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The Haversack Ruse,
and British Deception Operations in Palestine During World War I

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my personal views and not necessarily those of the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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British deception operations in Palestine during World War I, and in particular the Haversack Ruse used in preparation for the third battle for Gaza, represent a modern revival of the use of deception in war. General Sir Edmund Allenby, the British commander in Palestine, conceived of and planned his two major operations, Gaza and Megiddo, with deception as an integral part. His success against Turkish-German armies in each was due, in large part, to his creative and thorough operational deception plans. Allenby's use of deception provides an excellent example because World War I represents one of the first modern wars, with regard to technology and techniques that we still use today. Using the two major deception operations and one unsuccessful attempt at strategic deception as examples, I have derived the basic elements, advantages and limitations of deception. I found the elements of deception to be: good intelligence and

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Block 19 (cont.) security; knowledge of your enemy's perceptions and expectations;
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into a clever and innovative plan. Deception's advantages are its low cost, that
it is difficult for your enemy to counter, and the surprise it gives you over your
enemy. The limitations of deception are that it is not a panacea, that you still
need adequate force to win in battle, and that you must have good enough intelligence
feedback to know if your enemy has accepted your deceptive picture. General Allenby's
use of deception during World War I provides us with a modern paradigm. His success
led to wide spread and successful use of deception during World War II. We should
teach the art of deception in our military schools and colleges and promote the
use of deception throughout our military culture.

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British deception operations in Palestine during World War I, and in particular the Haversack Ruse used in preparation for the third battle for Gaza, represent a modern revival of the use of deception in war. General Sir Edmund Allenby, the British commander in Palestine, conceived of and planned his two major operations, Gaza and Megiddo, with deception as an integral part. His success against Turkish-German armies in each was due, in large part, to his creative and thorough operational deception plans. Allenby's use of deception provides an excellent example because World War I represents one of the first modern wars, with regard to technology and techniques that we still use today. Using the two successful major deception operations and one unsuccessful attempt at strategic deception as examples, I have derived the basic elements, advantages and limitations of deception. I found the elements of deception to be: good intelligence and security; knowledge of your enemy's perceptions and expectations; deception and operational planning integration; adequate time to both plan and execute operational deception; air superiority or the ability to control your enemy's reconnaissance of your forces; and creativity in blending these elements into a clever and innovative plan. Deception's advantages are its low cost, that it is difficult for your enemy to counter, and the surprise it gives you over your enemy. The limitations of deception are that it is not a panacea, that you still need adequate force to win in battle, and that you must have good enough intelligence feedback to know if your enemy has accepted your deceptive picture. General Allenby's use of deception during World War I provides us with a modern paradigm. His success led to wide spread and successful use of deception during World War II. We should teach the art of deception in our military schools and colleges and promote the use of deception throughout our military culture.

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"...the ultimate goal of stratagem is to make the enemy quite certain, very decisive, and wrong."[1]

Introduction

Stratagem is the use of deception in war to gain surprise over your adversary. Effective surprise in war will cause your adversary to fight with his forces dispersed, unprepared or ill-equipped. This in turn, allows you to mass all of your combat power at the decisive point in space and time against your weak and unprepared foe, and take him beyond his culminating point of victory rapidly and at a lower relative cost.

Commanders have practiced deception in war throughout history. Sun Tzu stated that "all war is based on deception" during the forth century B. C., and the *Bible* contains many examples of successful deception.[2] In the west, though, the art of deception in war fell from widespread or general use. From the middle ages until the First World War, few commanders tried to deceive their enemies.[3] If a particular commander did use deception effectively, he drew from his own imagination and cunning, rather than from his military doctrine or training. As a result, western military culture had no tradition of deception at any level of warfare--strategy, operations or tactics. For this reason, General Sir Edmund Allenby's very effective use of operational deception in his campaign in Palestine during World War I represents an important revival of the *art of deception* in the west. The Palestine campaigns also present a singular exception to other theaters and campaigns of that war, particularly to the western front. Allenby conducted operations in which deception was an integral and inseparable part in his overall campaign plan. He employed deception as the cornerstone of his major operations to surprise and confuse the Turkish-German forces in Palestine. This allowed him to defeat them repeatedly, ultimately causing Turkey's surrender.

Many of the modern means of warfare appeared for the first time during the First World War. These included: tools of warfare, such as tanks, aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery;

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methods of directing forces, such as wireless radio; and ways of collecting information, such as aerial reconnaissance and wireless intercept and decoding. The British campaigns in Palestine made use of each of these new and varied techniques and types of equipment. While we use many of these same innovations in more advanced form today, the way we employ them has not changed significantly since World War I. In addition to aircraft, we have added satellites for reconnaissance. We have refined and expanded our use of both radio, which now transmits and receives both voice and data messages, and our ability to conduct signals intelligence (SIGINT). Thus, General Allenby's clever and effective use of these and other tools to deceive and defeat the Turkish-German forces in Palestine provides an excellent example from which to distill the basic elements of deception which we should find relevant today. From these basic elements, I will highlight the advantages and limitations of deception for the operational commander and apply these lessons to today and to the future.
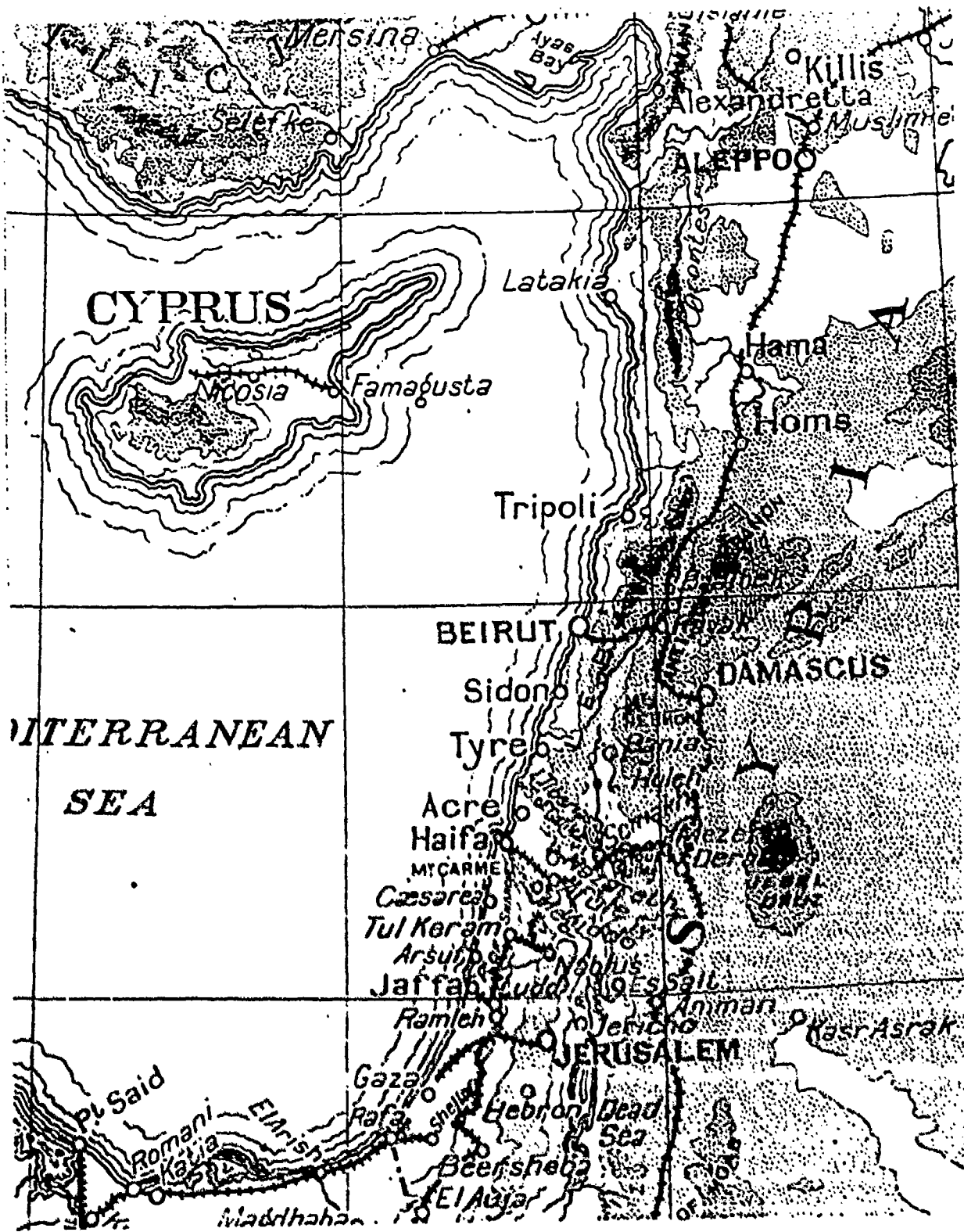
figure 1

Chapter II

"Attack where he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you"[5]

Narrative of British Deception Operations in Palestine

Gaza   During the winter and spring of 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (E.E.F.), under the command of General Sir Archibald Murry, twice attempted to capture the town of Gaza, held by Turkish-German forces under the command of the German General Kress von Kressenstein. Each time the British staged frontal assaults and failed. Following these failures, Turkish-German forces reinforced their positions along the Gaza-Beersheba line, which formed the gateway from Egypt to Palestine.

After the second failed attempt, the British War Cabinet decided to replace General Murry and chose General Sir Edmund Allenby to relieve him. Before leaving England for Cairo, Allenby paid a call on the British Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George. The Prime Minister, a firm believer in the ideas later embodied by B. H. Liddell Hart as the *Indirect Approach*, believed that a hard enough blow would drive Turkey from the war, weakening Germany and freeing British troops for the Western Front. He also needed a victory to boost British and allied morale. He told General Allenby "he wanted Jerusalem as a Christmas present for the British Nation".[6] With the capture of Jerusalem as his initial operational objective and the surrender of Turkey as his ultimate strategic goal, Allenby took command of the E.E.F. in late June, 1917.

Prior to General Allenby's arrival in Cairo, General Chetwode, commander of the Eastern Force, prepared an assessment of the situation for his new E.E.F. commander. In it he described the very strong Turkish-German defensive position in Gaza--the Turkish-German center of gravity--and the serious scarcity of water on the British side. He then suggested the outline of a plan to attack Gaza by an enveloping attack through the Turkish left flank at Beersheba. If executed successfully, this approach would quickly provide the British with

the good supply of water in Beersheba, make use of their superiority in mounted strength and avoid the strong defenses before Gaza (and the accompanying slaughter a third frontal attack would certainly inflict). For this plan to work, General Chetwode stated "the enemy must be made to believe until the last moment that a renewed offensive on the Gaza front was contemplated".[7] General Allenby concurred with this proposed plan and forwarded it to the War Cabinet, who approved the plan and made additional forces available to Allenby.

The plan to take Gaza by first taking Beersheba required deceiving the enemy on where the British would attack. To do this, General Allenby and his intelligence officer, Major Richard Meinertzhagen, developed and implemented an operational deception plan fully integrated within the overall operational plan for Gaza.

Through good intelligence, Allenby and Meinertzhagen knew that General von Kressenstein expected the British to direct any new offensive against Gaza as they had in the first two battles. The British challenge was to reinforce that expectation, while secretly massing forces before Beersheba. They chose to employ the *double bluff*, in which the forthcoming attack on Beersheba was presented as a diversion intended to draw attention away from the 'main objective' of Gaza."[8] A second important part of their plan was to cause the enemy to expect the attack three weeks later than actually planned, which in July Allenby set for October 31. This allowed the British ample time to present a deceptive picture that the Turks and Germans would believe *and act on*.

The deception plan called for all British forces encamped before Gaza to remain there until the last possible moment. Then, they would gradually leave their camps and travel towards Beersheba, moving only at night and hiding during the day. The camps would remain standing, with small garrisons of troops, in each, to simulate as much activity as possible during both day and night. To allow the British to delay the movement of supplies for the campaign until just prior to battle, they secretly extended the railway and water pipeline from Gaza into the desert towards Beersheba. To conceal this from the enemy and

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specifically from German reconnaissance aircraft, they worked only at night and camouflaged the track and pipeline each day. In the autumn of 1917, the E.E.F. received new, more modern fighters. With their anti-aircraft artillery, these new aircraft gave the British control of the airspace over their lines, allowing the E.E.F. to prevent German aircraft from effectively observing any British preparations for battle. Another method used to deceive the Turkish-German leadership was to stage a cavalry reconnaissance close to the Turkish line in Beersheba twice per month from August on. This served to acclimatize the Turks to demonstrations of force and was intended to help mask the real attack.

The British used deceptive wireless messages extensively to convey: Gaza as the real target of the attack, with Beersheba only a feint; and the misleading date of late November. "September was spent in creating an atmosphere...by sending misleading [wireless] messages...in a code which the Turks, by various ruses, had been taught how to solve".[9] This ground work complete, Major Meinertzhagen created the center piece for the deception operation, the *Haversack Ruse*. He intended it as an 'independent' method by which the Turkish-German command could 'verify' the intelligence they had received via wireless intercept. Meinertzhagen's subordinates made several attempts to 'lose' documents near the front where the Turks would find them, but none succeeded.

> "Meinertzhagen [then] decided to plant the documents himself, and he compiled a false staff officer's notebook to suggest that the Beersheba movements were only a feint, and that D-Day for the attack at Gaza would be some weeks later than the date actually set for the offensive. The notebook was placed in a haversack together with £20 in notes--a tidy sum in those days--to give the impression that the loss was not intentional."[10]

Meinertzhagen also included fictitious personal letters, one from his wife reporting the birth of their son--not an item a man would willingly lose--and another from a disgruntled officer complaining about poor British plans. He added orders and staff papers, all meant to confirm Gaza as the main target and late November as the time for the British offensive.
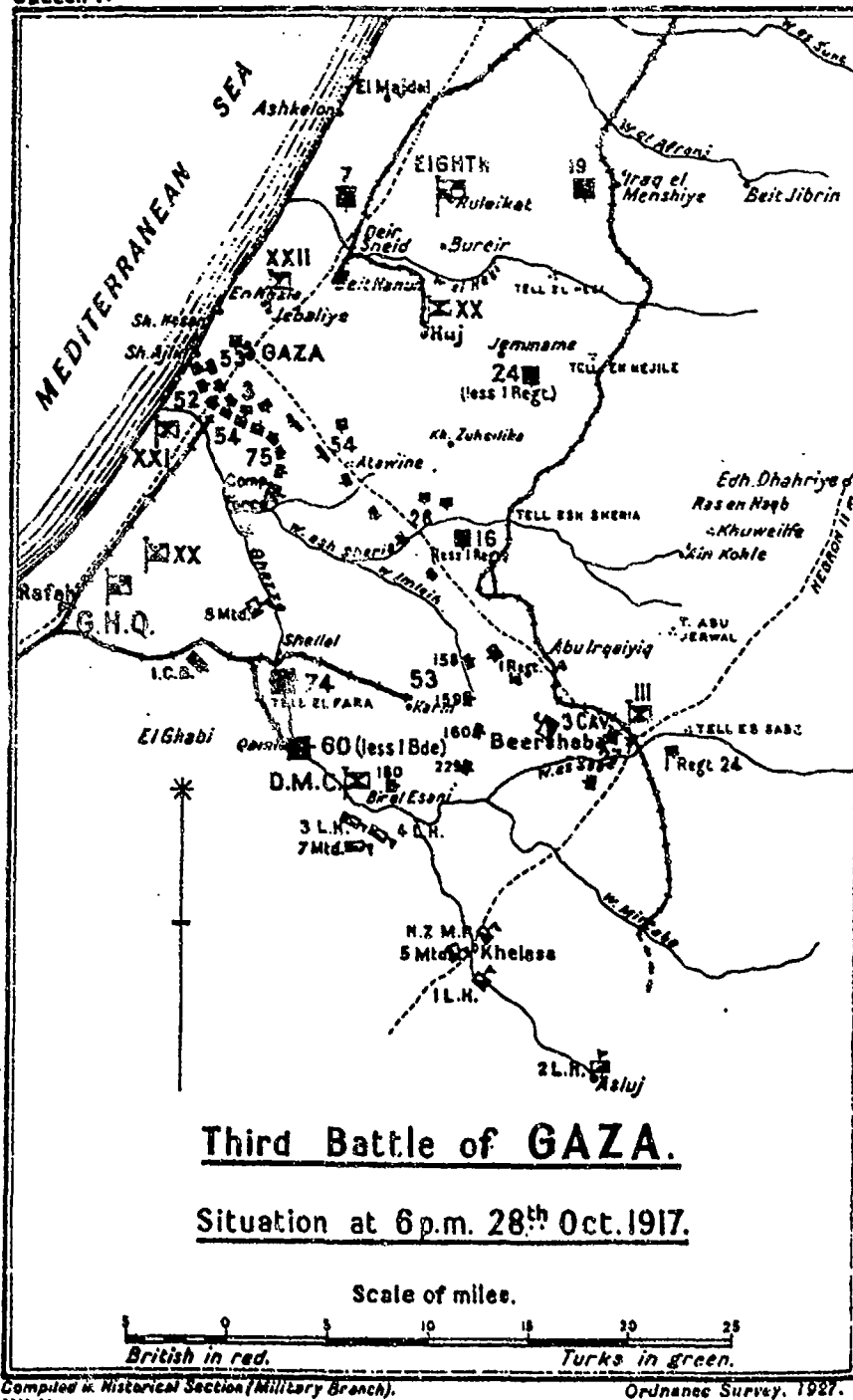
Finally, he included British code information which would enable the Turkish-German SIGINT unit to decode additional British wireless traffic. On October 10, he took the haversack out into no-man's land and managed to get himself spotted by a Turkish patrol. When the patrol gave chase, he pretended to be wounded and dropped his rifle, water bottle and the haversack, which he had smeared with fresh blood from a cut on his horse. He continued on, but stopped to make sure the Turks picked up the haversack. The next day, he contrived to have a British reconnaissance party leave a General Headquarters (GHQ) order directing an urgent search for the lost haversack near the front. Then, to add a final layer of confirmation, he began 'feeding' the Turkish-German SIGINT unit low grade information, including some on the coming offensive against Gaza, in the code he knew they would break using the haversack information. In addition, he sent wireless traffic indicating that General Allenby would be in Cairo, away from the front until November 7. Finally, he sent out a wireless message directing an officer named Meinertzhagen to report to GHQ for an inquiry about the loss of a haversack containing important information near the front.

As a result of these elaborate deceptions, General von Kressenstein ordered Gaza reinforced and its defenses expanded at the expense of Beersheba during the weeks leading up to the attack. He was initially skeptical of the haversack documents as a plant (he examined them personally) but finally "inclined strongly to believe in their authenticity."[11]

Ten days before the attack, the British began to move troops secretly from Gaza towards Beersheba. In addition, the British made conspicuous preparations for an amphibious landing behind Gaza, including the readying and loading of landing craft and the dispatch of Royal Navy ships to survey possible landing beaches. On October 27, the British began an intense artillery bombardment of Gaza from both land and sea, as they would if Gaza were their main objective. Early on October 31, the British launched their attack on Beersheba and took the city that day. From there, they took key positions in the Turkish rear, captured Gaza on November 7 and Jerusalem on December 9.

Sketch I.

Third Battle of GAZA.

Situation at 6 p.m. 28th Oct. 1917.

Scale of miles.

British in red.   Turks in green.

Compiled in Historical Section (Military Branch).   Ordnance Survey. 1927.
3000, 30.

Note that British forces have already begun their clandestine move from Gaza to Beersheba.

figure 2

Third Battle of GAZA.

Situation at 6 p.m. 1st Nov., 1917.

Scale of miles.

British in red.   Turks in green.
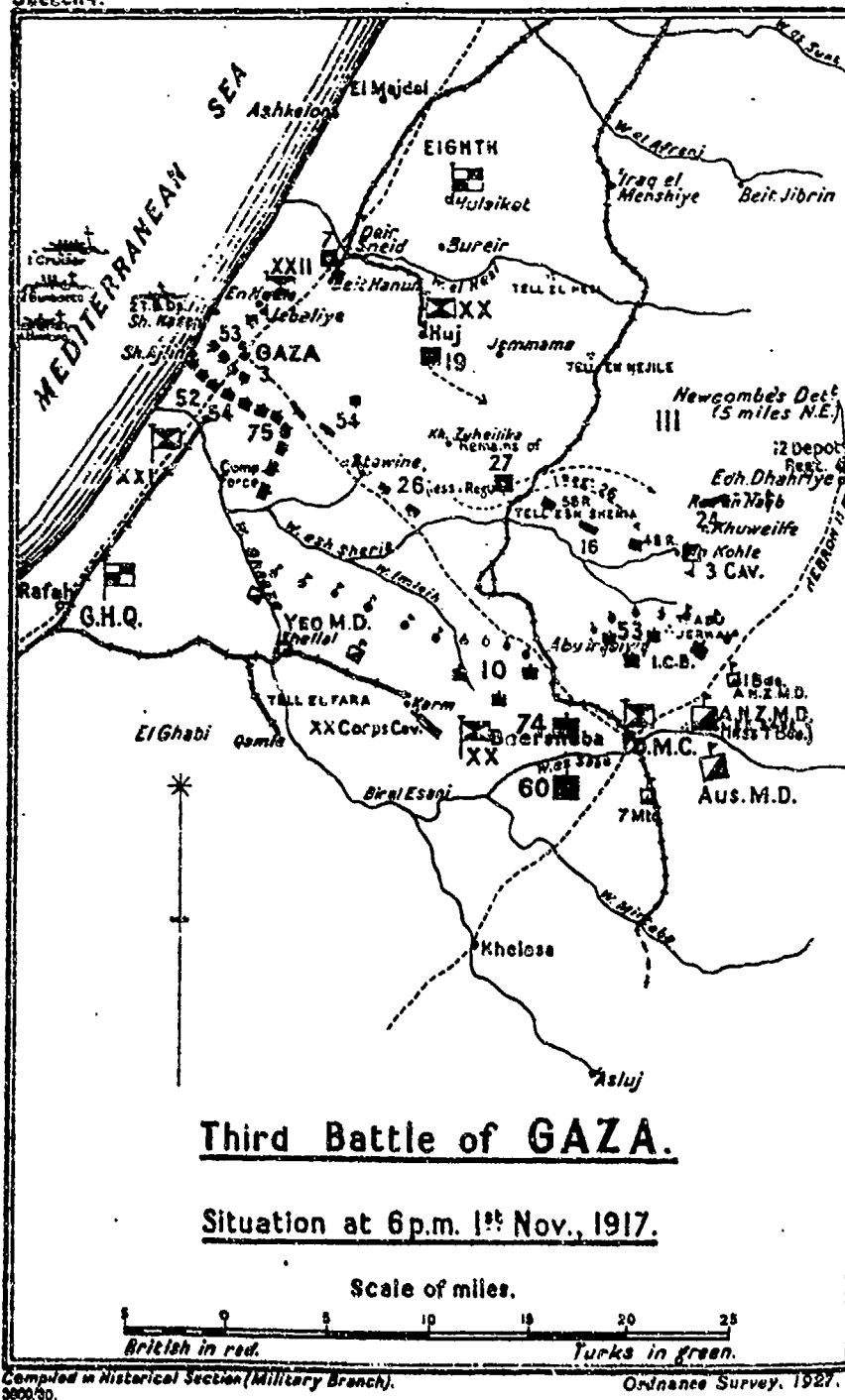
Note the completion of the British clandestine force movement and the capture of Beersheba.

figure 3

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The overall effect of the deception plan was to reinforce very strongly in General von Kressenstein's mind that Gaza was the intended target of the British offensive. The British captured Turkish-German force disposition maps during the battle showing that on October 28 and 29, the Turks had correctly located many British forces in positions near Beersheba. The Turks also discovered that the British camps before Gaza were empty, before the battle. But, this information arrived late and General von Kressenstein continued to believe that the British had six divisions before Gaza (though his intelligence reports contradicted this) and that any attack on Beersheba would only be a diversionary action. Even after the initial attack, Von Kressenstein did not reinforce Beersheba. He still feared a frontal attack on Gaza which he probably believed he could defeat, since he had done so twice previously. "There is.....o doubt that it [the British deception plan] succeeded with regard to the overall goal of achieving surprise, which in turn confused the Turkish-German defense and slowed down its reactions."[14]

Alexandretta During the Summer and Autumn of 1917, the overall Turkish-German command in Turkey began massing forces in Aleppo and around the Gulf of Alexandretta, for use in an attempt to recapture Bagdad (lost to the British in March, 1917). British intelligence found out about the plan for an attack on Bagdad, code named Operation Yilderim ('Thunderbolt'). To pin down some or all of these forces, Allenby hoped to create a deceptive picture for the Turkish-German leadership indicating that a large allied amphibious landing would be mounted in the Bay of Alexandretta, from Cyprus.

The British used a number of means, including "visual and wireless deception and rumor spreading"[15] to try to convince the Turkish-German leadership of the probability of an amphibious assault. They chose sites for and began construction on camps for the assault troops; had the small garrison in Cyprus simulate as much activity as possible; sent deceptive wireless messages and increased the amount of wireless traffic, in general, to and

from Cyprus; made commercial orders for large amounts of provisions; and made overt preparations in the ports to receive a large army. "After being alerted to the possibility of suspicious activity, the Turks sent a special reconnaissance mission over Cyprus which apparently determined that there was no threat of invasion after all."[16] The British deception plan failed because: they lacked resources (actual troops); they did not allow sufficient time to implement a plan which would have presented a more realistic picture; and General Allenby wanted to change, rather than reinforce, the basic perception of his enemy.

Megiddo By the summer of 1918, the E.E.F. had pushed the Turkish-German forces to a line from ten miles north of Jaffa on the coast, inland over the Samaria hills, into the Jordan Valley just north of Jericho. Also by summer, Arab irregular forces working with their British Army advisor, Colonel T. E. Lawrence, had conducted numerous raids and attacks behind Turkish lines, particularly around Deraa, the hub of Turkish rail communications, and the primary source of supply to Palestine and Arabia, from Syria. Most of the E.E.F. troops were based in the Jordan Valley and had conducted several raids, east of the Jordan River, into Turkish controlled territory. This, coupled with: Arab irregular attacks; the Turkish-German experience at Gaza (where General Allenby had attacked inland, vice along the coast); and their concern for protecting Deraa at all costs, caused the new Turkish-German commander, General Liman von Sanders, to expect the next British attack in the Jordan Valley. Continued good British intelligence and the placement of most of the enemy's forces in the Jordan Valley indicated to Allenby that von Sanders expected the attack there. The British did everything they could to reinforce this notion, while at the same time Allenby created an all together different plan.

> "His plan was to concentrate five of his seven infantry divisions, three of his four cavalry divisions, and all of his heavy artillery along a narrow front on the coastal plain. This force would make the main attack, sweeping quickly up toward Nazareth and Megiddo, enveloping the entire enemy force."[17]

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Here, as with Gaza, the Turkish-German army and their defended positions formed the enemy center of gravity. Allenby's operational objective was to cut off the retreat of all Turkish-German forces in Palestine by a rapid, Blitzkrieg-like enveloping cavalry movement up the coast and inland behind the main Turkish-German positions. This action was intended to dramatically reduce Turkish-German strength. To accomplish this, Allenby needed an operational deception plan to hide the movement and concentration of the E.E.F. along the coast, from their positions opposite the main Turkish-German force in the Jordan Valley. Unlike Gaza, where he could not hide the E.E.F.'s presence before Beersheba, Allenby wanted to hide all indications of his concentration along the coast from von Sanders.[18] By concealing the movement and concentration of the E.E.F., Allenby could hold the majority of Turkish-German forces in the Jordan Valley and mass the E.E.F. against a much weaker and unprepared opponent on the coast. As with the Gaza operation, Allenby fully integrated deception for Megiddo into his overall plan. He set the date for the attack as September 19, 1918.

British deceptive methods were designed to fool enemy ground and SIGINT sites, but their primarily concern was enemy air reconnaissance. During August and early September the E.E.F. executed the deceptive movement in preparation for the attack. This involved a slow thinning out of forces in the Jordan Valley and their secret concentration on the coast. Troops moved west only at night and hid by day in woods or citrus groves along the way. The British used several methods to conceal the troops when they arrived on the coast. They hid new camps in woods and citrus groves south of the front. Near the front along the coast, they used a method of acclimatization: from July they had built camps with double the capacity needed for troops then deployed. They spread those troops out evenly in each camp to give the appearance of full occupancy, leaving room for new arrivals.[19]

The British also used a number of techniques to maintain the impression not only that their troops remained in the Jordan Valley, but that they were *adding forces* there. They left

all camps standing and manned them with troops unfit for combat who simulated normal activity, once the regular forces had left for the coast. They set up new camps in the Jordan Valley and marched in new troops in from Jerusalem each day, to fill them. Each night, those troops were trucked back to Jerusalem, only to march back to more new camps again the next day. Thus they displayed an ever increasing troop strength. finally, they built and displayed enough wood and fabric horses to simulate mounted corps strength and raised large clouds of dust to simulate the horses' movement.[20]

The British worked very hard to maintain air superiority to prevent enemy reconnaissance. They used wireless communications deception, by leaving the mounted corps HQ and its active wireless station in the Jordan Valley after the forces had left. Finally, while they didn't want to present a misleading date for the offensive, since they wanted to conceal its very existence, they did announce a that a horse race would take place in Jafa on September 19, the day of the offensive.

As a result of their carefully planned deception, the E.E.F. completely surprised the Turkish-German commanders with their lightning cavalry envelopment. According to Colonel Archibald Wavell, a member of Allenby's staff, by September 20,

> "...the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies were already doomed to destruction. Their natural lines of retreat down which they were being hustled by our infantry were in the hands of our exultant cavalry."[21]

By September 26, all of Palestine had fallen and by October 28 the E.E.F. had captured all of Syria. Turkey surrendered on October 31, 1918. As a testimony to the Turk's complete surprise, a captured map dated September 17 showed none of the British concentration on the coast (figure 5).
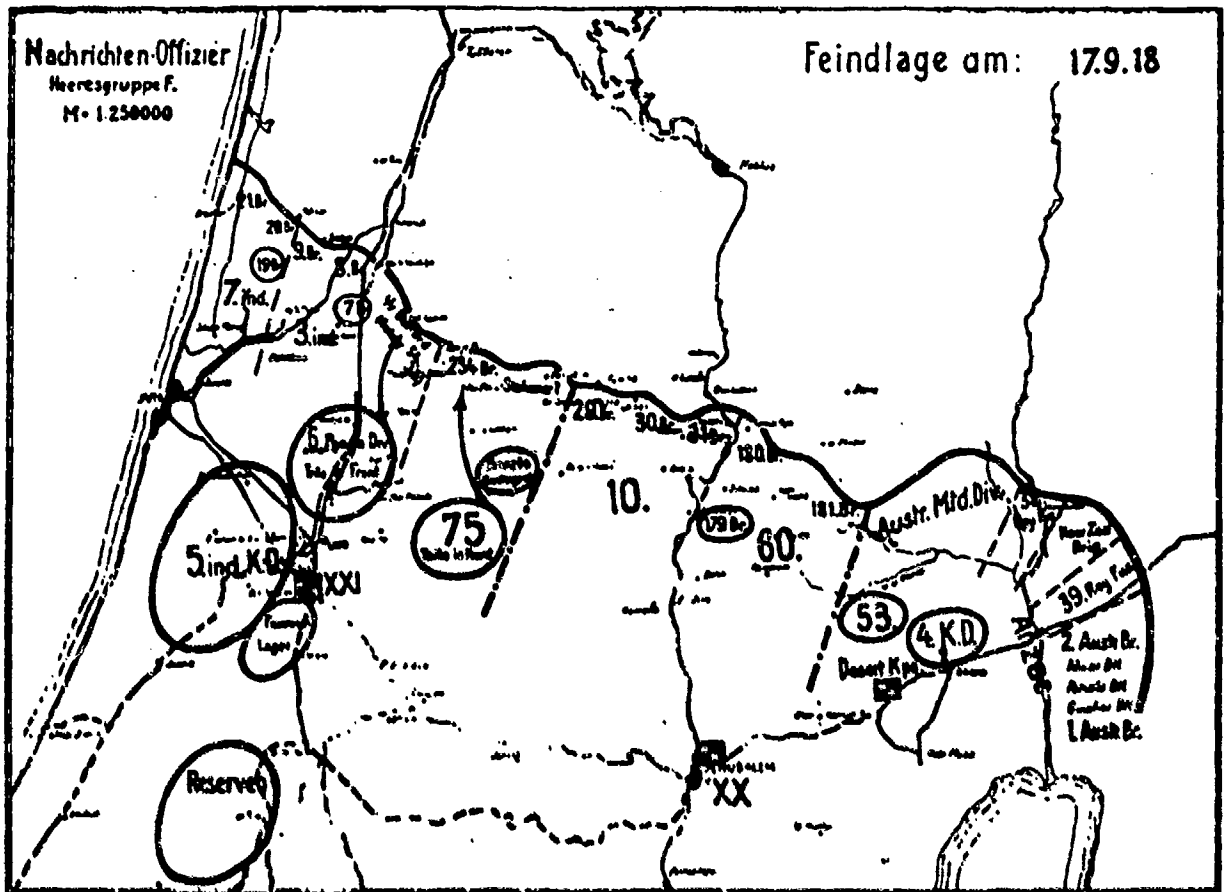
MEGIDDO, 1918. Situation at Zero hour, 19th Sept., 1918.
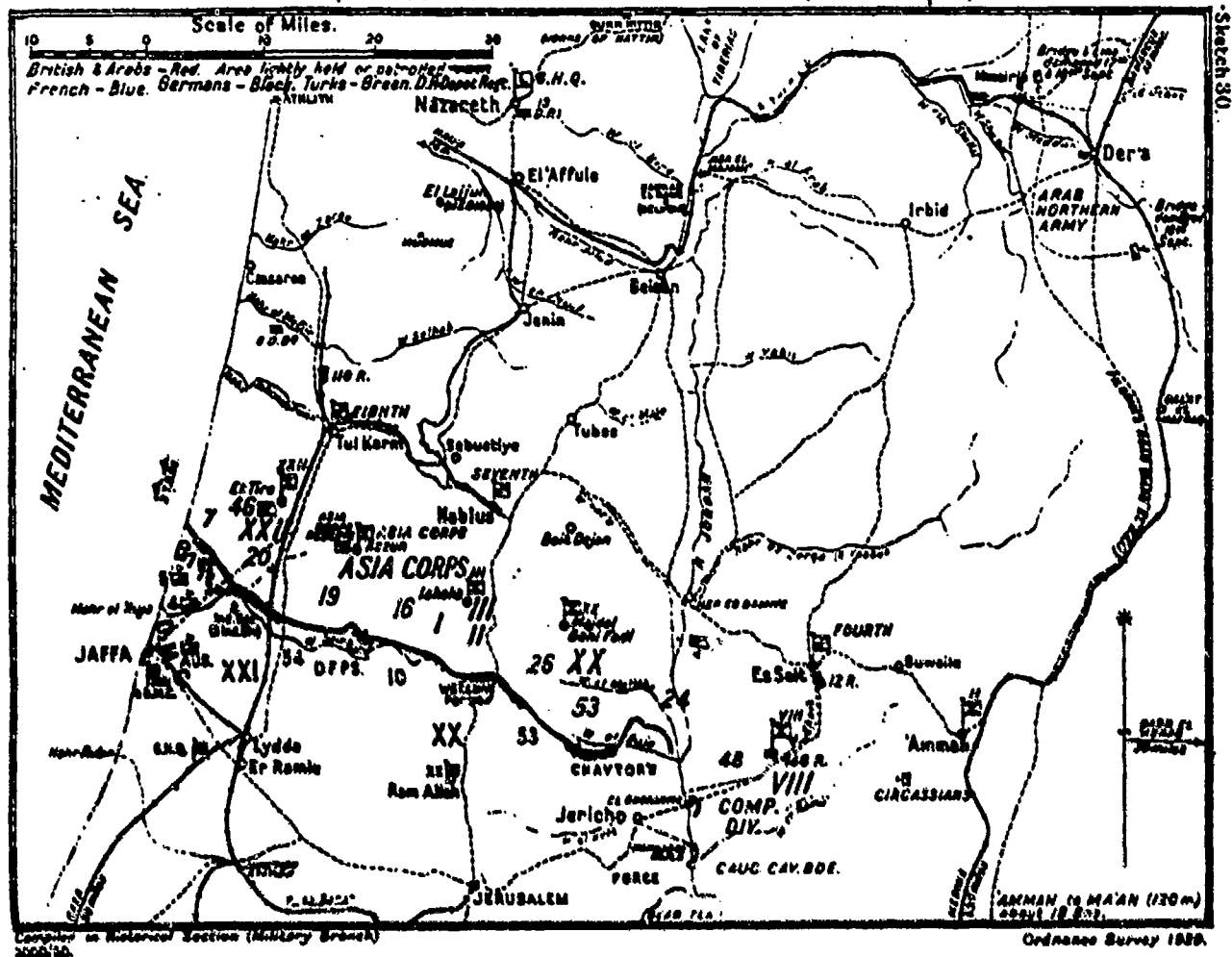
Note the concentration of British forces along the coast north of Jaffa.

figure 4

Turkish-German intelligence has not picked up any British concentration near the coast.

figure 5

Chapter III

"...deceptions, which for the ordinary general were just witty hors d'œuvres before battle, became for Allenby a main point of strategy."[24]

Analysis of British Deception Operations

Reasons For Success or Failure   General Allenby had a keen sense for the operational level of war and he achieved success by fully integrating imaginative operational deception in both of his major operations in Palestine. He had far less capability to carry off his attempt at strategic deception.

In the first case, Allenby could not hide the fact that he was preparing for a third attempt to take Gaza. Though Turkish-German strength has not been determined exactly, it appears that the British had slightly less than a two-to-one advantage in total forces with an advantage in mounted strength as well[25]. Through deception he caused von Kressenstein to expect another frontal assault against Gaza and to strengthen and reinforce that city at the expense of Beersheba. This allowed Allenby to use the indirect approach at the operational level to move around heavily defended Gaza, via relatively lightly defended Beersheba. In this way he could render all of Gaza's heavy physical defenses and force concentrations--the Turkish-German center of gravity--useless and hold that large force away from his main point of attack. A key element to this deception was the critical combination of good intelligence and adequate time to create and execute a detailed, innovative operational deception plan. Meinertzhagen used feedback from his intelligence system to evaluate how well von Kressenstein had accepted his deceptive picture. He could then adjust or modify that deceptive picture to make it more believable.

For his attempt at strategic deception, Allenby did not have the resources or allow enough time for appropriate preparation. He also tried to change, rather than reinforce existing enemy expectations, a much more difficult task. His strategic goal made sense and, had it

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worked, he would have held a significant force of Turkish and German troops out of combat in both the Mesopotamia and Palestine theaters. But he could not achieve air superiority and thus, could not control the enemy's ability to conduct reconnaissance. Finally, he didn't have nearly enough troops to present a realistic deceptive picture when German aircraft conducted reconnaissance of Cyprus.

In preparing for Megiddo, Allenby again turned to the indirect approach to employ his two-to-one advantage in troops. After a year of slow retreat north through Palestine, the Turkish-German force he faced was in worse physical and mental shape than at Gaza.[26] He planned to mass the bulk of his forces for an attack against a position held by far fewer enemy troops. Allenby then attacked in a rapid thrust well into his enemy's rear and took the Turkish-German force beyond their culminating point in a stroke, by cutting off both their lines of resupply and all routes of retreat or escape. Thus, for both Gaza and Megiddo, Allenby used the indirect approach to mass his force against the Turkish-German weak point. He used effective operational deception to mask his concentration of force and succeeded in surprising his enemy in each case.

British deception operations succeeded or failed for a number of reasons. By comparing and contrasting these three cases, I have identified some common elements of deception. In both major operations Allenby combined: intelligence; operational security; clear knowledge of his enemy's perceptions and expectations; deception plans fully integrated into the overall campaign plan; adequate time for his enemy to pick-up, accept and act on his deceptive picture: air superiority to control the view the Turkish-German forces had of E.E.F. dispositions and battle preparations; and creative and imaginative ideas to effectively deceive his adversary.

Intelligence   In this area the British did well in each case. For Gaza, Major Meinertzhagen arrived in Egypt just before General Allenby in June, 1917, and "...found a good system of agents based on Cairo and operating in central Palestine, but...no 'front line' intelligence."[27] To correct this deficiency, he set up a system of agents to provide "information about the enemy's strength, dispositions and intentions...supplemented by a wireless receiving station...[that] never failed to decode enemy messages".[28] He also worked to eliminate enemy agents collecting information on the British. This overall system provided the British excellent intelligence at the strategic, operational and tactical levels in the period before, during and after the third battle of Gaza. On the strategic level the British had good information on the location of the Turk's marshaling and staging area around Alexandretta Bay. Thus they knew that an allied landing would cause the Turkish-German command to hold a large number of troops in that area, vice moving them on to either Mesopotamia or Palestine. For the Megiddo campaign, the British continued to receive excellent intelligence on Turkish forces and intentions. They received it from a number of independent sources including, SIGINT, aerial reconnaissance, POWs and deserters, and captured documents.[29]

Security   The compliment to good intelligence is good operational security. For both Gaza and Megiddo, Allenby and his subordinates enforced good operational security and allowed only the minimum number of people to know of plans for operational deception. In the case of the Haversack Ruse, only Meinertzhagen, Allenby and three other senior staff members knew that the haversack contained faked documents.[30] The rest of the E.E.F. thought Meinertzhagen had lost accurate and important information, so troops at the front conducted their search for it in earnest. For the Alexandretta strategic landing deception, the British maintained good security on their limited preparations. In the case of Megiddo, Allenby told his corps commanders of the plan in early August and his division commanders

just before their forces had to move. Then, just prior to the attack, he traveled to each unit to tell the troops of the campaign plan. By waiting to tell his troops his intentions right before battle, he could outline his expectations and bolster their confidence at the same time. This proved both an excellent leadership technique and a sound method to preserve security.

Enemy Perceptions With the good intelligence pictures General Allenby had on his Turkish-German adversaries, he knew what they expected him to do prior to *both Gaza and Megiddo.* He used this information very effectively, by designing his deception operations to carefully *reinforce* enemy perceptions, vice change them. Prior to the third battle of Gaza, General von Kressenstein believed the British would again attack Gaza in a frontal assault, as they had in their two previous attempts. The British made every effort to reinforce this belief throughout planning and preparations for Gaza. In the case of Allenby's attempt at strategic deception for a landing in or near Alexandretta Bay, he attempted to create a new perception, rather than reinforce an existing one, in the minds of Turkish and German commanders. This accounts, in part, for the failure of this deception plan. As an example of Allenby's thinking before Megiddo, he stated that,

> "the enemy was thought to be anticipating an attack in these directions [from the Jordan Valley towards Deraa and Amman] and every possible step was taken to strengthen his suspicions"[31]

Thus, he chose to reinforce his enemy's expectation and induced the Turkish-German commanders to hold the majority of their forces in the Jordan Valley.

A key concern in reinforcing enemy expectations and perceptions comes in the mechanics of passing the deceptive information to the enemy. The British had to choose methods, such as the Haversack Ruse and wireless deception, which they could be sure Turkish-German forces would pick up and act on. To do this they had to understand the Turkish-German intelligence system, its methods, agents and limitations.[32]

Deception and Operational Planning Integration   Both operational deception plans for Gaza and Megiddo were fully integrated into the overall operational plans. General Allenby conceived his original idea for each campaign with deception as an integral part. This allowed his staff to build plans and fill in details, based on his clearly stated goals for each operation and its accompanying deception. Allenby's strong belief in the utility of deception and support for its use throughout his Palestine campaign proved key to the overall success of deception in that theater. For Gaza: the timing of troop movements; the laying of rail and water pipe; and maintenance of empty camps before Gaza were all conducted according to the integrated operations and deception plan. In addition, Meinertzhagen developed a carefully overlapping system of deceptive information, each bit designed to 'independently' reinforce the next, and delivered each in conjunction with real events. For Megiddo, virtually all preparations for the campaign, including troop movements, new camps and the maintenance of old empty camps, were part of the deception plan. Operational and deception planning integration was so complete that I would have had trouble distinguishing the deception plan from the overall operational plan during either preparation or execution.

An important contributing factor to deception planning integration was Allenby's use of real troop formations whenever possible.[33] He used real troops (and wireless stations) for both Gaza and Megiddo to present the most realistic picture to the enemy. In particular: leaving the majority of troops before Gaza until the last moment; and for Megiddo, marching troop columns repeatedly form Jerusalem to fill new camps near Jericho all added realism to British deceptions. In contrast, the British had very few actual troops available in Cyprus to use in the failed strategic deception attempt.

Time   An important characteristic distinguishing Allenby's successful operational deception from his unsuccessful strategic deception attempt was the amount of time he allowed for preparing and executing the deception plan. Or, rather, the amount of time he allowed the Turkish-German commanders to receive, accept and act on the deceptive picture.

Here time is related to enemy perceptions in that reinforcing those perceptions (for Gaza and Megiddo) took less time to plan and execute than would changing or creating new perceptions in the mind of the enemy (as with Alexandretta, where the Turks had no preconceived idea that the British would attempt a landing).

Initial preparation for operational deception for Gaza began in July, nearly three months before the attack. This allowed the British to carefully plan and execute their deceptive operations. It also allowed Meinertzhagen to get feedback from various intelligence sources on how well their deceptive picture was being accepted and acted on by the enemy, before presenting further deceptive elements. Preparations for the deceptive landing from Cyprus to Alexandretta Bay were given less than a month and starved of resources. In fact, the Turks conducted their aerial reconnaissance of Cyprus, which discovered the lack of any real threat, only 11 days after Allenby gave the deception plan his official approval.[34] Specific preparations for Megiddo began only about a month and a half prior to the attack. But, for the first seven months of 1918, both E.E.F. regular and Arab irregular forces had made repeated attacks, raids and aerial bombardments to the east of the Jordan Valley, towards the areas around Deraa and Amman. This, coupled with their natural concern for the major hub of their rail and communications network, created a strong perception of danger to this area in the minds of the Turkish-German commanders and caused them to expect any large scale attack in that direction. Thus Allenby could begin his preparations relatively late, and still succeed completely in fooling his enemy.

Air Superiority   Allenby and his staff members understood the need to limit and *control their enemy's view* of the E.E.F., particularly from the air. For the Gaza campaign, the E.E.F. did not receive the new fighters they needed to achieve air superiority until shortly before the attack, in the Autumn of 1917. Once in place, these "...swift fighters literally drove the enemy from the air...and for some days before the attack no German machines

were able to hover over British lines."[35] Unfortunately, the British did not have the aircraft

necessary in Cyprus to prevent German aerial reconnaissance of their deception operation

preparations. In commenting on British air power's contribution to their success in

operational deception for the Megiddo campaign, Colonel Wavell, a member of Allenby's

staff in Palestine, stated that,

> "...it was above all the dominance secured by our Air Force that enabled the
> concentration to be concealed. So complete was the mastery it obtained in the
> air by hard fighting that by September a hostile aeroplane rarely crossed our
> lines at all."[36]

Thus, the possession of air superiority prior to both Gaza and Megiddo (but not Alexandretta)

contributed significantly to the E.E.F.'s ability to prevent observation of their lines by

German aircraft. It also allowed them to conduct almost unimpeded reconnaissance of

enemy positions and defenses. This final point contributed significantly to the overall British

intelligence picture of the Turkish-German forces.

Creativity   Without this last element, even the best combination of remaining

deception elements will likely lead to failure. For "there is no deception template that can be

imposed on every deception operation."[37] Each situation is different and you must adapt

your deception to your situation and enemy. Allenby had a keen awareness of this. He

started each operational plan with a good idea, then incorporated imaginative use of

deception within the overall plan. He and his staff did not simply rely on repeating a few

clever tricks, such as camouflage or new technical innovations, such as fake wireless

messages. Using their enemy's perceptions and expectations as their cue, they drew from a

wide and varied repertoire of feints, ruses and deceits and combined them so as to gain the

optimum operational advantage, best suited to their situation. Their creativity in the *art of*

deception enabled them to achieve a very effective blend of active (the Haversack Ruse,

false wireless messages and the acclimatization of the Turks at Beersheba to biweekly

reconnaissances) and passive (concealing troops in woods and groves, camouflage of extended rail and pipe lines) deceptive methods. For, creation occurs in the mind of the artist, not in the tools he chooses.

An important aspect of creativity is the amount of appreciation and support, deception planners get from the commander. Allenby stayed personally involved in deception planning for both Gaza and Megiddo.[38] In fact he was the driving force behind the complete integration of deception into the overall operational plans. He, in turn, received ample support for his operational and deception plans from the British War Cabinet. So, support for deception came from both military commanders and civilian leaders.

Each case I have presented contained some or all of these elements of deception. When effectively combined in both planning and execution, these elements brought success. In the strategic case, the British had neither the time nor resources to employ the elements of deception effectively and ultimately, they failed. Having analyzed specific examples and derived the general elements of deception, I will list the advantages and limitations of deception for the operational commander.

Advantages

Achieve Surprise Effective operational deception both surprises and confuses your adversary and causes him to fight with his forces divided and disorganized. Even though the Turkish-German forces discovered the real disposition of most of the E.E.F. troops prior to Gaza, they did not move their own forces to counter the new British disposition, because their commander still expected the main attack at Gaza. In the period prior to Megiddo, the Turkish-German commanders had no idea the British would attack along the coast because they expected any attack to come from the Jordan Valley. In both cases, they believed that the attack would come either later than it did (Gaza) or not on the day it did (Megiddo).

Difficult to Counter   The clever deceiver allows his adversary to build the deceptive picture in his mind based on realistic and believable information. This makes deception very difficult to counter. Allenby and his subordinates presented careful and detailed indicators to the Turkish-German commanders. They intended each new bit of information to reinforce those already presented. Good intelligence allowed the British to confirm that the Turkish-German command had picked up and acted on the deceptive information. Because the German commanders, von Kressenstein and von Sanders, had already accepted and acted on British deception--largely because it coincided with their own preconceptions--they were very reluctant to change their view when new, *correct* information arrived. In effect, they became unwitting agents in each of Allenby's deception plans[39]. In the case of Gaza, General von Kressenstein knew of the empty camps and of most of the British concentration near Beersheba before Gaza. He chose not to reinforce Beersheba, because he still feared a major attack at Gaza. For Megiddo, von Sanders had several significant indicators that the British might attack along the coast, vice in the Jordan Valley. In August the Arab irregular leader, Sherif Feisal, approached the Turks with an offer to change sides. He told the Turks of the British plan. Then, just before the attack, an Indian sergeant deserted to the Turkish side and told them of the British plan. Von Sanders learned of and disregarded both of these indicators as attempts at deception.[40]

Low Cost   Deception costs relatively little.[41] When planned and executed in a well integrated way, as Allenby did for both Gaza and Megiddo, deception costs almost nothing. Allenby used forces unfit for battle to simulate activity in his empty camps and each plan directed that troops move to their designated place for battle at the last possible moment and according to the deception plan. The number of people planning and executing deception operations was kept small primarily to preserve security. (And though the construction of 15,000 decoy horses to represent mounted corps strength for Megiddo undoubtedly cost

something in time and material, that cost cannot be compared against the great benefit Allenby's effective operational deception achieved.)

Limitations

Not a Panacea Even the best deception plan will not save a poor operational or strategic plan[42]. In the case of Allenby's strategic deception attempt, he did not or could not create a believable scenario in the mind of his enemy. The Turks lacked the preconceived fear of an allied landing and Allenby lacked enough ground and air forces, a sufficiently integrated plan, and the time to build his deceptive picture.

Still Requires Force Operational Deception supports your fighting force by providing you surprise over your adversary. A weaker force often uses deception to help level the field of battle.[43] But, you must have enough force to defeat the enemy at the point you choose to engage him. Though he had the greater force in each major operation, Allenby used deception and accompanying surprise to achieve his operational and strategic objectives in less time, with fewer casualties. This forms a stark contrast to operations on the Western front, where almost no deception was attempted.

Must Have Good Intelligence If the Turkish-German forces had not picked up the deceptive information or had chosen to disregard it, Allenby's deception, and thus operational plans would not have succeeded nearly as well as they did. But Allenby had good intelligence throughout and he knew that the Turkish-German commanders had accepted his deceptive picture. This information was crucial to the success of both deception operations. Feedback on the Turkish-German acceptance of his deceptive picture allowed him to execute his operational plan with all confidence that it would succeed.

Chapter IV

"Strategem will always remain part of the essence of war."[44]

Conclusions and Recommendations For the Future

Conclusions   World War I represented the first modern war, with respect to technical

innovations used there, that we use today. We still use radio, aircraft, and now spacecraft to

control our forces, to fight, and to gather information about our enemy. Allenby's use of

operational deception in his Palestine campaign aptly illustrates the general elements,

advantages and limitations of deception. The success of his deception operations played an

important part in the extensive use of deception during World War II. While serving on

Allenby's staff in Palestine, Colonel Wavell saw first hand just how effective deception can

be. He put that experience to work as Commander-in-Chief of Commonwealth and allied

forces in the Middle East during World War II. He and his subordinate commanders used

deception to defeat the Italians in Egypt and Libya, in 1940, and their remarkable success

caused the British to greatly expand their use of deception in every theater.[45] British success

at deception during World War II, in turn, influenced the Americans and we gained new

appreciation for the art of deception during that war. For this reason, most of our deception

successes during and after World War II owe their genesis to Allenby in Palestine.

We can employ the same basic elements of deception against our present and future

potential adversaries. For, though I drew these elements from World War I cases, successful

commanders have employed most of them (less those specifically oriented to modern

technical developments) throughout history. In fact, the elements of deception I have listed

relate closely to many of the basic principles of war: mass, objective, offensive, surprise,

economy of force, maneuver, unity of command or effort, simplicity and security.

Intelligence provides the information necessary to discover the capability, intentions, and

expectations of your enemy. You must have good intelligence, at the tactical and

operational levels (to learn of your enemy's dispositions and intentions) and at the strategic and national or cultural level (to understand what sort of deceptive picture your enemy will or will not believe). Once you begin a deception operation, intelligence enables you to monitor how well your adversary has accepted or acted on your deceptive picture.

Instability in the post-Cold War world provides the U. S. with many potential adversaries. We have, and will continue to plan for some adversaries, such as North Korea and Iran. But, to judge by past crises such as Greneda and Somalia, we will still be surprised from time to time. This makes the task of intelligence collection a more demanding and all encompassing challenge, but one we must accept and work hard to meet.

Security, itself one of the principles of war, prevents your enemy from discovering your actual capability or intentions and preserves the integrity of your deception plan. Operating with NATO or (crisis specific) coalition partners will add complexity to the entire operation and thus, to any deception plan we design. Participation in coalitions will increase the problems of security, so we must be careful to limit the number of people who know of our deception operations to the absolute minimum; we must be willing to deceive a large number of our own forces, to maintain security. But, operating with NATO and coalition partners will create difficulties for our adversary, as well. As the number of coalition partners increases, so will our adversary's difficulty in gathering intelligence.

Enemy Perceptions give you the key to both your operational and deception plans. Knowledge of them allows you to reinforce your enemy's expectations in a realistic and believable way. This, in turn, allows you to *mass* your force against his weakness and achieve *surprise*.

Deception and Operations Planning Integration, when done effectively, will force you to focus on the *objective* and maintain both *simplicity* and *unity of effort*. In this way you will ensure that you don't compromise or contradict your deceptive picture with any other part of your overall plan. Deception, by nature, allows for and even encourages *economy of*

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force. By setting your strength against his weakness and achieving surprise, you gain more with fewer overall forces.

Time for careful, detailed planning and execution will allow you to present your deceptive picture in a believable way and to get feedback through intelligence to see that your adversary is acting as you want him to. "The essence of deception is that it lets the enemy convince himself that the misleading picture presented is valid"[46], and this takes time.

The short lead or warning time preceding many recent contingency operations indicates that we cannot count on a lot of time to plan and prepare once a crisis arises. I believe the long preparation time we had for Desert Storm is the exception, not the rule. In any case, we cannot expect to have the amount of time to plan and execute deception, that was available to General Allenby in Palestine. This compels us to plan deception operations in peacetime, for use in contingencies and war. And while we will not always have the right deception plan waiting, ready for use, the fact of our planning will ensure a cadre of experts trained in the technical aspects and equipment of modern deception. Continuous deception training and planning--at all levels of warfare--will ensure both that our civilian leaders and military commanders are familiar with the elements of deception, and that they are comfortable integrating deception into strategic, operational and tactical evolutions.

Air Superiority, or *the ability to control your adversary's view*, allows you to reinforce your deceptive picture or to deny your enemy access to certain areas you wish to conceal. The advent of space based reconnaissance systems would seem to make this much more difficult. But, even the wide commercial availability of good quality space based imagery, such as that from the French SPOT and U. S. LANDSAT systems, and proliferation of other space based intelligence collection systems do not preclude the use of realistic decoys, other false presentations, or methods of concealment. The key point to fooling these systems is knowing when they can see or sense your force. With this information, you can present

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space systems deceptive information in much the same way Allenby used fake horses and false wireless traffic to fool the Turks and the Germans. Our great lead and extensive experience in all aspects of space based technology gives us a significant advantage in this area. Our challenge is to make use of our experience.

Creativity remains the cornerstone of any successful deception operation. This element ties all of the others together and allows you to use enemy expectations to *mass* your force where and when he doesn't expect you: at the decisive point. This then, allows you to *maneuver*, maintain the *offensive*, and drive your adversary beyond his culminating point. A clever, insightful and well executed deception plan will allow you to achieve *surprise* over your enemy; and this, after all, is the ultimate goal of deception.

Recommendations For the Future   As our military gets smaller, a wide and well founded understanding of the art of deception is every bit as important as the understanding of operational art. Both concepts can convey great advantage on the force who employs them effectively. Deception and surprise, as in Allenby's operations, also provide the means to reduce overall forces required for a specific operation by allowing the us to avoid our enemy's strength, thus reducing casualties. This will become increasingly important as our national tolerance for combat casualties decreases.

Even though the technical aspects are, perhaps, more difficult and involved now, the important lessons from Allenby's campaign in Palestine are those that show us how a creative and enlightened commander, firmly committed to deception and its total integration within his overall operation or campaign, can deceive his enemy using the basic elements of deception I have outlined. Seen in this light, Allenby's use of deception in Palestine becomes the modern paradigm for operational deception. We should focus much more on these and more recent cases of deception here at the Naval War College and at all war and staff schools and colleges. In this way we can ensure that we plan and fight with the greatest advantage.

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[3]Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), pp. 362-366.

[4]A. P. Wavell, *The Palestine Campaigns* (London: Constable and Co., 1928), first map at end of volume.

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[5]Sun Tsu, p. 69.

[6]Wavell, p.96.

[7]Cyril Falls and A. F. Becke, eds., *Official History of the War, Military Operations Egypt and Palestine* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1930), v. 1, p. 11.

[8]Handel, p. 367.

[9]George Aston, *Secret Service* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1930), p. 205.

[10]Anthony C. Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p.280.

[11]Falls, v. 1, p. 43.

[12]Ibid., Map between pp. 36-37.

[13]Ibid., Map between pp. 44-45.

[14]Handel, p. 371.

[15] Yigal Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby's Campaigns in Palestine, 1917-18" Michael I. Handel, ed., *Intelligence and Military Operations* (London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1990), p.188.

[16] Handel, p. 366.

[17] Whaley, p. A-133.

[18] Sheffy, p. 204.

[19] Ibid., p. 208-209.

[20] Ibid., p.210.

[21] Wavell, p. 211.

[22] Falls, v. 2, map between pp. 462-463.

[23] Handel, p. 377.

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[24] T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935, reprint ed., Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987), pp. 553-554.

[25] Information drawn from Whaley, p. A-100; Wavell, pp. 212-213; and Falls, v.1, p. 35.

[26] Wavell, p. 195.

[27] Richard Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary, 1899-1926* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), p. 216.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Sheffy, p. 202.

[30] Ibid., p.222.

[31] Sheffy, p. 203.

[32] Handel, p. 328

[33]Ibid., p. 374.

[34]Ibid.; p.388.

[35]Raymond Savage, *Allenby of Armageddon* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1926), p. 211.

[36]Wavell, p. 201.

[37]Charlotte Rea-Dix, "Deception: Past Experiences--Future Opportunities," Unpublished Research Paper, U. S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1993, p. 20.

[38]Sheffy, pp. 218-219.

[39]Whaley, p. 225.

[40]Sheffy, pp. 218-219.

[41]Whaley, p. 232.

[42]Handel, p.342.

[43]Whaley, p. 12.

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[44]Handel, p. 393.

[45]Brown, pp. 49-50.

[46]Handel, p. 387.

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