

SPECIAL TEXT NO. 5
OFFENSIVE COMBAT OF SMALL
INFANTRY UNITS
1933--1934



PREPARED
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
COMMANDANT, MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS,
FOR USE WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE
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SECTION I

ORGANIZATION AND WEAPONS

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1. Principles of Organization.—In taking up the study of the tactical employment of small units it is pertinent to review briefly the subject of organization. It will be recalled that tactical organization for command is based upon the successive formation of groups. The basic group consists of the maximum number of individuals that can be successfully controlled by one man, and each successive larger group is composed of the maximum number of the next smaller groups which can still be controlled by one leader.

The commander of an organization is its controlling head, and, subject to orders from a proper senior, is responsible for everything the command does or fails to do, collectively and individually. In the smallest unit the commander gives orders and exercises supervision over each member thereof. As organizations increase in size, however, this personal direction and supervision becomes physically impossible and the commander is forced to deal only with a few subordinates. These, in the smaller units, transmit the commander's desires directly to their men; in larger organizations, the chain may include sets of subordinates; but in all cases the will of the commander finally reaches every individual in the command. The squad leader personally commands, supervises, and controls the members of his unit. The sergeant commands two or more squads by dealing directly with the corporals, and through them he controls the individuals under their command.

The platoon leader in turn holds his section leaders responsible for results, and is himself responsible to the company commander. And so on up through the other units in succession to the highest, each commander, so far as the transmission of orders is concerned, deals with the commander of the next lower unit. The succession of subordinate commanders through whom a commander exercises his authority is known as the chain of command. This system results in no subordinate having more than one immediate commander from whom he receives orders. It is only by maintaining this chain of command and responsibility that confusion can be avoided and efficient results obtained.

2. The Battalion.—This text deals with offensive combat of the rifle companies, and the machine-gun and howitzer company, and the various subordinate units which make up these organizations. The battalion, however, is of interest, as it is the fighting team of which these smaller units form a part. It consists of a headquarters, a headquarters company, three rifle companies, and one machine-gun and howitzer company. The headquarters company provides personnel to obtain information of the enemy, to maintain signal communications, and to operate the battalion combat train. The rifle companies are fire and maneuver units, while the other organizations support the maneuver units by fire alone. The combat train of a battalion comprises six light tractors with twelve trailers, which are divided in the following manner: battalion headquarters company, one tractor with two trailers; each rifle company the same; and the machine-gun and howitzer company, two tractors with four trailers. The strength of the battalion is 31 officers and 646 enlisted men including the Navy medical personnel.

3. The Rifle Company.—The rifle company at full strength is composed of 5 officers and 136 enlisted men. It is organized into 3 platoons of 1 officer and 40 enlisted men each and a company headquarters of 2 officers and 16 enlisted men.

The company headquarters has two missions; one tactical and one administrative. In order to perform these two missions during combat, company headquarters is divided into a forward and a rear echelon. The forward echelon or command group performs duties of a tactical nature. It consists of a captain, a first sergeant, a signal corporal, a signal private, two field musics, and five runners. In addition, one runner from each platoon is sent to the headquarters when the company goes into action. The duties of this personnel are as follows:

a. The captain commands the company. The enlisted men who accompany him furnish the necessary assistance to insure continuity of control and communication.

b. The first sergeant takes direct charge of the command post personnel and performs such duties as the company commander may direct.

c. The signal personnel maintain communication within the company and with higher and adjacent units.

d. The two field musics perform such duties as the company commander may direct, usually as runners.

e. The five runners are employed for the transmission of orders and messages, two being sent to the battalion command post for use of the battalion commander in sending orders to the company and three remaining with the company headquarters for the transmission of messages to the battalion commander.

f. The three runners who are sent from the platoons are used to transmit orders to their platoons. When a rifle company has a machine-gun platoon in direct support, an agent corporal from that platoon joins company headquarters for the purpose of conveying messages concerning machine-gun support.

The rear echelon of company headquarters usually accompanies the combat train or company portion thereof, and is charged with administrative and supply matters. It consists of 1 first lieutenant (second in command of the company), 2 sergeants (mess and supply), 1 corporal (company clerk), and 3 privates (2 cooks and 1 mechanic). All of the personnel of the rear echelon have duties in connection with the interior economy of the company.

4. The Rifle Platoon.—The rifle platoon comprises a platoon headquarters and two sections of 18 enlisted men each. The platoon headquarters consists of 1 lieutenant, 1 gunnery sergeant, and 3 privates (runners). The lieutenant commands the platoon; the gunnery sergeant, called the "platoon sergeant," assists the platoon commander, and in case the latter becomes a casualty, takes over his duties. Of the runners, in combat one joins the company command post. The other two remain with the platoon. One of these remains within calling distance of the platoon leader. The other is sent to a flank to observe the adjacent unit.

5. The Rifle Section and Squad.—The rifle section is divided into two squads and is commanded by a sergeant assisted by a corporal. The sergeant leads the section. He controls the action of his section through his squad leaders. The corporal (section guide) follows the section, prevents straggling and otherwise assists the section leader. He particularly observes the squad leaders and watches for signals from the platoon leader; he maintains such distance from his section leader that both will not become casualties from the same shell; he replaces the section leader if the latter becomes a casualty. The rifle squad consists of eight enlisted men, formed into a group for instruction, discipline, control and order. The personnel of the squad consists of a corporal (leader), 5 riflemen (2 of whom are designated as scouts), 1 rifleman armed with a grenade discharger, and 1 automatic rifleman. The assignments of the different members of the squad are as follows:

No. 1 front rank, rifleman, scout.

No. 1 rear rank, rifleman, scout.

No. 2 front rank, rifle grenadier.

No. 2 rear rank, rifleman.

No. 3 front rank, substitute automatic rifleman.

No. 3 rear rank, automatic rifleman.

No. 4 front rank, corporal and leader.

No. 4 rear rank, rifleman, second in command.

All men of the squad carry grenades and extra ammunition for the automatic rifle as directed. All rifle squads are organized and armed alike.

6. Weapons of the Rifle Company.—The weapons with which a rifle company is armed are the rifle and bayonet, the automatic rifle, grenades and the pistol. The rifle with its bayonet is the main reliance of the marine of this unit. Every marine in a rifle company carries a rifle or automatic rifle except the following: the five officers, the first sergeant, the three gunnery sergeants, the signal corporal and private, and the two field musics, all of whom carry pistols. The rifle is sighted

up to 2,850 yards; it is capable of accurate fire up to 1,000 yards, but on account of the personal equation the maximum effective battle range for the individual is taken as about 600 yards. At short ranges trained riflemen can fire 10 well-aimed shots per minute. The rifleman usually carries 100 rounds of ammunition, this amount being increased by issue from the battalion combat train to 220 rounds before going into action. The bayonet is an essential addition to the rifle. An enemy cannot be shot out of a position, but must be driven therefrom by personal contact or the threat of it. A knowledge of the use of this weapon lends great moral assistance to the advance to close quarters.

A grenade is a small bomb to be thrown or projected at short ranges against an enemy who has sought shelter in trenches or behind cover where he cannot be reached by rifle fire. These weapons are classed as hand grenades and rifle grenades. The first type is thrown by hand at ranges up to 45 yards. Under favorable conditions a man can throw ten a minute. Hand grenades are not part of the equipment usually carried by riflemen, but are issued in number and types as required.

Rifle grenades are not thrown by hand, but are projected by a discharger attached to the barrel of the service rifle. This device is carried by one member of each rifle squad. The range of the rifle grenade can be made to vary from 120 to 180 yards. It is valuable for use against machine-guns, men in trenches, and troops in assembly places.

The automatic rifle is a shoulder weapon which fires rifle ammunition on the automatic principle. It weighs $15\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, and its principal characteristics are the following:

- a. It can produce a large volume of concentrated fire.
- b. Its dispersion is small.
- c. It presents a small target.
- d. It is almost as portable as the ordinary rifle.
- e. Its ammunition consumption is large.
- f. It is unsuitable for maintaining continued fire for long periods.
- g. It is unsuitable for indirect or overhead fire.

The automatic rifle is part of the equipment of each rifle squad. Its fire is equivalent to that of several rifles. It is used to furnish the fire support of the squads in rushes, infiltration, and in the final phase of the attack which is the assault. In holding a position, it covers the flanks and assists in repelling counter-attacks.

7. Machine-gun and Howitzer Company Organization.—A machine-gun and howitzer company consists of 7 officers and 146 enlisted men. It is organized into a company headquarters, 2 machine-gun platoons and 1 howitzer platoon.

The command group forms part of the forward echelon of the company. Its personnel mans the C. P. which is usually located near the battalion C. P. It contains the personnel whose functions are direction, control, information, and communication. Personnel of the group consists of 1 captain (company commander), 1 first lieutenant (reconnaissance officer), 1 first sergeant, 1 sergeant (reconnaissance), 1 sergeant (signal), 1 corporal (signal), 2 field musics and 7 privates first class and privates (1 signaller, 6 runners or agents).

Generally, the location and duties of the personnel in combat are as follows: Company commander, with, or in close touch with the battalion commander, directs and controls the machine-gun units of

the company as a whole. He is assisted by the first sergeant who is usually at the C. P. The reconnaissance officer and his assistant, the reconnaissance sergeant, make reconnaissance and compute fire data as directed and are normally found operating well to the front. The first sergeant assisted by the signal sergeant, signal corporal, and signal private, is in direct charge of all communications at the C. P. Such runners as are necessary to maintain communication are sent to the rear echelon of the company, and two to the battalion C. P. One runner from each machine-gun platoon joins the company which then leaves available at the C. P., two field musics, one or two company runners, depending on the number sent to the rear echelon, and the three platoon runners.

The Administrative and Supply Group, with the train, forms the rear echelon of the company and is normally located with the rear echelons of the other companies of the battalion. The functions of the personnel are administrative and supply, except ammunition. The ammunition supply is directed from the battalion munitions distributing point to the platoon munitions distributing point. Personnel of the group consists of 1 first lieutenant (executive officer), 1 sergeant (supply), 2 sergeants (mess and supply), 1 corporal (company clerk), 2 cooks and 2 mechanics. In general, the location and duties of the personnel are as follows: The lieutenant, executive officer of the company, commands the rear echelon including such transportation from the battalion combat train as may be with it. He is responsible for the administration and supply of the company and especially with the supply of food to the forward echelon. The mess and supply sergeants, company clerk, cooks and mechanics perform the routine duties of their grades.

8. Machine-gun Platoon Organization.—The personnel of the machine-gun platoon consists of 1 officer and 48 enlisted men. It comprises a platoon headquarters and two sections.

Platoon headquarters consists of 1 officer and ten enlisted men. The rank of the officer is: first platoon, first lieutenant; second platoon, second lieutenant. The grades of the enlisted personnel are: 1 gunnery sergeant (2d in command), 1 corporal (signal), 1 corporal (transport), 1 private (signal), 6 privates (runners or agents). The platoon leader, assisted by the gunnery sergeant directs and controls the sections and supervises the ammunition supply. The corporal and private signalmen perform signal duties at platoon headquarters. When the platoon is supporting a rifle company, the signal corporal represents the platoon at the headquarters of the rifle company and thus becomes an agent. In this capacity he keeps the machine-gun platoon leader informed of the needs and positions of the rifle company and of targets, firing positions, and routes of approach. The transport corporal is in charge of the gun and ammunition carts of the platoon. He is charged with the supply of ammunition by cart from the battalion munitions distributing point to the platoon distributing point. He is also charged with loading belts when the ammunition received from the battalion munitions distributing point is not loaded in belts. Two runners accompany the corporal agent, one goes with the transport corporal and one or two to the company C. P. Thus one signalman and two or three runners are normally available at the platoon C. P.

Each machine-gun section consists of two machine-gun squads of 9 men each and is commanded by a sergeant. Each squad operates

one machine-gun and maintains the ammunition supply from the platoon munitions distributing point to the gun. The squad is commanded by a corporal.

9. The Machine-gun Squad.—Each machine-gun squad consists of the following armament and transportation: 1 machine-gun, Browning, 9 pistols (1 per man), 1 Cole cart, gun, and 1 Cole cart, ammunition. The corporal commands the squad at the gun. The other members are numbered from one to eight. Number 1 is the gunner, Number 2 is the assistant gunner, Number 3 passes ammunition to Number 2 and is available with Number 4 to replace casualties. Numbers 5 to 8 function under the transport corporal, and bring ammunition by cart from the battalion munitions distributing point to the platoon munitions distributing point. These men are also available for filling belts at the belt filling station when necessary.

10. The Machine-gun.—The machine-gun used in our service is the Browning, M1918. It is a water-cooled recoil-operated gun which uses the same ammunition as the service rifle. It can fire from 400 to 500 rounds per minute. However, the actual firing is done in bursts of from 6 to 50 rounds, with pauses between bursts in order that the accuracy of the aim can be checked or in order to relay on other parts of the target. Therefore, the maximum usable rate is about 250 rounds per minute. The maximum effective range is about 2300 yards. The following are the important characteristics of the Browning machine-gun:

a. Having a fixed mount, the gun can be clamped in direction and elevation thus enabling accurate fire to be delivered under battle conditions. It also permits firing by indirect laying, safe overhead fire, and firing at night.

b. The gun is capable of all-round traverse, which makes for ease of fire control; that is, ability to shift fire rapidly to new targets.

c. The gun quickly develops a large volume of fire, and being water cooled can sustain this fire for a long period.

d. The cone of fire is small and the beaten zone is long and narrow. This makes the gun particularly suitable for delivering flanking and enfilading fire.

e. On account of the small dispersion and the visibility of impact, observation and adjustment of fire at long ranges are practicable.

f. The gun is quickly employed, easily concealed, and presents a small target.

The disadvantages of the machine-gun are its flash, the distinct noise when firing, and its liability to mechanical breakdown and stoppage. To overcome possible malfunctioning, these weapons are generally operated in pairs. Other disadvantages of the gun are its vulnerability, its lack of mobility under certain conditions (for example, when carried by hand) and its inability to fire while being moved. This latter feature makes it necessary to halt when it is desired to fire, thus causing the guns to fall behind the advancing rifle units.

11. The Howitzer Platoon.—The howitzer platoon is a complete tactical unit and includes a platoon headquarters, 37^m gun section, light mortar section and an ammunition squad. While attached to the machine-gun and howitzer company, it is employed in combat as a separate unit by the battalion commander.

a. The platoon headquarters consists of one officer, one warrant officer, and seven enlisted men divided as follows: 1 first lieutenant,

1 Marine Gunner (2d in command), 1 gunnery sergeant (platoon sergeant), 1 corporal (signal), 1 corporal (transport), 1 private first class or private (signalman), 3 privates first class or privates (runners and agents) In combat, platoon headquarters is located where the platoon leader can best observe and control his sections. The platoon leader assisted by the second in command and platoon sergeant, controls the sections, compiles fire data and supervises ammunition supply. The corporal and private signalmen carry out their signal duties at platoon headquarters and take charge of all communications. The transport corporal is in charge of the ammunition squad and is charged with the supply of ammunition from the battalion munitions distributing point to the platoon munitions distributing point. One runner is sent to the battalion C. P., which leaves two runners for use at the C. P. of the platoon.

b. The 37^m gun section consists of 8 enlisted men divided as follows: 1 sergeant (section leader), 1 corporal (gunner), and 6 privates first class and privates. The armament consists of 1 gun, 37^m, mounted on pneumatic tired wheels, and 8 pistols (1 to each enlisted man). The section leader personally controls and directs the actions of the gun and its personnel.

c. The light mortar section consists of seven enlisted men, divided as follows: 1 sergeant (section leader), 1 corporal (gunner), and five (5) privates first class and privates. The armament consists of one 3-inch mortar carried on a Cole cart and 7 pistols, (1 to each enlisted man). The section leader is personally responsible for the control of the gun and its personnel.

d. The ammunition squad (howitzer platoon) consists of 8 enlisted men divided as follows: 1 corporal (in charge) and 7 privates first class and privates. The ammunition squad is equipped with three Cole carts for the purpose of hauling ammunition. The carts are distributed as follows:

1 cart, Cole	224 rounds HE, 37 ^m gun.
2 carts, Cole	48 rounds HE and Smoke for the light mortar, 24 rounds per cart.

All men are armed with pistols. The ammunition corporal is in direct command of the squad but is under the transport corporal, and is responsible for the establishing and functioning of the howitzer platoon munitions distributing point. He is in charge of supplying both the light mortar and the one-pounder with ammunition directly from the platoon munitions distributing point to the gun positions. His duties should not be confused with those of the transport corporal who is responsible that the platoon munitions distributing point is kept supplied from the battalion munitions distributing point. In other words the transport corporal works from the platoon munitions distributing point back, while the ammunition corporal works forward, although the men and the carts supplying the ammunition forward from the battalion munitions distributing point may be those of the ammunition squad. An actual dump may not be established by the ammunition corporal. In most cases he will establish the distributing point at a convenient place and when the full carts come up from the battalion distributing point, will guide them to the vicinity of the gun or mortar position where a dump may or may not be established.

12. Howitzer Weapons.—The weapons now supplied are the 3-inch mortar and the 37^m gun. The 3-inch mortar is a muzzle-loading, high

angle-fire, low velocity weapon. Fire can be maintained at the rate of four rounds per minute. However, maximum bursts of from 20 to 30 rounds per minute can be sustained for about three minutes. The range limits are from 250 to 750 yards depending upon the angle of elevation and the amount of propellant used. The projectile weighs approximately 12 pounds, is filled with about $2\frac{3}{4}$ pounds of TNT, and has an effective bursting radius of 30 yards; some fragments may, however, be effective at as much as 150 yards from the point of impact of the shell.

The mortar consists of three parts—the barrel, the mount, and the base plate. The mortar and its ammunition are either transported on carts or its parts and ammunition are carried by the members of the mortar squad. The latter method is only used when hostile fire or unfavorable terrain prevents the use of the first one. With the use of carts, the rate of march is equal to that of other infantry units, except when travelling across country. Material is carried by hand, only for short distances. The high angle of the trajectory and the high angle of fall make the mortar a suitable infantry weapon for placing concentrations on defiladed areas within a short distance from the infantry front lines, which localities can not be reached by other infantry weapons or by artillery on account of their flat trajectory. The large bursting radius of the shell and the possibility of a rapid rate of fire for short periods, make the mortar well suited for covering wooded areas in which the position of a target may be only approximately located. It is also useful for breaking up reported small enemy concentrations in such places. The piece is readily fired from or behind small woods and from defiladed places. It has the disadvantage, due to its low velocity (which permits the projectile to be seen in flight), of disclosing to the enemy its approximate location. Another disadvantage is that because of the effectiveness of its own fire, it draws the fire of the enemy artillery. Both of these can be overcome in part by using suitable defilade and by use of alternate positions.

The 37^{mm} gun, M1916, is a flat trajectory weapon of the field gun type. It is transported on an axle and wheels with pneumatic tires and drawn by members of the gun section, or it may be separated into two or more man loads and carried by hand for short distances. The gun is normally fired from a tripod but when necessary may be fired from its wheels. The maximum rate of fire which can be obtained under service conditions is about 20 rounds per minute. However, accuracy and quick adjustment of fire are more often depended upon for results than is the ability to maintain a rapid rate. Fire is usually adjusted from observation of the burst. Consequently, although the weapon is very accurate to nearly its extreme range of 3,960 yards, never-the-less the maximum effective range, because of the limitations of ordinary means of observation, is considered to be approximately 2,000 yards. The usual combat ranges for the use of this weapon are from 600 to 1,800 yards, and at such distances it has a very high degree of accuracy.

Various types of shells may be fired—those containing a charge of either high or low explosive which burst on impact, the solid steel shell, and special types of armor-piercing shell. The low explosive (common steel) shell contains a charge of black powder; it is used in training and for observation purposes. The high explosive shell contains a charge of TNT, and when it is detonated, breaks into many more and smaller pieces than the low explosive type. It is generally used in "firing for

effect" in combat. The high explosive shell is a base percussion projectile and weighs about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. The effective bursting radius is about 5 yards, although fragments fly to a much greater distance. Because of its accuracy, high rate of fire, and the penetration and destructive effect of the shell, it is a valuable weapon for use against machine guns in the open or emplaced in "pill boxes" and against tanks. The characteristic flash and sharp noise of discharge discloses its position. Firing from behind a mask eliminates the flash and makes the gun difficult to locate. The most favorable position for its employment is one with "sight defilade"; that is, where the piece itself is protected from view of the enemy but is so located that the observer, from the gun position can see the effect of fire.

Within the howitzer platoon, and carried on the carts, there are 224 rounds (one cart load) of 37 mm ammunition, and 48 rounds (two cart loads) of 3-inch mortar ammunition. The amount of ammunition carried for both weapons is limited and can be fired in a short time, but it is sufficient to meet the ordinary requirements of one day's fire if care is used in selecting proper targets.

13. New Howitzer Weapons.—The new 37 mm gun is of similar design to the M1916 piece now in use. The barrel is longer and the round of ammunition carries an increased propelling charge, thereby giving greater muzzle velocity, with consequent increased range and penetrating power. The prime object of the increased muzzle velocity is to create greater penetrating power for use against tanks, etc.; the increased range is only an incidental resultant factor, as the ordinary combat ranges for the weapon will probably not exceed those within observation distance (1,800 to 2,000 yards).

The 75 mm mortar, like the present type, is a weapon which employs high-angle-fire. Its maximum range is about 1,800 yards. It is a breech-loading firearm with a rifled barrel, and is very accurate at distances up to the maximum range. The shell weighs 12 pounds and is somewhat similar in shape to the 75 mm shrapnel shell used by the artillery. It is fitted snugly, but not crimped into a brass cartridge case. This case contains as a propelling charge several ballistite rings. For firing at other than extreme range, the shell is removed from the cartridge case and one or more ballistite rings removed, according to the zone to be fired into. The casing containing the remaining rings is reattached to the shell, and the latter is then inserted in the breech and fired.

The Stokes-Brandt 81 mm mortar, while not adopted in our service as yet should be mentioned. It is a smooth bore mortar fired similarly to our present 3-inch. It weighs approximately 150 pounds and can be divided into three loads. It is equipped with a small collimator sight, a quadrant allowing 40 to 90 degrees elevation and a cross-level bubble, and has a traverse of about 146 mils. It fires two types of shell, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, having extreme ranges of about 3,300 yards and 1,500 yards respectively. Its accuracy, induced by fins being placed on the projectile to steady it in flight and by its improved sight and quadrant, is surprisingly superior to any other mortar of this type.

SECTION II

PHASES OF THE OFFENSIVE

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14. Introduction.—Training Regulations discuss offensive combat by phases which are usually listed as follows:

- a. Advance in route column, and the development.
- b. Approach march and deployment.
- c. Advancing the attack (fire and movement).
- d. Assault.
- e. Continuing the attack, passage of lines, and reorganization.
- f. Pursuit or organization of the ground.

This arrangement makes the subject easier to discuss. It must be borne in mind, however, that these steps are not clear-cut, that they usually overlap, that they do not always appear in the sequence given, and that some are, at times, entirely omitted.

To simplify matters, let us consider an offensive as consisting of three steps—first, getting the infantry units into their attack positions ((a) and (b) above); second, the attack proper ((c) and (d) above); and third, the measures taken after the attack proper has been made ((e) and (f) above).

15. Advancing to First Firing Position.—The underlying principle in moving troops into their first firing positions is to get them as close to the enemy position as practicable with a minimum of losses. As indicated above, this includes the following phases of offensive combat; the advance in route column, the development, the approach march, and the deployment.

16. Advance in Route Column.—When out of range of the enemy weapons, or at times when within range if cover from observation and fire be available, troops are conducted toward the enemy in column of squads or in some other close-order formation suitable for marching. The movement forward in this formation is called the “advance in route column.” Troops are kept in column of squads as long as it is safe to do so, because this formation is best for both marching and control. When in contact at the beginning of an offensive, as in an attack from a stabilized position, there may be no advance in route column.

17. Development.—That phase of the forward movement which begins with the extension of a command from mass formation or from route column, and which ends when all its elements are in rear of their

probable areas of combat, is called development. Because it takes a long time for large bodies of troops to get into battle formation, the larger units, while still advancing in route column, are some times broken up into separate columns. These march generally parallel to each other, each covering its own advance and keeping in touch with adjacent columns. Security and contact are obtained by sending out detachments from the columns to cover the flanks, to maintain contact, to obtain information of the enemy, to drive in hostile detachments, and to give timely warning so that units may change their formation before coming under hostile fire.

This breaking up of columns into separate columns is usually gradual and marks the beginning of development. Brigades break up into battalion columns, battalions into company columns, etc. The object of development is to place the different units in assembly positions preliminary to forming for attack, or to advance them directly to the position in which they will form for attack. It should be noted that development may, and usually does, begin while the troops are advancing in route column, and may not be complete until the smallest units are in their firing position. Development is progressive and may overlap all of the preliminary phases of offensive combat.

18. Approach March.—The advance from the point where the zone of hostile fire is entered up to the point where it becomes necessary to return the hostile fire in order to continue the advance is known as the "approach march." Where troops are not in contact with the enemy prior to the attack, it will ordinarily be necessary for the infantry to advance a considerable distance after coming within range of the hostile artillery before it is justified in opening fire. It cannot combat the enemy's artillery and high-flying airplanes, and is at a disadvantage if it attempts to return the enemy's long-range rifle and machine-gun fire. The infantry therefore ignores these weapons, and taking full advantage of cover, of the discipline of troops, and of suitable formations, it continues to a position within the effective range of its own arms.

Since artillery is particularly effective against infantry in column of squads, it will usually be impracticable to conduct the approach march in route column except where there is ample cover not only from observation, but also from fire. The conduct of the approach march requires rapidity of advance and a judicious use of cover; it must also be made in formations that do not present concentrated targets to the enemy's fire, yet will keep units suitably disposed to take up the fire fight when they reach a point within effective range of their weapons. Such a formation is one in which units are broken up into numerous small columns, usually of squads and sections, disposed in frontage and depth so that no two columns can be struck by the burst of the same shell. Dispositions of this character are called approach-march formations.

Care must be exercised not to confuse approach-march formations with the phase of the offensive known as the approach march. During the approach-march phase, troops may or may not, depending upon the situation, adopt approach-march formations; these formations may be used at other times than during the approach-march phase, as for instance, in pursuit. A unit advancing to the attack might, for example, be under cover from observation and fire when it came within range of the enemy's artillery. To facilitate marching and control it would probably continue its advance in route column, not changing formation until the nature of cover made it unsafe to advance farther in that formation. Or again, to cross an open stretch of terrain, it might be

necessary to take up an approach-march formation. Having crossed this dangerous area, cover might again be such that it would be practicable and desirable to re-form the unit in column of squads for a further advance. To cross a fire-swept zone, it might be necessary to take up an approach-march formation and have individuals, singly or in pairs, work their way across this dangerous area and reform on a designated line or in a designated position. To coordinate the attack, higher commanders prescribe a line on the ground called the line of departure that will be crossed by the assault units at a specified time. This line should be easily recognizable; it may be a road, a crest, the edge of a woods, a stream, or a similar terrain feature. If practicable it is located outside the zone of effective enemy rifle fire. Battalions and smaller assault units usually take up the approach-march formation at or just before crossing this line if they have not already done so. They continue to advance in approach-march formation until they reach their first firing positions, which may be at, just beyond, or at a considerable distance from the line of departure, depending upon the cover available. The idea of reaching the first firing position at the time desired with as few casualties as possible underlies the choice of formations for the approach-march.

19. Deployment.—Deployment is an extension of front, or as separation of elements laterally, for battle purposes. The deployment of a unit is complete, and it is said to be deployed for attack, when its elements are disposed so that the front assigned to it can be covered by fire and when its leading elements are in suitable formation to enter the fire fight. In discussing the phases of offensive combat, deployment is usually considered in the sense of complete deployment and the subject ordinarily follows the discussion of the approach-march. Deployment, however, begins when the first unit leaves the main column of advance, and is not complete until the assault units take up an approach-march formation just prior to occupying their first firing positions.

Deployment may take place gradually during the approach-march or complete deployment may be made direct from route column. When deployment takes place gradually, it is usually an expansion of the route column into smaller columns which are successively broken up into still smaller columns until deployment is complete. These columns march on assigned direction lines or within designated zones of action. Each conducts its advance in a series of bounds from one to another of the successive points which define the route of advance. The advance is conducted under the protection of covering detachments.

When deployment can be made deliberately, as when under the protection of troops already in position, units are conducted to predetermined places and there formed for attack. This is usually done under cover of darkness. Troops are massed preparatory to further deployment when the nature of the action cannot be foreseen or when it is desirable to shorten the column or to clear the road.

Before entering an action the commander should be as far to the front as practicable, in order that he may personally see the situation, order the development, and begin the action strictly in accordance with his own wishes. Based upon the information obtained from higher authority, from the advance guard action (if there be one), from reconnaissance agencies, and from personal reconnaissance, together with his knowledge of his own forces, the commander makes an estimate of the situation and formulates a plan of attack. His attack order

announces the general plan and assigns definite missions to each subordinate unit which is directly under his command. Certain units are designated as assault elements, others as reserves. The artillery is assigned general positions and the manner in which they will support the attack is specified. To coordinate the attack, the line of departure and the boundaries between front-line units are designated.

The commanders of assault units, keeping in mind the time it will take for subordinates to issue their own orders and move their commands into attack positions, make such personal reconnaissance as is practicable, move their forces into the zones of action assigned to them, and issue their attack orders. Boundaries between units are designated by the higher commander for organizations of the next lower command. This ordinarily extends down to include battalions.

This assignment of boundaries results in battalions and larger units having lanes, called zones of action, in which they ordinarily conduct their maneuvers and operations. Companies and platoons are usually assigned frontages to cover. From the width of the zone of action or frontage assigned and after considering other factors, such as the expected resistance of the enemy, the nature of the terrain, and the like, each commander decides how to dispose of his unit. If practicable, he places his elements in the same relative position in the approach-march as that in which they will be employed in the attack. In the beginning, he usually holds out a portion of his command for emergencies. The portion which a platoon or company holds out is called a "support," while that withheld by a larger unit than a company is called a "reserve"; the remainder of the unit is called the "assault echelon." Frontages are usually assigned so that platoons can begin the action with one section in support, companies with one to two platoons in support, and larger units with from one-sixth to two-thirds of their strength in reserve. The withholding of supports and reserves results in a command being disposed in depth.

Assault units complete their deployment before crossing the line of departure. If this line is under cover, a battalion may form for attack with its leading unit on it; if not under cover, troops form for attack in rear of the line of departure and cross it at the designated time. After crossing the line of departure, assault platoons continue to advance in small columns or line of skirmishers, until it becomes necessary to return the enemy's fire in order to advance farther without excessive losses. They then occupy their first firing positions and begin the attack proper.

20. Attack Proper.—The attack proper includes the advance from the first firing position to the occupation of the enemy's position. In Training Regulations the attack proper is discussed under phases of offensive combat called "advancing the attack" and the "Assault."

21. Advancing the Attack.—At the first firing position, each attack unit seeks to gain fire superiority over the enemy to its front. This is obtained by subjecting the enemy to such heavy fire that his own fire becomes so inaccurate or diminishes so in volume that it is no longer effective. This sometimes necessitates a steady, accurate fire for a long time. Once fire superiority has been gained, a sufficient number of infantry weapons, and artillery as well, must be continued in action to maintain it. Further advance is made by infiltration or by successive rushes of fractions of the units engaged in the fire fight. The movement of advancing subdivisions is covered by the fire of those remaining in position. The size of the fractions advancing is determined by the

amount of fire which can be spared without losing fire superiority. Every lull in hostile fire is utilized to push groups to the front and occupy the naturally strong places in the terrain from which covering fire, particularly that of automatic weapons, can be delivered to facilitate the further progress of the assault units.

The attack will not generally encounter a uniformly held, continuous line of defense. It will have to overcome a defense disposed in depth and consisting of a series of localities organized for defense and occupied by infantry battalions and companies, with relatively lightly held intervening intervals. By stubbornly holding these localities, the defense will seek to limit the penetrating action of the attack and to overwhelm by counter-attack the assault elements which succeed in piercing the front. There will consequently be inequalities in the resistance encountered on the front of attack, and as a result the assault units will not make uniform progress. Each presses on, however, as rapidly as possible, within its own zone of action; certain units of considerable size may of course be held up by strong resistance while others encountering only minor resistance, will be able to continue the advance. The latter press on without regard to the progress of the units held up, and then attempt to turn the flank of the hostile force causing the delay. The battle thus becomes a series of local combats carried on by units of varying size. Sections of the assault echelon held up are not reinforced when the resistance in their front can be outflanked. By their own fire and that of accompanying weapons they attempt to neutralize or or mask the opposing resistance and prevent the latter from enfilading (firing from a position on or near the prolongation of the line of) the attacking elements advancing on the flanks.

Assault units endeavor to obtain superiority of fire over the enemy occupying the organized localities which make up the defensive position. The leading elements advance straight to the front, push as closely as possible to the hostile position and immobilize the enemy with fire, that is, make it impossible for him to change the disposition of his front-line troops without suffering heavy losses. While this is being done, additional troops (supports or reserves) are brought up on the flanks to envelop the enemy; that is, to attack simultaneously his front, one or both of his flanks, or to gain his rear. If the attacker has sufficient troops to envelop the enemy, he may not only gain superiority of fire resulting from numbers but can deliver converging fire as opposed to divergent. In many cases, however, the mutually flanking fire of organized tactical localities will be unfavorable to enveloping action. In such cases frontal action is necessary.

During the attack, supports and reserves do not passively follow the troops engaged in the fire fight. On the contrary, one of the purposes of the disposition in depth is to enable the attacking units to act in any direction. Supports are employed to reinforce the assault echelon and to protect its flanks. Reinforcement may take place by increasing the density of the assault echelon, by filling gaps, or by prolongation of the echelon (enveloping action). Reverses are employed during the progress of an attack primarily to envelop points of resistance developed by the assault echelon, to continue the action of any units of that echelon which have become disorganized, depleted, or exhausted, and to repel counter-attacks directed against the flanks of any section of the assault line. In principle, supports and reserves, are put into action where least losses are being suffered rather than where

they are greatest. All commanders must endeavor to locate the points where the enemy is offering the least resistance in order to use troops in rearward echelons to exploit any weakness developed.

22. Assault.—The assault is the last phase of the attack against any given element of the defense, the assailants moving in to determine the issue by close combat. This is the hour of the bayonet and grenades. Except where the opposing troops have been in contact for a considerable time, the assault can not be conducted on an extended front. Inequalities of resistance and the necessity of immediately taking advantage of weakening in the hostile resistance wherever it occurs will produce local assaults executed by small units. The assault should be delivered by each unit at the earliest moment that promises success.

During the progress of a determined attack, a beaten enemy may begin to withdraw from his defenses before he is threatened with the bayonet. In this case the assault may begin when the assaulting troops are some 300 or 400 yards from the enemy position. More often the enemy will resist with rifle, machine-gun, and artillery fire until the rifle groups close with him and actually occupy his position. Usually in a situation of this kind, the assaulting troops, under the cover of their own fire and that of supporting weapons, work their way close to the enemy position before launching the assault. When the distance to be covered is short, the men advance at a run with bayonets at "charge" and close with the enemy. In a charge of this nature it is not desirable to cover more than 50 yards distance. When the distance to be covered is more than this, the men move forward at a walk, halting and firing individually as they advance, until charging distance is reached.

When an advance is checked in front of local hostile resistance which can be taken only by frontal attack, it is sometimes necessary to put down on the enemy position a heavy volume of fire of artillery, machine-guns, and howitzer weapons. Under cover of this fire, rifle units are pushed forward as far as possible and the assault is launched when the supporting fire is lifted, either at a prearranged signal or at a specified time.

When the assaulting troops reach the hostile position they engage the enemy in close combat. The defenders are killed, captured, or driven from the position. Troops in the assault echelon, after capturing a position, continue to fire on the retreating enemy as long as they remain within range, and then prepare to continue the attack, take up the pursuit, or organize the ground for defense, as may be required.

23. Action Following Assault.—The action to be taken following an assault will depend upon the situation. The steps that may be taken include continuing the attack, passage of lines, reorganization, pursuit, or organization of the ground.

24. Continuing the Attack.—The attack of successive positions in rear of the first is made in a manner similar to that already explained. As soon as the first position has been seized, each assault unit continues on to capture other successive positions in rear. The advance is usually begun in a deployed formation and the retreating enemy is closely followed.

25. Passage of Lines.—During the assault the smaller units (squads, sections, platoons, and companies) become badly intermingled and disorganized, and during prolonged attacks larger units become fatigued

and depleted. In such cases supports and reserves pass through (or by) the disorganized units and continue the attack while the latter halt, reorganize, and follow as supports or reserves. This is called a "passage of lines."

26. Reorganization and Pursuit.—As has been stated, troops in the assault echelon fire on any of the enemy who attempt to escape by running. This is called "pursuit by fire." The pursuit proper, which is the act of following a retreating enemy to complete his capture, demoralization, or destruction, is seldom begun by units which have engaged in close combat until they have reorganized and provision has been made to meet possible counter-attack. If the enemy retreats beyond range, numerous patrols are sent out to follow and maintain contact.

If supports and reserves are available, they pass through the assault echelon and take up the pursuit. If no reserves are intact, the assault echelon, after reorganization, takes up the pursuit. Pursuing troops advance in formations adapted to the situation. While under fire they are deployed as described under advancing the attack and the approach-march. When not under fire and not apt to come under fire they advance in route column with suitable security detachments in advance. The enemy is vigorously attacked whenever found. While part of the troops continue the attack or the direct pursuit, others endeavor to work around the flanks, in order to cut off, capture, or destroy the retreating enemy.

27. Organization of the Ground.—When the final objective is taken or when the advance of a unit is definitely checked, the assault troops hold the ground gained. They take advantage of available cover, such as shell holes, ditches, and natural depressions of the ground, and then dig in wherever they find themselves.

Reserve and supporting weapons are so disposed with respect to the assault units as to insure mutual support and concerted action. As soon as practicable, dispositions are readjusted, individual shelters are connected, trenches are developed, the fires of supporting weapons are coördinated, obstacles are placed in front of the position, and everything possible is done to reduce losses and to facilitate holding the ground.

SECTION III BATTALION IN ATTACK

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28. Introduction.—A discussion of the tactics of the battalion is beyond the scope of this text; however, the conduct of the battalion during the various phases of an offensive action will be briefly considered in order to illustrate the manner in which the various subordinate units operate as members of a fighting team.

29. Advance in Route Column.—An assault battalion advances in route column until the situation requires a change of formation. A battalion advancing as part of a larger force generally marches with its units in the following order: Battalion headquarters, including headquarters company, rifle companies, machine-gun and howitzer company, and combat train, unless given a rendezvous. Prior to taking up the approach-march formation extra ammunition is issued from the vehicles of the battalion combat train. When a battalion is advancing in a separate column, the battalion commander sends out detachments to maintain contact with other columns, to determine areas which are under fire, to ascertain when changes of direction or formation will become necessary, to develop the enemy's position, and to drive away hostile patrols and advance posts.

30. Approach March and Deployment.—The battalion commander will usually determine when the units of his battalion shall take up approach-march formations. He will generally have received his attack orders before this time and will know the area in which his battalion is to operate, his zone of action, the line on which the troops will be formed for attack or which they are to cross in combat formation at a certain time. This of course, is the line of departure. If he has decided on the probable manner in which he will employ his units, he arranges the elements of his battalion in the general formation in which they will be employed in the attack. A battalion will have a zone of action of from 350 to 800 yards. A company can attack on a frontage of from 200 to 400 yards. Thus the formation to be employed is dependent upon the zone of action of the battalion influenced also by the terrain, cover, etc., and whether the battalion is making the main or secondary effort. In the usual cases the battalion will attack with two rifle companies in assault and one in reserve. In such a case, the approach-march formation of the battalion would be two rifle companies abreast, leading, followed by one in reserve. One of the leading companies is designated as the base company and is assigned a direction of advance. The position of the machine-gun and howitzer company in the approach-march formation of the battalion depends upon its contemplated use. If the early employment of these weapons is desired they usually march in the rear of the assault companies. If early use is not contemplated, they march in rear of the reserves. If a flank of the battalion be exposed to attack, some machine-guns should march near that flank where they can go into action promptly to protect it by fire.

The battalion forms for attack on or in rear of the line of departure, depending on the available cover. The battalion commander may issue his attack order before or during the approach march.

If not already so arranged, elements of the battalion are formed for the attack before crossing the line of departure. The advance is made in small columns covered by the scouts until it becomes necessary to return the enemy's fire in order to advance farther. (See Fig. No. 1).

31. Advancing the Attack.—In advancing the attack, the role of the battalion commander is to employ the accompanying machine-gun and howitzer weapons, to support the advance of the assault rifle companies; to maneuver the reserve in order to envelop hostile resistance or to cover gaps occurring between assault companies; to employ the reserves to replace or reinforce front-line companies when they become

depleted in strength and to forward ammunition to the company supports by carrying parties or with reinforcements; and finally, to take the necessary action to protect the flanks of his own battalion or of an adjacent unit. He provides for mutual support with adjacent units when the situation demands such action and arranges to have the fire of the artillery unit supporting his battalion placed where it will be of most assistance. During the advance he selects successive positions for his reserve and takes necessary action to prevent it from merging with the assault line. He also selects successive positions for the battalion munitions distributing point and issues instructions for the movement of the battalion train to the points selected. The position of the battalion commander during the attack is such that he can observe the progress of the assault companies and can control the action of the reserve and the supporting weapons. When in order to do this he must leave his command post, the battalion commander, of course, informs the battalion executive, whom he leaves in charge, as to where he may be located.

32. Assault.—When the enemy is overcome by a series of assaults executed at different times by small units, the situation often warrants the battalion commander using his reserve, if it is still intact, to assist and exploit such thrusts and to get his machine-gun units and howitzer weapons forward in order to defeat counter-attacks. When the entire battalion is temporarily checked in front of strong hostile resistance which can not be out-flanked, the battalion commander arranges for a prepared and coördinated assault to be supported by artillery, machine guns, and howitzer weapons. He either fixes an hour for the delivery of the assault or employs a prearranged signal for that purpose. Under cover of the supporting fire the assault units advance as close to the enemy position as possible; and when the preparatory fires cease or lift, all assault units charge the hostile resistance in a single rush. As soon as a position has been taken, heavy fire is brought on the retreating hostile troops and arrangements are made for resisting counter-attacks, for reorganization, or for continuing the attack until the objective has been captured. The battalion commander must anticipate possible counter-attacks; he should detect and check any threat against the flanks of the battalion.

33. Pursuit.—When the battalion is acting independently, pursuit is undertaken on order from its commander; the reserve and such assault companies as are not disorganized are employed to initiate this phase. When the battalion is acting as part of a larger force, orders for pursuit are issued by the commander of the whole. In preparation for pursuit the battalion reorganizes and maintains contact with the enemy by means of patrols.

34. Organization of the Ground.—When the advance is definitely stopped and can make no further progress, the battalion commander organizes the ground for defense, promptly forwarding information of his dispositions to the regimental commander and the supporting artillery.

SECTION IV

RIFLE COMPANY IN ATTACK

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35. Advance in Route Column.—During the advance in route column and the development, the commanders of small infantry units maintain march discipline and conduct the march in accordance with instructions from higher authority.

36. Approach March.—Before entering the zone of effective artillery fire, the rifle company takes up the approach-march formation on order of the battalion commander or, in an emergency, on the initiative of the company commander. During the approach march, in order to advance with minimum losses, the formation of the rifle company is adapted to the available cover, hostile fire, and the required rate of advance; distances and intervals are increased or decreased according to the terrain and the effectiveness of the enemy fire. If the situation is obscure, platoons are disposed so that a change of formation can readily be made to meet any emergency. Suitable covered routes of approach are so utilized that only indistinct and fleeting targets are presented to enemy artillery. Gassed and shelled areas are ordinarily avoided; when it becomes necessary to cross dangerous places, such as roads, crests, or embankments, it may be advisable to do so by a rush of the entire company; this is done in order to obtain the effect of surprise and to present a transient target to the enemy. If the area to be passed is under fire, it may be crossed by successive rushes of individuals or small groups who later re-form on a designated line. This latter method of advance is known as infiltration. Before entering a wood, distances and intervals are decreased so that adjoining units will be mutually visible; if necessary, connecting files are used.

During the approach march, the company commander moves to points which afford the best facilities for observation; he conducts personal reconnaissance for the purpose of anticipating the future courses of action. However, when danger of serious losses arises, he should be with his company. He insures that his base platoon guides on the base company. If his own company is the base, he makes sure that the base platoon marches on the direction points or the azimuth prescribed by the battalion, and that his other platoons conform to the movements of the base element. The instant the company leaves the main column of the battalion, the company commander becomes responsible for its security. The advance is covered by scouts. Flanks are protected by so locating the support that it can cover either flank; patrols from the support may also be used for this purpose. Contact is maintained with adjacent units by placing connecting groups of from four to eight men on each flank of the company; these groups are usually detailed from

the support and they march approximately abreast of it. Company commanders maintain communication with their platoon leaders, with the battalion commander, and with the adjacent units during all stages of the advance and combat; runners insure connection between the company and platoon commanders during such times as the former may be absent from his company on reconnaissance.

Upon receiving his attack order from the battalion commander, the company commander must perfect his plan for employing his company and issue his instructions to his platoon leaders, who if practicable are assembled for this purpose at a point which affords a view of the objective and the ground over which the attack is to be made. The company order is based on the battalion order. It is issued orally and includes any recent information concerning the enemy not already known by the platoon leaders, and all information concerning adjacent units and supporting artillery; the mission of the company and its scheme of maneuver; the combat mission of each platoon, including where it will form for attack, its objective, and its direction of advance; the location of the battalion munitions distributing point and the battalion aid station; and the location of the battalion and company command posts. When issuing the order the first sergeant may well receive it as well as the platoon leaders, as all information is vital to him in operating the C. P. or in guiding the platoons to their combat positions, a duty he often performs.

It will not always be possible to formulate a complete attack order at any particular time. Frequently, it will be made up of a series of partial orders given out in the course of the advance as the situation develops.

For the attack, the company commander disposes of his platoons in assault and support, as he deems best to accomplish the company mission. One or two platoons may be deployed in assault, with two or one in support, depending on the frontage assigned to the company and the information available as to the enemy dispositions. In exceptional cases all three platoons may be placed in the assault echelon. In the usual case, two will be deployed in the assault and one in support. The frontage assigned the company usually determines this. A platoon can effectively attack on a frontage of from 100 to 200 yards, dependent upon cover, terrain, etc.

37. Advancing the Attack.—Formation in small columns will generally be maintained by the assault platoons until they are compelled to reply to the enemy's fire in order to advance. Ordinarily, fire is opened on the orders of the platoon leaders. The significance of the designation of the base platoon ceases as soon as the fire fight commences. When the company takes up the fire fight, the advance of the assault platoons is mainly in the hands of the assault platoon, the section, and the squad leaders, who advance the attack by mutual fire support, and alternate fire and movement. Each platoon advances as rapidly as the circumstances in its front permit. (See Fig. No. 2).

The company commander intervenes in the conduct of the advance of the assault platoons only when it is apparent that his instructions are not being complied with. His principle duties are to supervise and coördinate the action of the three platoons and to assist the advance of the assault echelon by employing his support to outflank resistance holding up the advance; to protect the flanks against counter-attack, and to re-

inforce the assault platoons or execute a passage of lines when they become depleted or very fatigued. He also assists the advance by keeping the battalion commander informed of the situation, calling promptly for artillery, 37^m gun, mortar, and machine-gun fire when unable to advance with the means at hand. When a machine-gun unit is directly supporting his company, he requests its fire whenever needed.

The distance of the support from the assault echelon is dependent upon the situation, including the terrain. Care must be exercised to prevent its merging with the assault echelon, to keep it at all times close enough to the assault platoons to be able to effect timely reinforcement, and to hold it under cover when not advancing. In general, it should follow the assault echelon as closely as cover and the possibility of movement toward a flank will permit, advancing by bounds from one covered position to another.

Reinforcements join the assault echelon as quickly as may be done without exhausting the men. Their advance may either be by rushes or by infiltration. The reinforcing of the assault platoons by driblets of a squad or a few men has no appreciable effect. These platoons generally require a strong reinforcement or none at all. As a rule a section or a platoon will be sent forward under cover of heavy fire of the assault echelon.

If possible, original divisions of the company are maintained; they should not be broken up by the mingling of reinforcements, and when practicable, these are sent up on a flank or placed in a gap in the line. If this method of reinforcement is impracticable, the reinforcements are sent forward widely deployed, with instructions to individuals to join the squad with which they merge upon arrival at the firing line. Each man then obeys orders of the leader of the nearest squad or platoon. Each officer and noncommissioned officer accompanying a reinforcement takes over the duties of others of like grade who have been disabled.

The position of the company commander during the attack is where he can best supervise the action of his platoons. Usually, he is with the support or between the support and the assault echelon. He must at all times be able to observe the action of the assault line. When the support has been entirely absorbed by the assault echelon, he joins that part of the line from which he can best control the advance of the company.

38. Assault.—When the assault echelon has advanced to within assaulting distance (40 to 400 yards from the enemy position) and fire superiority has been gained, the assault is launched to drive the enemy from the position. When the distance is short and the assault has not been started by the assault echelon, the company commander makes the necessary arrangements and gives the signal or command. Skirmishers spring forward shouting, run with bayonets at “charge,” and close with the enemy. In a charge of this nature, it is not desirable to cover more than 50 yards, for if an attempt is made to pass over a greater distance, the men will be tired and therefore at a disadvantage in the close combat which follows.

When the space to be covered is more than “charging distance,” the procedure is as outlined above, except that the men move forward at a walk, using assault fire until charging distance is reached, when they charge the hostile position. When the company is unable to advance farther on account of lack of fire superiority, the situation is reported to the battalion commander; the future action of the company then rests in his hands. He usually organizes a prepared assault as already explained.

39. Reorganization and Pursuit.—After a successful assault, the company pursues the retreating enemy with fire, and the company commander immediately takes steps for the reorganization of the assault units, to hold the ground captured, or to continue the attack. On occasion, also, the success may be further exploited by committing the support, if it is still intact, to the attack at this time; thus the defeated troops may be thrown back upon their reserves, their fire may be masked, disorder spread among them, and counter-attacks prevented. If the attack is not continued, contact is maintained with the retreating enemy by sending out patrols.

40. Organization of the Ground.—When the advance is definitely stopped or the objective has been reached, the company commander organizes the area as directed by the battalion commander. In the absence of instructions he acts on his own initiative, establishes a firing line and a support line, reestablishes contact with adjacent units and the rear, assigns areas of defense and sectors of fire to his platoons, and arranges for the mutual support by flanking fire. He makes a report of his dispositions to the battalion commander, preferably by sketch.

41. Reserve Company in Attack.—At least one rifle company is usually designated as battalion reserve. This unit generally operates under the direct orders of the battalion commander. However, the commander of the reserve company must be prepared to act without hesitation in emergencies, such as the repelling of a sudden enemy counter-attack or when an exposed flank needs protection. A reserve company is moved from position to position or from cover to cover, as directed by the battalion commander or in accordance with his general instructions. In order that he may be able to act with knowledge of the situation, the commander of a reserve company conducts a personal reconnaissance whenever circumstances will permit. He often precedes his company and takes station where observation is favorable; frequently, he accompanies the battalion commander. When not accompanying the battalion commander, he maintains contact with the latter by having his first sergeant remain at the battalion command post. Two runners from the company are also located at that point during combat. Before moving the company from one position to another the company commander selects the route and determines on the method of advance. When the situation demands a move and orders have not been received, he selects a new position and requests instructions from the battalion commander.

SECTION V

RIFLE PLATOON, SECTION, AND SQUAD IN ATTACK

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42. Advance in Route Column.—During the advance in route column the platoon leader and all non-commissioned officers with his command strictly enforce march discipline. Straggling is severely checked and men are kept closed up at all times.

43. Approach March and Deployment.¹—The advance in route column is changed to the approach march by the company commander as soon as the fire or the proximity of the enemy renders a less vulnerable formation desirable. The platoon is most frequently deployed in two waves, each wave comprising one section; that is, with one section in assault and one in support. Sections advance in section column, in squad column, or as skirmishers. The formations of sections and squads are adapted to the terrain and the nature of the enemy's fire. One section or squad may be compelled in its advance to pass over a dangerous piece of ground in skirmish line, while those in rear or on a flank, by making use of cover, may be able to continue their advance in small columns. Either section or squad columns may be used in avoiding shelled areas, in passing through ordinary shelling, in going over ground under fire, and in passing through woods, fog, or smoke. Section columns give better control than squad columns, as there is less dispersion; however, being a more compact formation it is more vulnerable than squad columns.

Section columns is the usual initial approach-march formation of the platoon, and is maintained until a more extended formation is necessary or desirable. The formation will usually be changed from section to squad column when the advancing troops come under long range rifle and machine-gun fire. This fire may necessitate the formation of a line of skirmishers and an advance by successive lines of men at wide and irregular intervals, or by bounds from cover to cover.

When the platoon takes up the approach-march, scouts from the leading section deployed at wide and irregular intervals (10 to 50 yards) precede the platoon. These scouts locate enemy positions, overcome resistance encountered from small hostile advance posts and patrols, and cause the enemy riflemen and machine guns to open fire and disclose their positions. Without such protection, a platoon is liable to walk blindly into dangerous areas where enemy fire may prevent further advance or maneuver. Scouts in advancing take such advantage of cover as is consistent with their mission of aggressive reconnaissance to the front. The exact distance at which they operate in front of the platoon is not prescribed; at one time they may be 500 yards ahead of the leading section, and later they may be absorbed in the firing line.

In the approach-march, the platoon leader must maintain control of his command and keep it in its assigned place in the company formation. If his is the base platoon, he maintains the direction of march by azimuth or by marching on distant direction points; otherwise, he regulates the advance of his unit on the movements of the base platoon. During the advance in approach-march formation the platoon commander leads his organization. His position is between the scouts and his leading section. Here he is able to observe his scouts or keep in contact with them by means of his runners, to make personal reconnaissance, and to issue instructions promptly to his section leaders. The platoon sergeant usually is between the two sections. His principal duty during the advance is to prevent them from merging with each other. Section leaders march ahead of their units, the commander of the leading section watching the platoon leader for signals. He looks back only to exercise control and to vary the formation of his unit in order to take advantage of local cover and avoid losses. The leader of the rear section looks to the platoon sergeant for signals and orders. When the platoon sergeant is not located between the sections, the leader of the rear section conforms to

the movements of the leading one. Section guides follow their units. They see that squads are kept closed up and that orders and instructions are complied with. Squad leaders lead their squads. In section and squad columns, the second in command of each squad is at the rear thereof; when the squad is deployed as skirmishers, he is in the firing line. (See Fig. No. 3).

44. Advancing the Attack.—Upon receipt of the company attack order, the platoon leader makes an estimate of the situation and issues his preliminary instructions. Unless it is necessary to open fire at once, to continue the advance, the platoon moves forward from the line of departure in approach-march formation, covered by scouts. When the scouts are fired on, they take cover, locate the enemy, and if within effective range, return the fire; if practicable, they outline the enemy position by the use of tracer bullets; that is, bullets which have been treated with a phosphorescent preparation to make them visible to the naked eye. When the scouts are halted by fire, their platoon commander goes immediately to a position from which he can see them, observe the ground to the front, and examine the enemy position. He then decides on a plan of action and assembles the platoon sergeant and the section leaders, if the terrain and the enemy fire permit, to receive their instructions for the attack.

The plan of attack should usually include pinning the enemy to the ground by frontal and flanking fire, under cover of which some portion of the platoon can close with the defense by short rushes. The assault section will build up a firing line on the line established by the scouts. Individuals move up to that line, in order as indicated by the leader, each being covered by the fire of the scouts and other members of the section who have preceded him. The automatic riflemen are among the first who are sent forward to the line of scouts.

If the scouts are in low ground, it will sometimes be advisable to establish the firing line on a commanding elevation in rear. Unless orders have been given not to advance, or else to advance only when directed by higher authority, the leader of an assault section moves his unit forward whenever the fire of the enemy permits. He drives his attack forward with the idea of closing with the enemy in close combat. Advance under fire is effected by successive rushes of fractions of the assault echelon. Enough weapons must continue in action to insure the success of each such movement. Frequently, the successive advance of the assault platoons must be effected by rushes of decreasing size; that is, advance by rushes may at first be made by sections and finally by squads or even files. Where cover is easy to find, particularly when shell holes are numerous, the rushing fractions will often become individuals. The men will move from hole to hole firing and rushing alternately; each will maintain contact with his fellows, responding to the control of his leader, and the general line of squads and sections will thus advance slowly, but more or less regularly through the successive movements of its individual members. A fraction about to rush should move forward when the remainder of the line is firing vigorously; otherwise the chief advantage of this method of advancing is lost. The length of the rush varies from 20 to 40 yards, depending upon the existence of cover, the presence of positions suitable for firing, and upon the hostile fire. A bound of less than 20 yards unduly delays the advance, and a rush of more than 40 yards in combat so tires the average soldier that it is several minutes before he can again deliver effective fire. Successive fractions are not sent forward until the preceding one has established itself on a new line and has started firing. In advancing the attack, no

effort is made to keep straight lines or to maintain any exact interval. Bunching and undue dispersion are, however, avoided.

The rear section is the maneuver unit of the platoon. If the situation is favorable, part or all of this element is used to work around the flanks of the assault section, to get at the flanks of the resistance and to envelop the enemy position. In making a movement against the flanks of a hostile position, the section is protected by its scouts. They will usually afford the best security by being formed into a patrol under a designated leader. The movement is usually made in section or squad columns, and full advantage is taken of available cover. If the maneuver section is fired on, the leader attempts to work the entire section past the resistance and carry out his mission. If he decides that this cannot be done quickly, he attacks the force opposing the section, using one or two squads, and attempts to work the remainder of this unit to a position from which it can attack the platoon target. If only an automatic rifleman and his assistant reach a flank position close to the objective, they may be able to assist materially the other section of the platoon in its effort to reach a point from which it can assault and take the position.

If it is impossible on account of flanking fire from other hostile localities situated to the flanks and rear to reduce a hostile strong-point by enveloping action, the position is captured by frontal attack. In such a case and under cover of a heavy volume of frontal and oblique fire, the assault echelon, reinforced, is pushed forward to a position from which the assault can be launched.

During the attack the platoon leader is bound to no fixed post. He moves so as to observe best the progress of the attack. The section leader is in rear of his section where he can see the enemy and control his unit. He centers his attention on the enemy position. He observes the effect of fire and determines the time to start moving forward, the size of the elements to go, and the routes they will follow. The section guide takes post where he can see the section, especially all squad leaders and still be in touch with platoon headquarters. He should be close enough to the section leader for easy communication by voice. He is not tied to any fixed position. He insures that squad leaders perform their duties; he goes to any one of them who is not properly supervising his squad and indicates corrections or changes to be made. He looks from time to time toward platoon headquarters for signals. He receives all signals from that point and tells the section leader of them. He is responsible for the mechanical functioning of the section while firing. He centers his attention on his own men rather than on the enemy. A squad leader during the attack usually does not take part in the firing. He takes position in the vicinity of his men where he can see the target, control the squad, and be in touch with the section leader. He watches the target to note the effect of fire of the squad. He moves about in rear of the firing line as he sees fit.

Any defensive position will ordinarily consist, not of long trench lines manned at regular intervals by riflemen, but of organized tactical localities which are garrisoned in strength, the intervals between them being relatively lightly held or covered by fire only. The garrisons of such localities will vary from small groups to battalions, but the larger element will in turn be composed of an aggregation of small ones. Hence, in an offensive no matter what its size, the smaller rifle units can expect to encounter a series of points of resistance scattered here and there on the ground, all of them being integrated into one system of mutually

supporting defense posts. Any offensive will thus consist of the successive discovery, attack, and reduction of small defensive groups. As a rule, each such resisting body will have as its nucleus an automatic rifle, or they may consist only of one such weapon, or a pair of them, with their crew or crews. The reduction of such points by a squad, a section, or a platoon proceeds according to the same basic conception. All the available weapons are employed. Existing cover is used to advance the various assault elements as close as practicable to the point attacked. The rifle grenade, from any desirable position within range, opens fire on the defense. Under cover of this fire, when practicable, one or more automatic rifles are advanced to favorable firing positions, perhaps on a flank. The riflemen of the attacking unit, disposed if possible in a half circle about the resisting element, then close by short rushes from cover to cover. The size of the rushing fractions varies as already explained. In a single squad, individuals will move separately. Often this will be the procedure even in sections and platoons. On shell-torn ground, where the artillery has provided numerous convenient holes, individual men will close in by short dashes from hole to hole. Those not in movement at any given time, will cover the others by fire. Expert teamwork will result in only fleeting targets being presented to the defense. Now here, now there, first on this side, then on that, the machine-gunner in his hole will see men bobbing up and dashing toward him, to fall out of sight before he can train the gun upon them. The explosions of the rifle grenades near his position, the steady and accurate fire of the automatic rifle, and the inexorable advance of the riflemen, all these give warning that the near concussion of hand grenades and a rush to close quarters with the bayonet will soon spell the end of the chapter for him unless he surrenders. (See Fig. No. 4).

45. Assault.—The assault is delivered at the earliest possible moment that promises success. A demoralized enemy sometimes leaves his defense when a determined attack is in progress and before he is threatened with the bayonet. In this case, the action to be taken will be indicated by section and platoon leaders. More often, as has already been stated, the enemy will resist with rifle, machine gun, and artillery until the rifle groups close with him and occupy his defenses. The moment of taking up the assault cannot be determined ahead of time. It may be started either by orders of platoon or section leaders, or by one man or a group who get up and begin rushing forward. Of course, it is the duty of the officer and non-commissioned officers in charge of the firing elements of the platoon to decide how and when the assault is to be delivered; but if it is started spontaneously at a time that promises success, the entire assault line should be brought to its feet and launched forward in a coordinated effort.

46. Reorganization.—As soon as a position is taken, the platoon commander provides for protection of his unit and disposes the sections in depth to meet counter-attack. Scouts are sent to the front. In re-grouping units, two squads or groups should be organized as a leading section and a rear group should be formed even though it consists of only one squad. The platoon leader gives his orders for reorganization and then proceeds to make a personal reconnaissance to the front and flanks. The platoon sergeant supervises the reorganization. Section leaders first regain control of their commands, then appoint section guides and squad leaders, if any of these have become casualties. The section guide assists the section leader in reorganizing, personally super-

vising the squads and seeing that all orders are carried out. Squad leaders report casualties to the section leader and replace the automatic rifleman and his substitute if necessary. They also designate new men as scouts if the scouts are casualties, and appoint new seconds in command if the old ones are missing. Ammunition is collected from nearby dead and wounded, and reissued. Prisoners are disposed of in accordance with instruction from higher authority.

47. Pursuit.—When ordered to pursue, the platoon continues to fire on the enemy as long as he is in sight. It then reorganizes and pushes on rapidly. Unit leaders take every measure to prevent looting, skulking, and loitering around any position. The platoon pushes rapidly forward; no regard is paid to alignment; men are detailed to watch the flanks and precautions are taken not to get so far ahead as to become isolated.

SECTION VI

MACHINE GUN AND HOWITZER COMPANY IN ATTACK

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48. Advance in Route Column.—During the advance in route column, the position of the machine-gun and howitzer company is usually in rear of the rifle companies. They are so placed as to facilitate marching rather than for any tactical reason.

49. Approach-march and Deployment.—The position of the machine-gun and howitzer company in the approach-march formation of the battalion is ordered by the battalion commander. It is such as to enable the company to use the best concealed approaches in the battalion zone of action; that is, far enough behind the rifle units to afford protection against surprise fire from advanced hostile detachments, yet close enough to the front to provide prompt support when resistance is encountered. The formation of the machine-gun and howitzer company units in the approach-march corresponds as far as practicable to those adopted by the rifle companies; that is, in small columns. The purpose of assuming such a formation is to conceal the identity of the units as a machine-gun and howitzer organization and to minimize casualties.

Concealed routes for the carts are especially important, as the nature of the transportation discloses the identity of the unit. Guns are kept on their carts as long as possible because they are heavy and carrying them by hand reduces the mobility of the unit. However, under direct observation of the enemy, the guns must usually be carried forward by hand. In this case, carts are kept as close to the guns as practicable. They may be advanced by covered routes not tactically suitable for the guns to follow, or they may be held under cover and advanced as soon as the enemy observers are driven from their position. The company commander precedes his company to reconnoiter the route, to decide when it will be necessary to make changes in formation, to select positions, and to gain information of the situation. If the pla-

toons are assigned separate routes of advance, the company commander so regulates their movements as to insure their readiness for the support of any battalion mission. He furnishes platoons with information of the situation, including the terrain, obtained from the battalion commander, or by reconnaissance made by himself or his reconnaissance officer.

50. Supporting the Attack.—The support of an attack includes covering the advance of the rifle units to their first firing position, and assisting them in the fire fight. One firing position, suitable for both phases, is preferable. However, if hostile fire and lack of concealed approaches prevent the advance to a position well within effective range for the first phase, two or more positions may be necessary. In selecting positions, the probable maneuver of rifle units should always be borne in mind. If available, commanding ground is occupied in order to secure overhead fire. Positions permitting flanking fire are occupied whenever practicable.

All or part of the machine guns of the company may be used in general support of the assault companies in the initial phase of the attack, or a platoon may follow and support each assault company, the surplus platoon, if one, being held in suitable positions for the following purposes: to support the attack by fire on back areas of the enemy position, to protect a flank, to repulse enemy counter-attacks, or to provide security against hostile air attacks. The first method keeps the control of the fire of the entire company in the hands of the battalion commander, and is applicable when commanding positions are available from which the entire battalion front, or an especially important portion of it, can be covered by fire by direct laying.

When adequate support is not practicable from one position, specific platoons are designated to advance and give close support to each assault company. The second method provides closer support for the assault companies, but is not as well adapted to transferring fire to critical points. The manner in which the machine guns of the company support the attack may be varied in accordance with the desires of the battalion commander. At one time it may support the battalion as a unit; later, platoons may directly support assault companies. The battalion commander prescribes the method which the machine guns of the company shall use to support the attack, and the general location of the firing position when the company is employed as a unit; he also assigns such fire missions as will coordinate the fire of the company with his scheme of maneuver for the rifle units.

When the company is engaged as a fire unit, the company commander selects its exact firing position (in the general locality previously selected by the battalion commander) and directs its fire according to the maneuver ordered by the latter. As the attack progresses, the company commander transfers his fire to new targets as determined by the situation confronting the assault units.

When machine-gun platoons are assigned the mission of supporting assault companies, the company commander may select the first targets. The object of this is to insure that the platoons, in addition to supporting the designated assault companies, will be used to further the battalion scheme of maneuver and will be able to assist adjacent units with oblique fire. The company commander, by personal reconnaissance and by utilizing his personnel, keeps in close touch with the assault elements, and makes recommendations to the battalion commander as to

the manner in which the machine guns can best support the attack in the latter stages of the action.

The commander of a machine-gun and howitzer company ordinarily retains command of his machine-gun platoons. The assignment of platoons to support assault companies does not imply the transfer of command over such platoons to the rifle company commanders. However, in some cases, a machine-gun platoon or section may be directly attached to a rifle company, in which cases the platoon or section leader takes all orders directly from the rifle company commander.

51. Advancing the Attack.—To make machine-gun support continuous, the company, when acting as a unit, ordinarily moves forward by platoons, using a leap-frog method. At least one platoon remains in position firing or ready to fire, while the other is moving forward. If the platoons are widely separated, it may be advisable to advance a section from each rather than to send forward a whole platoon. The manner in which the advance will be made is affected by the situation, including the terrain. Platoons and sections ordinarily move from firing position to firing position. The rear platoon or section may either remain in position until the advancing fraction is established in its new position, or they may follow the leading platoon or section at a specified time or upon a prearranged signal. Short moves are avoided, and no movement is begun until it is apparent that the assaulting troops will gain the next firing position. Before the company or any elements of it advances, a careful reconnaissance is made for covered routes and for positions which provide cover and a sufficient elevation to make possible the employment of overhead fire. If no such positions are available, machine guns may have to fire through gaps in the line of riflemen. The reconnaissance officer, accompanied by runners, closely follows the assault echelon and keeps the company commander informed as to the situation, routes, and firing positions. Agents from the platoons keep in touch with the assault companies and provide their platoon leaders with like information.

The first units of the company to arrive at a new firing position are put into action as quickly as possible in any available position which will satisfy the requirements of the situation. As soon as arrangements are made to get the leading units in action against desired targets, steps are taken to bring up the others to positions selected for them.

When the battalion is halted because of resistance encountered, it is necessary to neutralize or destroy the defensive elements before the advance can be resumed. In order to do this and regain fire superiority, all available fire power is employed. All machine guns of the company should be placed in positions from which they can fire on the enemy who has checked the attack. Quick decisions and prompt action are necessary; time should not be wasted in seeking ideal positions. Guns are promptly placed in any available position, even in the firing line, and fire is opened promptly.

52. Assault.—Under cover of the fire of artillery and infantry weapons, the rifle units advance to within assaulting distance of the enemy position. During the assault, the fire of the machine guns is directed against hostile elements in position which enfilade the assault units or else on probable assembly positions of hostile counter-attacking units. When a foothold is secured in the enemy position, steps are taken to move some guns forward promptly to resist counter-attack.

53. Reorganization.—When a position has been taken, and at other times during the progress of the attack, it is necessary on account of

casualties, loss of direction, and disorganization, to halt the battalion and reorganize the assault companies. At moments such as these, the machine guns are particularly valuable to cover the reorganization. Guns are posted to cover the front and flanks of the battalion. Since counter-attack may be expected, it is essential that positions selected have good fields of fire and afford a maximum of security to the disorganized battalion. This will usually require a distribution in depth of the machine-gun units.

During the reorganization, fire superiority may be lost. In such a case, it will be necessary to regain it before the advance may be resumed. Machine guns are specially valuable in regaining fire superiority and assisting the resumption of the advance. In order that all available guns may be employed for this purpose, it will often be necessary to change the position of some of the elements employed in covering the reorganization. The new positions are occupied in time to assist in the preparatory fire. Care is exercised that in moving into new positions guns are not caught enroute by a surprise action of the enemy.

54. Organization of the Ground.—When a battalion has reached its objective, machine guns are employed in a manner similar to that used for covering the reorganization of attack elements. The first duty of the machine-gun unit is to cover the rifle troops for whose protection they have been specially detailed. Platoon leaders, keeping close liaison with rifle company commanders, provide first for the protection of the front and flanks of the particular rifle companies which they have supported. The machine-gun and howitzer company commander, under supervision of the battalion commander, coördinates his machine-gun units in order to cover the front and flanks of the battalion as a whole, and arranges with the machine-gun company commanders of adjacent battalions for mutual flank protection.

SECTION VII

MACHINE-GUN PLATOON IN ATTACK

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55. Approach-march and Deployment.—A machine-gun platoon operates either alone or as a part of the company. So long as the machine-gun company remains intact, a platoon leader maintains control of his command and keeps it in its proper place in the company formation. In order to get the platoon forward with a minimum of losses, he varies its formation in conformity with available cover and the nature of the hostile fire. When the front of the company is extended so that the platoons advance along separate routes, each platoon leader selects his own route of advance under general instructions from the company commander and determines the distance at which his platoon is to follow the rifle companies.

Cover, especially when carts are used, is very desirable, and platoons follow the best concealed routes available. Until the front has been cleared of hostile detachments, a platoon does not usually advance

from a concealed or defiladed position until the rifle units have determined whether the next position in front is occupied by the enemy. It thus follows the rifle units by a series of bounds, and is always ready to assist them in the attack. When hostile fire and lack of cover make it inadvisable to continue the advance with carts, a platoon carries its equipment by hand, using formations and methods similar to those of a rifle platoon. When advancing on an exposed flank of a battalion, a portion of the platoon is so conducted that it can quickly go into position to protect that flank.

56. Supporting the Attack.—The principal mission of machine-gun units is to assist rifle companies to advance. The machine-gun platoon acting alone; that is, when it is itself supporting a particular rifle company instead of acting as a part of a machine-gun and howitzer company supporting the battalion, presents no exception. Another possible mission is to fire obliquely on targets in front of adjacent units. The fire of the platoon is directed on the hostile personnel handling the weapons which are interfering most with the advance of friendly rifle units. This includes fire on low-flying airplanes when they constitute the most serious obstacle to the advance.

To be effective, good firing positions must be utilized. The main consideration in selecting such a position is that fire therefrom will not be quickly masked by the advance of the supported rifle units. Secondary considerations are ease of access to the position, and availability of cover from both fire and observation. The best position is one on commanding ground from which overhead fire by direct laying can be delivered until the supported troops are close to the hostile position. When commanding positions are not available, fire, if used at all, should be delivered through gaps on the line of rifle units. When neither of these courses is open, a platoon advances to and fires from the rifle firing line.

When there is considerable cover, a machine-gun platoon may be able to advance without firing until it arrives at a range from which it can support the rifle units while they are moving into their firing positions, and from which it can assist in the fire fight from this one position. When lack of cover makes it necessary to render early support to rifle units, it may be essential for all or a portion of the platoon to occupy a position at long range from the enemy in order to cover the deployment, advancing later to a closer range to support the attack.

The platoon leader usually precedes his unit in order to reconnoiter routes and firing positions and to determine where changes of formation are necessary. When the company supports the initial attack as a unit, the task of the platoon leader is to cause his command to occupy firing positions in the area assigned and to engage targets or cover the sector ordered by the company commander. When a platoon supports an assault company, the first firing position and targets may be designated by the machine-gun company commander or they may be selected by the platoon leader. In occupying a position, the platoon leader precedes his platoon and the sections are conducted by the platoon sergeant to a point close in rear of the first firing positions. At this point the guns are usually taken from their carts and carried forward by hand.

The platoon leader issues his instructions for the employment of the platoon at or near the first firing position. If he desires the section leaders to leave their sections, he sends a runner back to get them. The runner either conducts the section leaders to the platoon leader or so

indicates his position that they can find him. In his instructions to section leaders, the platoon leader points out the location of the enemy and friendly troops and explains as much of the plan of attack as it is necessary for them to know. He points out the approximate positions of the sections and assigns targets or sectors of fire. When the section leaders go forward, the platoon sergeant superintends the unloading of equipment, sends the squads forward, or holds the platoon under cover, in accordance with the orders of the platoon leader.

57. Advancing the Attack. When the platoon is supporting the attack as a unit of the company, the company commander will usually select new firing positions and routes thereto; he also prescribes when the platoon is to move forward. When a platoon is supporting a rifle company, the platoon leader generally decides these details, and, in addition, the manner in which he will move the platoon forward. The platoon, in its initial position, supports the advance as long as its fire is of value to the advancing troops. When the fire is masked by the advancing friendly troops or when for any reason it is no longer practicable to fire from the position, the platoon leader takes steps to advance the platoon to a new firing position.

The entire platoon may be moved forward at one time, but when supporting an assault company it generally advances one section at a time. The section which remains in position continues to support the attack by firing on suitable targets as long as the safety of friendly troops permits. It remains on the alert, it watches the flanks and the gaps in the line of assaulting troops, and observes for low-flying airplanes. It is ready at all times to meet any hostile counter-attack. It usually remains in position until the advancing section has occupied its new firing position. The platoon leader, when practicable, points out the probable location of the new firing position, prescribes the method of advance, to be used and the general route to be followed, and sometimes designates the time of movement of the sections. One or both sections may be directed to follow him at a certain distance, or he may arrange for their advance by signal or runner. Accompanied by one or more runners, he then goes forward to select the exact route of advance and the exact location of the new firing position. If necessary, he marks the route of advance by runners or by some other method. As a rule, both sections follow the same route.

When the section arrives at the new firing position, the platoon leader indicates its position, designates the targets to be engaged, prescribes the rate and kind of fire, and in general, exercises fire direction as at the initial firing position.

58. Reorganization and Consolidation.—When the attack halts for any reason, it is the duty of the machine guns to cover the front and flanks against counter-attack. The attack may stop at a predetermined objective; it may halt to enable commanders to reorganize their forces which have become scattered during the fighting, or to allow fresh troops to pass through and continue the attack. In any case, great reliance is placed on the machine guns to hold off the enemy while the reorganization is taking place, or while the position being prepared for defense. The positions of the guns in the consolidation are approximately those just previously used in support of the attack, except that rear platoons or sections may be ordered up. Any change in the location of guns or units must be rapid and entail as little movement as possible. All guns should be constantly ready to meet a hostile counter-attack.

SECTION VIII

MACHINE-GUN SECTION IN ATTACK

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59. Approach-march and Deployment.—During the approach, machine-gun sections are under control of the platoon leader. When the platoon is going forward deployed, section leaders prescribe formations best suited to the conditions under which the advance is being made. When under enemy observation, the formation adopted by machine-gun sections conforms to those employed by near-by rifle units. Formation in column is usually preferable, because with from 20 to 100 yards between squads, it has the advantage of requiring reconnaissance and clearing of only a single route of advance. The leading squad clears the route. If the advance is long and the route difficult, squads may be alternated in breaking the trail. When the squads follow in trace, they are not apt to become separated.

For crossing short stretches of open country which are under enemy observation and subject to artillery and long-range machine-gun fire, a line of squad columns with an interval of from 20 to 100 yards between squads is suitable. This formation is better than squads following in trace, because the leading squad will probably draw fire which the rear section may walk into. In employing the line formation, the section leader marches midway between the squads, both of them thus being under his immediate control.

A formation with echeloned squad columns combines deployment and depth. This is useful for a unit crossing open country with scattered cover, and for a unit marching on an exposed flank.

60. Supporting the Attack.—Platoon leaders usually precede their platoons and select the first firing positions. The platoon sergeant conducts the sections to the vicinity of the positions selected and superintends the unloading of equipment; the section leaders go forward to receive their orders for the employment of their sections.

The platoon leader informs the section leaders of the situation, points out the location of the enemy and of friendly troops, and the general positions to be occupied by sections. Each section is either assigned definite targets or a sector of fire.

Section leaders having received their orders proceed to their respective positions. If squads have not already been sent forward by the platoon sergeant, section leaders must return to their units and conduct them forward. As the squads approach, the section leader signals for the squad leaders to join him. He points out the approximate position for their guns and gives them the necessary fire orders. Each squad leader selects the exact position and directs the mounting of his gun. Every precaution must be taken to prevent the enemy from observing the squads as they enter their positions. If the guns are seen they will draw fire, and their installation and operation will be difficult. Natural cover is utilized against fire. The guns of a section are usually located from 20 to 50 yards apart. If good natural cover against fire is available, this distance may be decreased. The carts remain under platoon control

and are located in rear under cover in charge of the transport corporal.

When definite targets are assigned by the platoon leader, section leaders engage these. When sectors of fire are assigned, the section leader directs the fire of his guns on the most important targets which appear in his sector. When targets are obscure, he must diligently observe the enemy's position with glasses to determine organized strong points which are offering resistance to our troops. It may be necessary to search out with fire areas where a machine gun or automatic rifle may be concealed. With fleeting targets appearing and disappearing over a large sector, it may be necessary to assign half of the sector to each gun in order that all the targets may be quickly engaged. The section, however, is the usual machine-gun fire unit, and best results are obtained when the fire of both guns is concentrated on the same target. Surprise is obtained by causing both gun squads to open fire on the signal of the section leader.

On definite targets, fire is opened in bursts of from 10 to 30 rounds in order to destroy them instantly. Small bursts (less than 10 rounds) have little moral or physical effect.

Unless speed in getting the guns into action is extremely important, it is best not to open fire until both guns are in position because the noise of firing will attract attention and the movement of the second gun into position may disclose the location of the section.

Squads take care of their own supply of ammunition and water, carrying them forward when the carts are unloaded. When the distance to the carts is great or there is only one covered route of approach, section leaders combine the carriers of both squads into a single system of supply; in this manner, ammunition is brought forward to a point convenient to both squads.

Machine guns, on account of their effectiveness, always draw enemy fire. If the enemy offers stubborn resistance, it may be necessary to continue firing from one vicinity for a considerable period of time. In such a case, section leaders select alternate firing positions to which the guns may be moved if necessary. While section leaders have no authority to withdraw from a position and abandon their missions on account of enemy fire, they may move their guns to the alternate positions previously selected. Such alternate positions should have the approval of the platoon leader.

61. Advancing the Attack.—Platoon leaders decide when and how their sections will be moved forward to render close support to the advancing riflemen. Usually one section will be moved forward at a time. The section which is first to go forward goes out of action. If carts are to be used in the forward movement, the section leader sends for them, using all available members of his command. While he is waiting for the carts, he has the ammunition collected and the equipment prepared for loading. He prescribes the formation to be used in moving forward. As in the approach-march, covered routes are sought and every effort is made to keep out of the enemy's sight. If under observation of the enemy, guns are usually carried forward by hand, and the section takes up a formation similar to that used by the riflemen who are near it. On arriving in the vicinity of the new position, the section is halted under cover. When practicable, the platoon leader has a runner meet the section and conduct it by the best route. The section leader goes forward, joins the platoon leader, and receives his instructions. The section takes up its position in a manner similar to that described for taking up the initial position.

When one section is left in position, it continues to cover the advance while the other is advancing. It remains in position on the alert until directed to move forward by the platoon commander; this may be at a prescribed time, on a signal, or when the leading section goes into position or opens fire. The platoon commander prescribes the manner in which the section will move forward. In the usual case, greater use may be made of carts than is possible for the leading section. At the proper time, the rear section goes out of action and moves forward; the procedure is similar to that described for the leading section.

62. Reorganization and Consolidation.—When an attack halts for any reason, machine-gun sections continue to give protection from the firing positions in which they are located at the time. Any change in the location of guns must be specifically ordered by the platoon leader.

SECTION IX

HOWITZER PLATOON IN ATTACK

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63. Approach-march.—A howitzer platoon is assigned a position in the formation thereof by the battalion commander, who issues orders for the employment of the howitzer weapons directly to the howitzer platoon commander. In rare cases, these orders may come through the machine-gun and howitzer company commander. The position is usually such as to enable the platoon to use the best concealed route of approach in the battalion zone of action, far enough behind rifle units to provide protection against surprise fire of advanced hostile detachments, but close enough to the front to provide prompt support when hostile resistance is encountered. The formation is adapted to the terrain. When the hostile fire and lack of cover make it inadvisable to continue the advance with carts, the platoon advances its weapons and ammunition by hand, using formations and methods similar to those of a rifle platoon. The platoon leader ordinarily precedes his platoon to reconnoiter routes and firing positions and to determine where changes of formation are necessary.

64. Supporting the Attack.—The main mission of the platoon is to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's fire by combating his machine guns. The 37^m gun engages machine guns which are definitely located. The 3-inch mortar searches areas in which machine guns are known to be located when their positions have not been determined with sufficient accuracy for the 37^m gun to be effective against them. In addition, the 37^m gun fires on tanks and the 3-inch mortar, on counter-attack forming positions which cannot be reached by other weapons. When there has been an opportunity to bring up extra ammunition, the 3-inch mortar may also be used to bombard important points in the hostile position.

Positions should be near good observation points to permit constant search for hostile machine guns, observation of fire on them, and observation of the progress of the supported troops. Firing positions in the front line are objectionable. Such are selected only when there are no suitable positions in rear. Both weapons must be concealed. The 37^m is located on commanding ground. In a great many cases, it is necessary for it to fire over the heads of friendly troops in order to de-

molish enemy machine guns. The best location for this gun is just below the crest on the reverse slope where, while the piece is defiladed, the observer can see the target from the gun position. The 3-inch mortar is located to take advantage of all cover available, consistent with having an observer in the vicinity of the mortar. Natural concealment is best, such as a position behind a steep hill, in a sunken road, in a ravine, or in a pit. Whenever possible, both weapons are located so that there will be covered approaches for the ammunition carts close to the gun positions and so that the carriers can move the ammunition from the carts to the gun without being exposed to view. The guns are located close enough together to enable the platoon leader to control their action and yet far enough apart so that the hostile fire on one of them will not seriously affect the other.

During the progress of the attack, the howitzer platoon engages suitable targets as they appear, first ascertaining that its fire is not masked by friendly troops. As all the ammunition carried can be expended in a short time, it should be conserved for the principal mission of the platoon, and fire should be reserved for use against appropriate targets of primary importance.

65. Advancing the Attack.—When the assaulting companies advance beyond the limit to which they can be supported by the howitzer weapons, these latter are moved forward rapidly to another position to support the advance further. They move by carts if practicable; if not, then they are carried by hand. The advance of the platoon during the progress of the attack is usually by bounds. It occupies any given firing position as long as the assault companies can be effectively supported therefrom. It then moves rapidly forward to another. The platoon leader precedes his command to its new position. He instructs his units in the following points before he goes forward: any changes in the tactical situation, whether the platoon is to follow at once or whether it is to remain in its present position and advance on signal or order. If the platoon is to follow at once, he prescribes the route it will take, the place where it will halt or receive further orders, and also the point, if determined, where the carts will halt. He reconnoiters the new position and the route thereto, and endeavors to have firing data determined and all arrangements made for putting the platoon in action as soon as it arrives.

66. Reorganization and Consolidation.—The howitzer platoon weapons are the chief defense of the battalion against enemy machine guns. When the advance of the battalion is halted for reorganization or to consolidate a position, the howitzer platoon weapons are disposed to oppose possible counter-attacks against the front and flanks of the battalion. Howitzer platoon weapons are specially valuable in gaining fire superiority by keeping down the fire of enemy machine guns, either initially, or after a reorganization, or when resistance is encountered.

SECTION X

HOWITZER PLATOON SECTIONS IN ATTACK

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67. Approach-march.—The idea governing the formation of the howitzer platoon sections in the approach-march is to advance the weapons with a minimum of losses in the shortest time. The initial formation is prescribed by the platoon leader, but section leaders are responsible for the maneuvering of their sections to take full advantage of the terrain.

68. Supporting the Attack.—The platoon leader prescribes the first firing position. Section leaders fix exact locations of their weapons. Each weapon, if practicable, is so located that it can cover the entire battalion zone of action and those features of the terrain outside the zone from which the enemy can fire on the battalion.

If it is not possible to obtain such a position, one is selected from which the weapon can cover that part of the battalion zone which contains the most probable targets. In such a case, other nearby positions are chosen from which the remainder of the battalion sector can be covered by fire. These latter are called supplementary positions. All positions selected, whether for the 3-inch mortar, or the 37^m gun, must be well concealed.

The 3-inch mortar, being a weapon using high-angle fire, is well adapted to firing from defiladed positions. Such positions will be used whenever available.

The 37^m gun has a flat trajectory; to be used most effectively, it must be located on commanding ground. Such a position is necessary to enable the guns to fire without endangering the supported riflemen and also to cover the entire zone of action of the battalion. The nature of the fire delivery of this weapon makes it difficult to conceal. Natural cover, such as wood, a thicket, tall grass, a fold in the ground, or a shell-hole, is the most suitable position. A very desirable position is one on a reverse slope, near the crest, where the gun is hidden from the view of the enemy, but not so far down the slope that the target cannot be seen from the gun.

Both weapons are located near defiladed or covered approaches, if practicable, in order to facilitate ammunition supply, and communication to the rear.

For the howitzer platoon weapons, alternate positions are not only selected but are also prepared for use. This is particularly necessary in the case of the 3-inch mortar because it takes some time to install the base plate for firing. These alternate positions should have the same field of fire as the original ones, but should be far enough away from them to avoid receiving fire directed at the original or primary positions. They are provided for use when hostile artillery or other fire makes the original place untenable.

As with any other fire unit, it is necessary that the leader be in position to observe the effect of fire and to control the unit. Section leaders, therefore, select positions from which they can easily observe and control the fire of their respective weapons. If practicable, the observer should be at the gun. If this is not practicable, a position on or near the line gun-target, either in front or in rear of the gun, is desirable to facilitate the preparation of firing data and to control the fire. The observation position should conceal the observer and if practicable, afford cover from fire.

The supply of ammunition for both weapons is maintained by the ammunition squad which brings the ammunition to points near the weapons, whence it is carried forward by members of the gun sections. Six rounds of 3-inch mortar ammunition and one box (or 16 rounds) for

the 37^m/_m gun are held in reserve to be fired only on the orders of the platoon leader.

It is possible to use in a short time all the ammunition supplied for the howitzer platoon weapons. The selection of suitable targets is therefore of the utmost importance. The accuracy of its fire and the small area of burst of its projectile make it desirable to employ the 37^m/_m gun against relatively small targets. As has been said, machine guns which are definitely located fall within this class and are the principal targets of this weapon. Tanks are also appropriate and should be fired on whenever they appear within short range. Other targets which may be engaged are troops in close formation, a skirmish line which can be enfiladed, enemy small cannon, accompanying artillery, observation posts, and snipers. The tactical situation determines whether these targets are important enough to justify the expenditure of ammunition.

The great value in the mortar lies in the large area covered by the burst of its shell. Its principal targets are machine guns, accompanying artillery, light mortars, and similar weapons, which have not been definitely located, but whose general location is known; counter-attacks and areas, particularly woods and ravines, known to be occupied by enemy troops, are also suitable targets. In addition to firing at targets, mortars may be used to lay down smoke screens in front of small areas and to provide local barrages for short periods of time.

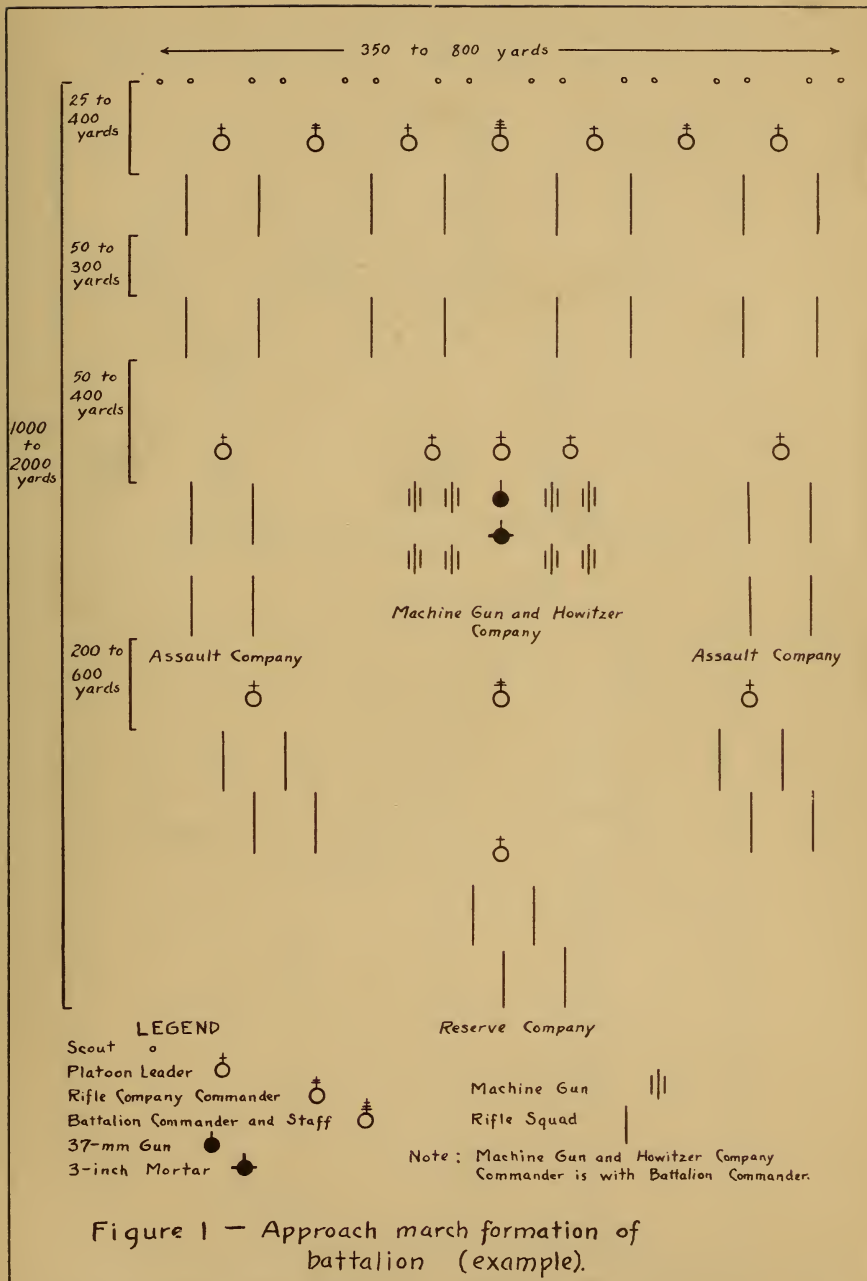
In extreme emergencies when the fire of the entire battalion must be used, both weapons fire at any target on which they may have material effect.

69. Advancing the Attack.—After the attack is once initiated, howitzer platoon weapons should either be in position firing, ready to fire, or in movement forward to a new position. Since it is seldom practicable to locate the two weapons close together, section leaders must be trained to recognize suitable targets for their own arm, and to engage these objectives whenever they can be fired at without endangering the troops who are being supported. The movement forward is regulated by the platoon leader. This movement is made by bounds from one firing position to another. This movement is made on carts when possible, care being exercised to take full advantage of covered routes and to get the guns forward to their new position as soon as practicable. Guns are moved forward so as always to be within supporting distance of the rifle units. The platoon leader orders the movement, but section leaders anticipate the order and prepare to move without delay.

70. Assault.—Howitzer platoon weapons may be employed with or without the fires of artillery and machine guns, to cover the advance of rifle units to within assaulting distance of the enemy position. Fire ceases or is changed to other targets when it endangers the advancing riflemen. The time at which the fire should cease, the moment when new targets should be engaged, or a definite signal indicating a desire for such a change, should be known by the section leaders in order to cause prompt cessation of fire on the target being assaulted.

71. Reorganization, and Organization of the Ground.—When a position has been taken, both guns are employed to repel counter-attack by firing on machine guns and other weapons supporting the latter. They also fire on the attacking troops when the latter present suitable targets. The mortar is employed to fire on areas in which it is believed enemy troops are concentrating to initiate a counter-attack.

The material used in this text was taken from Training Regulations and from Special Text No. 11, Army Extension Courses, modified to conform with Marine Corps organization.



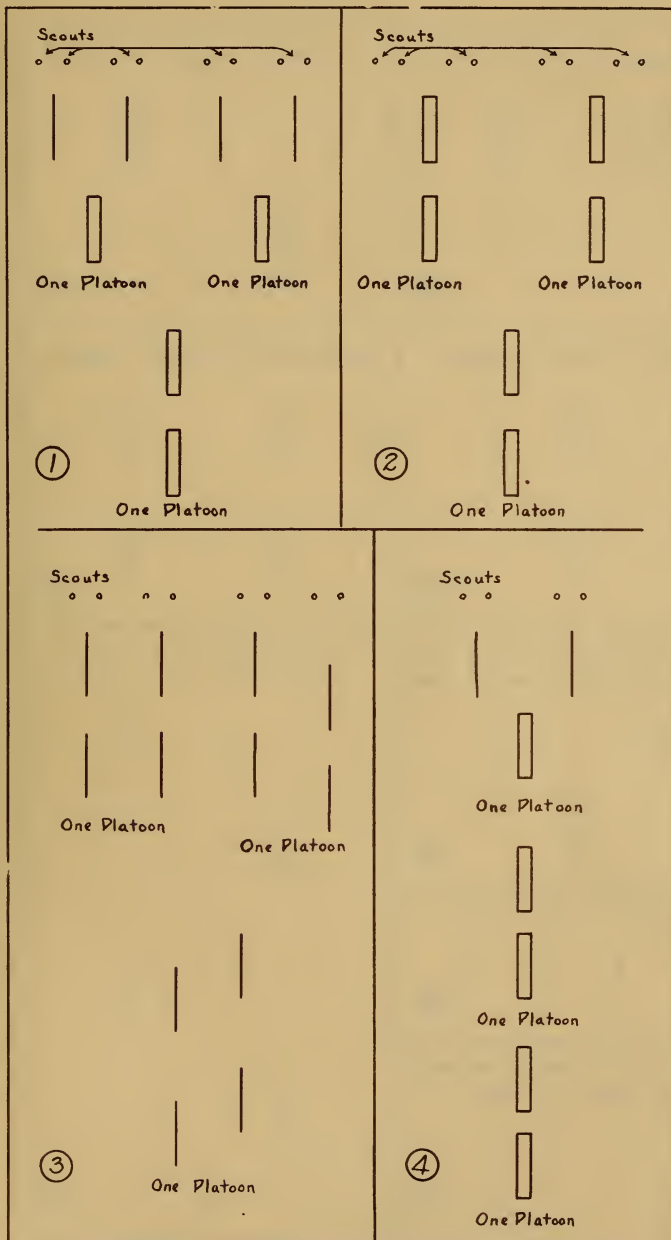


Figure 2 - Approach march formations of rifle company (examples)

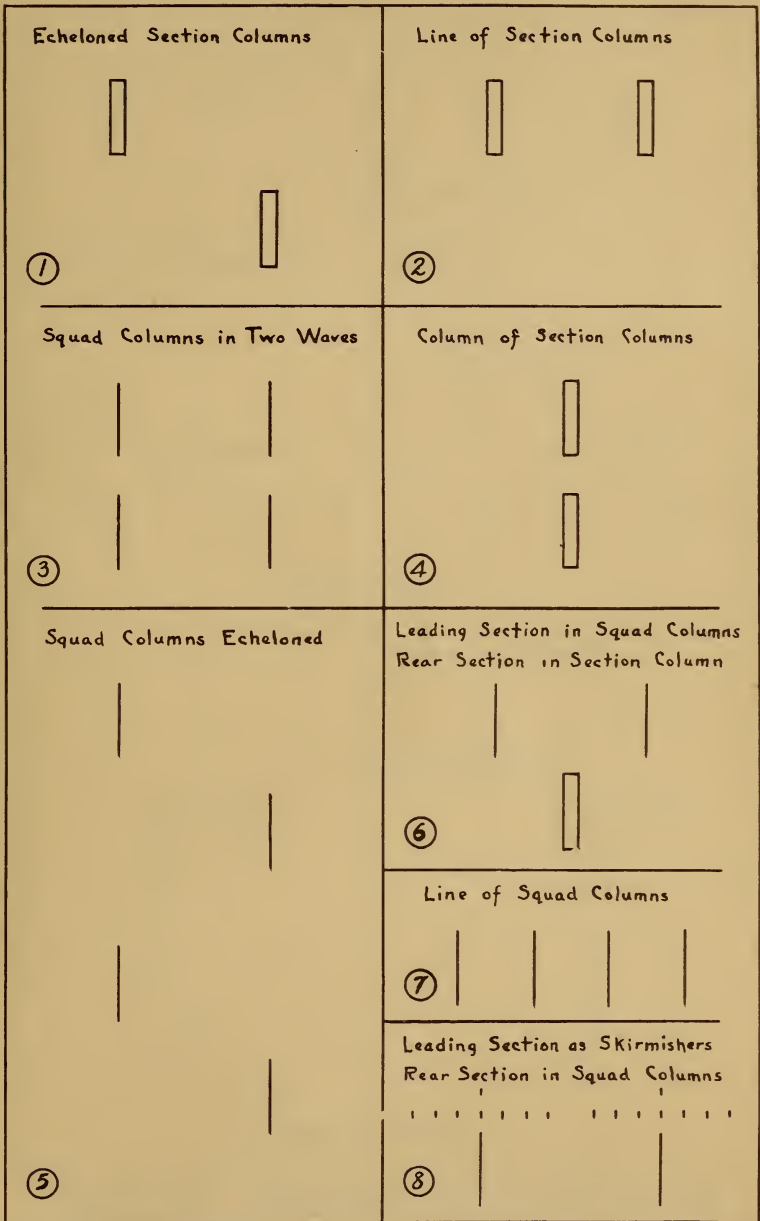


Figure 3 - Approach march formations of rifle platoon (examples).

Figure 2. Diagrams showing the arrangement of the various parts of the apparatus.



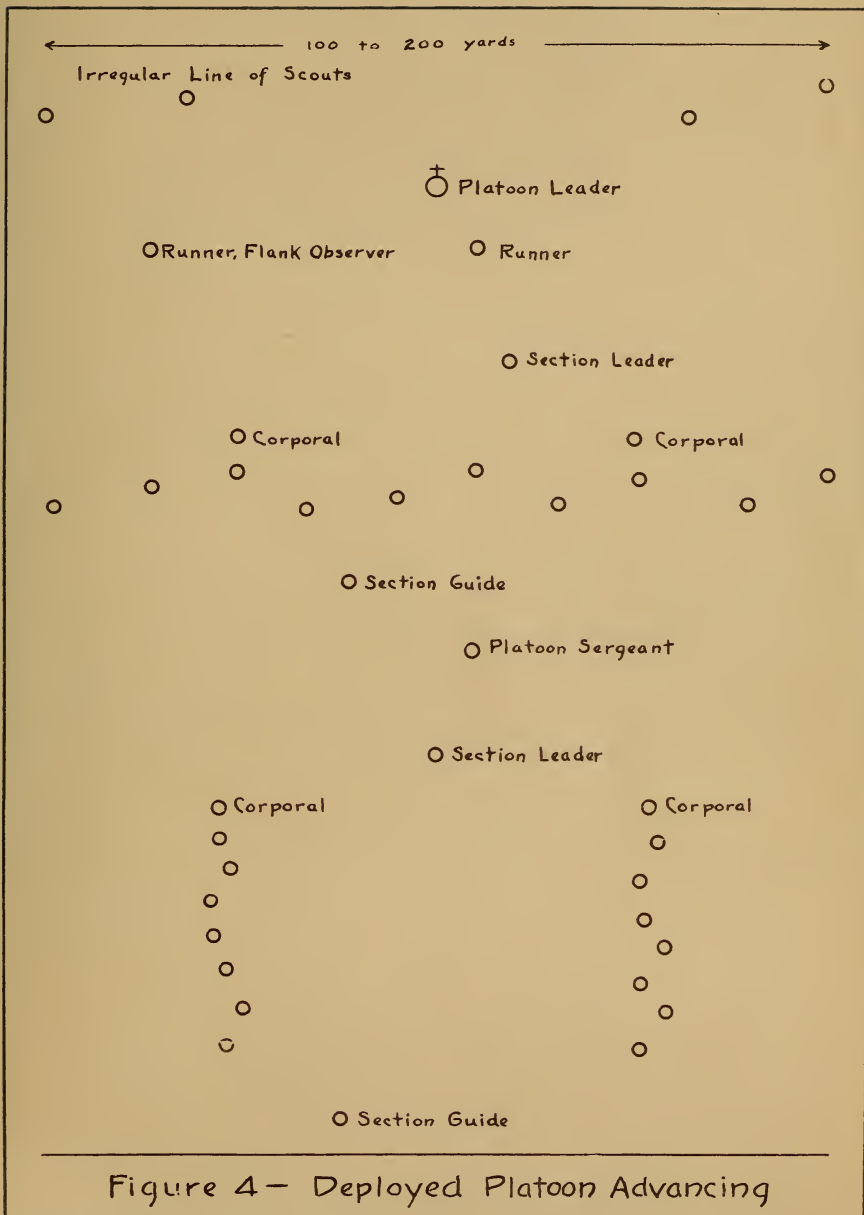


Figure 4— Deployed Platoon Advancing

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