

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Director, 2nd Year Class, C. & G. S.
School, Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.

SUBJECT:

A study to determine the basic principles
involved in the troop leading of an
infantry division.

I PAPERS ACCOMPANYING

A bibliography for this study

II THE STUDY PRESENTED

The basic principles involved in the troop leading of an
infantry division

III HISTORICAL FACTS RELATING TO THE STUDY

1. Troop leading has been defined as the art of leading,
fighting and supplying troops in campaign, in contact with
the enemy, or when contact is imminent. (1)

2. Science is systematized knowledge. From a case previously
demonstrated we deduce a second and so on, building up a sys-
tem upon which we can base rules and laws applicable in various
branches of scientific research and endeavor. In the arts, how-
ever, and in war above all other arts there are no constant fac-
tors. Two and two seldom make four. We must reckon with ever
varying even incalculable quantities. The next immediate oc-
currence is all that can be foreseen, and it but incompletely.

Rules, therefore, can be accorded only a very limited
importance and scope. In any given situation they are applicable
only in so far as we can overlook and absolutely control exist-
ing conditions. Rules may be formulated for the arrangement of
marches or for the establishment of outposts under certain con-
ditions, but for conducting an engagement on a large scale no
rules can be given. There they become empty phrases, for we
can neither overlook all conditions nor absolutely control them.
(2)

3. All arts, however, have their theories, and a study of
the campaigns of the great captains of the past discloses cer-
tain well defined theories or principles which are fundamental
and basic to the art of war. These principles have been var-
iously enumerated as follows:

- "I Maintenance of the objective
- II Offensive action
- III Surprise
- IV Concentration
- V Security
- VI Economy of force
- VII Mobility
- VIII Cooperation" (3)

- "I The principle of concentration
- II The principle of economy of force
- III The principle of surprise
- IV The principle of mobility
- V The principle of offensive action
- VI The principle of cooperation
- VII The principle of security" (4)

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- (1) (2, Chap. I, Sec. I)
 - (2) (I, VII)
 - (3) (4, 2)
 - (4) (5, 7)

- "1 Objective
- 2 Offensive
- 3 Mass
- 4 Economy of force
- 5 Movement
- 6 Surprise
- 7 Security
- 8 Simplicity
- 9 Cooperation" (5)

4. The principles of war are few in number and easily understood. Their application, however, is difficult, and varies in accordance with the circumstances of each case. Tactical situations never repeat or duplicate themselves. The application of these principles, therefore, cannot be made subject to rules.

Since war is an art and not an exact science, each situation must be considered on its own merits. The time spent on consideration must of necessity be reduced to the minimum, for in battle there is rarely time for prolonged reflection. Troop leaders of all grades must cultivate readiness of judgement. (6)

5. "The essential characteristics of a commander are a strong and resolute will and a ready acceptance of responsibility. He must have ability, clear judgement, and a well balanced sense of proportion. He must also have a temperament which is neither unduly elated by success nor depressed by failure. These characteristics should be supported by a thorough knowledge and deep study of war..... The chief role of a commander is to make decisions....." (7)

"Leadership requires personal courage, high intelligence, sound judgement, an intuitive faculty and great resolution" (8)

"Prestige and moral effect are more than half the battle, and the influence of the leader is chief amongst the moral factors which sway an army..... The efficiency of every formation or unit..... is the reflection of the personality of the commander". (9)

6. "The principal duty of a commander is to make decisions. If his decisions are to be sound it is not sufficient that he be possessed of personal courage, a strong and resolute will, and a ready acceptance of responsibility. He must have in addition a thorough knowledge of the principles of war, swift and clear judgement, imagination coupled with a temperament which is not liable to become unduly elated by success nor depressed by failure, and an understanding of human nature..... A commander must take every opportunity of coming in contact with his subordinate commanders and his troops, and of learning their characteristics and capabilities" (10)

7. ".....much depends upon the leader of an organization..... A competent leader can get efficient service from poor troops, while an incapable leader can demoralize the best troops.

Many of the disasters that had come to the Allies were due in a large part to the lack of energy and alertness on the part of older commanders, who often failed to exercise that

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|-----|---------|------|---------|
| (5) | (6) | (6) | (4, 4) |
| (7) | (4, 9) | (8) | (4, 10) |
| (9) | (4, 11) | (10) | (5, 5) |

eternal personal supervision and tactical direction necessary to success." (II)

6. It has been said that "out of every hundred men taken at random, ten would storm the gates of Hell unassisted, eighty would follow if led, and ten would run away if they could."

It falls then to the leaders to set the necessary example to the eighty per cent and carry with them the ten per cent of waverers" (12)

IV OPINION OF THE AUTHOR

I. Discussion:

Much of the foregoing is too general in scope to be of great value in the concrete case to the leader of an infantry division. Little has been written on the subject. The piping times of peace afford no opportunity to practice the leading of a war strength division, and when war comes the method of trial and error is far too costly in men and material.

How then shall an officer fit himself to lead an infantry division to success in battle? Upon what principles must he learn to base his actions and orders?

First of all he must have the ability to adapt the theories of the psychology of leadership to his specific task. Obviously a division commander must have the respect and confidence of his subordinate commanders and of his troops. These will ordinarily be accorded him if he has courage, skill, and experience. If in addition to these qualities he possesses and demonstrates a proper sense of proportion, an understanding of human nature, and an appreciation for the capabilities and limitations of his officers and men he will have their affection and loyalty and will be in a position to cultivate and develop that something of the spirit known as morale.

Much has been written concerning the psychology of leadership and its ultimate aims, the building up of an esprit de corps, and the attainment of a high morale. It may be roughly summed up by saying that the division commander who shows firmness without asperity, tact and sympathy without interference, and appreciation without fuss has a fair grasp of the subject, and has gone a long way on the road toward inculcating his officers and men with the will to win in whatever situation he sees fit to place them.

Secondly, passing to material rather than moral considerations, the division commander must know his job, be thoroughly familiar with his tools, and have the ability to so balance one against the other that the maximum results will be obtained at the minimum cost.

This phase of leadership is largely a matter of battlefield technique as far as pertains to the division commander. Therein he is concerned with the practical application of certain tactical and administrative principles such as the adaptation of appropriate principles of war, the formulation of plans and decisions, the issuance of orders to carry these decisions into effect, and the exercise of supervision and control necessary to insure the proper execution of orders.

These principles will be considered under the headings Information, Plan, and Coordination, since in their broad sense these terms embrace all vital factors.

Information :

The division commander must utilize all means at his

(II) (7, Chap. 46)

(12) (3, 9)

③ Your discussion is inadequate for the subject.

disposal to obtain information of the enemy and to block the latter's efforts along similar lines. Air reconnaissance and ground reconnaissance, personal and through the instrumentality of patrols, scouts, and detachments specially designated to perform this duty must be thorough and continuous. Reconnaissance clears the fog of war, opens the eyes of the division commander to the lines of action that are available, and points out the steps that must be taken.

By counter reconnaissance and security measures the division commander thickens the fog confronting his enemy, blinds him as to the situation, insures secrecy in his own preparations, and tactical surprise through concealment of the direction and strength of his main blow or counter attack.

Plan :

The principal tools at the disposal of a division commander are two brigades of infantry and a brigade of field artillery. The methods considered for the employment of these tools comprise his plan or plans. In formulating these plans it would be well for the division commander to think in terms of battalions and batteries rather than in terms of regiments and brigades, for the infantry battalion is the attack unit whether operating alone or as part of a larger unit, and the artillery battery is primarily the unit for the technical conduct of fire. On the defensive the number of battalion centers of resistance on the battle position determine the frontage and depth of the division. Both on the offensive and on the defensive the massing of artillery either in support of a main effort or in defense of a critical area consists of the location of firing batteries so that the mass of their fire will fall in the desired area.

In accomplishing a desired result that plan which is based on the best information, is simple of execution, shows prevision, and provides for or allows the adoption of alternate methods to meet changes in the situation is the plan most likely to succeed.

The meat of any plan is the "what", "when", "where", "how", and "why" of execution, otherwise known as the decision. The making of a decision is not only the division commander's prerogative, it is his principal responsibility and duty. Swift and clear judgement are obviously essential characteristics on the part of a division commander if he is to quickly arrive at sound decisions. Having made and announced his decision he should bend every effort toward its successful execution. The commander who vacillates or who straddles a situation is lost. It is far better to carry a poor plan through a precise and exact execution than to waver over a better one. It is apparent then that a strong and resolute will are characteristics no less essential in the make up of a division commander.

Coordination:

The division commander secures coordination of effort.-First: Through the issuance of orders couched in precise and simple language, which provide for flexibility through disposition in depth; the combined use of all arms through the proper combination of fire power and shock action; economy of force through the concentration of effort, and Second: through such personal inspection, supervision, and control as will insure the efficient execution of these orders.

This follow up of orders should in no sense constitute an interference with subordinates in the proper execution of their respective missions, for a division commander who is unduly fussy about minor details and who spends his time commanding subordinate units is a loss to his superiors and a nuisance to his juniors. It is, rather, an exercise of tactical direction and control designed to insure that each unit plays its part in the division team.

Once the division is committed its commander can influence the subsequent action only by means of his reserve and his divisional artillery. For this reason he should keep himself informed of the situation on the entire front in order that these last two tools may be used at the critical moment and to the maximum advantage.

2. Conclusion:

In campaign a division commander, within the limits imposed by his mission and the will of the next higher commander, practices the art of troop leading by the adaptation of the theories of the psychology of leadership; by the practical application of appropriate principles of war; by the rendition of basic tactical and administrative decisions; by the issuance of orders whose purpose is to carry these decisions into effect; and by that supervision and control which will insure the efficient execution of these orders.

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Key: (4, 2) indicates No. 4 text (below), page 2.

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