

Appx VIII

File 3-6

COY DEFENCE AND WITHDRAWAL SCHEME

8

OBJECT

To exercise one Inf. Coy with A Echelon Tpt. and with under command one sec. 3" Mortars and one sec. M.M.Gs in taking up a defensive posn in anticipation of a tactical withdrawal to a concentration area.

LESSONS

- (1) Siting of defensive localities and org. of fire plan
- (2) Org. of W Recce parties.
- (3) The necessities in withdrawal orders.
- (4) Method of conducting a withdrawal making full use of supporting arms under command.

GENERAL IDEA

The Battle of Sussex has been raging for two days. The enemy made bridgeheads at NEWHAVEN and BEXHILL we hold EASTBOURNE and PEVENSEY. At dusk on D 2 the Bde Cdr. receiving information of a probable enemy move EAST from NEWHAVEN decides to contact the defence of EASTBOURNE R.H.C. are holding the line incl. EXEAT BR(9418) to incl THE MARES (9415) with three coys fwd. The Bde Cdr. orders O.C. RHC to withdraw to a defensive posn on an intermediate line incl Rd. JUNC. 986170 to incl C.G.STATION. 9814 during night D2/D3 and to hold this line until 1100hrs D3 then to withdraw into reserve in EASTBOURNE.

SPECIAL IDEA

Your Coy is the centre Coy of the Bn. with 3 coys forward. The Bn is in position on the line RD. JUNCTION 986170 to incl. C.G. Station 9814 by 0130hrs. At 0230 hrs the C.O. summons his O.Gp. and issues his orders of which the following is an extract.


"The enemy will probably not attempt to cross, the RIVER CUCKMERE until dawn. There is one squad of the Recce Bn in front of us, and who will withdraw through us by 1000hrs. Carrier Pl. and ACK ACK Pl. will hold an intermediate line from exclusive Rd. Junc 011170 to Hotel 0214. Carrier Pl comd. will command this force, the positions will be occupied by 1015 hrs and the line will be held until 1215hrs All troops will report through this line.

Our foremost defended localities will be held until 1100hrs.

Thinning out will commence at 1015hrs.

Transport: All transport less one 15 cwt per coy must clear BIBLING GAP by 1015 hrs. and proceed by BIRLING GAP/EASTBOURNE RD to Bn transport R.V. One remaining 15 cwt must clear BIRLING GAP not later than 1015hrs. Bn Check point Rd. Junc. 024163.

Bn H.Q. closes its present position at 1045 hrs reopens same time at "CLOONA HOUSE".

 Major
2 i/c 1st Bn The Black Watch
(RHR) of Canada, O/S

WAR DIARY COPY.

1st Bn The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada, Overseas.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

BW 2-7
28th Feb 1942.

Umpire,
5th Cdn Inf Bde.

COMPANY DEFENCE AND WITHDRAWAL SCHEME
22726 Feb 42

The following report is submitted on the above exercise.

1. No company seemed to have the right attitude of mind towards a withdrawal, i.e., there was a tendency to regard it as a retreat and the offensive spirit was lacking.
2. The full use of W. Recce parties was not always made. In all except "B" Coy's case sec. and Pl. R.V.s were neglected and pls. moved off to the Coy R.V. in loose formation without Pl commanders having full control.
3. "A" & "B" Coys both made full use of their secs of MMG's and mortars to assist in the withdrawal. The other two coys failed to realize the extreme value of these weapons in an operation such as was being carried out.
4. Intermediate posns were not reccecd and "D" Coy was very slow in taking action, when fired upon in the withdrawal.
5. The defensive posns taken up in the initial stage lacked depth. This was in all cases caused by the Coy Commanders desire to cover the reentrant running up the centre of his area. Actually this reentrant could be very well covered by the flank Pls. leaving the third Pl as reserve in depth.
6. No coy reccecd alternative posns, although this was perhaps excusable as the posn held was only an intermediate one.
7. It is natural that this exercise should not have been so acceptable to the men. The discussions afterwards, however, produced plenty of questions from all ranks and I am sure that several major lessons were learned and the time was not wasted.
8. "B" Coy were by far the best coy in this exercise. I consider this was largely due to the good VERBAL ORDERS given out by the Coy Commander. I suggest that a great deal of practice is required in giving out clear and concise orders by all Commanders.

J. Deather

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