion is taking, to hurry back and report the same to the colonel.

With the remainder of the patrol he would push on to Weston and try to determine whether there were more troops in the vicinity and if so, their number and location.

Let us suppose a different outcome, and that Lieutenant B did not see any troops before reaching Weston, except the patrol.

He approaches Weston and with his glass carefully searches the village for signs of hostile occupation. He sees none. He then sends two or three men in, and as nothing develops, he follows and carefully examines the place. No enemy is found, but a boy tells him that there are a *lot* of soldiers

camped on the road leading to the northwest, about one mile from the village. What does Lieutenant B do now? His orders were to go as far as Weston, he has done so. Should he now return? If he thoroughly appreciates his mission, he will not. He was to find out about the enemy. All he knows is what the boy tells him. Not very satisfactory. If he goes a short distance farther he may get positive information.

Lieutenant B decides to go on. He first writes a report of what he has seen and heard and sends it back by two men. In his report he gives his source of information, and might add whether he believes the boy to be truthful, judging by the boy's manner, etc.

Lieutenant B now goes on, not directly, but selects a route that will give him an unobserved approach if possible and which would tend to mislead the inhabitants in the village.

Suppose he reaches a point from which he can see the hostile camp. Now comes in his ability to estimate the strength of the force, the arm or arms of which it is composed, whether apparently indifferent to our presence or evidently preparing for some movement, etc.

If he determines the force to be greatly superior to ours—then he should withdraw at once and report in person to the colonel what he has seen; for an attack on the camp will be improbable and the colonel will want his detachments in so that he can withdraw. On the other hand if he finds the hostile force to be only a battalion or two at most, what then? Lieutenant B would at once send this information by two of his men, stating in his report that he is remaining for the present in observation.

Why this action? The colonel should know at the earliest moment the strength and location of the

enemy, so no time must be lost in getting the word to him.

But the hostile force is so much inferior to ours and knowing the colonel's mission, Lieutenant B can foresee an attack. This will require more information and Lieutenant B tries to get it. The terrain should be studied to enable the colonel to plan his attack, the outpost line should be determined, where the enemy's position would probably be if attacked, etc.

Lieutenant B, here having accomplished all that he can, starts back. He avoids the route he came, especially the village of Weston.

Here note one thing; the enemy was reported only about one mile distant. Had this distance been two or three miles, Lieutenant B would hardly have been justified in going on. The distance would have been too great for an infantry patrol, though a cavalry patrol would have pushed on.

Let us now follow a patrol under Lieutenant A sent out from the force near Weston that morning. The commander at Weston hears early on this morning a *rumor* to the effect that hostile troops are approaching from the south. He occupies a good position north of Weston and sends out patrols to look for the enemy.

Lieutenant A leads one of them. He first sees a patrol of the enemy, no other troops are in sight. He at once reports this to his commander, sending back the message by *one* of his men. Here are two points of difference from the action of Lieutenant B—Lieutenant A sends a message back reporting the seeing of a patrol and he sends his message by one man. Why this difference? When Lieutenant B saw the patrol his commander already knew that hostile patrols were in the vicinity, but in the case of Lieutenant A, his commander did not know positively.

that there was an enemy anywhere in the vicinity. This information fixes the fact and it should be communicated at once. He sends only one man with his message, for he feels quite sure that there are none of the enemy between him and his main force; he knows that the inhabitants are all friendly and they will help rather than hinder his messenger. How was it with Lieutenant B? Hostile patrols were in the country and the inhabitants were all hostile, therefore, two men were required.

Lieutenant A now gets a position from which he can see the column on the road. He determines its composition and direction of march. This information is then sent back and he proceeds, keeping the column in sight. Finally he sees the column halt and march outposts formed.

Let us suppose that his orders were to return as soon as he determined the strength of the hostile command. This he did and when near camp, but before it was in sight, he saw a hostile patrol of 8 men approaching. His patrol is now reduced to 4, and he has not been observed. What should he do? Lieutenant A opens the most effective fire possible on the hostile patrol and endeavors to prevent its advance. His action, as well as his problem, is very different from that of Lieutenant B when he saw the hostile patrol. Lieutenant A has all the information he can get, the enemy he believes is still in the dark as to the location and strength of the northern force. If this patrol is allowed to proceed it may gain information of great value to the enemy. This he tries to prevent.

Patrols, sent out to gain some specific and important information, should, as a rule, avoid fighting. The enemy's patrols, however, can not be allowed to roam about without danger, but even so it will generally be better to entrust their intimidation to others than the special patrols sent out after information.

A patrol, seeking some special and important information, comes near to a point where, from a certain position, it can see and gain the information desired, but the position is found to be occupied by the enemy. Careful reconnaissance leads the patrol leader to believe he is at least equal to the enemy in this locality. A vigorous attack is justified in order to gain the view.

A great number of situations can be drawn but it is not necessary. For, after you have had them all presented, it is probable that the first one coming up in the field would be different. But if you have grasped the principles, you can solve it. Practice is the only sure help. Make problems for yourself and reason out what you should do and why, and soon you will acquire facility. Practice on the ground with men is still more valuable.

One important point I want to impress upon you. Get information back to headquarters if you get any. At many maneuvers, I have known patrols to go out, see the enemy and never report the fact until long after. There is no good in a patrol gaining information if it is not sent in or is sent in after the enemy attacks.

The necessity and importance of efficient patrolling and reconnaissance are taught by the history of war. In the Civil War it was neglected in many cases at heavy cost.

Such was the case, not alone in this war, but in many others. We have not been the only offenders.

The problems presented are varied and require for their solution men varying in capacity, from the average private to the best trained staff officer.

For the higher class of patrol leading the requirements cannot be learned entirely from books. The leader must be cool, determined and persistent. He must grasp the situation, understand the significance of what he sees and hears, must be possessed of good judgment and not afraid to take responsibility.

For the greater part of the many patrols required, only physical strength and good average intelligence are necessary.

ADVANCE AND REAR GUARDS

As in the case of patrols, I am not here to give you a compilation of what is in your manuals, but to bring out and emphasize a few points as far as time permits—points not too clearly expressed in the books.

In our manuals we have, in the case of all the covering detachments, a normal formation, yet, in every case, they prescribe that conditions may change this. My experience has shown that too many officers are prone to adhere to the prescribed formation, even when it results in an absurdity. A normal formation can be of value only as it helps one to understand the tactical principles that underlie the use of covering detachments. They are not models to be blindly followed, and it is questionable if they are not often harmful.

A much better method to learning a normal formation is to learn the principles, and practice applying them to concrete cases.

In other words, in every problem determine your own mission clearly—i.e., what you are to do and why. Bear in mind certain fundamental principles and use your common sense.

Now let us try this system in the case of an advance guard.

What is the object of having an advance guard?

First.—To prevent the main body of our troops from being shot into while in a formation that prevents their effectively defending themselves.

You can all guess at the effect of an unexpected heavy fire at effective range on a column of squads in a road.

Second.—Under modern conditions the haphazard throwing of troops into action has every chance of resulting in a disaster. If you expect to win in a battle you must have an understanding of the situation and must so put in your troops as to best meet conditions; remembering that troops once engaged can only go forward, stay where they are, or retreat. This requires that enough troops be told off for the advance guard to enable it to be the first to strike the enemy and then be strong enough to hold him until the commander can size up the situation, form his plan, and properly deploy his main body to best meet the situation. On the other hand, it should be no larger than necessary, following the rule that all detachments from the main body should be as small as practicable.

Third.—The march of the main body must not be delayed by small bodies of the enemy; these must be brushed aside. Do not allow a skilfully handled patrol to delay the march of a regiment.

Fourth.—Much of the patrolling and marching of flanking detachments across country is exhausting and wears out troops. This should be reduced to the minimum consistent with efficiency—not only in advance guards, but everywhere.

But efficiency requires that patrols be sent wherever information may be obtained or a possible danger lurks. As previously stated, never send a large body of troops to gain information where a patrol can do as well.

The greatest element in controlling the formation and method of conducting an advance or rear guard is your “mission.” What is the object of the march? What does the commander expect and want of you? How can you best accomplish this? If you use good sense to accomplish your mission, and bear in mind the foregoing principles, you will be correct,

whether it agrees with the normal formation or not. If you blindly follow a normal formation, the chances are you will be wrong.

The carrying out of your mission must control the application of the other principles. To illustrate: The enemy is in retreat; you are superior to him; it is important to prevent his escape. It may be assumed in such a case that there is little danger of his turning about and attacking you, so that for protection the advance guard would be relatively small. But what is the mission of the advance guard in this case? Evidently to overtake the enemy, then hold him fast until the main body can come up and complete his ruin. A relatively weak advance guard would answer for protection, but the enemy could quickly throw it off and continue on his way. Hence, in such a case, the advance guard would be strong.

In determining the size of the advance guard keep clearly in mind your mission and the conditions surrounding your problem. As shown above, in a pursuit it will be relatively large. Racing for the possession of some important point would call for a strong advance guard. Your column is one of a number of parallel columns marching to attack. The advance guard would be relatively very small for the commander of the column should keep his men in his own hand and control their deployment and entry into action.

If the country through which you are marching is hostile the advance guard must be larger than if the country is friendly. The inhabitants will help you in one case by giving information and will do nothing to injure you. In the other they will not give you much information, will help the enemy as far as possible, and surprises will be much more likely.

In making the detail for an advance guard avoid

breaking units, i.e., if three companies are found necessary it is generally better to send the whole battalion; where two battalions are needed, let the regiment go. In each problem you must consider carefully your mission in connection with the principles that govern and thus determine the size of the advance guard. It will vary from one-twentieth to one-third of the whole force.

The march of the advance guard.

Let us first leave out of consideration the flanks and look only to our front. From the principle enumerated, patrols must seek information where practicable. Our leading element must therefore be a patrol or as generally called a point.

Now the formation of the advance guard is in two principal bodies; a vanguard and a reserve. The first is sub-divided into the advance party which throws out the patrol or point, and the support.

With small bodies of troops, however, there is no necessity for a reserve; in fact it is better to disperse with it. The object of the formation is to prevent any body of troops being fired into at close range before it has had timely warning to prepare. The time necessarily depends on the size of the body.

Our leading element is a patrol. It is in open order and is always in proper formation and it will be the first to strike the enemy. Following it is the advance party only a section or so and for it to deploy is a question of but an instant. The support is larger and so on to the rear until we encounter the main body. Each body in front must afford the one next in rear time to prepare.

The terrain must then exercise a great influence on the distances separating the detachments. In very broken or rolling country they naturally could be much less than on an open plain. The size of the

command makes a great difference. A company or less deploys very quickly, there is little of plan necessary. In a large mixed command a regular plan of action should be formed, and the larger the body the more time it takes.

In night marches, if in the close vicinity of the enemy and an attack is contemplated should the enemy be met, it will generally be found that distances should be shorter. Of course, such marches are made with great caution and should have been carefully planned. Ordinarily, on such marches, you will not run into the enemy unless you intended in that case to push him vigorously. If this is what your mission calls for, you must be prepared to do it.

Night firing is comparatively ineffective and the attackers best chance of success is generally to rush the enemy vigorously. In such a case, then, distances would be reduced considerably from what they would be in daylight. Another precaution, well to take, is to have the leading elements march with bayonets fixed.

One can conceive of a night march in the vicinity of the enemy where he is nevertheless not expected to be encountered and if so met the commander intends to fall back and avoid an action. The advance guard commander's mission is very different from that in the previous case. He must arrange his force very differently. Distances will be increased and care taken by means of connecting groups to keep his whole command in touch.

No rule can be given. Know what you are to do and why. Study the best way to do it; use common sense.

Now let us look to our flanks.

Here is where a normal formation finds its least application.

The object of flanking groups is to protect your

column from a surprise attack from a flank. To attain this object you must have timely warning of the enemy's presence near your flank. In this connection, bear in mind that in small commands, you can generally form line of battle from a column in less time to the flank than you can to the front, and that fire across a column is not so dangerous as fire in the prolongation of the direction of march. How are we to get this needed protection? By so observing the country that if the enemy is where he can attack us in flank we will know it in time.

In this connection we must remember that modern artillery may be considered as effective up to 3500 yards and its fire will reach very much farther than this, and that infantry fire is effective to at least 1200 yards, though this is not its extreme range.

The measures to be taken to gain protection from this fire will be very varied. Many conditions enter into the problem.

With very large mixed commands, as a division or more, there will be troops marching on parallel roads with cavalry well to the front carefully reconnoitering the country so that no enemy dangerous to this command could well escape attention. Protection for a division is not gained by searching the country 150 yards on each flank but it must be had for several miles.

It takes much time to deploy a division and this should be done before the enemy's artillery is within effective range, or even within long range.

With smaller mixed commands, as about a brigade of infantry, with some cavalry and artillery, the distances on the road and the formation of the infantry of the advance guard should be as previously shown. Scouting to the flanks will generally be done by the cavalry. This reconnaissance must generally extend to over two miles at least, if the country on the flanks

is at all favorable to an attack from that direction and the general situation is such as to make it fairly possible that the enemy could be there.

Where if the enemy is met he will probably be in force and have artillery, and you have no mounted troops your problem is a hard one. The reconnaissance must be made. Infantry can make it but slowly. Cavalry is almost indispensable in such work.

Where the situation is such as to make an attack from a flank probable, as where you know he is on a road approximately at right angles to that followed by yourself a flank guard is generally the solution, provided there is a suitable road for it not over a mile away. This, while not called a part of the advance guard serves the same purpose. In commands not greater than a brigade these detachments are justified only by necessity. A brigade of infantry without cavalry will find much more necessity for them than where cavalry can do proper reconnaissance.

Even a small force of efficient cavalry can, in most cases, obviate the necessity for flank guards of any size.

But it is not of armies or even of divisions that I wish to talk today, but of small commands.

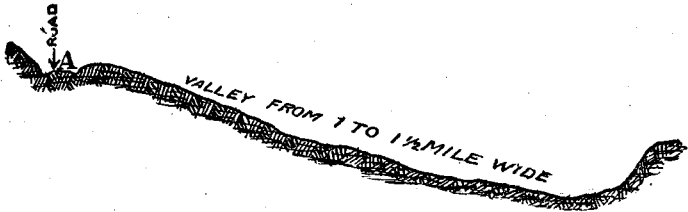
The general principles are the same. But without artillery and having only a small force, your protection to a flank does not have to extend so far.

In most cases your danger will be from about equal forces. If you meet a large force with artillery, you probably can do nothing but get away as best you can.

As commander of a small force, say a battalion or regiment of infantry, you must, if in the vicinity of an enemy, protect yourself from flank surprise attacks. The distance and manner will vary according to the terrain.

Take a march, first along a ridge road with a

valley close to one side as shown in cross section.



A=road.

Distance from A, across valley, a mile or more. Suppose the valley to be open field, affording little or no cover from view.

Would you send a patrol to the right?—evidently not, for you can see as much from the road as 150 yards away from it.

But how about the left? You cannot see far enough in that direction from the road. Patrols must be sent out to a distance great enough to secure you from surprise.

Suppose that on the right, while the valley is generally open, there are some features that would conceal a considerable force of the enemy. Patrols must be sent there in ample time to make sure you do not meet an unpleasant surprise. But to have a patrol march along parallel to the column would be unnecessary. It would be exhausting to the men and probably delay your march. Even on the left there might be a hill, or some point, from which a clear view of the country on that side could be observed. Sending a patrol there with field glasses will often render unnecessary a flanking detachment. The frequent sending of patrols to prominent points to the flanks will often answer every purpose. They should

hurry out from near the head of the column and re-join at the tail.

Again, the march may be through country that affords cover in every direction for an enemy. There will be cases in which the best solution will be a line of men at intervals of from 20 to 50 yards, or even more, marching ahead of the command. This last case would be rare.

There will be cases, as for instance a road in the bottom of a narrow valley, where flanking groups will probably have to march parallel with the column. In such cases it is well to relieve them often or your march will be delayed.

As this is only a short talk and not a book on the subject more examples are not necessary. I want only to illustrate the principle that you must adapt your measures to the problem presented; do not follow a fixed formation.

As to the size of these flanking detachments. They will vary from 2 men to a considerable force. If the patrol remains practically in sight of the command, two men will probably answer as well as more. But if the flanking group is to be at some distance with say an obstacle of some kind intervening, it should be much larger. For instance, if your road runs nearly parallel with a railroad, about 600 yards distant with some thick country between them, it would be well to send a party varying from a squad up, according to size of command, to march along the railroad.

A problem worked out at one of our maneuvers illustrates the point. A regiment of infantry was sent along a road which led through a defile about 3000 yards long. The west side was nearly precipitous and the road was from 20 to 40 feet below the plateau on this side. The problem was solved on different days by different regiments.

The first marched through in the normal formation with a battalion in advance guard and flanking patrols out about 150 yards.

The enemy, a squadron of cavalry, had dismounted and held position on the edge of the plateau looking down into the defile about its middle. The cavalry had out its combat patrol to its left which promptly captured the flankers of the infantry. The enemy then waited until the main body was opposite to them and then poured in a rapid fire at very short range.

A Wisconsin regiment solved it differently. Instead of a patrol of three men they sent a company to the right and much farther out. The combat patrol of the cavalry was captured and the company gained the left rear of the squadron and threatened the led horses. The cavalry now had other work cut out for it than shooting up the column. Another precaution taken by this regiment is worthy of note. The advance guard marched with much greater distances than the normal and there was a distance of several hundred yards between the second and third battalions. If attacked in flank by a small force, not more than one battalion would be involved and either the leading battalion (advance guard) would be emerging and able to take in flank the attacking force, or the last one not yet in the defile could take the same action on the other flank.

The first solution followed a form, the second tried to adapt means to the end desired. Which is the better?

In war nearly every time you get command of the advance guard your problem will present new phases, new conditions to be met.

In every case ask yourself the questions: Can the enemy make a *surprise* attack on me? Are my arrangements such as to unnecessarily exhaust my

men? Have I scattered my command too much (by flank detachments' etc.)? If you can give a satisfactory answer to these questions your dispositions are correct.

Remember large bodies of troops are hard to hide in ordinary terrain.

Patrols sent to the flanks from small infantry columns are apt to delay the march and be less effective than cavalry. But if you have no cavalry, infantry must be used.

One course is possibly open to the infantry. To each regiment of infantry is now attached twenty mounted orderlies. The battalion staff officers are mounted. Cannot these men be trained so that when the regiment is operating alone they can be utilized for this work? All of them are certainly not necessary for orderlies at such a time.

Rear Guards

These are often described as an advance guard reversed. As far as formation and distribution are concerned this is nearly correct. Most of what I have already said applies.

There are a few special points I wish to call to your attention that pertain to rear guards and not to advance.

Your mission is generally very different. You are not seeking a combat but are trying to avoid one for the main body.

The great danger in a retreat is that it may become a rout. This the rear guard must prevent. It must not allow the main body to be crowded. Particularly is this the case after a lost battle. The pursuer must push his success to the utmost if he is to reap the full fruit of his victory. The defeated command is more or less disorganized and in confusion. If it can gain time to get in shape unmolested it can

not be run over, but it is practically helpless at first. The rear guard must gain the necessary time.

Another case—suppose the retreat is not the result of a defeat but rather because the command is so weak that a fight must result in a defeat. This retreat if long and crowded will generally degenerate into a rout, and cause great injury to the command. The enemy wants, of course, to force a fight.

The rear guard must so delay the enemy in both cases as to fully serve his own command.

The troops selected for this duty should be the best available. Cavalry and artillery are very essential in large commands.

The manuals give all these points, and all that I have said as to the applicability of the normal formation, in the case of the advance guard, applies equally here.

There is one point that is essential to keep in mind; you do not fight from choice, but from necessity to gain time and thus fulfill your mission.

In selecting a position in which to fight a delaying action, one requirement must be considered not ordinarily entering into the problem when an advance guard combat is entered into, and that is, ease of getting away.

A strong defensive position must be selected as explained in the books. But you are going to retreat from it; you are not going to fight to a finish. This involves a new consideration.

If you become closely engaged you can only break off with great difficulty unless the ground is favorable. Such ground should be selected where practicable. For example, in rolling country you can often find a ridge where you can remain until the enemy is within a few hundred yards and as soon as you drop to the rear you will be concealed until he gets to where

you were, and even then you may be under cover from that position.

Now a word to the officer who makes the detail of an advance or rear guard. Give your order so that the advance or rear guard commander can intelligently carry it out. If he knows the situation fully he can determine his mission and know what to do.

You can generally do no better than follow the rules given in the Field Service Regulations as to general form.

First.—Tell him what is known of the enemy and of other bodies of our own troops.

Second.—Your plan or intentions in a general way but fully enough that he can appreciate his mission.

Third.—Details as to the march—i. e., route, distance from main body, and directions as to special reconnaissance you want him to make. In this latter, do not encroach too much on his liberty of action.

When to relieve the advance guard? The general rule in small commands is in the morning; that is, the advance guard of today will furnish the outpost tonight and stand relieved when the new advance guard marches through the outpost line next morning. This does not put excessive labor on the advance guard. The reserve, or support if you have no reserve, has not had any harder time on the march, probably, than the main body; at night they take all the sentry work and patrolling, the leading troops during the day being the reserve of the outpost at night.

The reason for this is—they are thoroughly familiar with the situation and have seen the country farther forward and it avoids a countermarch for them when relieved.

In a retreat you generally make the relief at night. A new outpost is detailed, the rear guard

providing protection until it is in place. The rear guard then marches through to the rear and stands relieved. The outpost is the rear guard next day, if the retreat is continued. The reason being the same in principle as in the above case.

In large commands, as a division, the covering detachment is not relieved daily, often remaining out for a week or ten days.

Let us now take the two-inch map of Fort Leavenworth and vicinity and try a simple problem.

Problem

General Situation:

The Missouri river forms the boundary between two hostile states whose main armies are operating about thirty miles south of Leavenworth.

The Western Army occupies Leavenworth, with a garrison of two or three thousand troops, and is sending small parties into nearby eastern territory seizing supplies and horses.

The Eastern Army has ordered a force to Platte City to clear this country of hostile raiders. This force, October 1st, is marching north on the east side of the Platte.

Special Situation:

On the hill south of 76 the commander of the Eastern force learns that there are about seventy-five hostile troops east of the Missouri river and that they are somewhere between Tracy and Farley. He there-upon orders Company A, 1st Infantry, to cross the Platte on the bridge at 72 and defeat and drive away this hostile company and rejoin at Platte City.

Let us briefly state a method of conducting this company's march and then examine it more closely. We will assume our company of full war strength—with four squads in the first section.

From the hill south of 76 and from the map a good idea of the country is formed by all the officers of the company.

The company quits the column at 76 and here halts while the captain details the leading section as the advance guard and gives its commander his orders.

The advance guard then moves out as follows:

In the lead are four men and the corporal of the first squad, two hundred yards behind them remaining three men of the first squad, two hundred yards further back the front rank of the second squad, two hundred and fifty yards further the remainder of the advance guard, and six hundred yards in rear, the main body. It is recommended to the reader to make a sketch of the formation.

The column moves directly to Farley, and no enemy is found. When the leading patrol reaches Farley the place is examined to see if any of the enemy are there. Then one man moves west until he can see along the road 42—32. Nothing being seen, he signals back to the patrol at Farley and all five of the men go up on the bluff and proceed north across country, really becoming a left flank patrol.

The second group and column would halt while Farley was being examined and until the patrol moves to the bluff. The leading patrol having gained the bluff, the march is resumed. The second patrol now being the point, would move from 44 to 46 and would there turn off to the right and become a right flank patrol, and the third group would now become the point and would proceed along the 48—50 road. The other parts of the column following in the same order as before.

Let us now follow our left patrol.

The corporal and his four men having reached the high ground near 975 and having examined the

ground there, proceed north on the ridge in open formation until they reach the knoll unmarked. Here they divide. The corporal sends two men to hill 960 thence to proceed north to Cannon—900 hill—Mayo—to west of hill 900 near 50. With the two other men he goes to 1000—860—the high ground north following along near the ridge to 930, north to 950, to hill 960 east of Alexander on the 14—50 road. These patrols see nothing of the enemy thus far, but shortly after passing the points designated, the point on the road is fired into, and a few minutes later the company is seen to be attacking a force of the enemy near Baldwin.

The corporal now assembles his men and disposes them so as to cover the company's left flank and detect any movement of the enemy in that direction.

The second patrol after turning east at 46 would increase its pace, follow the road for about three hundred yards, and then to hill 930, along the bluff, past Peters to 48, on the way observing carefully the country north of the road 48—60, and then rejoin the column. Just before reaching 48, two men would be hurried forward (fast walk) to leave the road between Robket and Baker and go to the edge of the bluff and follow along the ravine back to the road and join the column. After crossing the ravine near Baker no right flank patrol would be necessary until near 50; but here the enemy is struck and the combat ensues.

There is no necessity of following in detail the march of the parts on the road, except to state that whenever a patrol is sent out from a leading element, men are sent forward to replace them. If the detaching of the patrol can be foreseen men should be present in ample time or even should be started out with the leading elements.

Let us now see whether the above outline answers the purpose.

First.—Will it protect the main body from fire from the front at short range? The ground the company must first cross is open and an enemy at Farley or on the hill nearby would have a clear field of fire for the full range of their rifles. Have we protected against this at the beginning? From the leading patrol to the head of the main body is one thousand two hundred and fifty yards and our leading patrol should see the enemy at least a few yards before reaching him. Infantry fire at a range of over thirteen hundred yards at a target of that size would not be very effective in the first few seconds and three sections could deploy quickly. Only patrols, always assumed to be in open order, precede the main body of the advance guard. It is six hundred and fifty yards from the leading patrol to this body, only two and a half squads in strength. It seems then that the requirement is fulfilled for this part of our march.

Turning at Farley toward 46 one patrol less is in front and the distance is only one thousand and fifty yards from leading patrol to main body. But there is a patrol on the bluff and it is fairly certain that no enemy is south of 46 between the bluff and river. North of 46 the distance is reduced to eight hundred and fifty yards. But the country is broken and rough and that will be ample distance in such terrain. When places occur where the field of fire from the front would be too open and long, the main body could hold back, closing up again on the leading elements where the terrain was of a different character. Delays due to slowness of flanking patrols will give opportunity for this without hurrying.

As to the second requirement, time needed to put the main body properly into the fight. In so small a

command this condition is generally fulfilled when the first requirement is met.

Let us look at the flank protection. We have used none until reaching Farley. Was any necessary?

According to the map the country southwest of the road is flat and open and could be seen from the hill and from the road. To the northeast slightly more cover for an enemy is available, but not much, and the enemy would hardly put himself in such a pocket: with our main command to his east and this company making for Farley. He would scarcely be so obliging.

From Farley north, on the west of the road, the country is covered for about one thousand yards as efficiently as can be done with so small a force. The distance of one thousand yards is sufficient for a company's protection, knowing as they do the small size of the enemy's force in the neighborhood. Then they are in friendly territory; farm houses are numerous, and information more easily obtained. Had this been hostile country, I would recommend increasing this patrol to a squad so as to have a central group.

On the other flank we have less patrolling for we have considered the improbability of an enemy pocketing himself against an unfordable river with the main body of our force able to shoot into him across the river and our company threatening to cut him off from home. We also consider the friendliness of the inhabitants as before. Still the enemy might not know of our main body and might be caught in this bad situation, so those places that would conceal him from view should be examined. This has been done. If the patrols on this flank are properly conducted, our object will be attained.

I think it is clear that we have not used too many for this exhausting work.

Now suppose that in this problem there was a battalion detached, instead of a company, and the en-

emy was two or three companies. What changes would you make?

My answer would be, simply to consider the company already discussed as the advance guard, form it exactly as we have and have the main body (3 companies) follow six hundred yards in rear as main body. One modification to be made would be to detach another patrol from the main body of the advance guard to follow between the two parts of the first one through the country west of the road.

Suppose it was a regiment detached against two battalions. Simply have the other two battalions follow the first as main body at from six hundred to eight hundred yards. In this case there should be a squad on the left after reaching Farley and another squad following as second patrol.

We now have all the parts of an advance guard. The leading company is the vanguard, its first section the advance party. The other three companies of this battalion the reserve of the advance guard.

As the size of the command increases more protection both on the flank and front is necessary and this solution provides for it.

In solving a rear guard problem you apply the same method, remembering that your mission is very different.

I have not gone into the details as to connecting files and how the patrols are formed and led—that is assumed to be done correctly—but a study of this problem will show the importance of carefully instructing our men in patrolling.

The turning off of the leading patrols, as done in this case, is of course exceptional in a way. From the hill and the map assumed to be had, it could be foreseen that these patrols would be needed and using them in this way gave additional security to the march during a critical period and saved delay later. Without them, distance must have been increased for this part of our march. Each problem will present its own special features. This same one may never occur with you, but others will. Do not try to follow a normal formation, but adopt the means necessary in the particular case to meet the conditions.

OUTPOSTS

The object of an outpost is to protect a body of troops while in camp or bivouac from surprise, to prevent an attack being delivered against it before it has had ample time to form up. There is an exceptional case where a command has only one object—to retreat. In that case the outpost must give warning and hold back the enemy until the command can get in march.

What is the correct formation for an outpost? The answer appears plain. Any formation that secures the object aimed at most efficiently with the fewest men, giving unbroken rest to the remainder of the troops. In no part of tactics does a normal formation so little apply as in outposts.

In determining the outpost strength and dispositions we must consider, as in all other covering detachments, the nature of the terrain, probable direction of attack, range of weapons, country—hostile or friendly, supposed proximity of the enemy, etc.

Let us look at the bearing of some of these conditions on our problem.

In a country like most of the United States with its telephones and telegraph, its loyal and intelligent population, we can safely count on little valuable information being given hostile troops, and on the other hand we can count on the people reporting movements of the enemy to friendly troops.

There will be many cases in which foolish or stupid people will give the enemy valuable information and at times information will not be sent to

friendly troops and small detachments can often evade observation.

Accepting the above we see that we can not dispense with covering detachments even in friendly territory, but that the danger of surprise is less.

When the hostile main body is a day's march or more away we can feel certain that only small bodies of infantry and cavalry need be feared. Large bodies of infantry and artillery do not move far in a night if at all and concealment is very unlikely.

The most important consideration, however, is the nature of the enemy. If he has recently been defeated and you are pursuing you do not require as strong an outpost as when the conditions are reversed. With an aggressive, active enemy your protection must be greater than with an enemy who seems to be strictly on the defensive.

Of course outpost dispositions must vary with the size of your command. A company or less bivouacking in a state of readiness to form for action does not require an elaborate outpost, two or three sentinels and a patrol or two are ample. A brigade or more must have considerable time to form for action.

The relative strength of the outpost is therefore influenced by many conditions, it will vary within wide limits. One twelfth of the troops at one time may be large; at another, one third may be scarcely enough.

The placing of troops on outpost follows the general rules as given in advance and rear guards. Their distance from the main body must be sufficient to keep the main body from being fired into before it is in proper formation. If the attacker will probably open with artillery the distance must be greater than if only musketry fire is to be expected. The size of the main body, hence the time required to form, must have an influence. The stronger the outpost

and the position it occupies the longer it can probably delay the enemy and keep him from closing in to effective range.

In this connection, we must consider where we propose to make our stand if attacked. If the defense is to be made in the position occupied by the main body less time and distance will generally be required than if a position forward of that is to be taken.

When we come to placing our men on outpost we must bear in mind that we must early learn of the approach of the enemy in order that timely warning may be given, and that the enemy may be met by no troops not in formation for such a meeting. As in advance guard formation a patrol or its equivalent must be the first to meet the enemy, and succeeding troops must be able to form before he can reach them. A squad deploys very quickly.

The time of day and weather conditions must be considered. If the weather is clear, in an open country, movements of the enemy can be seen much farther than when conditions are different. Naturally, if you can see for a mile or more from your advance positions the latter need not be as far from the main body as when the enemy can approach much closer before being seen.

When it comes to dividing up the troops on outpost, the terrain is an important element.

There are often portions of your front over which the enemy cannot advance, as, for example, a swamp, or very thick jungle, etc. There are other portions which, while it is possible for the enemy to cross them, it is extremely unlikely that he will. Such parts of your front should not receive the same attention as the others. Here an occasional patrol will answer every purpose. At night marching troops must generally keep to the roads. A large force can not move far across rough country in the night and

be in condition to accomplish much against an alert enemy. In exceptional country it can be done, but generally the roads are the important points to watch, especially when cavalry is to be feared. Portions of your front that the enemy can possibly cross, though he is not likely to do so, must not be neglected; a few men, or often better, patrols to watch it should be provided. Apportion your men according to requirements, taking full advantage of the ground to economize strength.

You have just finished the study of "Security and Information," therefore no attempt is made to go into details of formation nor cover all points, but merely to point out some of the more important features that are often overlooked. It is so much easier to always follow a normal formation that too many do so, overlooking the fact that the book tells you that circumstances and conditions make variations in the normal form. It may be said that the normal formation is decidedly exceptional in practice.

In solving your problem determine your "mission"; then consider carefully what you know of the enemy; the distance necessary to hold him off; determine his probable course of action; then consider the ground in your front; what portions must be strongly held; what portions can be ignored; then if you are to detail an outpost determine the number necessary and make the detail, breaking tactical units as little as possible. If you are detailed with your company or battalion to form the outpost, after studying the question as before divide your men so as to best carry out your mission. A reserve of greater or less strength, according to circumstances, should always be held in your own hands.

After you have decided tentatively on your dispositions look over the ground carefully and study

every avenue of approach for the enemy and ask yourself if your dispositions are such as to get timely information of a hostile advance by any of these and to cause the necessary delay to the enemy, then examine your dispositions and see if you are using no more men than are necessary for sentinels and patrols. If your answers are in the affirmative you have probably solved the problem correctly.

Outposts can be best studied by considering concrete cases.

Let us take the following problem on the two-inch map of Fort Leavenworth and vicinity:

Problem:

A Northern army is at Omaha, a Southern army at Kansas City. Country shown on map is Southern. The two bridges over the Missouri river near Leavenworth have been rendered impassable.

On May 1st the 2d Battalion, 3d Infantry, of the Southern army arrived by marching from Kansas City to hold the railroad crossing at Beverley, the remainder of the brigade to which this battalion belongs is to follow next day. These troops are to cover the repair of the bridges and protect the country in the vicinity from raids.

Major A in command of the 2d Battalion arrives at Beverley at 3 p.m., and here learns from friendly inhabitants and spies that a considerable force of the enemy was expected to reach Atchison (twenty-seven miles north of Weston) that evening and that small parties of hostile troops are already from ten to twelve miles south of Atchison.

Weather clear.

Required:

1. Major A's dispositions for the night, and his reasons therefor.

Let us assume that Major A has marched his battalion with Company E as advance guard, the

other companies following in the order F, G, H.

Major A is at Beverley at the head of his main body. The advance guard having been notified to halt, as this is the end of the march, would promptly have out the necessary march outpost to cover the battalion until the "halt and outpost" order was issued.

Major A's mission is to hold Beverley until the brigade arrives tomorrow. The information received convinces him that he cannot be attacked during the night by a very large force, but that detachments, probably together, equal to or stronger than his own are within striking distance and may attack.

He must therefore select his camp and post his outpost in such a way as to best enable him to carry out his mission.

He sees at once that to protect Beverley he must not camp there. The spur at Spinner about 500 yards east of Beverley commands it and the place could not be held with an enemy of about equal strength at Spinner. Conversely, if Major A holds Spinner the enemy can do nothing at Beverley until he first drives away Major A's command.

This spur also affords a good defensive position against an attack by the enemy. To the west and northwest is an open plain for nearly 1,500 yards, beyond this the timber is too dense for the successful movement of troops. To the north and northeast the roads are well controlled and a fairly good field of fire is afforded, especially to the east and to the north where the enemy has Bee Creek to cross in plain view at effective range.

The spur north of this one does not afford as strong a defensive position to an attack from the north and does not so well cover the railroad junc-

tion. Other good positions in the neighborhood uncover Beverley too much.

As there is water sufficient for his men at the farm and the animals can be watered in the nearby streams, Major A decides to camp at Spinner. He must now decide on his outpost dispositions to secure his camp against surprise.

He first studies the roads available to the enemy. There is a road and railroad along the river from Weston to G that approaches his position directly from the direction of the enemy. From Weston the enemy has a road via 21 to 49 thence to G or E. From E he can move 600 yards south and follow the railroad to the northwest and approach the position at Spinner. A wider detour to 10 and an attack from the south is possible but highly improbable, the enemy would thus uncover his own line of retreat, have a long march, and gain little. If the enemy attacks south of the railroad he would undoubtedly turn the ravine west of Ode and not try to force a crossing.

An advance between the two roads forking at 49 is also improbable in the night; the stream has steep banks and constitutes a decided obstacle. The enemy could cross on the bridge south of 49 and then move across country but would lose time if he attempted it in the night. The enemy may turn off at 25 by the farm road and move down the spur. From this spur to the Spinner position is about 1200 yards, to advance from it would be difficult, and the range is long for decisive effect with infantry fire.

From his study of the country Major A concludes that if attacked before the arrival of the brigade the enemy will approach by one of the roads above mentioned and the attack will probably be north of the railroad. Which road or roads will be used it is impossible to foretell. The enemy will not have artil-

lery so the rifle range is all that need be considered. Much of the line need only be patrolled but all the roads must be held. There is just enough danger of a wide turning movement to make it advisable to keep a watch to the south. He further decides that if attacked he will make his fight for the position at Spinner; he will not reenforce the outpost but have it fall back when pressed, uncovering the main position.

The outpost line should therefore extend from the Burlington R. R. north of G around to the southwest to the Rock Island railroad. The distance to the front of the line of observation need not exceed 1500 to 2000 yards. As only a few points have to be more than merely observed not more than 100 men are necessary but observing the rule not to break unnecessarily a tactical unit he decides to detail a company complete. For reasons explained in the talk on advance guards he selects Company E, the present advance guard. The troops for a detached post, far from the outpost proper are generally taken from the main body, or in large outposts, from the reserve. Major A decides that a detached post of one squad located just east of the little woods south of Spinner can effectively observe that section and decides to take the squad from E Company. His reasons for taking it from this company are that the outpost is strong enough without it and that tomorrow all the men, who on account of extra duty today and tonight should be spared as much as convenient, will belong to one company. The other three will be intact.

Having arrived at a decision as above, Major A is ready to issue his "halt and outpost" order. This, in so small a command, would usually be verbal and direct to the officers.

Major A then assembles his company commanders and issues the following order:

“Information has been received that small parties of the enemy were seen about 12 miles north of here today.

“Our brigade will reach here tomorrow.

“This battalion will go into camp near the Spinner house yonder.

“Company E, less one squad, will constitute the outpost and will establish the line from a point about three-fourths of a mile north of here on the Burlington Railroad to near 45 thence southeast to the Rock Island railroad.

“A detached post will be established by me south of camp.

“In case of attack we will defend the position near the main camp which will be intrenched as soon as camp is made.

“Captain E (Company E) will detach one squad under a sergeant to report to me.

“I will be with the main body.”

Let us assume that Captain E has studied his map and the ground and when he receives his order is ready to post his men. His course of reasoning and conclusions are practically the same as those of Major A.

With so small an outpost there would be no reserve. The squads which constituted the advance party, flankers, etc., during the day will be in the support during the night.

Captain D decides to have the support bivouac a little south of the bridge north of G, to which point he marches his support if not already there and then issues his outpost order to his company.

Order:

“Small parties of the enemy have been seen today about 12 miles north of here.

“The battalion camps on that hill near the Spinner farm house.

“The support will bivouac here.

“If attacked the position at Spinner will be held.

“First Lieutenant A, with the first two squads and Sergeant X, move out on the F—E road about 500 yards beyond the second bend where the railroad diverges from the wagon road. You will constitute Picket No. 1. You will observe the road and railroad to your front and patrol to the head of the ravine to your north.

“Second Lieutenant B, you will take the next two squads and move out the G—47 road about 300 yards beyond 47 and constitute Picket No. 2. You will carefully guard the bridge to your north and patrol east to that ravine running south from Bee Creek.

“Sergeant Y, with the next two squads, move up the river road to near the next bridge. You will constitute Picket No. 3. Place a cossack post to your right on this hill (pointing) with instructions to carefully observe the country to the north. You will patrol along the railroad to the north and prevent the enemy moving undetected through the woods along the river.

“Cooked meals will be sent to the pickets from the support.

“I will be with the support.”

As soon as the pickets just detailed are in position the temporary or march outguards are relieved and come into the bivouac.

Captain E then establishes his bivouac. Three men are detailed for guard (3 reliefs of one man each) and a noncommissioned officer. A sentinel must be on duty all the time at the bivouac.

Men are also detailed for patrol duty; at least one visiting patrol must be out all the time. In this case two men are sufficient for a patrol, Three reliefs for patrols = 6 men.

The patrol starting out from the support would move to Picket No. 1, thence to No. 2, thence to No. 3, and back to the support. The round should be made in less than an hour.

Having attended to the above Captain E should now inspect his pickets and satisfy himself that his orders have been understood and are being properly executed. He should make any changes he finds necessary. Captain E now makes a report of his final dispositions to the battalion commander. It is advisable to show the dispositions of the troops by means of a simple sketch.

Captain E causes all the men who are to do the patrolling during the night to make at least one round before dark in order to learn the country.

Let us now see what the picket commanders do.

Lieutenant A establishes Picket No. 1, 500 yards east of the second bend in the road. At this point the distance between the two roads is about 100 yards. He decides to make his bivouac between the two roads, to place one sentinel on the wagon road, one on the railroad, and one between at the picket. Double sentinels are the rule on such posts as these on roads. One double sentinel can not satisfactorily do what is required and two such posts require too many men. In this case all three sentinels are so close together that the middle one may be considered as the double to each of the others. This requires nine men for sentinels. He must have three patrols of two men each = 6 men. Two noncommissioned officers can divide the night in charge of picket. Three would be better but he has only two left, but Lieutenant A can take some of the work himself. He has 17 men besides himself in the picket.

He decides to have one patrol out all the time. It will move from the picket north to the head of the ravine thence southeast to the knoll near E in the northeast angle of the wagon road, whence both roads can be seen, then back to the picket by the

same route. At least once every two hours a patrol will move via the farm road to Picket No. 2. Lieut. A and those to make the patrols during the night go over the route before dark.

Lieutenant B establishes his picket to the right (east) of the railroad due south of the bridge and posts a double sentinel a few yards from the picket. No other sentinel at the picket is required. Three patrols of two men each are detailed to patrol from the picket east to the ravine. A patrol will move back and forth between these two points. He has so far 6 men for sentinels, 6 men for patrols and 3 non-commissioned officers or privates acting as such = 15. He has one man left besides himself. He decides to have a patrol to Picket No. 1, going by way of 45 and returning via G. This will be made once in two hours without interfering with the patrol to the ravine. It will be made by two men taken from the noncommissioned officers, sentinels not on post and the extra man. Patrols go over the route before dark.

Sergeant Y established his picket in the mouth of the draw east of the little railroad bridge and posts a double sentinel to observe to the northwest along the road and railroad. He detaches a corporal and three men to establish a cossack post about due east of the picket on the ridge. The rest of his men he holds in readiness for patrolling. Frequent patrols will be made well to the front; the cossack post will be visited about once an hour.

During broad daylight the double sentinels may be made single and much of the patrolling omitted, but from sunset to broad daylight the above dispositions will be followed.

This disposition requires for night work, if there is no attack, six squads and two sergeants for the three pickets; one squad for the detached post. The guard and patrols at the support requires nine men and say two noncommissioned officers. A total of eight squads and one man besides four additional noncommissioned officers or a grand total from Company E of 69 men out of the 128, practically one-eighth of the force.

The major would also have from the main body a small camp guard; probably a single sentinel would be sufficient, at most two. This would require 3 or 6 privates and one or two noncommissioned officers.

This is not excessive, particularly when we consider that full work is only required during darkness.

The next question: Has he economized too much, is there an avenue of approach too open?

If the enemy comes by the wagon road against the front of Picket No. 1, he is met by two squads; this number of men shooting down a road would be quite an obstacle. It would force a deployment and regular advance and this would take time, particularly in the dark; the enemy having deployed would doubtless be able to push back the men of the picket, but by that time the support could be deployed and ready and Picket No. 2 would soon be on their flank. By the time the enemy was oriented and in condition to handle this force, nearly a company strong, the main body would be adding their fire.

If he comes by the roads against either of the other pickets the result is practically the same.

Suppose the enemy attacks moving across country between Picket No. 2 and 49. Crossing the stream with its steep banks will take some time for a force as large as a battalion, and is certain to make considerable noise. One or the other of the two patrols will detect it early. After crossing it will take an appreciable time to overcome the disorder and prepare to advance to the attack. Pickets Nos. 1 and 2 are ready to open a cross fire on them and are strong enough to cause trouble to the enemy and will delay him. The support, as before, deploys and is ready.

Suppose the enemy moves south of the railroad to turn the position. He would hardly attempt to cross the ravine, but would turn it bringing him in well from the south. The detached post in this vicinity should get early information of it and alarm the main camp. The squad could not cause much delay but would cause some, for the enemy must find out how much is against him. The distance is so great that by the time the enemy was within effective range for night firing our troops could be

ready. The outpost company, or part of it, can move against the enemy's right flank during his advance. The enemy would be running such a great risk in such a move unless he were greatly superior to us that he would hardly attempt it.

We must remember that the force which has to advance in the dark is much more liable to confusion, disorder and mishap than the troops in position.

The enemy may turn south via 25. The cossack post should see him in time to give ample warning. This post could not cause any delay. The southern point of the hill is over 1,200 yards from our main body, too far to accomplish anything by night firing. To get down the steep bank to advance would be considerably interfered with by the support and later in their advance would be flanked by Pickets 1 and 2.

The distance from the main body to the advance elements of Pickets 2 and 3 is nearly 2,000 yards, to Picket No. 1 is only about 1,200 and the detached post about the same. This, I believe, fulfills the requirement. Night fire by infantry is effective only at short range, in daylight the enemy would be seen for a considerable distance before he reached the detached post or Picket No. 1.

I do not believe we can dispense with any of the men we have used. To cut out one of our sentinels or patrols from the pickets would leave an opening. The patrolling from the support is believed necessary.

This problem is very simple and in solution works out rather normally. The pickets are of equal size. This will not be the *rule*. To each picket must be assigned men enough to do the work before it. One picket may have two or three double sentinels, another only one. In some cases a cossack or sentry squad would be used, and the pickets may vary from two squads to a company.

You must also bear in mind that generally there is more than one *correct* solution. Whatever disposition gives necessary security with the minimum of men is absolutely correct.