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EXPLORATORY EFFORTS CONCERNED WITH A STUDY OF THE
INTERROGATION PROCESS: SURVEY ACTIVITIES,
CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PILOT STUDIES

Hilton M. Bialek, et al

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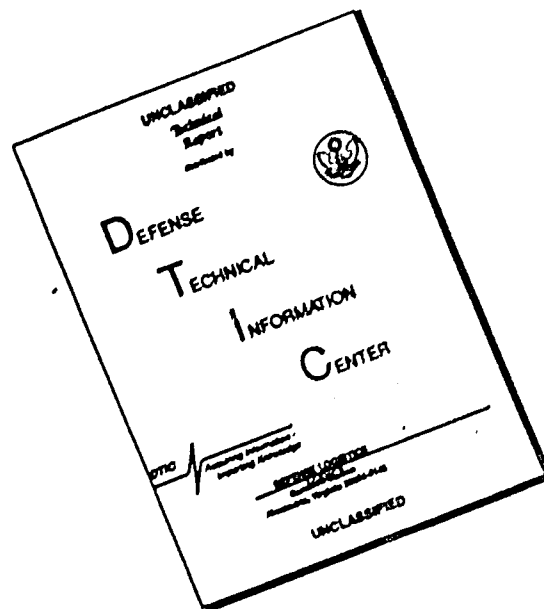
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RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

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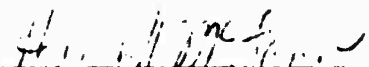
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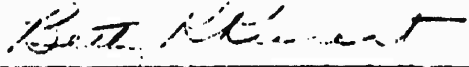
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SUMMARY

This research memorandum contains an overview of the first four months of activity on Task Quiz. It includes a survey of potential problems in the areas of interrogation and resistance, a working conceptualization of the interrogation process, and the informal results of a number of pilot studies originating from the conceptualization.

The outcome of these activities is a proposal for a formal research effort directed initially toward developing a technique for measuring the effectiveness of a tactical interrogation, and determining both the effects of varying kinds and intensities of resistance and the effects of using particular interrogational strategies. Short range objectives include implementation of IPW training and evaluation of IPW students, while the larger objectives include recommendations for utilizing techniques of interrogation and resistance based on empirical evidence. Consideration of extrinsic variables such as fatigue, fear and drugs are reserved for future studies but are encompassed in the initial conceptualization.

The pilot studies reported here indicate that the objectives of the Task are feasible and amenable to research.

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INTRODUCTION

Task Quiz became an approved task in the HumRRO work program on 1 July 1961. It was sponsored jointly by ACSI, DA and Hq USCONARC, for the purpose of conducting research on problems related to the general area of exploitation of prisoners as individuals. Subsequently, ACSI expressed interest in the possibility of research in the more limited area of interrogation.

The work described in this memorandum comprised Task Quiz's full research effort from 1 July to 1 October, 1961, and subsequent supplementary effort. It consumed the equivalent of two and a half man years.

This report has three purposes. The first one is to present results of a survey of interrogation and resistance practices. The survey had as its objective the identification of areas in which research would be useful and also possible. The second purpose is to present a tentative conceptualization of the interrogation process, and the third purpose to describe exploratory work designed to test the feasibility of experimentally studying and measuring interrogation.

SURVEY OF RESISTANCE AND INTERROGATION ACTIVITIES¹

This initial section includes a description of the sources utilized, the information collected, and recommendations for Task research. This survey was organized about the five topics listed below.

¹

Original drafts of the Survey section of this report were contributed by Dr. Mark B. Silber, until recently a member of Task Quiz.

- (1) Brainwashing and indoctrination methods
- (2) Training of interrogators
- (3) Code of Conduct and resistance training
- (4) Interrogation techniques and methods
- (5) Procedures for handling and manipulating POWs

Three principal means of collecting information and impressions were employed for the survey. They were: (1) review of military and psychological literature concerned with techniques and theories of interrogation, coercion and resistance; (2) observation of Intelligence School training, field exercises which included IPW activity and Survival, Escape and Evasion courses; (3) individual and group interviews of Interrogators, IPW students and instructors and former POWs.

Literature Survey

The topics listed above guided the literature search. In surveying military documents and articles¹ the members of the Task were principally interested in familiarizing themselves with the current doctrine, attitudes, and training edicts pertaining to these topics. The search included field manuals and training pamphlets which are listed in the bibliography. Very little could be found in the area of interrogation which suggested that techniques exist for determining (a) how much relevant information is obtained through interrogation, (b) how accurate obtained information is,

1

Augmenting and guiding this aspect of the survey was the experience and knowledge of a military member of the Task whose twelve years of Intelligence experience greatly facilitated the work. Some of this knowledge and experience was shared in a series of daily lectures he gave covering such topics as the Intelligence cycle, handling of POWs, IPW problems and uses of Intelligence information.

and (c) how much of it is used in command decision.

The search of the psychological literature, again guided by the topics listed above, centered about current material. Published bibliographies (Biderman, 1961; Zimmer and Meltzer, 1957) were also consulted. However, there appeared to be a relative paucity of research and theory in the area of non-cooperative interpersonal settings. The psychological explanations of phenomena such as "brainwashing," indoctrination and coercion (e.g., Schein, 1961; Biderman, 1960) are, generally, post hoc and lack experimental substantiation. No explanation of interrogation advanced was completely adequate as a working model for Quiz's research effort. However, various explanations suggested potentially useful concepts. The literature survey left many questions about resistance training unanswered. For instance, is it useful to subject trainees to some of the frustrations and humiliations of captivity? Does such training reinforce incorrect responses or create unrealistic expectancies? Does it "inoculate" the individual against the shock and disorganization of capture?

In short, the relative dearth of relevant research which the review of both the military and psychological literature revealed pointed up the need for conceptualization, exploration and research.

Observation of Ongoing Training Activities

1. Sixth Army Intelligence Training Area School. A valuable source of information, particularly with respect to interrogation training and techniques, was attendance at the Sixth Army Intelligence Training Area School, held at the Presidio of Monterey, California.

Information concerning interrogation training and techniques was collected from both faculty and students. Task members attended the training sessions and classroom lectures, and one of the Task military personnel enrolled officially as a student in the IPW training course.

In addition, round table discussions were held among school faculty and Task members, individual faculty members who had interrogation experience were interviewed, and questionnaires were administered to faculty members and IPW students.

These activities were directed toward gathering information about interrogation itself and interrogator training. They helped to delineate the information extraction and psychological manipulative functions of interrogation and to differentiate them. Twelve former interrogators who were interviewed tended to view information extraction skills as more important than manipulative skills, although very few considered the latter unimportant. Almost all of these men said that what manipulative skills they had developed or heard of were based on pragmatic principles or "common sense." None of them had ever heard of any systematic analysis or investigation of this important skill, but most felt that such an effort would be worthwhile. Although twelve is too small a number from which to draw generalizations, it is notable that there was a complete lack of unanimity on such topics as (a) ease of getting POWs to give information, (b) effects of threat and force, (c) desired characteristics of interrogators, (d) accuracy and pertinence of information collected, and (e) disadvantages of using interpreters. This group felt that research in these areas would also be beneficial.

2. Exercise Swift Strike. Interrogation activities were observed at Exercise Swift Strike - a full field maneuver conducted in the Third Army area by the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. The most effective interrogation technique observed appeared to be one in which few cues that he was being interrogated were given to the prisoner. Generally, when prisoners were not aware of being interrogated, they revealed far more information.

The "captured" soldiers appeared satisfied with their resistance training. However, the interrogators, many of whom had little or no formal IPW training, indicated a desire for additional and formal training in interrogation. They also expressed a general concern that assignment to Military Intelligence holds little status for the career-oriented officer, and thus limits his opportunities for advancement.

3. SEE-Ord and SEE-25th. Observations were made of Survival, Escape and Evasion courses at Ft. Ord, California, and at the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Both courses simulated the POW camp conditions existing during the Korean conflict. In both cases, students were subjected to harassment experienced by POWs, and were given interrogation demonstrations.

Content and presentation of these courses vary throughout the Army, since at present each command or post is left to its own devices to conduct and evaluate such training. As a result, it is not surprising that there appears to be a lack of understanding of (a) the possible adverse consequences of parts of the training programs, and (b) what specific behaviors are being learned. The need for a standardized resistance training program is quite apparent.

Interviews with ex-Prisoners of War

Group and individual interviews were held with soldiers who had been prisoners of war in World War II or in Korea. Almost none of them had undergone tactical interrogation, but many had been interrogated later on in their POW experience. Although this sample was highly restricted and unique, their interview material provided useful background information. (And even suggested hypotheses. For example, some of the men noted that although, in general, the Chinese in North Korea had not attempted to apply intense pressure during the interrogation, on those occasions where pressure was applied resistance frequently increased, rather than decreased.)

Summary

The primary purpose of the survey was met in that it indicated a series of problem areas in which Task research would be desirable and might profitably be undertaken: a systematic study of current IPW training; the development of an Army-wide resistance training program; evaluation of current interrogation techniques and development of new ones; development of means of assessing the validity of obtained information, and the reliability of the source; evaluation of the training needs of IPWs currently functioning in combat-critical units; and evaluation of assumptions underlying current interrogation doctrine (e.g., specific types of interrogation techniques are more effective with certain types of prisoners.)

¹
1 Agreement with the present survey concerning researchable areas is found in a HUMINT TD study conducted in 1957-58, classified SECRET, "A Survey of Human Factors Problems in Army Intelligence Training and Operations."

Research in most of these areas presupposes a conceptualization or psychological description of the interrogation process. For example, a criterion situation would be required to evaluate particular interrogation techniques, and such a criterion situation would most effectively be based on a conceptualization of the interrogation process. This survey was the primary means of tentatively identifying processes involved in interrogation. The following section describes an initial effort at a conceptualization of these processes.

1 CONCEPTUALIZATION

Rationale

There are three reasons for presenting a conceptualization of the interrogation process. The survey findings suggested the desirability of presenting some psychological aspects of interrogation to augment the primarily military orientation presented in interrogator training literature. Related to this is a second reason. The documents, course outline, and lecture material examined failed to provide a description of interrogation as a process, and the presentation of a conceptualization could help IPW trainees to recognize the dynamic qualities of the activity they are preparing to undertake. The third, and most impelling, reason for a conceptualization is to provide a guide or a structure for a research program which has as its objective the study and manipulation of factors contributing to the effectiveness of the interrogation.

1
The original ideas and general formulation for this conceptualization were contributed by M/Sgt. Arnold Kohn, a military member of Task Quiz.

The statement of a conceptualization of the interrogation process is presented below. This conceptualization is precise enough to generate empirical substantiation, yet flexible enough to stand modification based on new information.

Definition of Interrogation

Interrogation is an interpersonal process in which, usually, one man, the interrogator, tries to obtain information from another man, the source, who may or may not possess the information and who may or may not be motivated to reveal this information if, in fact, he does possess it.

Comment and Discussion. Note the use of the term, "usually". There is nothing inherent in interrogation which restricts it to the interactions between one interrogator and one source. Unless otherwise indicated, however, use of the term "interrogator" in this paper will refer only to the process between a single interrogator and a single source.

The word "process" in the definition refers to the dynamic quality of the interpersonal relationship of interrogation, that is, continuous change. In addition, "process" recognizes two distinct aspects of interrogation behavior, information extraction and psychological manipulation, which are discussed below.

The possibility is always present in interrogation that the source does not possess the information desired by the interrogator. If the source is not cooperative, the interrogator has to decide whether the source has worthwhile information warranting further effort. If the source does reveal information, the interrogator must be able to ascertain whether it is reliable and relevant.

Information, in this conceptualization, is limited to events in or

perceptions of the real world which have military significance. This is in contrast to feelings or attitudes of a personal, political or ideological nature.

Major Aspects of the Interrogation Process

Two major aspects may be identified: information extraction and psychological manipulation. These may exist concomitantly or separately, occurring cyclically throughout the interrogation.

1. Information Extraction. This aspect of interrogation is the one most strongly emphasized in the current training of interrogators. Such factors as essential elements of information, map reading, and familiarity with order of battle, all have reference to an interrogator's information extracting activities. Because this aspect is thoroughly covered during training and because such activities are primarily military skills and knowledge, this part of the process is not included in the psychological conceptualization presented in this paper. It is, however, included in the projected experimental program where the criteria of effective interrogation will be, in fact, the amount and accuracy of military information extracted.

2. Psychological Manipulation. Briefly stated, psychological manipulation refers to all interrogational activities directed toward changing the expectancies, perceptions and motivations of the source in such a way as to encourage, enable or force him to reveal information he possesses which is desired by the interrogator.

The term "psychological" has as its referent the state of the source, and does not necessarily apply to the means of manipulation employed. Thus, the intended effects of physical force or drugs, for example, are psychological.

Basic Formulation

Resistance behavior in interrogation (R) is hypothesized to be a function of two antagonistic forces within an individual, the source. The amount of relevant information an individual will supply to an interrogator is a measure of the resultant of the resolution of these two forces, i.e., $R = f(W - C)$.

The force impelling an individual to give relevant information is called communication press (C), and includes all such pressures ranging from the socially learned need to talk in the presence of someone else to specific interrogator techniques used to encourage or enhance communication.

The force impelling an individual to resist giving relevant information is called the withholding force (W), and comprises three interactive components: perceived importance of the information (I), perceived enmity of the interrogator (E), and degree of personal identification with a specified unit or group (Id). An additional component of this withholding force is the individual's awareness of training prohibitions (T) against revealing information. (These prohibitions are defined by both military and civilian training.) Stated symbolically, $W = f[(I, E, Id) + T]$.

The basic formula, completed, reads thus: $R = f[(I, E, Id) + T] - C$.

This formula expresses the following general hypotheses:

1. All other factors equal, to the extent that a source (a) perceives the interrogator as inimical, (b) perceives the sought information as important to the well-being of his group, and (c) identifies with his group, the greater will be his propensity to resist supplying the information.

2. The greater the value of T, the higher the value of R.

That is, the more an individual has internalized the prohibitions

associated with supplying relevant information to the enemy, the less likely will he be to supply the information, other things being equal.

3. The greater the need on the part of the source to communicate with the interrogator, the less is the value of R, other things being equal.

Discussion. The main importance of this conceptual statement is that it provides a framework for an initial experimental investigation of the interrogation process. The constructs included in this initial conceptualization were selected because (a) they appeared to be the major determinants of resistance behavior and, (b) it appeared possible to manipulate them in ordinary military training and interrogation settings. At this time, they appear sufficiently general to encompass any kind of interrogational technique or resistance training device that comes to mind, and yet they are specific enough to lend themselves to some degree of quantification.

In describing and discussing resistance behavior as a function of two forces, withholding (W) and communication press (C), it is assumed (a) that both forces may vary in initial strength - i.e., at the outset of the interrogation - and (b) that the strength of these two forces will vary during the interrogation. It is further assumed that whether the interrogator consciously considers his behavior in these terms or not, his efforts are directed toward reducing W and increasing C.

A consideration of the conceptualization will show that it is possible to (1) manipulate experimentally the initial values of the constructs as well as the activities of the interrogator designed to alter the initial values, and (2) introduce extrinsic variables such as fatigue, drug effects, and fear into the situation and measure their interaction with the constructs

as well as their effects on the dependent variables.

Initial work, however, will concentrate exclusively on the former point, and a series of pilot runs has been made to determine the feasibility of the manipulations described above in Point (1). The following section describes these pilot runs.

PILOT STUDIES

Purpose

Before committing large segments of time and energy to the development of an experimental design, a number of informal pilot studies or feasibility tryouts were conducted to discover whether this conceptualization of the interrogation process would lend itself to experimental treatment. These small-scale, flexible operations had three objectives:

1. To design and test a field problem which would provide the type and variety of military information typically sought in tactical interrogation.
2. To test the feasibility of arousing genuine motives to resist interrogation.
3. To develop instruments to measure (a) information obtained through interrogation, (b) total information subjects obtained from the field problem, (c) reactions of Ss to interrogation and interrogator, and (d) efficacy of treatments applied to arouse resistance.

Before considering each of these three objectives in detail, a description of a typical pilot run will be presented.

Procedure

Subjects were AIT or Basic trainees who met the following requirements:

GT scores of 100 or above, ability to read and speak English, and 20/20 vision corrected. The first two requirements were necessary because, during these initial runs, suggestions for improvement and retrospective reports were sought from the subjects. The third requirement was necessary in order to ensure that any differences in observation in the field exercise were not a function of differences in visual acuity.

At the outset of the problem, Ss were given an orientation briefing describing the purpose of the exercise as an Army study of soldiers' ability to observe in the field. At the field course, they received another briefing giving information relevant to the field problem; i.e., order of battle, mission, casualties, etc. After this, they were escorted through the field problem, approximately 1000 meters long, which took about 25 minutes. Upon completion of the field exercise, Ss were transported to the Leadership Unit where they were interviewed, tested and debriefed. On those days on which "resistance set" manipulations were attempted (these will be described below), the "set" instructions were introduced after Ss arrived at the Unit and before they were interrogated. In all cases, an extensive debriefing included a straightforward description of the purpose of the research and the manipulations, and the request that the Ss keep confidential the nature of their experience. During the debriefing, Ss were encouraged to discuss their reactions as well as to offer suggestions for improving the credibility of the experiment.

Specific Objectives

1. Designing and Constructing the Field Problem. The primary purpose of constructing a field problem was to develop a standardized form for

presentation of tactical military information in a realistic way. The information presented in the problem provides a basis for determining the accuracy and amount of information elicited during interrogation.

This tactical information was made available to subjects in three ways: some items of information were presented verbally, others could be observed visually, and inferences could be drawn from the information thus gained. There were five content areas of information: terrain, location, order of battle, tactics, and morale.

Since the purpose of the problem was to expose the foot soldier to the kinds of information he might have available to him if captured, the extent of "realism" was not considered important. That is, while presentation of information in a field setting seemed highly desirable, the added value, relative to its cost, of simulation of the kinds of things a soldier would probably encounter in the actual situation, appeared slight. Accordingly, no effort was made to recreate the milieu of sounds, smells, and dangers of actual combat.

Ss were told that, for the purposes of the exercise, they should consider themselves as replacements for a company positioned at the front line and that they would be guided to that position. (The verbal material and a map of the problem showing the location and description of the items in the field are found in Appendix 1.) Except for foxholes, some ammo boxes, barbed wire and engineers' tape, all non-terrain objects were represented by sign posts. The sign posts designated units, command posts, support, etc., placed in such a manner as to represent the organization of a division in the field. The terrain was quite varied (enough so to provide a realistic challenge to an interrogator trying to determine location,

distances and terrain characteristics).

Several impressions were gained from the trial runs over the field course. As suspected, the lack of simulation does not seem to be important. Ss seemed to have little trouble accepting the signs as representative of their significates, and indicated that only the absence of other military activity and personnel made the course "unrealistic." The use of the sign posts in lieu of actual buildings and equipment did not seem to lessen the effectiveness of the course in any way, and appreciably reduces the administrative and logistical problems of maintaining such a course.

Most important, of course, it appears that the experience provided Ss with the kinds of information an infantryman might bring to an actual combat interrogation.

Finally, one practical implication of the efforts to construct a field problem was the possibility that such an exercise might be a much more adequate technique for presenting information than the "canned" scripts currently used in Intelligence schools.

2. Feasibility of Arousing Genuine Motives to Resist Interrogation.

If one is interested in arousing resistance, it is a simple matter merely to instruct Ss not to tell the interrogator anything, since they have no genuine reason to talk under the patently contrived circumstances in which they find themselves. But such a procedure rests upon a subject's desire to please the experimenter (or exasperate the interrogator) and provides no intrinsic reason so to behave. Yet, the meaningfulness of generalizations forthcoming from this research is dependent upon Ss either wanting or not wanting to give information for reasons similar in nature, if not

in intensity, to those reasons obtaining in actual combat situations.

In an effort to generate intrinsic motives to resist, two experimental manipulations, based on the conceptualization, were introduced. In one case, an attempt was made to increase the perceived importance of the information (I) and training prohibitions (T) by telling Ss that the field problem they had just been through was classified. They were instructed that any information about it should be transmitted only on a "need to know" basis, and implicitly, the interrogator had no need to know. In a series of four runs (in which 40 subjects participated), approximately half of the Ss refused to divulge any information.

A second technique was based on the hypothesis that high group loyalty is a resistance-enhancing force. In this instance, Ss who had just completed the field problem were led to believe that due to an inadvertent mixup (no fault of theirs), they had been run over the wrong field course, and the consequence of this error, if it became known to the civilian interrogators, would be that other members of their company would lose some of their leave time or weekend pass time (in order to correct the error). The first run under these conditions were unsatisfactory because too many Ss doubted the truth of the story. However, after subsequent refinements in the story, almost all of the Ss (14 out of 15) accepted the story as genuine and made some efforts to mislead or confuse the interrogator.

The significant impression gained from these two manipulations is that there does not appear to be any readily apparent explanation for the large proportion of Ss who tried to resist interrogation, other than those factors which served as the independent variables. These techniques appear promising and will be further refined.

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3. Development of Measuring Instruments. The pilot studies permitted exploratory work in the development of instruments to measure:

- (a) the amount, accuracy and pertinence of obtained information, and
- (b) the reactions of the subjects to the interrogation and the interrogator.

The first two instruments discussed below deal with the information subjects had obtained concerning order of battle, terrain features, military fortifications and facilities and their location, and tactics and morale of the units involved. These, of course, are the kinds of information which interrogators typically seek.

The first instrument was intended to assess just what information is available to an interrogator. It was a written test in which the source indicated what he saw or heard during the field problem, and is a measure of what the individual can observe, retain and report independently of a social stimulus, the interrogator.

The second instrument was intended to assess the information obtained in the interrogations. Essentially, it is an outline covering all the information which was included in the written test. Scores from this outline serve as operational measures of resistance, i.e., they are the criterion scores. Hence, this test is the primary means of determining the efficacy of experimental treatments intended to strengthen and reduce Resistance.

Another type of measure was intended to assess the individual's reaction to the interrogation and to the interrogator. These are check-list scales on which subjects indicate feelings they had before, during and/or after the interrogation. These scales could provide information as to:

- (a) more effective pre-interrogation and interrogation treatment, (b) the

amount of personal "involvement" the individual had in the experiment, (c) the interrogator's efficiency in assuming particular roles (e.g., hostile or permissive), and (d) the effect on the individual of the different roles assumed by the interrogator.

Further standardization, development and refinement of these three types of instruments is planned.

To summarize, the pilot run results, in general, have been very encouraging. It was demonstrated that genuine motives to resist interrogation could be aroused. Using a field problem as a means of imparting military information in a realistic and standardized way proved practical. And lastly, the quantifying or manipulating of the dependent and independent variables of the conceptualization was possible.

APPENDIX 1

Briefing Instructions and Description of Field Course

Briefing given to Ss at the beginning of the field problem

I am going to guide you men to your company. You have been sent to us as replacements because we, that is, Baker Company of the 15th, have suffered casualties during the last few days of the fighting. We are actually at half strength now.

You guys are lucky. The 15th Infantry is the best in the 7th Division and Baker Company is the best company in the 15th. Captain Miller is up there at Division Headquarters right now (GESTURING TOWARD THE WOODS), getting a personal briefing from the Commanding General. General Lee thinks a lot of our outfit. That's why our company is going to spearhead the attack tomorrow morning.

I know the Captain is going to want to speak to you fellows himself when he gets back, especially since there are no platoon officers in our company. Captain Miller is a good Joe. He gives you a job to do and then leaves you alone.

Our company is located right up on the front line, about a mile up this road, but I'll guide you there. We'll move out in a minute. I want you to stay alert, keep your eyes open and remember what you see. You may not get another chance to see the ground during daylight. The 7th Division is scheduled to jump off tomorrow morning at 0600 with our company in the lead in this sector. At least that's what we figure old Robert E. wanted the Captain for this morning.

We'll be in pretty good shape because we are expecting about 200 extra men as replacements. It's too bad we are short of tanks.

All right, let's move out!

(IN THE RAVINE) Remember this place! Some of you may be sent back here tonight to pick up ammunition.

Tabular Map of the Field Course

<u>Distance, in Meters, from Starting Point</u>	<u>Item & Location Verbally Communicated</u>	<u>Item, only, Verbally Communicated</u>	<u>Item Observable</u>	<u>Information Deducible</u>
Starting Point	7th Div.		Div. Hq.(SIGN)	
100			Aid Station (SIGN)	
200		15th Inf.	CP,15th Inf.(SIGN) Bunker	
300			Mine Field (SIGN) Trench	Anti-tank Ditch
400			☒ (Unfamiliar symbol or sign)	
500			Home of 2nd Arty. Bn. (SIGN)	
600	Area under Enemy Observ.		MP Check Point (SIGN)	
700			Stav area (SIGN)	
800	Ammo pick-up point		Ammo boxes, ravine	Ammo supply point, tank obstacle
1000			Concertina wire	Defensive wire for B Co.'s rear area
1300 (End of Course)	B Co. Position	B Co. Position	Dug-in position, foxholes, etc.	

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