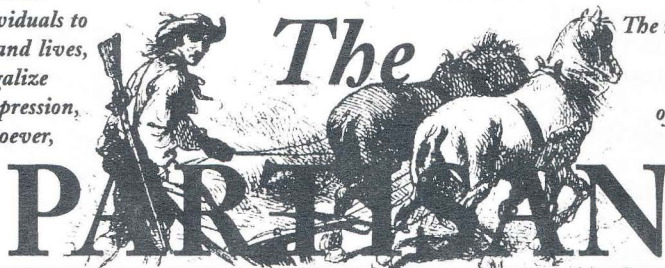


The legal effect of these constitutional recognitions of the rights of individuals to defend their property, liberties, and lives, against the government, is to legalize resistance to all injustices and oppression, of every name and nature whatsoever, on the part of government.

Lysander Spooner, 1852



The military value of a partisan's work is not measured in the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching.

John S. Mosby

DEFENSE OF HOUSES

by
Colonel G.A. Wade, M.C.

The Resister is reproducing a series of pamphlets from our tactics library that were written for the Home Guard during World War II. This first entry, *Defense of Houses*, will be followed by similar others in this year's edition. Pay close attention to the lessons imparted by this series of pamphlet reprints. The men who wrote them did this for a living and they didn't get their information from the Mail Order Militia, video tapes, the anarchnet, or short wave. It's time for those who never rose beyond Specialist 4th Class to stop pretending to be militia generals and start paying attention to what they'll need to know to be good privates led by professionals who are singularly unimpressed by you and your "movement." So, take your unearned stars off your unissued uniform collar. It's time to get "serious." And that means, sit down, shut up, and pay attention.

This is a very important subject and one which well repays a little earnest study. When the enemy invades us the most stubborn fighting will be in the built-up areas where their tanks will not be able to help them much, and if in these places the houses have been scientifically prepared for defense it may make all the difference to the result, and in any case will have considerable influence upon the casualties suffered by the defending forces.

Houses are found in infinite variety. Some are very suited for defense, others are absolute death traps.

Frequently, the tactical situation will demand that a certain house, or houses, will have to held regardless of suitability. In this case we have to improve them as much as possible with the means at our disposal.

Sometimes, however, we may be able to choose which house or houses we intend to defend, and when we have a choice the following are the

chief considerations which should influence us in making our decision.

The Tactical Situation

Is the house where, if held, it will best assist the general defense scheme? Possibly the intention is to defend a road block or an important road junction, and in this case a house must be chosen which is placed so that adequate fire can be brought to bear upon the tactical point.

It may be that several houses are equally good from this standpoint, so the one should be chosen which is best in the following respects: —

(1) Is it Strong?

Houses vary tremendously, and

when assessing the strength of a building remember that close range machine-gun fire is very penetrative, as a number of bullets will hit exactly the same brick.

Each successive bullet starts penetrating where the previous left off and a long burst will consequently eat its way through quite a lot of masonry. The house may be subjected to aerial bombing, trench-mortaring, or artillery fire, consequently the stronger it is the better.

Usually, the newer the house the less robust it is; in fact, most of the modern houses surrounding our towns seem to have been erected by the Fifth Column specially to act as traps for the defenders.

From this standpoint, the expression "Jerry builder" has acquired a new and sinister significance!

(2) Has it a Cellar?

A cellar is very desirable. It can be made safe and is where stores, ammunition, water, candles, etc., can be stored and where wounded may be kept pending evacuation.

(3) Are its Surroundings Suitable?

The house will be a difficult proposition to defend if there are covered approaches to it on several sides and no reasonable field of fire.

By "reasonable field of fire" I do not mean several hundred yards. In some circumstances 50 or

Houses are found in infinite variety. Some are very suited for defense, others are absolute death traps.

100 yards will be as good as you can hope for.

If the building to be defended harmonizes with its surroundings and is not conspicuous, so much the better.

Another factor in the surroundings is the means of approach, and

departure. Where it is possible to move into and out of the house under cover from enemy observation this might be an enormous advantage to the defense.

You must also carefully study the surroundings to see if there is any dominating point such as a neighboring high building or hill from which the enemy could bring close-range fire to bear.

A garden in which trenches could be dug for protection against bombing is always an asset.

Frequently a splendid place to select a house is in a ROW! Do not select end houses if you can help it, as they are so liable to be punished by the enemy's mortars and machine-guns. If only one or two houses in a row are occupied the enemy has to find out *which* they are and that will cost him in casualties. A house which is set back from the other buildings in the row frequently offers advantages for the defense (Plate 1).

(4) Is it where it can be Supported?

There may be other defended houses in the locality an mutual protection might be arranged from one house, but not from another. This is a most important point (Plate 2).

Three or four defended houses sited so as to be mutually supporting are worth a dozen houses defended independently.

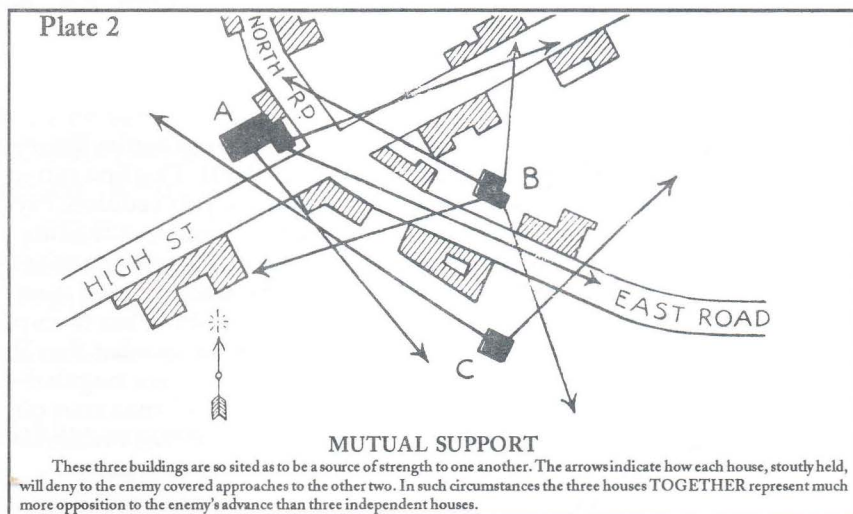
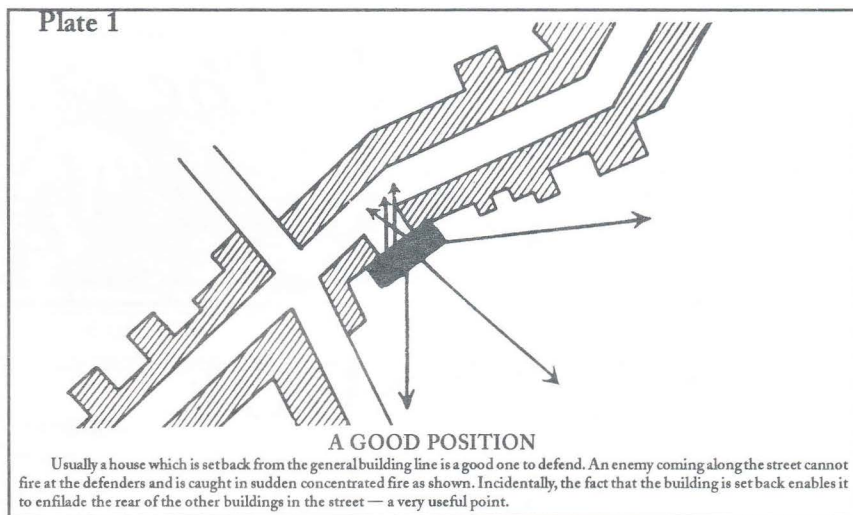
(5) Is it Capable of All-round Defense?

When you have decided which house or houses you will hold you should first of all consider them from the enemy's point of view and imagine from which direction he will attack and what tactics he will use. This will influence you in deciding where you will arrange your loopholes, you wire, your booby traps, your alarms, and your general welcome for the strangers.

Remember above all things that the house must be capable of being defended from EVERY DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES.

If it is in the center of a row, loopholes should be put through the walls into the houses on either side.

Well, having duly considered all these points and decided on which house you will defend and from which direction attack will most probably



come, we now have to begin improving it by all kinds of engineering work. First of all, let us arrange:

The Loopholes

There should be an ample number of loopholes so that when a man has fired from one, and thereby possibly given away his position, he can move to another one before the enemy takes retaliatory action. The most effective loopholes are usually those nearest to the ground. A loophole in the corner of the building is strong and useful (Plate 3).

Try to get loopholes in *unexpected places* (Plate 4), such as under the overhanging eaves, just below windows, at ground level and do on (Plate 5). See that it is possible for a rifleman to get his muzzle well back from the loophole (Plate 6). Many a good

man has gone west because an enemy sniper using glasses or telescopic sights has picked up the dull glint of his protruding muzzle.

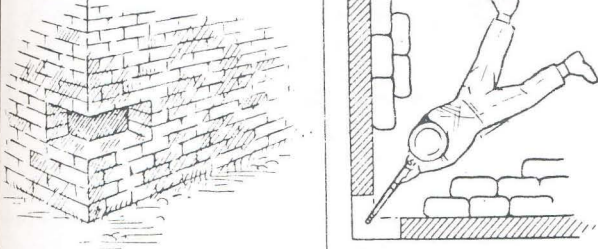
Incidentally, if you ever capture a house from the enemy NEVER USE THE ENEMY'S LOOPHOLES; if you do, you will be asking for it.

Loopholes, particularly those which are low down, should be fixed up with a wire-netting cover to stop grenades (Plate 7). Take every care to ensure that no light of any kind shows through the loophole to an observer outside, otherwise a man will have his head silhouetted when he mans the loophole and he will not live long (Plate 8).

All around the loophole should be made absolutely bullet-proof with sandbags or steel plate, and in each one should be placed a half-filled sandbag for the rifleman to rest his weapon on.

An excellent ruse is to have a few

Plate 3

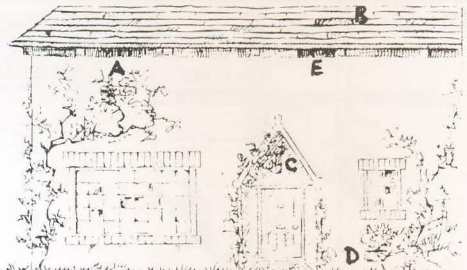


PLAN

A CORNER LOOPHOLE

Frequently the corner of a building affords an unusually good field of fire. In the illustration the loophole is very obvious. Actually it would be camouflaged in some way, such as two bushes in front of it with space to fire under or between them; or a large piece of ivy can be transplanted from a neighbouring house to climb over it. Note the rifleman is well protected by sandbags.

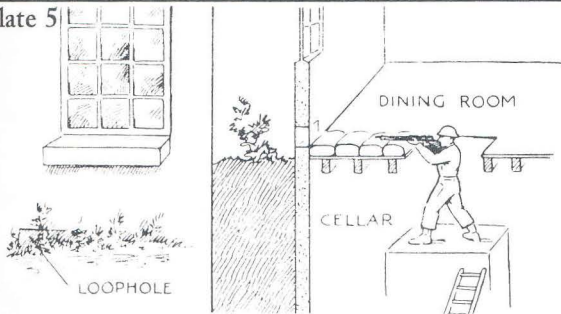
Plate 4



LOOPHOLES IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

A—Loophole behind creeper.
 B—A few tiles have been lifted on roof. In this case the same thing should be done in several places or dark patches should be painted on roof as dummy loopholes.
 C—Loopholes under shadow of porch, over the door.
 D—Loophole at ground level behind bush.
 E—You will see this under the eaves. Dummies should be painted all along under the gutter. Here is an illustration of the axiom, "If you cannot entirely conceal it, make dummies like it."

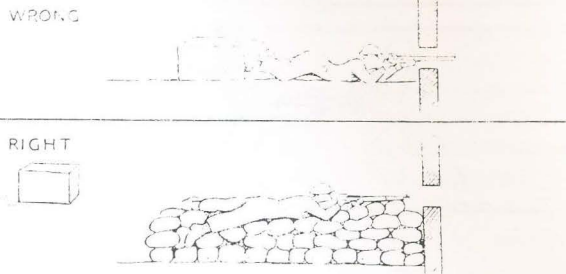
Plate 5



A WELL PLACED LOOPHOLE

On the left you will see the loophole cunningly concealed by the flowers in the border. On the right is a section of the house showing the dining-room and the cellar below. The floor has been cut away to enable the rifleman to pop up from the cellar and fire. You will observe that the man is practically below ground when firing, but even the small part of him which is exposed has been protected with FOUR sandbags! Attention to detail like this will cut down the casualty list.

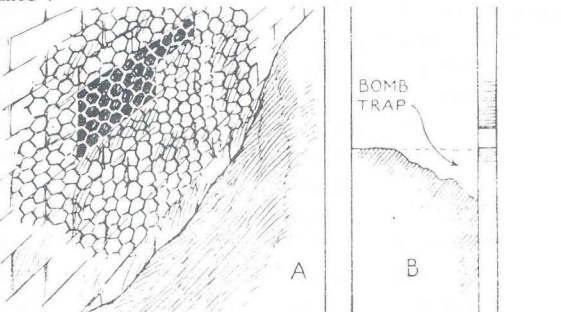
Plate 6



MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE

The top man is too idle to move the box, so he has to push his muzzle right out into the enemy's view. All we can do with that type of man is to hope his end will be painless. The lower man is well back from the loophole, has arranged sandbags to rest his rifle on and protect him from the front. Not only that; as he is upstairs he has taken precautions against upward fire from below.

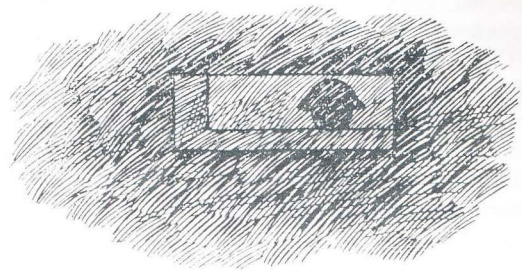
Plate 7



GUARD AGAINST HAND GRENADES

There is always wire netting available near houses and some of this should be firmly nailed round loopholes, particularly low ones. If the loophole is actually at ground level a trench for the grenade to explode in after it has rolled off the netting should be arranged as shown to the right. Unless you do this, fragments of the grenade may enter the loophole.

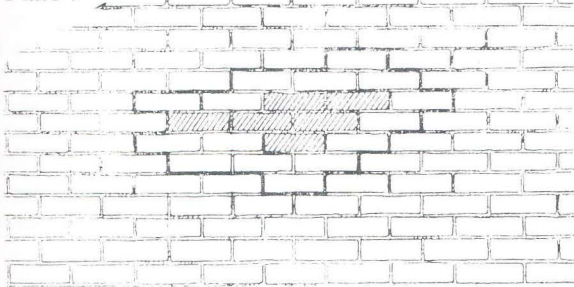
Plate 8



A FATAL ERROR

A simple sketch, but a tragic one. It shows how hundreds of good men have brought about their own deaths. It may be light from another loophole, it may be from the door, or a candle, or EVEN A CIGARETTE! The enemy sniper, waiting patiently, sees the head silhouetted in the loophole, aligns his sight and squeezes the trigger. A blanket hung behind the look-out's head would have prevented this tragedy.

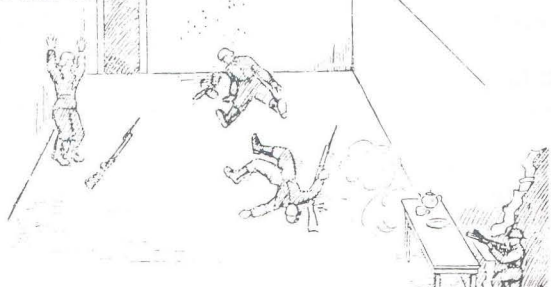
Plate 9



TO CAMOUFLAGE A LOOPHOLE

Knock out the loophole, irregular in shape. Nail open canvas, gauze or perforated zinc over it as shown. Trim so that the edge camouflage material comes on the joints between bricks and then paint to match the bricks and mortar. You will be astonished how transparent this is from inside and how difficult to detect from outside. If you have great difficulty in matching the walls exactly try painting the wall to match the camouflage.

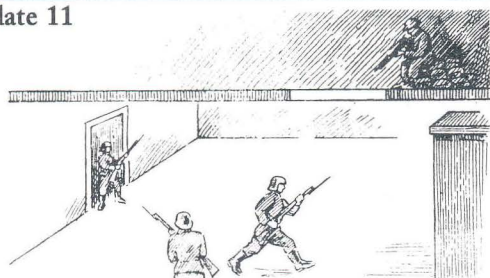
Plate 10



LOOPHOLE THE INSIDE WALLS

In the above case a loophole has been knocked through the wall between two rooms, and the table has been placed to hide it. The wall is shown cut away in the drawing so that you can see the man who has just bagged "right and left" with buck-shot from a 12-bore. Incidentally, if the invader on the left could see the expression on the hidden defender's face as he reloads he would not stand with his hands up. He would be through the door like a rabbit!

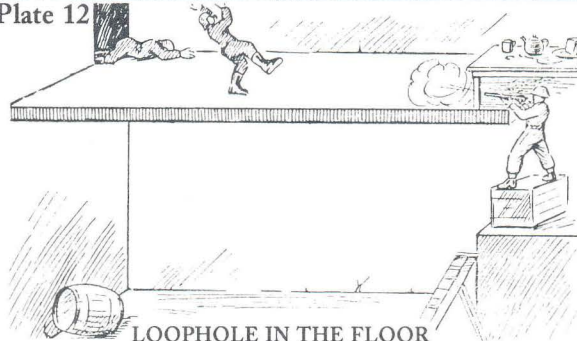
Plate 11



A CEILING LOOPHOLE

A hole has been made in the ceiling and butter-muslin has been stretched tightly over it. The man in the dark cockloft can see everything in the room below, but the loophole is not obvious. The Boches are searching the house for a man they have seen, and the one on the right is just shouting "I'll bet the pig-dog is in the wardrobe." As it happens, the pig-dog is only waiting for the third man to get into the room. Then he will fire three point-blank shots. Having done this he knows exactly what he will do, i.e., run along the cockloft to the next house, steal downstairs to the cellar and pop up again in Plate 12, where he has prepared another surprise.

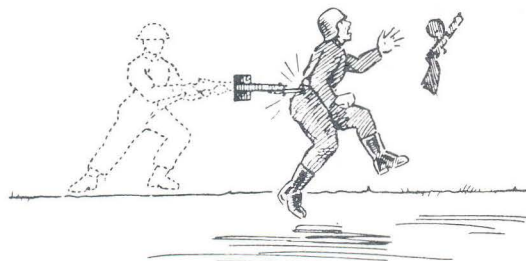
Plate 12



LOOPHOLE IN THE FLOOR

Having popped up through a hole in the floor under the dining table the defender has seen two Boches enter the room. He has just, very sensibly, bumped off the one near the door first and is now scoring a dead centre on the other. After this he will not wait to see what happens, but he will go up the coal-chute (he has loosened the grating), along the entry and through two houses back to the Platoon Keep for tea. Everything has been planned beforehand, including his get-away.

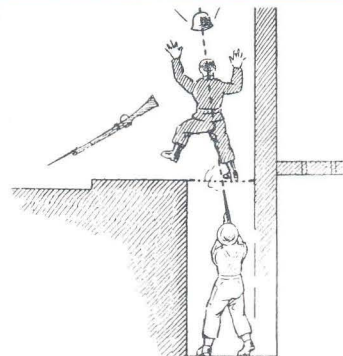
Plate 13



THE BAYONET LOOPHOLE

Useful for defence of passages and entries. The bottom of the loophole should be about three feet six inches from the ground. The dotted soldier has just struck through the wall and hit the German in the kidneys. He will probably drop without a sound. The Bayonet man then gets ready for the next invader, who is unlikely to have seen exactly how Fritz has been killed and consequently will advance past the loophole with his eyes glued to the front.

Plate 14



HOW TO SHOOT A GERMAN UP THROUGH THE GRATING

After waiting amongst the coal the Home Guard heard the German tip-toeing along the street. When he was over the grating the Home Guard let him have it! A shot-gun is all right for this close work, but if you want to knock their helmets off you must use a rifle.

dummies with strings attached which can be made to move so as to be **JUST FAINTLY VISIBLE** in the loophole. And this reminds me to warn you about something — every loophole is a source of danger to those in the house because at any moment a bullet may come flying through it into the room. You should therefore be sure that sandbags filled with shingle¹ are arranged behind each loophole to prevent this.

Take precautions to prevent smoke by day and light by night from issuing from the loopholes. This is a point easily overlooked and it may tell the enemy everything he wants to know.

All loopholes should be so arranged that a grenade can be thrown **OUT** through them; if necessary a flap should be left in any wire netting put over them.

With a crowbar and sledge-hammer it is possible to loophole a 14-inch wall in three minutes, so do not be mean with them. It is good to have plenty, provided, of course, that they are not obvious to the enemy.

If the house happens to be a fur-

nished one you may be able to fix one or two mirrors at loopholes so that a man can sit in safety and watch what is happening outside. When you do this, be sure it is *dark* inside the room and that the mirrors cannot move so as to reflect the light from outside.

Loopholes can be camouflaged in lots of ways, one of the best being to cover the loophole with perforated zinc of the kind used to keep flies out of meat stores, or with gauze or wide-mesh canvas, and get somebody with artistic ability to paint it like the surrounding bricks and mortar. Perfectly astounding results can be obtained in this way, it being impossible to detect the loophole at twenty yards' distance and yet from inside the room (which **MUST** be kept dark) a perfectly clear view of the enemy can be obtained (Plate 9).

Where it is difficult to hide the loopholes, a checker pattern painted all over, like the old-fashioned forts, will help considerably.

So far we have talked only about loopholes through the outside walls of buildings, but a few loopholes actually inside the house to enable fire

to be brought to bear from one room into another will help tremendously should the Germans succeed in forcing an entry (Plate 10). Loopholes through floors also have their uses, either for firing down into the room below (Plate 11) or up into the room above (Plate 12).

A bayonet loophole at the side of a passage may be invaluable. If an enemy comes along the passage he can be disposed of *without a sound*. The bayonet loophole should be small and about 3 ft. 6 in. from the ground to enable the enemy to be struck in the kidneys just after he has passed (Plate 13).

Sometimes there are gratings in pavements and passages which can be used as loopholes for upward shots (Plate 14).

Incidentally, never, if you can help it, fire over the top of a wall where your head will be very obvious. A loophole low down is much safer.

A terrible obstacle in house-to-house fighting is a loopholed traverse (Plate 15). If it is well sited and strongly made, it is exceedingly difficult to pass when a determined man

is behind it.

If you are siting a loophole where the enemy may occupy some place either above or below and fire into it from close to, be sure to site the firing position well back (Plate 16).

Should there be one side of the house where your defenses are weak and you are anxious that the enemy should not choose it for his attack, make a few moderately obviously loopholes there. The sight of these may induce him to attack one of the other sides, which will suit you a lot better.

That covers loopholes. As a matter of fact, they are very interesting things, and I have just mentioned twenty-six points in connection with them. When you come to study them you will discover twenty-six more.

Shoring Up

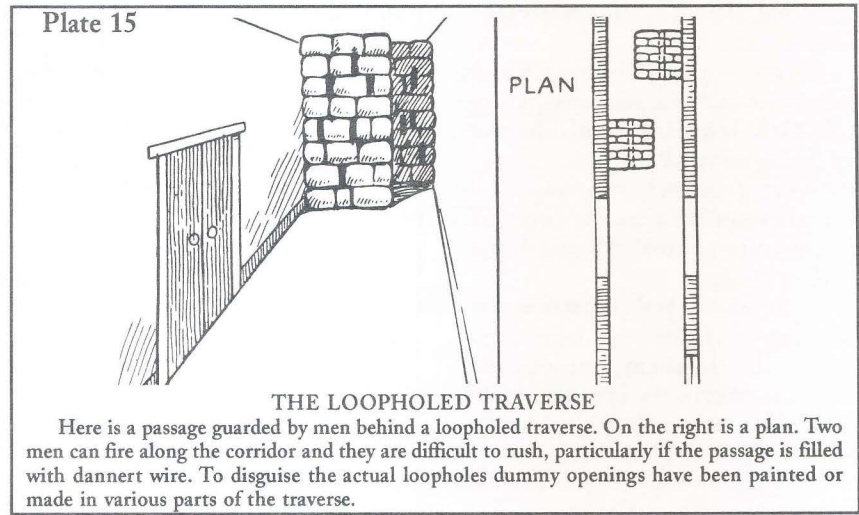
Next let us consider strengthening the cellar or a downstairs room, remembering always that if you are going to put considerable weight on to a floor by sandbagging, etc., you must support it adequately underneath. Otherwise you will have a situation which gives no threat to trouble until the building is shaken by a nearby bomb and then down comes the ceiling with its load of sandbags, etc., and somebody is buried underneath.

Before shoring up make certain that the floor upon which the supports will stand is itself enough to take the strain, and will not allow the timber to sink in should a heavy load be placed upon it by the sudden collapse of the house.

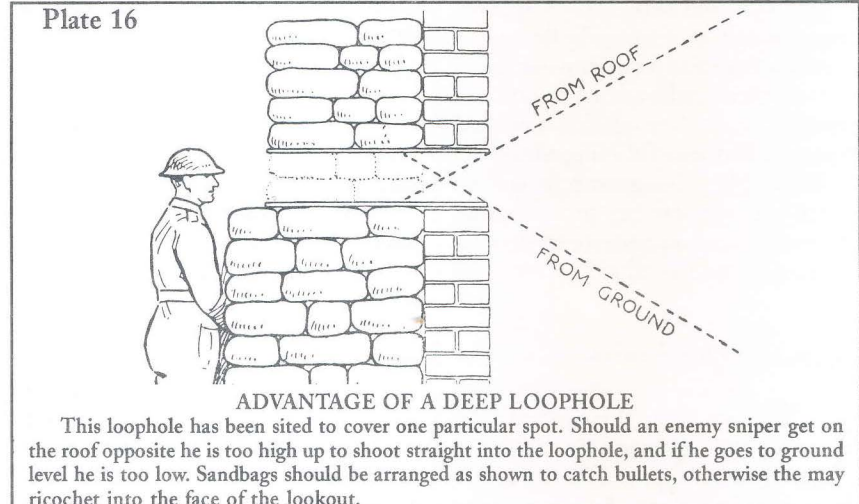
If there is in the unit a man from the building trade he will soon supervise the shoring up of a floor, but not it is quite easy for unskilled men to make a thoroughly effective job if they see that the uprights are perfectly vertical and each one is wedged up to take its fair share of the work (Plate 17).

For shoring purposes it may be necessary to raid a blitzed house. The timber used should be the stoutest available.

Do not forget that every cellar should have two exits, an extra one being easily made. Should there be any ground-floor windows which are weaknesses in the defense either from



Here is a passage guarded by men behind a loopholed traverse. On the right is a plan. Two men can fire along the corridor and they are difficult to rush, particularly if the passage is filled with danner wire. To disguise the actual loopholes dummy openings have been painted or made in various parts of the traverse.



This loophole has been sited to cover one particular spot. Should an enemy sniper get on the roof opposite he is too high up to shoot straight into the loophole, and if he goes to ground level he is too low. Sandbags should be arranged as shown to catch bullets, otherwise they may ricochet into the face of the lookout.

the enemy fire standpoint or liable to admit attackers, they should be blocked up entirely.

A good way to do this is to use double boarding or two sheets of corrugated iron with shingle (usually taken from the drive) in between. Shingle is first rate for stopping bullets, only a foot or two being required.

Having settled the downstairs windows turn your consideration to:

The Roof

Can the enemy get on to the roof and attack downwards from there? Beware of this, because it is a most disconcerting thing to happen, as he will drop grenades down the chimney, snipe all around, and be most difficult to dislodge. If it is a flat roof it may be a grand place to put a couple of snipers; they may prevent the enemy from giving adequate covering fire and be able

to exact a terrible toll during any attack on the house.

Some sandbags, grenades and Molotovs may be required on the roof, so do not overlook them.

Whilst considering the roof, see if visual communication can be established by flag or lamp with other parts of the town's defenses, and if you can arrange a signal cord or speaking tube (hosepipe will do) to give alarm in house below by all means do.

Entrances

The various entrances to the house should be barricaded or, better still, protected by loophole traverses, and if there are any narrow entires or passages they can be converted into traps by means of barbed wire and loopholes through which to fire or drop bombs.

Intercommunication between rooms, or houses if several are to be

defended, should receive careful consideration.

Between houses joining up the cellars is usually the best way; particularly if it kills two birds with one stone by giving another exit.

It is very wise to have passages from room to room upstairs and down, and these may be concealed by wardrobes, cupboards, etc.

Sometimes good communication between two houses can be arranged right under the enemy's nose by judicious use of screens. He soon tires of firing promiscuously at the carpet or whatever it is you put up, and he cannot waste his ammunition because his future supplies are so problematic.

If you intend to have men upstairs do not forget to arrange bullet-proof cover against fire from downstairs.

Be sure to make adequate sanitary arrangements. Remember that high explosive is the world's finest laxative.

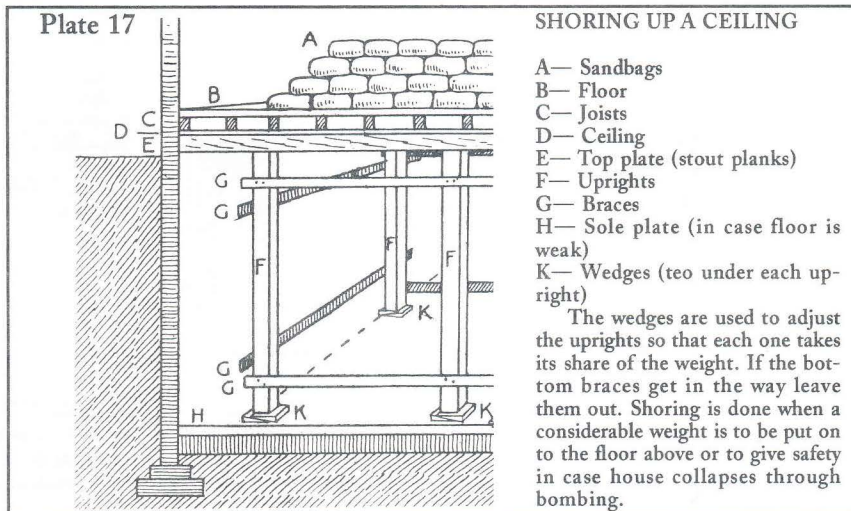
Should you have time, it will be worth your while to gas-proof a room, preferably one you have strengthened.

Now let us attend to:

Outside the House

Can we clear the field of fire? This requires doing with the greatest discrimination and, done cunningly, may be the decisive factor in the defense. Do not attempt to clear all around the house till it looks like a battleship cleared for action, but aim to make any cover there is a **DEATH-TRAP TO THE ENEMY**. I have mentioned using loopholes to induce them to attack some other side: dummy cover can be used even more effectively to persuade him to attack just where you want him to.

Usually round a house are various out-houses and garages which mask the defender's fire and give the enemy a covered approach. These should not be removed but should be so thinned out and opened up that the walls are not bullet-proof. During an attack in all probability the enemy will bunch up behind them. Then a burst of fire can be sent *through* the building and they will trouble you no more. When preparing sheds, buildings, etc., in this way be sure you make the vulnerable area **LOW DOWN**; if you make it too high you may let one or two Huns still cling to



life by lying down, whereas if you can shoot them through the legs the rest of them will drop into the vulnerable area.

It may be possible to coax the attacking enemy to take cover behind what looks like a large pile of debris but which is really canvas (or carpets) packed underneath with a few bricks and a little timber thrown on for effect. The pile looks as if it would stop an A/T bullet,² but actually a tommy-gun³ can shoot straight through it.

Barbed wire can be of great help, particularly during darkness or in smoke or fog. It should not be placed where it can be seen by the enemy from either the ground or the air. Coiled in entries, alleys, passageways, etc., it can be a great obstacle to the enemy.

All wire should have tins, etc., hung on it to give the alarm if anyone shakes it, and it **MUST BE COVERED BY FIRE**.

The later requirement is met if grenades can be exploded in the wire. You realize, of course, that if the wire is not covered in some way the enemy may remove it and attack you unexpectedly.

Whilst considering the outside of the house, see if there is any place from which the enemy could dominate the buildings you are going to hold. If there is, you will have to do something about it — either occupy the place yourself or put men where they can by accurate rifle fire prevent the enemy from occupying the threatening point.

For instance, you may find that the enemy could, if they occupied the roof of the house across the road, make it

very hot for you, but if you put men on the roof of *your* house no one could live on the roof across the road.

After settling this, have a look around for **DEAD GROUND** and if you find some within hitting distance see what can be done by way of making fresh rifle positions, etc., to bring it under fire.

Failing this, you will have to consider a detached post to look after it or putting wire or other obstacles to prevent the enemy from using it.

The next outside matter to attend to is to decide which is the best approach for your own men by day and by night. If the state of emergency lasts a long time you will require rations, reliefs, etc., bringing up these should come unobtrusively or they may give away the position to the enemy.

Which reminds me to emphasize that nothing you do to the house or its surroundings should give the least indication to the enemy that it is to be defended.

If you decide to take the glass out of some of the windows take some out of the surrounding houses as well. If you put some dummy heaps of rubble in the garden, as I have suggested, put some **REAL** heaps in the neighboring gardens.

I may be advisable to dig a few slit trenches for the protection of your men in air raids, bombardment, etc. If you cannot entirely hide these, dig some in other gardens near by. Should it be impossible to avoid making tracks in the garden which may show up from the air be sure to make similar tracks in the gardens all around.

Sometimes it is a good idea to make

some other house look as if it has been put in a state of defense, particularly if you can enfilade the enemy who may be induced to attack it.

And in your study of the surroundings *never forget* that **ATTACK IS THE BEST DEFENSE**, so be prepared with schemes for counter-attacking the enemy should he be held up near your house.⁴

Next give the place the "once over" from the standpoint of FIRE. Should there be a lot of inflammable refuse, etc., inside the house have it removed to a safe distance. Commandeer all the fire-fighting equipment you can get hold of and put it at suitable points. Keep your eye on the supplies of water and sand. Turn off the electricity and gas supplies at the meter.

When your preparations are complete, look everywhere for signs of activity which will tell the enemy the house is defended. Trails of white plaster into the garden — piles of painfully new rubbish — altered windows — sandbags showing — loopholes obvious — dust out in the road, etc. — are all indications which may cause enemy scouts, aerial or ground, to suspect your house.

Now, having discussed the material side of the defense, let us talk about:

The Men

How many do we need? How will they act? Where will they be kept? Before we start answering these queries let us be absolutely sure you have the right idea about what the men will do.

Dismiss forever any lingering Maginot complex⁵ which may be inclining you to look on the defended house as a place in which to await the enemy.

All this "awaiting the enemy" idea is so much bunk! So long as we are content to wait for the enemy to start doing things to us we shall continue to get the worse of it.

No! The defended house should be the center for defensive activity taking place in the surrounding district. It is a wasp's nest from which the wasps will dart out and STING!

Possibly after heavy fighting the house MAY be the scene of a last desperate stand against the invader, but

till the time comes it should be regarded only as a base for operations and there must be no tendency to keep within its precincts when there is an enemy who can be **ATTACKED**.

Generally speaking, to defend a house requires only a few men — say, six, eight or ten — and these may possibly be detailed to act as garrison cooks, etc., while the house itself is used for feeding and rest by fighting patrols and similar bodies of men who will come and go.

We are concerned now only with the garrison, as fighting patrol, street fighting and tank-hunting parties have been dealt with elsewhere.⁶ The garrison should be organized in pairs, and every man should know his job. A look-out must always be kept to obviate risk of surprise attack, and all men should be warned against hanging about anywhere in view of aircraft or enemy scouts.

Even with such a small garrison it is very advisable always to have a reserve (if only two men) in some central place ready to rally round instantly and stage a counter-attack should the enemy unexpectedly penetrate the defenses.

If the garrison has an automatic weapon, such as an L.M.G.⁷ or tommy-gun, it will usually be wiser to put it where there is a POOR field

of fire. That is where the enemy is likely to rush across. If you put the weapon where there is the best field of fire it will probably never get a target, because that is just where the Germans will NOT come.

See that all your bombs are detonated and suitably distributed for use, and if you have some A/T mines make detailed plans as to how they will be used and who will use them. You will be able to form a fairly reliable idea of how tanks will approach the house.

Consider the question of posting one or two snipers in the surrounding district, with careful instructions about their withdrawal.

If you have time, go and liaise with the other defended houses in the vicinity.

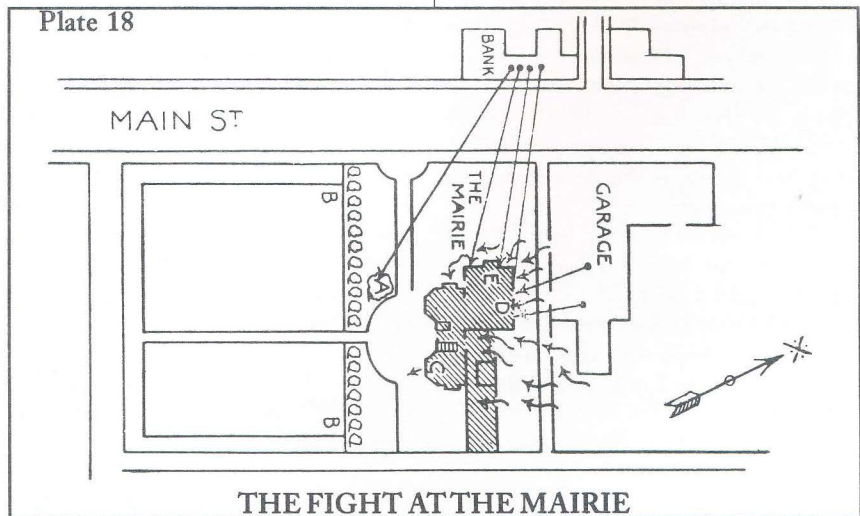
It will give you a good idea of correct tactics in defending a house if I describe what took place at:

The Mairie (Plate 18)

This was a large, strongly built house standing well back from the main street. To the north of it was a large garage and across the street the bank.

As the enemy was reported to be approaching rapidly from the south, Lieut. T was ordered by his company

And in your study of the surroundings *never forget* that **ATTACK IS THE BEST DEFENSE**, so be prepared with schemes for counter-attacking the enemy should he be held up near your house.



commander to place Mairie in a state of defense and hold it, with the remains of his platoon, whatever might happen.

T, who was a very conscientious officer, at once posted a man at an upstairs window with orders to keep a keen look-out in the enemy's direction, and ordered his L.M.G. team to dig in at A under the shade of a large tree, so as to cover the garden, which offered an excellent field of fire. He had a small quantity of barbed wire and this he used to strengthen the hedge at B, making it into a very formidable obstacle.

His stores and S.A.A.,^s together with several wounded men, he put into the cellar, gas-proofing the door with blankets.

Knowing the enemy to be in close proximity, he periodically called upstairs "Are you keeping a good look-out across the garden?" and he always received a reassuring "Yessir!" from above.

As he was expecting the enemy from the south and there was such a good field of fire in that direction, he stationed his tommy-gun at C, well back in the dining-room, ready to fire through the open window.

To give all-round defense he placed men in the rooms at D and E, both upstairs and downstairs.

These men were waiting for some sandbags to arrive from Company Headquarters so that they could start making some protection for themselves, when suddenly there was a terrific racket from the roofs of the garage and the bank

This was covering fire for a number of Germans who swarmed out of the garage and were crossing the entry as the men at D and E reached the windows. Before they could fire at the attacking enemy they were shot down by the accurate covering fire from the roofs opposite, which smashed through the windows with deadly precision.

A few seconds later the Boches were in the house shooting the tommy-gun and L.M.G. teams in the back before they could fire a shot. The upstairs look-out came to the top of the stairs and was immediately scuppered by bullets from below.

A hand grenade thrown into the cellar completed the wiping out of the garrison. This the Germans had done

without sustaining a casualty.

If, as is said to happen, Lieut. T in the short time he lived after receiving three bayonet wounds could have reviewed the events leading to his death he would have realized what fundamental blunders he had made:

1. He had assumed that because the enemy were approaching from the south they would ATTACK from that direction. His continual calling to the look-out man had served only to rivet his attention on the GARDEN while the enemy was sneaking up the back alleys and side streets. If he had only sent out a couple of scouts to contact the enemy he would have been warned in time.

2. He placed his automatic weapons, his all important fire power, where he HOPED the enemy would come, and not where his common sense would have told him they were much more likely to come. The Germans are seldom obliging enough to attack over a good field of fire if there is a covered approach from some other direction.

3. He had not occupied the Mairie roof. If he had placed a couple of good shots there the Germans could never have given covering fire from the roofs of either the garage or the bank, and his own men at D and E could have shot down the advancing Germans like rabbits.

4. He had placed his precious barbed wire in the very place the enemy would be most unlikely to reach it, whereas if he had put it between the garage and the house it would have held them up under heavy fire, which is the special function of barbed wire.

5. He had not barricaded the doors and windows and so they had been easily rushed.

6. He had not put a barri-

cade or loopholed traverse to prevent the enemy mounting the stairs.

7. He had allowed his men to waste time waiting for sandbags when they could have been using the material on the spot, filling drawers with gravel from the drive, or soil out of the garden; barricading doors and passages with furniture, mattresses and so on.

8. He had not kept an organized reserve. Even a few men in some place where they could not be taken by surprise and all ready to counter-attack instantly would have held up the enemy long enough for the tommy-gun and L.M.G. to come into action, and this might have saved the situation.

Poor T! He learnt a lot in the last few seconds of his life, but it was too late then for him to benefit.

But it is not too late for us to benefit. The lesson is that it is no use waiting for the Royal Engineers to put our house in order. It is for US to do it, with every ounce of energy and common sense we possess. No use lamenting because we have no dump of material to draw upon: we must use the timber, wire, furniture, carpets and anything else which is to hand on the spot.

And, just as a last word upon this subject of the defense of houses, I would impress upon you once again **LET THE DEFENSE BE ACTIVE; GO OUT AND HIT THE ENEMY FIRST; KEEP HITTING HIM AS HE DRAWS NEAR TO YOUR DEFENDED HOUSE;** and have your defenses so good and so cunning, both inside and outside, that when he begins to attack it you can heave a sigh of relief and say, "And now he's going to ask for it and he *will GET IT!*"

LET THE DEFENSE BE ACTIVE; GO OUT AND HIT THE ENEMY FIRST; KEEP HITTING HIM AS HE DRAWS NEAR TO YOUR DEFENDED HOUSE...

The legal effect of these constitutional recognitions of the rights of individuals to defend their property, liberties, and lives, against the government, is to legalize resistance to all injustices and oppression, of every name and nature whatsoever, on the part of government.

Lysander Spooner, 1852



The military value of a partisan's work is not measured in the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching.
John S. Mosby

HOUSE TO HOUSE FIGHTING

by
Colonel G.A. Wade, M.C.

House to House Fighting is the second installment in this year's series of reprints of Second World War home guard training manuals from The Resister's tactical library. Although dated, these manuals reflect a known reality; once you bog a modern army down in house-to-house fighting, the technology they rely upon so heavily begins to work *against* them. This series began last issue with *Defense of Houses*, and will follow an escalating sequence to *Defense of Towns*. This series is in response to the militarization of police and federal agencies, the US military's "training" for Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain in U.S. cities, and our Establishment's commitment to disarm us. In other words, resistance to their agenda of completing the communization of America. (*House to House Fighting* has been slightly abridged for formatting and to eliminate repetition within the text.) SMB.

A Fascinating Problem

In all kinds of fighting the better the training of the men engaged the fewer the casualties, but in that fierce form of warfare where determined men encounter each other in built-up areas it is no exaggeration to say that losses sustained by untrained troops will be more than *ten times* what they would have been had they known their job.

Ignorance has to be paid for in blood.

Now that tanks tend to dominate the battlefield, fighting in or near houses is likely to increase in frequency and intensity. You see, tanks hate houses because if they get close to them they become hemmed in, A.W. bombs may be thrown from upstairs windows and mines slipped under the tracks. The tank's guns will not elevate sufficiently to hit high windows and will not depress enough to shoot a man creeping from an entry; road blocks and flame-throwers

may be encountered unexpectedly and the advantage passes to the defense. In other words, the awe-inspiring tank loses all its magic in a street and becomes just a lumbering iron contraption awaiting final preparation for the salvage dump.

At first glance fighting amongst the houses seems to be a bewildering business, and no two tactical problems look alike. The arrangement of the houses, their size, height and relative positions all appear to vary in different parts. Streets of all widths and degrees of straightness, and entries, gardens, squares, side streets, cul-de-sac, etc., provide infinite variety. Consequently when word is received that an enemy in unknown strength is somewhere amongst it all it seems extremely difficult to decide on a plan for either attack or defense.

But, in spite of its forbidding appearance, house-to-house fighting is capable of simplification and analysis, and it is quite possible to apply certain general principles which will

quickly point the way to a good plan of action which can be followed with complete confidence.

DEFINING THE TASK

The wise saying of Henry Ford that, no matter how big a job is, it becomes easy if you split it up into a lot of little jobs applies very forcibly to house-to-house fighting — in fact, it gives us our first guiding principle:

Every Detachment Must Have a Clearly Defined Objective

Such as: "You will capture and consolidate SOUTH side of HIGH STREET from BUCK INN to POST OFFICE." Or: "You will turn enemy out of THE GRANGE and THERE AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS." Or: "You will clear all houses on this side of the road from here to CROSSROADS and wait there until relieved by 'B' Company." Or: "You will retake the triangle of houses bounded by the CANAL, the MARKET-PLACE and the RAILWAY."

The task given a fighting patrol should be well within its power and clearly defined by some easily recognizable features.

If it can be avoided, a patrol should never be sent off into the blue on a vague errand, but its job should be *clear cut, definite, and known* to all the men. (NOTE: This does *not* mean that the Patrol Leader must not exercise his discretion. For instance: Enemy might not be in the house he had been ordered to attack, but have moved to the next one. In that case, of course, leader would not hesitate to act accordingly.)

AVOIDING CASUALTIES

Guarding Against Surprise

House-to-house fighting lends itself to sudden surprise situations and the object of the patrol is not only to avoid being surprised but to *surprise the enemy*. There is splendid cover in houses. A score of men may be in a house and no aeroplane can spot them, and the whole lot may come charging out of doorways, windows, gateways and entries to catch the patrol unawares. Every house in a town is a passage and every window a loophole from which death may come.

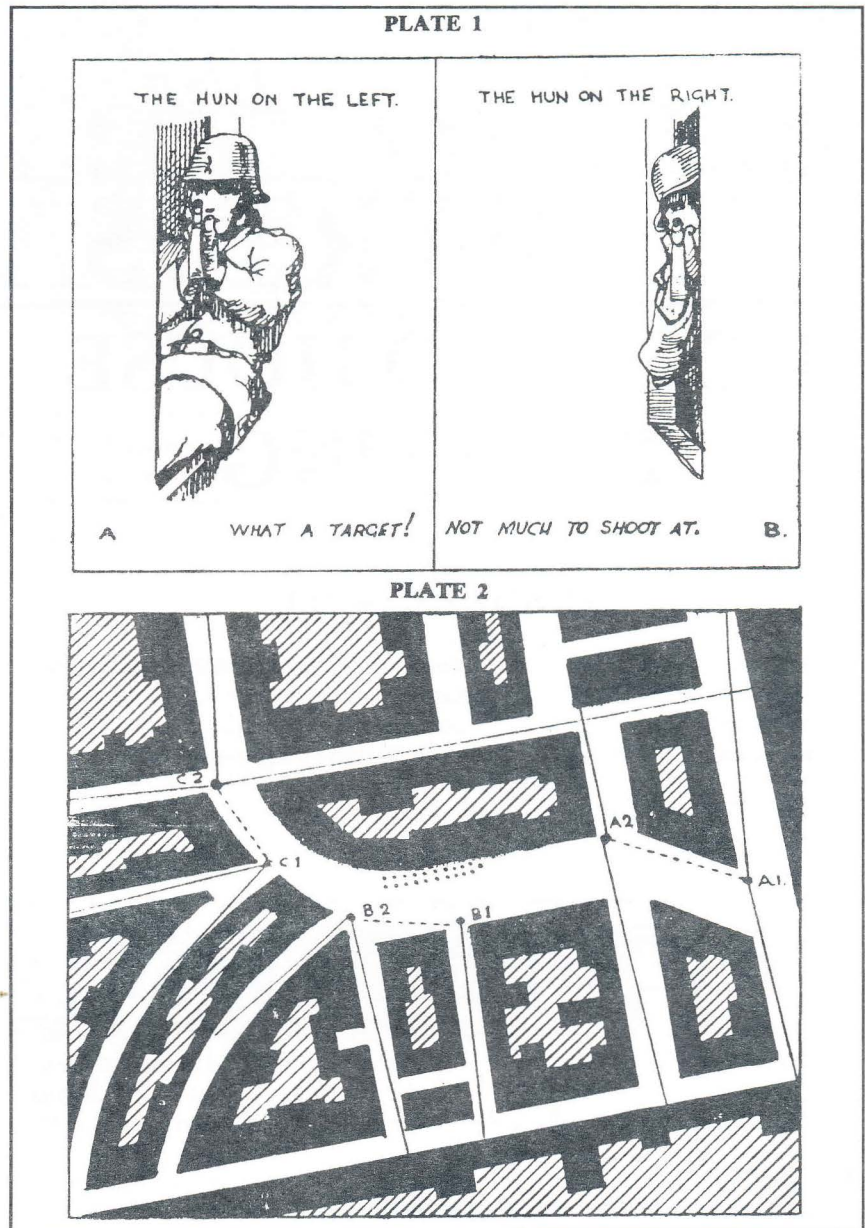
Consequently, the patrol must move circumspectly with scouts in front of it, scouts covering its flanks, and scouts watching its rear. In this formation the patrol can cover ground quickly and confidently. There is no need for the patrol to creep on its belly... until the enemy is definitely located either by our scouts spotting them or by shots being fired.

Then we come to our next guiding principle:

Never Advance Without Adequate Covering Fire

Your object in house-to-house fighting is to kill the enemy without getting killed yourself. Consequently, you should aim to be as difficult a target as you can whilst compelling the enemy to expose himself to the maximum when he tries to shoot at you. And *before* compelling him to expose himself you make sure that somebody with a straight eye is in a position to crack down on him the instant he appears. That is what is meant by *adequate covering fire*.

Now I will take you where you can look straight down Our Street, but don't expose yourself too much because there are some Germans in it. You see the one peeping out of the window on the right-hand side of the street? He is not exposing himself too much, although he is aiming in our direction. That is because he need only show his right shoulder and half his... head in order to shoot at us. Conse-



quently he is not a very good target for our covering fire (Plate 1B).

But look at the Boche on the left-hand side of the street. What a difference! To aim in this direction he has to expose all his head and all his chest! (Plate 1A.)

Now, I ask you, if you were expecting to be attacked which position would you take up? The one on the *right*? Of course you would! Consequently always expect more enemy *on the right of the street* than on the left because the enemy usually knows which way your attack will come from and dispose himself accordingly.

Of course, if you can do something to make him think you are going to attack up the street from one direc-

tion and then, instead of doing that, attack from the other end your covering party will have a grand time because most of the Boches will be on the wrong side and consequently will have to lean right out of the windows to shoot at you.

MAKING HIM SHOW HIMSELF

Keep Close to the Enemy's Side of the Street

This compels him to lean right out to the fullest extent before he can aim at you so that he

PLATE 3

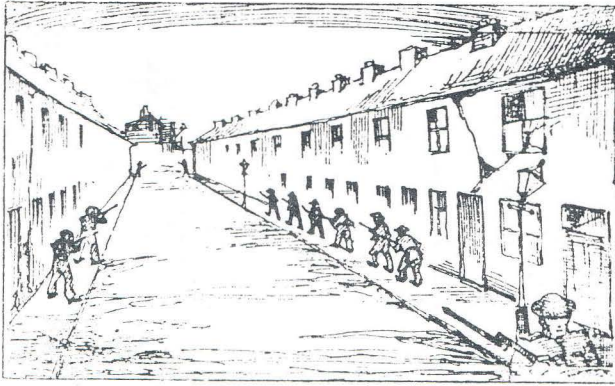


PLATE 4

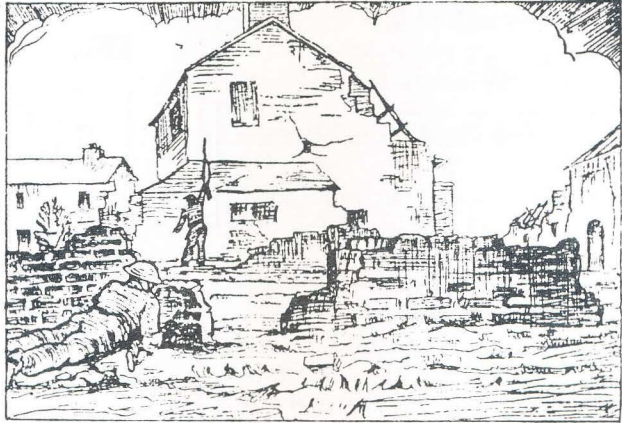


PLATE 5



ENEMY IN SIGHT IN SMALL NUMBERS.

PLATE 6



ENEMY IN SIGHT IN LARGE NUMBERS

will be easy meat for the covering party before he can get a shot. (Get a rifle and try aiming out of a window in various directions and imagine a crack shot is aiming at you. This will soon give you the underlying idea.)

HOW THE SCOUTS ACT

Plate 2 shows a patrol proceeding through a town. Observe the progress of the scouts, who move by bounds from one point of advantage to another. The patrol itself makes *steady progress*, relying on the protection of the scouts and does not move by bounds unless under enemy fire. The number of scouts the patrol throws out depends entirely on the nature of the locality in which it is operating. Sometimes a pair in front and a pair in the rear will be adequate. Other times there may be a lot of alleys and side streets which will call for flank scouts in addition (Plate 3).

Usually the scouts will be provided in equal numbers from each of the three sections because if they were all drawn from one section it would be so weakened that it could not carry out its function in attack or defense....

You will notice how the scouts are disposed to cover all the streets round the patrol. The main body and the scouts both cover the same distance in the same time, but in very different style: The former advances steadily and unhesitatingly, but the scouts peep very carefully from a good lookout spot, have a look round and then if it is all clear select another point to bound to and move there *on the double*. Very good men should be chosen for forward scouts, otherwise the progress of the patrol is going to be far too slow (and slowness is the besetting sin of all fighting patrols). Let us follow a fighting scout, keeping just behind him to see how he "does his stuff" till he makes contact with the enemy.

First he runs across the main street and lies flat to look round the corner

into the side street. Look how slowly he pushes his eye round the corner, how carefully he scans the windows, the roofs, and the road, looking for any sign of movement or telltale shadows. He pulls his head back, waits a few seconds and then has another look. Ah! He has decided that there is no enemy that way and is standing up ready to go across. See how clearly he makes the signal, "*No enemy in sight*," (rifle held up at full extent of arm, muzzle uppermost). (Plate 4.)

Now he is running across the side street like a rabbit and making his way down the main street. All the time he is concentrating hard, his mind never wanders for a second and his eyes dart everywhere. His progress is a curious combination of slow deliberation and sudden spurts, and, like a hound on the trail, his pal, the second scout, never loses sight of him. Right down the street he goes, scrutinizing every house, entry and side street, but always pushing on quickly in the safe places and slowly in the doubtful ones.

(Did you notice why the scout left the wall and walked in the road? To avoid the noise which walking over that glass and rubbish would have made. Why has he stopped? I wonder if he hears something in that next side street? He has tip-toed to the corner and is looking carefully round. By Jove, he did not look long! See, he is holding his rifle above his head at the full extent of his arm and parallel with the ground, muzzle pointing to the front. This means, "Enemy in sight in small numbers." (Plate 5.) He is having another look and now he is making the same signal again, but raising and lowering his rifle, which means, "Enemy in sight in large numbers." (Plate 6.) He is also signaling "Double." It looks as if the Germans will come around the corner any moment now. The second scout has passed the signals on to the patrol — with whom he has been careful to maintain touch — and both scouts have darted into houses. The patrol has taken cover in those shops ready to ambush the enemy.)

Regarding the distance scouts should be from the main body of the patrol; this will vary tremendously according to the visibility, nature of the houses, streets, etc., but the general tendency is for scouts to remain *too close* to the main body. If they do this they are not much use, because they do not spot the enemy in time to protect the patrol against surprise. On the other hand, if they get too far away they will lose touch.

The second scout of each pair must keep in touch with the patrol *and* the first scout, so that if the former goes ahead too fast the second scout should halt him for a few moments. Sometimes the main body of the patrol will move down a narrow street with half the men on one side and half on the other.

CLEARING A STREET

You have seen how the scouts are used; now let us watch a patrol execute a simple task — to clear the enemy out of houses on both sides of a street. The backs of these houses, by the way, are just back yards with high walls between them

PLATE 7

CLEARING A STREET

No. 1 Section gives covering fire.

No. 2 Section clears houses on right of street from house to house as shown.

No. 3 Section clears left of street in the same way.

Notes

(1) REAR SCOUTS cover entry and protect rear of Section.

(2) RESERVE is close to but under cover.

(3) When half the street is cleared COVERING PARTY would advance to A1 and B1. A must be in position at A1 before B moves.

CLEARING A ROW OF HOUSES

In this case two Sections are available for clearing Houses 1 to 7, consequently the Sections "leapfrog" up the street.

No. 2 Section takes Houses 1, 3, 5, 7, and No. 3 Section Houses 2, 4, 6.

Notes

(1) It is here possible to give covering fire from a better angle.

(2) The covering party would not advance during the clearing operation.

so that it is not feasible to attack the rear of the houses (Plate 7). Here are the orders:

First — Define the Objective: "You will clear the enemy out of the houses on both sides of High Street up to the crossroads."

Second — Arrange the Covering Fire: "No.1 Section will give covering fire from Houses A and B. No.2 Section will take up position at X. No.3 Section will take up position at Y."

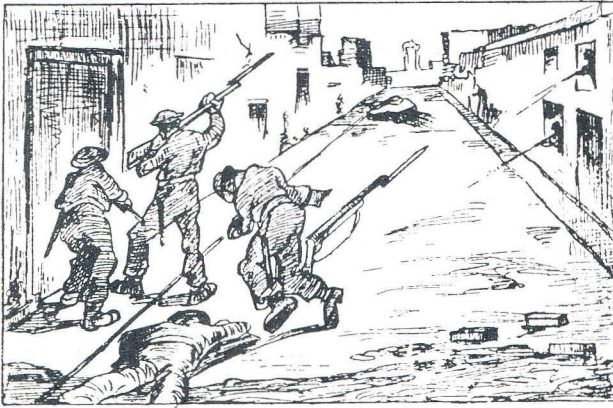
Third — Attack With Speed: "As soon as No.1 Section is ready, No.2 Section will advance round the corner and enter House No.1. After clearing this, they will carry on to the next house, and so on to the crossroads. At the same time No.3 Section will act in a similar way on the left side of the street. As soon as No.3

Section has cleared half the street, covering party from A will move to A1, and as soon as practicable afterwards covering party from B will move to B1 to give closer support. The reserve will be kept under cover until required. Nos.2 and 3 Sections will each leave two scouts to prevent surprise attack in the rear and also shoot any enemy escaping from the back of houses. I shall be with the covering party at A. Any questions? *Move!*"

FIGHTING INDOORS

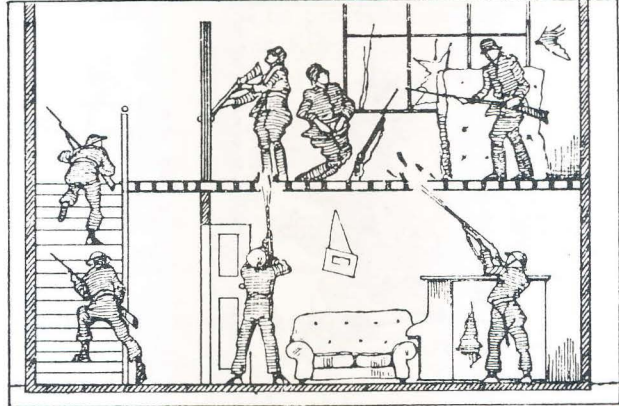
You have seen how the scouts work and have heard the orders given to the fighting patrol. Let us keep with the No.2 Sec-

PLATE 8



THEY WOULD BUNCH ROUND DOORS

PLATE 9



ATTACK THROUGH FLOOR

tion and see how it "does its stuff."

First of all, see how lightly they are equipped. Steel helmets, fixed bayonets, [ammunition] in pockets. You will notice they are all wearing gumboots or canvas shoes.¹ There are tow reasons for that. Firstly, that *silence* is at times all-important in house-to-house fighting, and, secondly, that if men have to run across open spaces and stop suddenly at the other side, hobnailed boots slip on the pavements and cause nasty falls. The bulges in their pockets are... grenades and, as you can see, two men are without rifles but carry a heavy sledgehammer and a crowbar instead. These are for bashing in doors and breaking through walls.²

The Section Leader is waiting 'till he gets the signal that the covering party is ready. The Patrol Leader is an experienced man and will not send any of his men into the occupied street 'till he knows that the very second any German tries to shoot at them he will be fired upon with deadly accuracy. The last thing in the world he will allow is an enemy to take leisurely aim at his men, so he will not let them move until he is certain about the covering fire. There, the Section Leader has got the signal, round the corner dash the door-smashers and crack! crack! go the rifles of the covering party. Watch how these two men break open the doors. They never stand in front of the closed door, for fear someone inside shoots through it, but they stand on one side and hit it obliquely. The section leader watches them round the corner, and

the instant the door breaks open he sends forward the men to enter the house, but he kept them in safety 'till he knew they could get right inside.

A lot of casualties are incurred in house-to-house fighting by men rushing up to a house, finding the door closed and clustering round it 'till it is burst open. While they are gathered there they are an easy target for enemies down the street or even inside the house (Plate 8).

Anyway, there was no delay on the threshold here, and the section are inside the house. How will they proceed now? First the Leader posts a lookout just inside the front door to make sure no Germans sally forth from one of the other houses to attack the section in the rear. Then he posts a man to prevent anyone coming downstairs and the rest of the section starts to clear the ground floor and the cellars, working in pairs with one man covering the other. If there is reason to think the enemy is in occupation of a room it is bad form to invade his privacy without previously handing your visiting card (in the form of a... grenade).

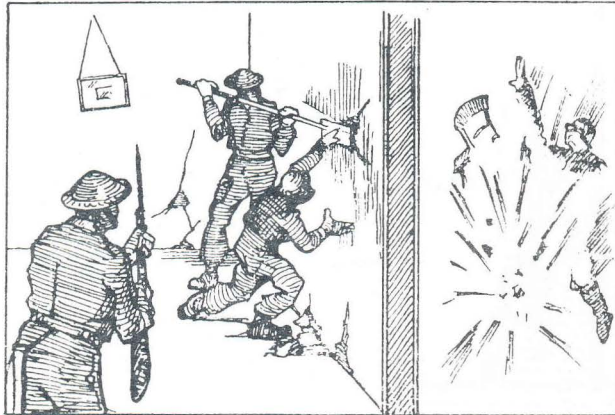
Hand grenades are freakish things, and all the enemy may not be incapacitated, but they are bound to be shaken for a second or two. The instant the bomb bursts dash into the room and, if any of the occupants still has any [fight in him] left, let him have the bayonet.

Now they have satisfied themselves that there are no enemy in the cellars or anywhere on the ground floor, but it is known that several enemy are

upstairs, as they have heard moving about overhead. The Section leader is evidently considering his plan of campaign. He knows that, where it can be managed, it is better to get on the roof and work downwards. This applies more to larger buildings with flat roofs. In this case, even if the men could get on to the roof without being shot by the Germans down the street, they would have difficulty entering, so the Leader is going to attack up the stairs — not a very attractive proposition, but here again good covering fire can be given. How? Why, by firing up through the ceilings and floors. The modern rifle bullet has terrific penetrative powers and will fly through plaster and floor-boarding with the greatest of ease. Consequently, rapid fire up through the ceilings and floors will be a great shock to the Hun above and very damaging to his morale. (In fact, a well-aimed upward shot may damage considerably more than his morale!)

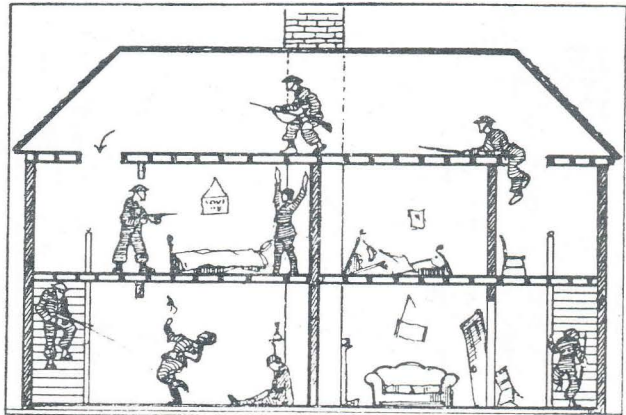
Two men are now ready to dash upstairs, but how quite the whole party has gone! They are listening for signs of the enemy on the floor above — a creaking board may show exactly where to fire. Rifles are pointing to the ceilings and the leader shouts, "Fire!" (Plate 9.) The two bayonet men have bounded up the stairs... [and] up go the rest of the party except one man left on the watch in the hall. Immediately the sledgehammer and crowbar men are getting ready to attack the next house [through the adjoining wall]. (Plate

PLATE 10



ATTACK THROUGH WALL

PLATE 11



ATTACK THROUGH COCK-LOFT

10.) And that it how it is done! All according to a definite plan, with determination and speed, with men working in pairs and with covering fire always ready.

METHODS OF ATTACK

Where the enemy is very well organized and has all entrances to the house covered by fire it is better to attack him in some way other than from outside in the street.

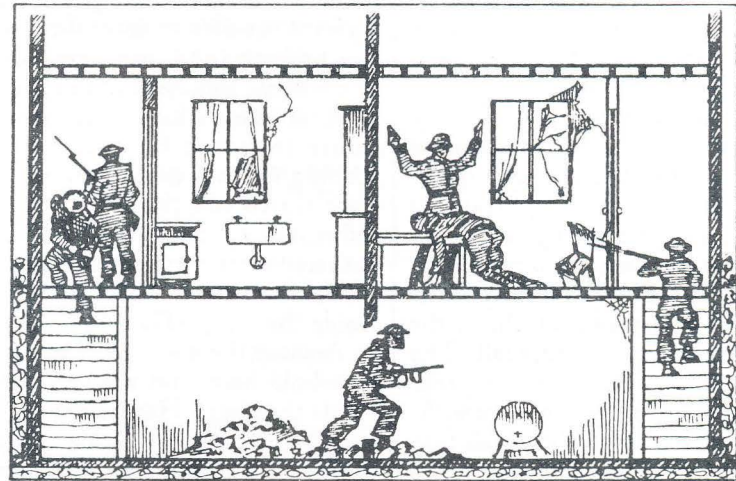
The Attack From the Roof

If the building has a flat roof it is always wise to occupy it. Grenades can be dropped through skylights and windows, even down chimneys, and they enemy is at considerable disadvantage if an attack comes from above him. By occupying the roof you also cut off the enemy's escape and prevent reinforcements reaching him that way. It is usually a good place from which to direct covering fire.

Attack Through the [Attic]

Sometimes there is no division between semidetached houses. If you attack this way take a [flashlight] and tread very quietly and carefully, remembering what has just been pointed out about bullets from below. (Plate 11.)

PLATE 12



ATTACK THROUGH CELLAR

Attack Through the Walls

This is much easier than it sounds (thanks to [modern construction methods]). Get the crowbar man to start by knocking a brick out five feet from the floor. Then stick a [grenade] through the hole; wait 'till it bursts and then bash a hole through and enter as quickly as possible. Incidentally, it makes you look silly if you stick a hole through the dividing wall and the Boche puts a grenade through your side *first*; but it amuses your pals and makes them think of something flippant for your tombstone. To stop this, keep the crowbar in the hole until you are ready with *your* bomb, then pull the bar out, slip the bomb through and put the crowbar in again. It takes two

to do this properly. (NOTE: Dividing walls are frequently thinner upstairs and also behind fireplaces.)

In certain circumstances communication from cellar to cellar may be best; and if the enemy has been in occupation of adjoining houses long enough you will find he has already made some means of intercommunication, probably between cellars. (Plate 12.)

ATTACKING HOUSES

Do Not Use Too Many Men: Employ as few men as possible, remembering that a few well-trained, energetic men under firm control will accomplish more than a

much larger number employed loosely.

Keep Reserves Under Cover: Men not actually taking part in the attack must be kept under cover. If this is not done there will be more casualties from snipers amongst the *reserves* than are sustained from the *attacking* party!

Men Should All Know Plan: Plan of attack should be known to all the men and they should be told that whatever happens they are to PUSH ON 'till objective is taken.

Always Press On: Remember that steady progress by the attackers in spite of opposition soon demoralizes the enemy, particularly in house fighting where he feels penned in. Press on and his fire will get wild and inaccurate, and he will not wait for you to get to close quarters.³

Trip Wires Are Useful: Where possible, particularly at night, place trip wires across where he will bolt and have a couple of bayonet men handy. They may get some sport.

Don't Lose Momentum: The Leader should do his utmost to prevent the attack losing its momentum. If it does it is always very difficult to overcome its inertia and get it going again. I consider that an attacking party has lost its momentum if it is tied down to cover and is exchanging grenades or shots with the enemy instead of pushing on to close quarters. The moment you lose momentum look out for casualties.

Advance Party Cannot Provide Its Own Covering Fire: It is a big mistake to imagine that a patrol or a section moving up an enemy-occupied street can provide its own covering fire. It cannot. Covering fire should be *instantaneous* and *accurate* or it will be no protection at all. No man can, when walking up a street, suddenly spot [an enemy], stop, aim and press quickly enough to prevent the enemy firing. The very fact that a man is walking up a street means that he must occasionally take his eye away from where the enemy may be to look where he is going and that may well be the FATAL SECOND.

Place Covering Fire in Right Place: The correct disposition of the covering party is more than half the battle. Marksmen should be in dominating positions, such as roofs, upstairs windows, town halls, factories,

etc., where they have nothing at all to do but remain comfortable and WATCH OVER THEIR SIGHTS for the enemy.

Use Gardens⁴ if You Can: Very frequently it is better to take advantage of the cover furnished by gardens and buildings to attack the backs of houses. It all depends on circumstances, but do not make the mistake of thinking that because you attack the back of the houses you are thereby taking the enemy in the rear. It does not follow. The back of the houses may be the enemy's *front*.

Position of the Leader: The Leader of the Patrol should be in some place where there is a good view. He will not lead the Patrol in the attack unless the Patrol as a BODY is making an attack on ONE objective. His whereabouts should be known to the Section Leaders and their men, and he should be fairly close to the reserve.

Keep Him on the Jump: Any invader in this country will be sparing of ammunition because his future supplies are more than problematical; consequently, if you can get him to waste it by means of dummies, etc., by all means do so. A good way to keep him on the jump is to screen off part of the road. Remember houses have carpets in them and cloths lines, and a few of these put up as screens during the night so that behind them the attackers cross the street without being seen will play Hamlet with the Germans' nerves and ammunition supply.

Study the Windows: If you can attack houses on the side where there are fewest windows do so.

Use of Smoke: Smoke may be useful in the attack, but should SELDOM BE USED TO CONCEAL THE ATTACKERS. Far better induce the enemy to think he is going to be attacked from one direction by putting down a smoke screen and then, when he is popping off into the smoke, attack him from another angle. Or you mask his field of view with smoke while you advance, but if you ever have to attack in smoke make

absolutely certain that all the men keep actually IN it, otherwise they will be presented to the enemy as black silhouettes against a white background ("presented" is a good word).

Crossing a Street: When a detachment is to cross a street under fire make sure it can get under cover at the other side. Move across one at a time unexpectedly, and if an automatic weapon is firing on the street time to get across whilst the magazine is being changed.

Explosives will Help: Explosives are useful for blowing in doors if there is someone in the party who understands them. (NOTE: A grenade will NOT blow open a door.)

Chalk is Very Useful: When fighting in a maze of streets chalk marks and instructions written on the walls may be most useful, so every man in the patrol should have a piece of chalk, preferably colored, so that each section can recognize its own information by the color in which it is written.

Study the Map: Before the "schemozzle" a careful study of MAPS and photographs (both air and ground) will repay the patrol.

How to Tackle a Barricade: In street fighting you may have to tackle a barricade and they are nasty things. If it is in any way possible to get round it, even at considerable trouble, do so rather than attack it from the front. Covering fire against a barricade must be arranged from as high and close a spot as possible so as to get the bullets well down behind it. A mortar or a [grenade launcher] is very useful. Sometimes barricades are made of inflammable material, and it is possible to set them on fire. If you have to make a frontal attack try to mask the enemy with smoke, but do not attack in the first cloud. Let them blaze away into it. Then send over another and still do not go. Then send the third and storm the barricade.

Plan of attack should be known to all the men and they should be told that whatever happens they are to PUSH ON 'till objective is taken.

DEFENDING HOUSES

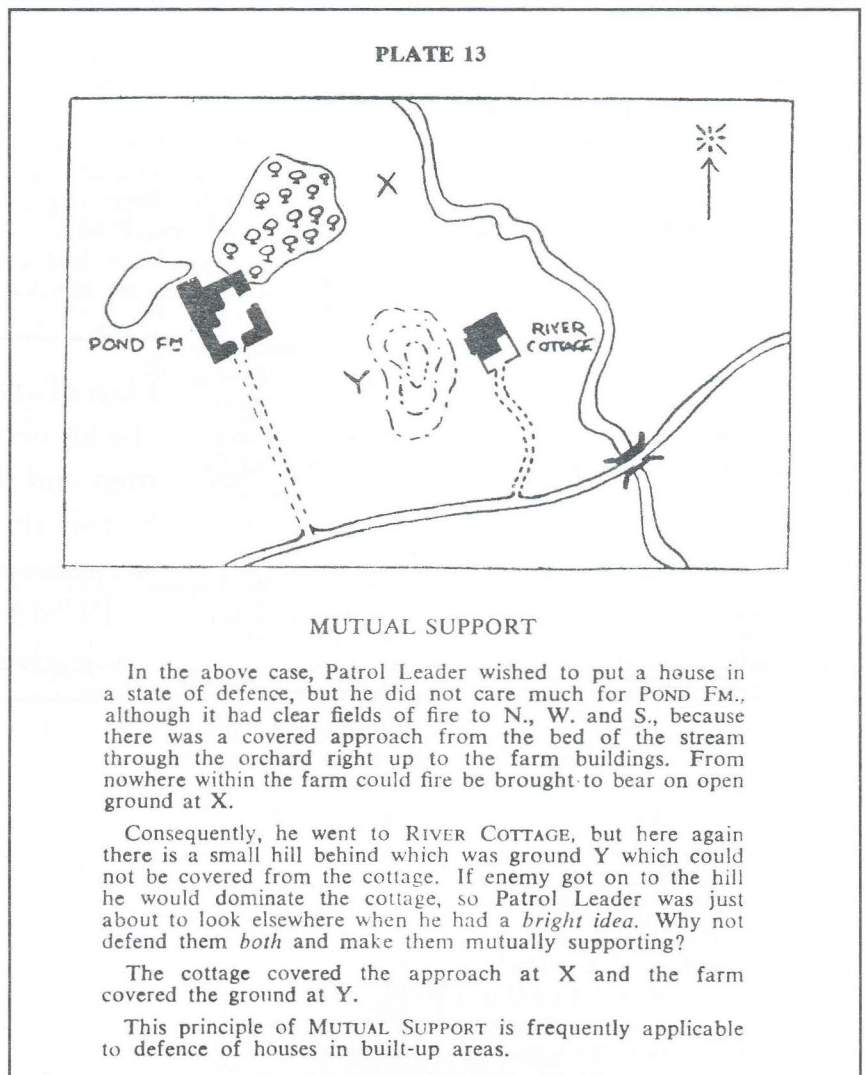
I have first dealt with the attack in house-to-house fighting because for one thing **ATTACK** is the **BEST DEFENSE**, and for another if you master the technique of attack you have naturally fitted yourself to put up a good defense when necessary, because you know how your adversary is likely to act. Suppose you are ordered to put some houses into a state of defense.⁵ Here are some hints.

Which Way Will the Hun Come? Before making your dispositions for defense, put yourself in the enemy's place and say, "Now how shall I attack these houses? Where shall I put my covering party? On which front shall I make my assault? The answers to these questions will give you valuable hints about the defense. (Plate 13.) For instance, you might decide that a certain roof would be a good place from which to give covering fire, so when you worked out your defense scheme you would search for a spot where the defense could dominate it and so deny its use to the enemy.

Whenever Possible Occupy the Roof (Provided it is flat and affords cover): This will prevent the enemy from surprising you from that direction; it may also provide a good O.P. or a useful spot for snipers or bombers.

Always Fire From Unexpected Places: Remembering the enemy's covering fire, try to arrange things so that your own men can shoot from all sorts of unexpected places. If possible instead of from windows and doorways fire from loopholes cut at ground level, or from under the eaves. Sometimes houses which have basements have grids in the pavement. A man posted beneath one of those might have an interesting time if the enemy came sneaking along the side of the house. It is an excellent principle to have far more loopholes than you have men and to change these in use periodically. Dummy loopholes are invaluable and so are dummy heads to show in loopholes.

Don't Let Your Muzzle Show: All firing positions should be so arranged



that a man can fire without his muzzle showing. Neglect of this simple precaution will cost precious lives. The German snipers are adept in the use of field-glasses and will all the time be studying your defenses to see which loopholes to shoot at. The glint of a rifle muzzle will tell him all he wants to know.

Guard Against Hand Grenades: Wire netting is the best defense and where there are houses there is usually some to be found. Up to two inch mesh is quite effective. Cover windows, loopholes, etc., and any opening into which the enemy might hurl grenades. Failing wire netting, laths or boards nailed two inches apart will do quite well. Glass should be removed from windows and they should be made to look alike. Thin curtains often enable one to see without being seen.

Do Not Get Caught Unawares By

Fire: As part of your defense arrangements organize what fire-fighting equipment you can. You never know when or where incendiaries may appear in your defenses. Inflammable material should be removed from the houses as much as possible and taken to a safe distance.

Strut the Cellars: If you put up a stubborn defense you may get mortared or bombed from the air; consequently, it is wise to have somewhere extra strong to keep your ammunition, rations, water, candles, wounded, etc. If there is a [yard] or open ground near, a few slit trenches would be a wise precaution, but site them so that they are of no use to the enemy.

Barricade the Doors: All doors should be barricaded and the barricades should be covered by the fire of the defenders. Keep one quick exit from the house in case you want to make a sortie or the place gets on fire.

Connect the Houses: As soon as possible break openings in the dividing walls and connect up all the houses which are to be defended. This will help in all sorts of ways, from the movement of reinforcements and reliefs to the circulation of rations. Loopholes between rooms may be useful if the enemy gets inside, but make them small, inconspicuous and in unexpected places or they may be a two-edged weapon.

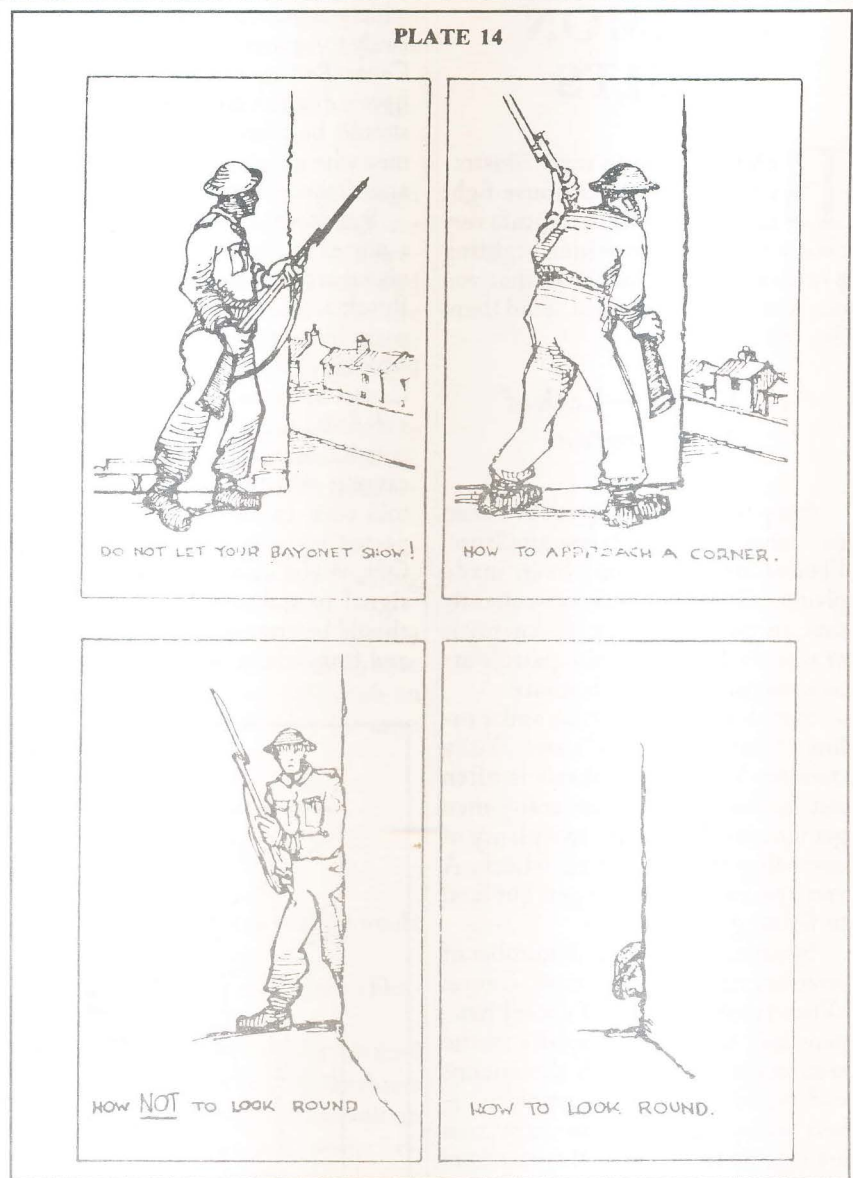
Be Sure Cover is Bulletproof: If you have not got sandbags fill drawers and boxes with brick rubble or soil and reinforce the walls with them. Get a clear idea of what is bulletproof and do not be satisfied with anything else. Few walls of ordinary houses will withstand a burst of machine-gun fire at close range, and practically no floors are proof against small-arms fire from below.

Allocate to Every Man His Job: Be sure that every man knows what he should do in making defenses and what part he is to play if an attack develops. Draw up a roster of lookout duties and see that the best possible O.P. is occupied.

Cultivate Keen Observation: As part of your training for house-to-house fighting practice your powers of observation and deduction. A little thing changed, something not quite right, observed in time may save your life. Cultivate the habit of looking at everything critically, even ILLUSTRATIONS IN BOOKS, and you will find that your ability in this respect will rapidly develop.

Learn to Shoot From Both Shoulders: An accomplishment fairly easily acquired is to shoot from the left shoulder as well as from the right. Practice it. It may make all the difference some time.

Look Out For Booby Traps: If the enemy has been in occupation for any length of time LOOK OUT FOR BOOBYTRAPS. For some reason or other, the Germans take a childish delight in devising traps which will maim, blind or kill you if you are not careful, so while fighting from house to house do not touch a thing more than you need and be on your guard. If, for instance, you see in a house just left by the Germans a cat with its tail fast in a closed drawer don't yield to your first impulse to release it, but take the number of the house, wait 'till the



battle is over and then send your mother-in-law to attend to it!

LITTLE THINGS WHICH MATTER

Trip wires with tins on the arranged to rattle and put in entries, back yards, etc., may give you welcome warning. Barbed wire in doorways, etc., and dannert wire⁶ in entries can easily be made impen-

etrable obstacles and with a little ingenuity can be arranged to form a trap for the enemy. [Grenades] and [satchel charges] have their uses in house-to-house fighting, but very careful judgment is required, as, for instance, a grenade thrown upstairs may come rolling down again before it bursts, and a fire bomb may start a fire which cannot be put out. Incidentally, when fighting in houses always move from cover to cover and every moment have in mind where you will dart should a grenade or a burst of fire come your way.

When approaching a corner take great care that your bayonet does not poke out before you look around. (Plate 14.)

COMMON FAULTS

Before passing to some illustrations of house-to-house fighting I would like to indicate very clearly the faults to which fighting patrols are liable. This is so that you can look out for them and avoid them like the plague.

No.1 Fault — Lack of Determination

Symptom: A very long time is taken in coming to grips with enemy. Cause: Plan of attack has not been made plain to all the men and consequently they are not sure where the enemy is or what is the limit of the patrols attack, so naturally they hesitate.

Symptom: Exaggerated and prolonged use of cover. Cause: Faulty training. So much emphasis is often put on use of cover that some men get the idea that if they use plenty of cover they are doing their whack. A very comfortable idea to get, but fatal to fighting patrol tactics.

Symptom: Only a small number of attackers reach the objectives. Cause: When [prolonged use of cover] happens only the hardiest spirits in the section get to grips with the enemy, and instead of there being ample numbers to dispose of them so many men are lagging behind that the attackers are in the *minority at the critical place and moment*.

Symptom: Heavy casualties. Cause: If for causes detailed above the action is spun out to over four times as long, that means that the enemy has four times the time in which to shoot at you. But it is worse than that because he can be calm and steady while he is doing it and much more accurate. Nothing disturbs the enemy's aim more than a well-covered, *steadily advancing* enemy. Nothing bucks him up more than to get the attackers tied down and reluctant to move.

No.2 Fault — Lack of Cohesion

Symptom: Men become spread out into couples or even single men

widely separated and unable effectively to cooperate with one another. Cause: *Bad arrangement of tasks*. If men have a difficult route to traverse they should be allowed more time than men who get straight there by an easy and sheltered approach.

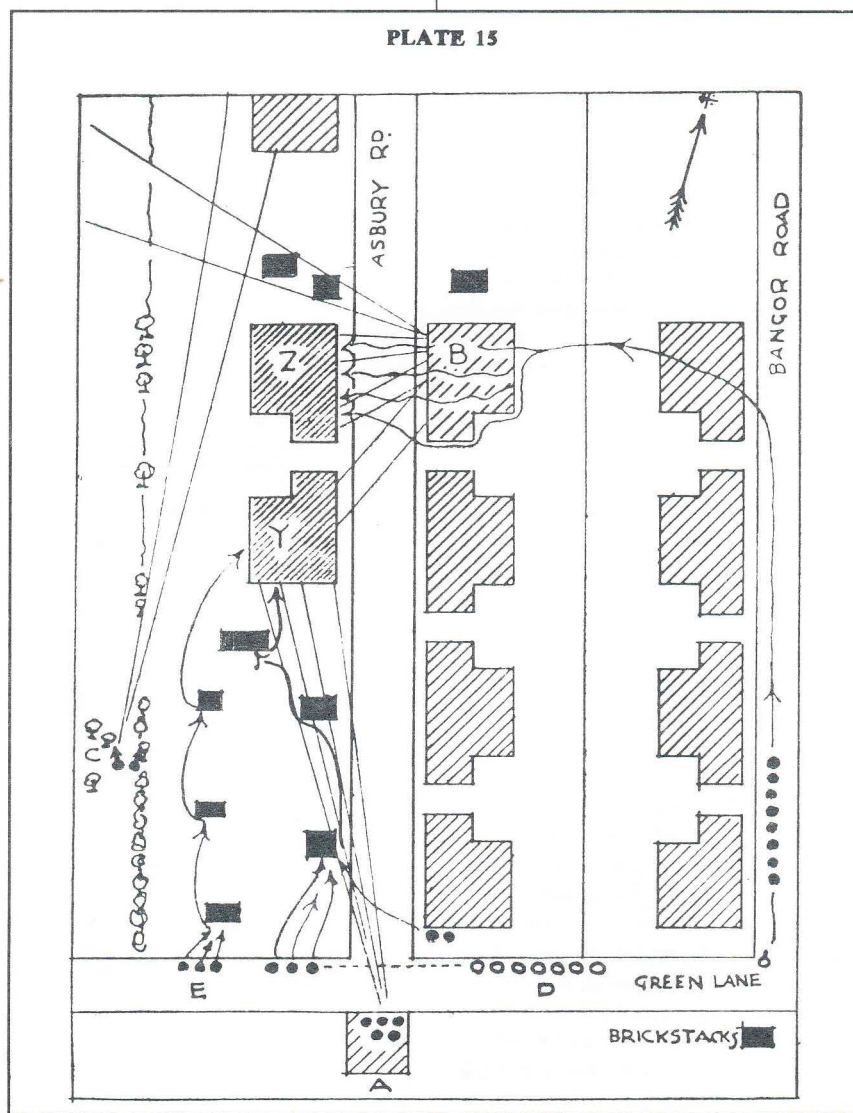
Symptom: Parties supposed to do a pincer movement do not synchronize their final rush on to the enemy. Result is that enemy takes on each party in turn instead of being overwhelmed by a concerted assault. Cause: Sections have not been given a definite time by which to take up position for the final assault. Another cause is that the men have not been told what to do if something unexpected crops up, namely, to **PUSH ON, WHATEVER HAPPENS**. A signal to indicate the final charge should be arranged. All men know it and from where to expect it.

No.3 Fault — Lack of Wariness

Symptom: The men are all so interested in scuppering the enemy in one house that every man's attention is riveted in that direction so that the enemy coming from everywhere else can surprise and take them at a terrible disadvantage. Cause: Lack of **IMAGINATION**.

Symptom: Whole detachment moves into cul-de-sac or goes into a house without guarding against an enemy closing the bottleneck. Cause: Bad leadership and ignorance of elementary precautions.

Symptom: Men shout, talk and crash about, absolutely inviting enemy attention. Cause: Carelessness and bad training.



WHENEVER THE FIGHTING PATROL IS IN BEING, NO MATTER WHERE IT IS OR WHAT IT IS DOING, SCOUTS SHOULD *ALWAYS* BE POSTED TO PROTECT IT AGAINST SURPRISE.

A STREET-FIGHTING EXAMPLE

(Plate 15)

Here is a solution (notice I do not say "the" solution, because sometimes these tactical problems have several solutions equally good). I give it in the form of orders as they should be issued by the Patrol Leader after he has called his three Section Leaders together at D.

"No.1 SECTION: You will provide covering fire for No.3 Section, who will attack from the south — that is, from GREEN LANE. Take four men to house at bottom of ASBURY ROAD, south of GREEN LANE (A).

"Go through the [yards] at the back and when you get there keep very quiet until No.3 Section is ready to advance by bounds from brickstack to brickstack. When you see they are ready plaster the enemy with rapid fire while No.3 Section gets across. Send two men along the hedge (C) west of the houses:

"(1) To snipe any enemy they see.

"(2) To look out for hostile reinforcements from the west.

"(3) To bump off any Huns running away.

"After houses are taken you will leave a lookout in the house A and use the rest of your section as a protective screen round Houses Y and Z whilst the rest of patrol is blocking the road."

"No.3 SECTION: You will attack the Houses Y and Z from GREEN LANE under covering fire from No.1 Section. Wait here 'till No.1 Section is ready and then cross to cover of low wall at E. From there advance by bounds from brickstack to brickstack.

"After houses have been captured your section will at once block the road between the houses.

"Commence advance in ten minutes from word 'Move.'"

"No.2 SECTION: You have heard what One and Three Sections are going to do. You will take No.2 Section along BANGOR ROAD, and keeping well under cover, cross the gardens to the fourth block of houses UP ASBURY ROAD from GREEN LANE (B).

"Put out a couple of men to give covering fire across ASBURY ROAD, and when you hear No.3 Section attack go all out for House Z.

"After the Houses Y and Z are captured you will at once start putting them in a state of defense."

"All three sections must be in a position to start ten minutes from now. If something comes unstuck push on at all costs and don't wait for anything.

"Any questions? MOVE!"

NOTES:

¹NOTE: The modern equivalents would be rubber soled boots.

²NOTE: The modern equivalent is Flexible Linear Shape Charge.

³NOTE: Anybody who doubts this need only review the tapes of those third-rate clowns in ATF during their assault on Mount Carmel. Cops, in particular federal cops, are fundamentally cowards; they are more afraid of you than you should be of them. The moment they encounter determined resistance they hesitate. At that very moment you should counterattack with the objective of killing as many of them as possible. Give no quarter. You're going to die anyway. At that point you have nothing to lose. Make them pay for it.

⁴Yards.

⁵Although *Defense of Houses* was last issue's article, one should remember that during an attack, having seized a house or building, it must be prepared for the inevitable enemy counterattack to retake it.

⁶Concertina wire.

The legal effect of these constitutional recognitions of the rights of individuals to defend their property, liberties, and lives, against the government, is to legalize resistance to all injustices and oppression, of every name and nature whatsoever, on the part of government.

Lysander Spooner, 1852



The military value of a partisan's work is not measured in the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching.
John S. Mosby

THE DEFENSE OF VILLAGES AND SMALL TOWNS

by
Colonel G.A. Wade, M.C.

This is The Resister's third reprint of Home Guard tactical manuals treating what our military calls Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT). While *Defense of Houses* and *House to House Fighting* treated tactical considerations in defending and attacking single structures, we now expand our tactical view to those tactical considerations involving multiple structures, i.e., "villages" and "small towns." In context, we may think of these groupings of buildings as what the Establishment media are pleased to call, "compounds." Think of a "compound" as a defensible neighborhood. Something our so-called "government" considers a blatant defiance of their "authority" over us. SMB

Wanted: A Sense of Reality

Up to a year or so ago none of us could imagine our beautiful English villages, the picture of peace and contentment, being attacked by anything more deadly than carbuncles and sightseers.

Yet, here we are, faced not only with the possibility but the *probability* of having to defend them against invaders, heavily armed, scientifically trained and treacherous.

When I first began to study the defense of villages which I had known and loved since boyhood, I discovered that I was suffering from some sort of vague handicap, some feeling which hindered me in doing justice to the job, something which prevented my taking that depth of interest which the subject warranted.

Thinking the matter over I finally

made an absolutely astounding discovery — it was simply this: I was not putting my heart into the defensive schemes for these places simply because they were so familiar and I loved them so much I could not bring myself to believe that anything could threaten their existence! Somehow I could not picture them as the center of bloodshed, devastation and death.

In other words, I could not go all out on the defense schemes because I was not convinced that they would ever be necessary.

Not to put too fine a point on it, I was being just the sort of b.f.¹ Hitler has banked on my being — unable to

realize the threat until it was too late!

After that I did some hard thinking which caused me to shed my rosy delusions, and I want you to do the same before I go on to talk about village defense.

Do not, any of you, listen to me with the same sort of casual detachment with which you hear the preacher describing the perils you are storing up for yourselves in the hereafter, because today we are NOT dealing with the remote future but with the next few months, and *above all things* we must immediately develop a SENSE OF REALITY.

Now I am going to assume that YOU have just been charged with the responsibility of defending the village of FENDIT with your company of Home Guard, and we will discuss the problem together.

Strategic Importance of Village Defense

Nowadays we hear a lot about defense in depth, and nobody likes to talk about "holding the line."

The Germans have become accustomed to staging mobile heavily armed attacks, and against these only defense in depth is of any use.

If you picture the onslaught of the Panzer division as like the impact of a bullet, then loose, clinging resistance is

like the sand in the sandbag which will stop it in a much shorter distance than other substances offering considerably harder resistance.

When the invader bursts into our countryside those who are defending our villages will have a role of absolutely primary importance. Every cen-

...here we are, faced not only with the possibility but the *probability* of having to defend them...

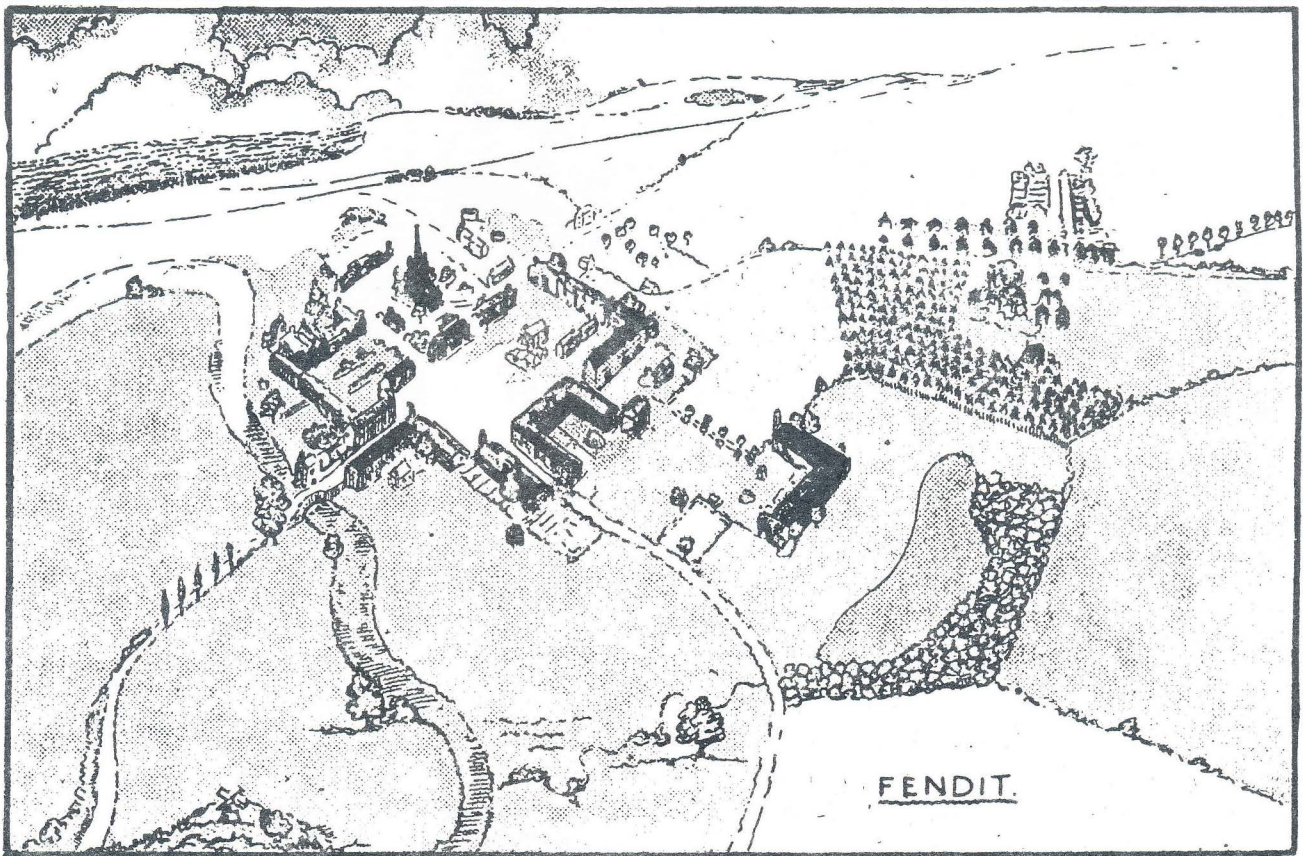


PLATE 1.—VIEW OF FENDIT

ter of resistance the enemy meets will slow him down and use up a little of his impetus. If these strongholds are distributed right across his path, as villages will be, before he has traveled far his pace will be slowed, his initiative gone and the way prepared for action by our own shock troops.

Another aspect of village defense is this: the Germans are trained not to break their heads on tough spots but to by-pass well-defended localities, so that, even though the enemy may be present in overwhelming force, if the village puts up a spirited resistance he will probably give it a miss. But before doing so he will test the defenses in a most determined way, and the village will not be held unless it has a GOOD DEFENSE SCHEME well coordinated and carried out.

The preparation of this scheme is *your* responsibility, so make it a good one.

General Considerations

The first step is to consider what kind of attack it is that we have to guard against.

It may be that at sunset or dawn a comparatively small number of Huns will drop from the skies, stealthily and speedily assemble and attack the village, or it may be that one day the sounds of battle will be heard in the far distance and the enemy, in great force, preceded by armored fighting vehicles, will come moving across the landscape.

We do not know HOW he will come, but we *do* know that when he *does* come our village must be ready for him.

Consequently, we must have our dispositions such that we can not only hunt and exterminate small bodies of Germans, but, if attacked by larger numbers, can oppose force with force and surprise them by delivering a heavy counterattack.

Now you can only meet force with force if you have been sufficiently strong-willed to withstand the great

temptation which is always present when making defensive plans — I mean the tendency to dissipate your strength in a host of small uncoordinated posts so spread out all over the place that a compact body of the enemy could mop up five or six times their own number by taking them a few at a time.²

Admittedly every one of those small posts would be guarding something useful, and if you take them away you will feel you are giving something to the enemy without a fight. But that is the price you have to pay for your ability to strike back at the Hun, and, believe me, you will find it well worth while, particularly if you make careful study of what you are giving away so that you let the enemy have nothing that is really vital.

In any case, when we come to discuss fighting patrols you will see that even though no posts are stationed in a particular area it does not by any means follow that Germans can safely enter.

Now let us look at the village to make up our minds which parts it is

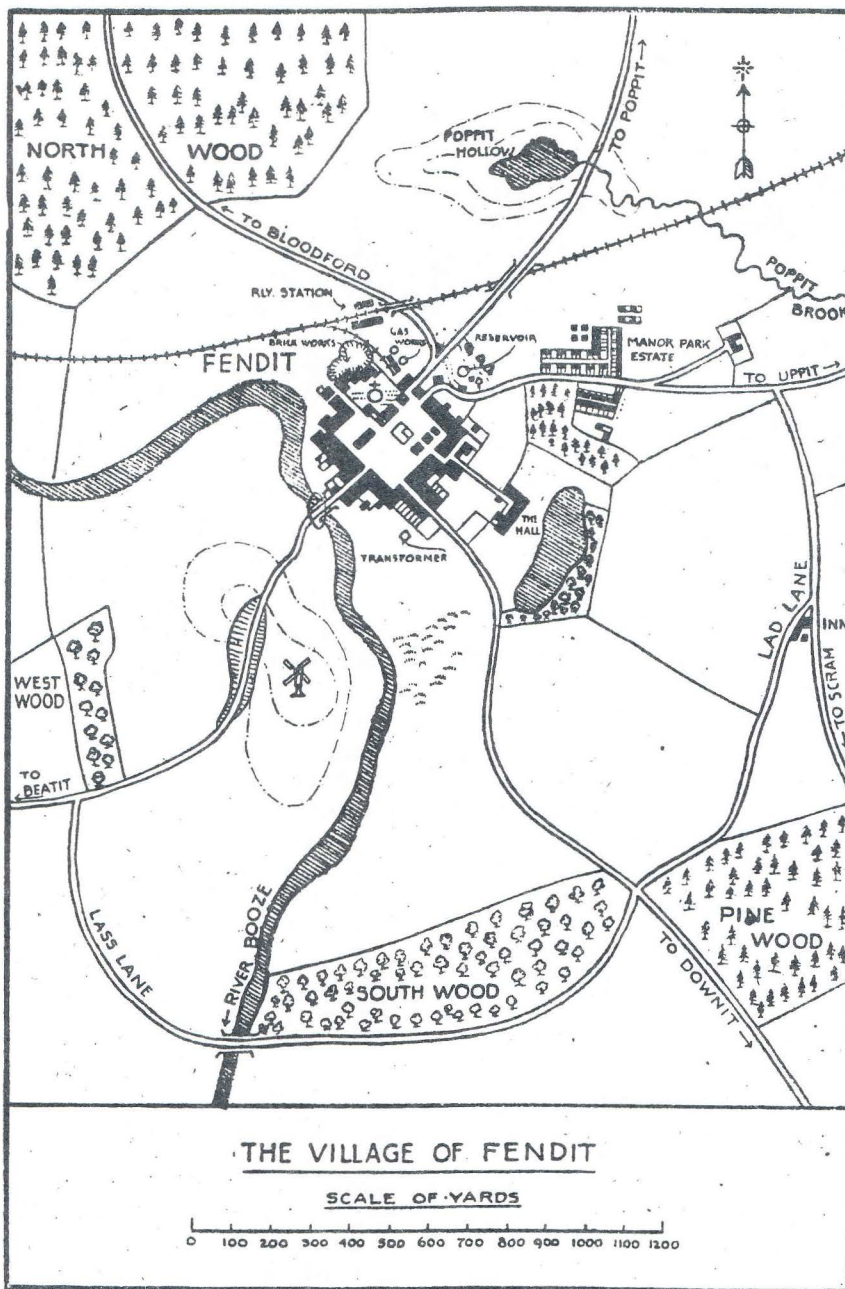


PLATE 2.—MAP OF FENDIT

vital to defend and which parts are such that if the enemy occupies them it will not be disastrous.

(1) The RIVER BOOZE is considerable protection against attack from the SOUTHWEST, so the BRIDGE must be strongly held.

(2) Damage to the PLUMBING STATION or RESERVOIR would be a serious matter, and, in addition, an enemy on RESERVOIR HILL could dominate the defenses.

(3) The COUNCIL OFFICES, POLICE HEADQUARTERS, A.R.P. CONTROL are all in the

heart of the village, so they will be all right, but the TRANSFORMER STATION is rather isolated on the SOUTH.

These places I have mentioned must all be protected within your scheme.

On the other hand, although if plenty of men were available it would be desirable to hold the RAILWAY STATION, MANOR PARK ESTATE and THE HALL, they are all places which the enemy could occupy without seriously threatening the main part of the village; consequently,

to avoid too wide dispersion, they will not be defended by posts.

This will mean that three points will arise:

(1) The members of the Home Guard who live on Manor Park Estate will have a meeting and say they want *their* houses embraced within the main defenses and that they joined the Home Guard to defend their own homes and not other people's.

(2) The Squire will raise hell and say you do not know your business and that if the chaps he served with in the South Africa War were here they would soon teach you that the Hall should be the *center* of defense.³

After you have pacified the Squire and the Manor Park Estates worthies by a dissertation on the deadly effectiveness of the fighting patrols with which you intend to cover their respective areas, you come to the third point, which is the one that really matters.

(3) You will have some MEN IN RESERVE, men to hit back with, men to restore the situation if it gets critical, men to reinforce the threatened parts.

Siting the Keeps

We will start with our KEEPS; the strongholds which will have garrisons to defend them to the bitter end and from which our fighting patrols and reserves can sally forth for ACTIVE DEFENSE further afield.

As far as possible the keeps should:

(1) Be capable of ALL-ROUND DEFENSE.

(2) Be sited where they cover approaches to vital parts.

(3) Be mutually supporting.

Good places for keeps will be:

No.1 Keep at the BRICKWORKS. This will be protected on the NORTH by the clay pit. The building is robust and the kiln, being of tremendously thick brickwork, will make an admirable shelter. From this keep the gasworks can be protected from attack coming from the railway station, and there is visual contact with No. 2 Keep on Reservoir Hill. The churchyard on the south gives an open field of fire and will be very handy for the disposal of attackers.

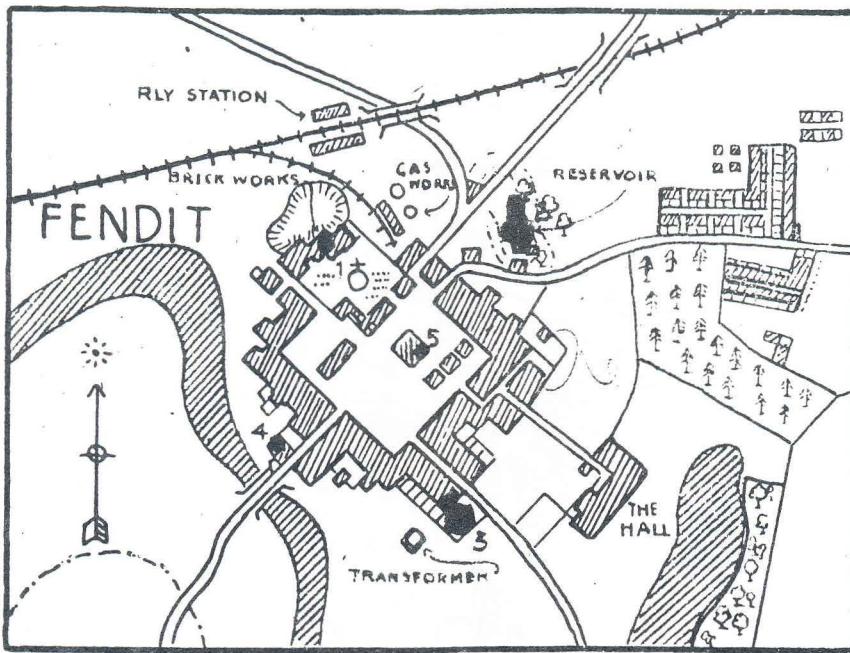


PLATE 3.—KEEPS

No.2 Keep on RESERVOIR HILL will take advantage of the natural cover furnished by the trees and commands the three roads from the BLOODFORD, POPPIT and UPPIT as well as guarding the east of the gasworks.

No.3 Keep in the ALLOTMENT GARDENS will cover the DOWNIT ROAD. It also protects the transformer station and is in visual contact with the Bridge Keep (No.4).

No.4 Keep will be the OLD WATER MILL near the BRIDGE. It has a good field of fire across the river, and the garrison can reach the road block on the bridge with A.W. and Mills grenades.

No.5 Keep in the MARKET HALL. This will be the Home Guard Battle Headquarters and has a fair field of fire all round. Being such a high building lookouts on the roof can see the various other keeps, and the snipers up there would dominate any enemy penetrating into the built-up part of the village. It is reasonably central and from it RESERVES could issue in any direction to reinforce threatened localities or to counterattack in the event of local success by the enemy.

Speed is essential in such operations, so the reserve must always be placed in a central position. The

S.A.A.⁴ dump will be in the No.5 Keep and the position of this reserve ammunition should be known to all NCOs.

Road Blocks

In my opening remarks I asked you to develop a REALISTIC outlook, and you should certainly have one in relation to road blocks.

A road block to some soldiers seems to mean nothing but an obstacle in the road or street, but it is *far more* than that.

A road block is a CHALLENGE to the enemy; it is the gauntlet thrown down for him to pick up. In effect, the men who erect the road block say to the advancing Huns, "Here is where we mean you to stop. So what?"

Now if you are a wise soldier you do not throw out a challenge unless you are favorably fixed for dealing with the resulting schemozzle; consequently, you site your road block where it will be *easy* for you to defend and *hard* for the enemy to attack; because ATTACK IT HE WILL!

Those folk who fondly imagine the Hun will look at a road block and say, "I can't get past it; I shall go somewhere else," have got another guess coming, either in this world or next.

Surprise is a great factor in road-block tactics, but it is no use surprising your enemy unless you are in a position to take advantage of his temporary hesitation and confusion. In other words, if you place your road block where the hostile armored fighting vehicle will come upon it suddenly and halt, you MUST have everything prepared to put him "on the spot" without a moment's delay.

When you think of putting a road block in a certain place, say to yourself, "What will the Boches do when they see a road block here? Will they try to get round the flanks? Which flank will they try first? Where shall I put some men to stop that? What about the other flank? What will he do if he cannot turn our flanks? Use a mortar? Where could the guard shelter? Where will they use a mortar from? How could we sneak out and ambush them there? And so on.

Having these considerations in mind, let us look at the map and fix some appropriate positions for road blocks prior to reconnoitering them on the ground.

Road Block A — If we place a block just south of the gasworks it will block both the BLOODFORD and the POPPIT ROADS and we can put the guard in the gasworks, which will kill two birds with one stone. No.2 Keep can also cover this road block.

Road Block B — This should block the UPPIT ROAD and if it is put in the bend of the street it will be easy to defend from houses at both sides.

Road Block C — This will stop any traffic from DOWNIT and, being right up against No.3 Keep, will require no special guard, but as it is on a straight road it will require screening carefully.

Road Block D on the bridge on the BEATIT ROAD is actually much easier to conceal than appears from the map, as the bridge has a high crown which will prevent an approaching vehicle from seeing it till on the center of the bridge.

These four are the really hefty man's size road blocks required to deny the roads to the enemy.

Two other lighter road blocks will be an advantage, one where the drive from the Hall (E) enters the village and the other at the west corner of

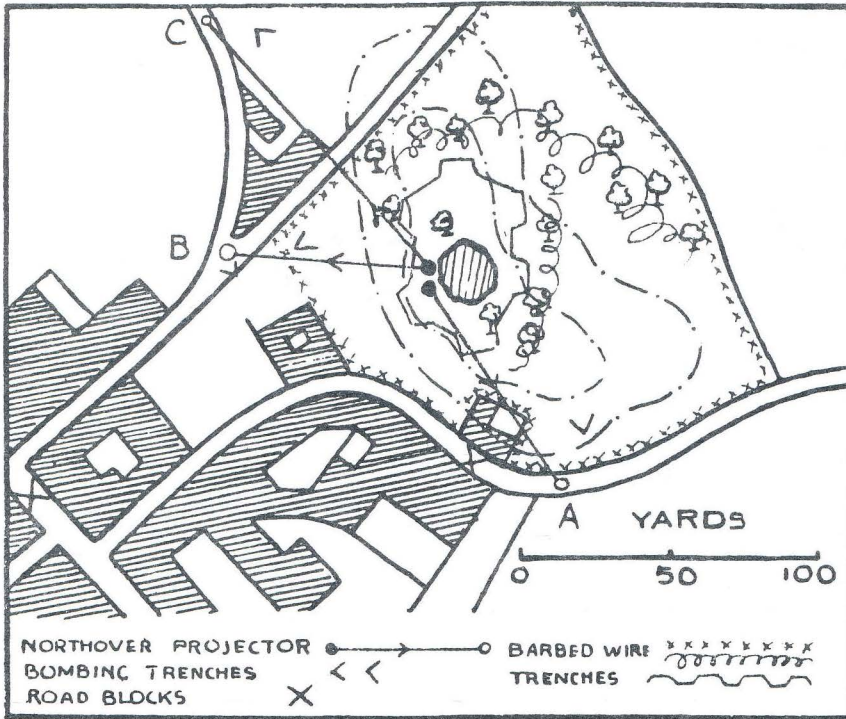


PLATE 4.—No. 2 KEEP

Note the wiring which follows hedges (or the side of the road) all round except a small stretch due west of the keep, which should go straight across so as to look like a fence or hedge. The trees are also laced together with wire.

The [mortars] are on the near slope of the hill and cannot be seen or fired upon from the east. They cover the roads at A, B and C, and vehicles can be caused to hesitate at these spots by a cunning use of screens or dummy mines.

Bomber's¹ trenches should be within range of A, B and C so that once the [mortars halt vehicles] Molotovs can be thrown to carry on the good work. These slit trenches should be well defiladed against a bad shot from the [mortar], and great care should be taken to avoid making tracks.

¹Grenadiers (or men with satchel charges).

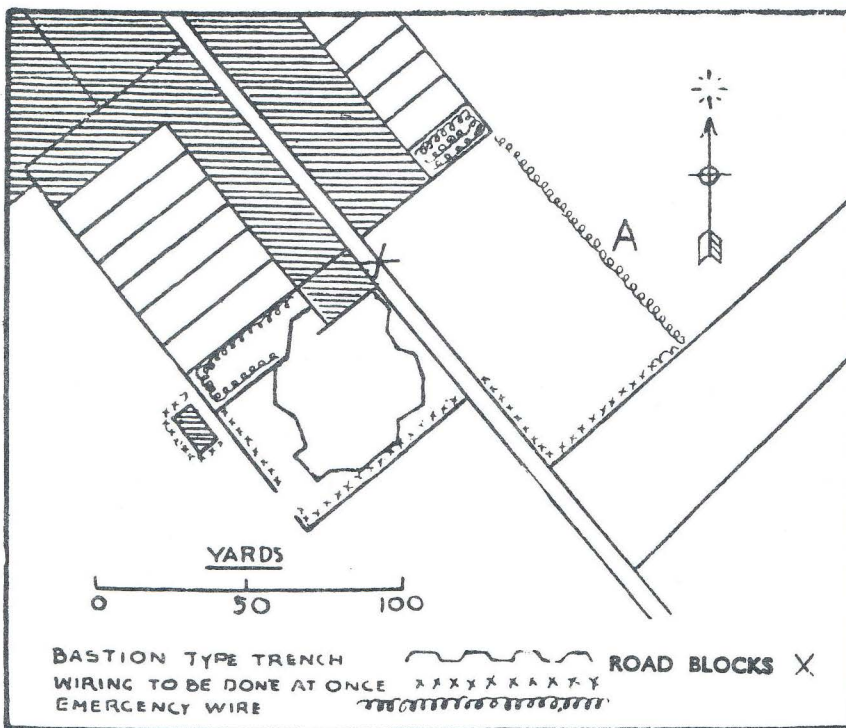


PLATE 5.—No. 3 KEEP

A HOUSE has been included in this keep, as it dominates the road block and has a splendid field of fire.

The WIRING is along hedges and in two back gardens.

You will notice that some of the wiring comes much too close to the keep; but even so this is better than putting it further out in the field, where it would be very obvious from the air.

A supply of concertina wire should be kept ready for putting out at A (to look like a continuation of the garden fence after the "balloon goes up.")

Parts of the trench can be dug now to act as fire positions, and these may be connected up later if required.

The hedges should be cleared to give necessary field of fire, but with GREATEST DISCRIMINATION and care (and only low down at that).

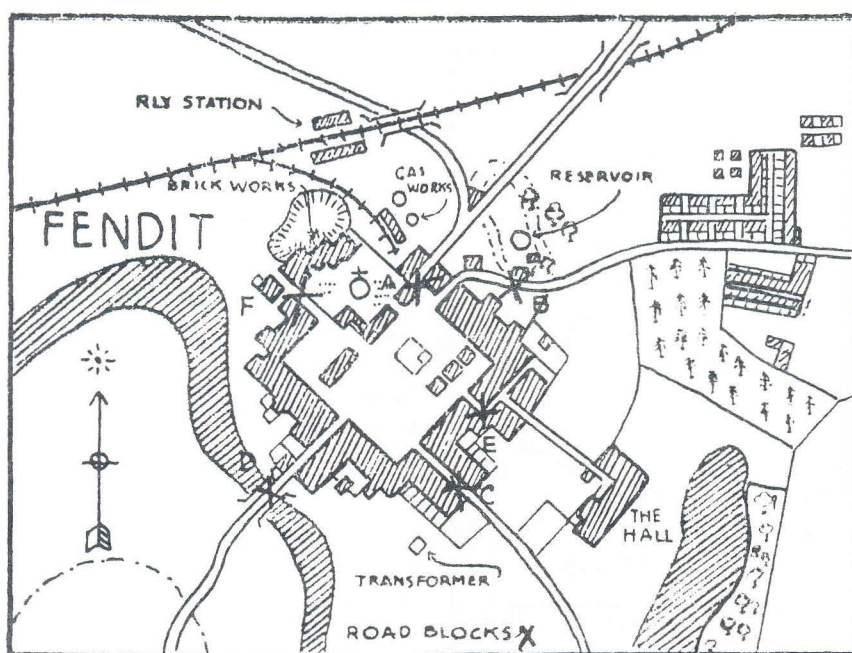


PLATE 6.—ROAD BLOCKS

the churchyard (F).

Having fixed the keeps and the road blocks we have formed the framework of the static defense, so now let us consider the more ACTIVE and AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE, because that is what *really* counts.

The Fighting Patrols

When I talk about fighting patrols I mean twenty-five men organized into three sections of eight with a Patrol Leader. The country round about FENDIT is very suitable for the operations of fighting patrols. It is full of undulations and interesting features which will give a patrol which knows that ground a great advantage over an enemy strange to the locality. The advantage should be exploited by the Home Guard to the utmost, as it will largely offset the military training of the German invaders.

Now let us divide the surrounding district into fighting patrol areas. This is very necessary, because your fighting patrols should be trained to be very aggressive and swift to attack; consequently, if you have tow of them out, particularly under conditions of bad visibility, etc., there is a risk of their attacking one another unless you tie them down to operating within certain specified boundaries.

These boundaries, by the way, should be well marked geographical features, easily recognizable on the ground, such as streams, roads, woods, etc.

As apparently you will have only sufficient men to have two patrols out at once, what about dividing the surrounding district into two patrol areas, one south of the line made by the UPPIT—FENDIT ROAD as far as the bridge over the RIVER BRIDGE southwest of FENDIT and thence along the BOOZE westwards, and the other north of it, the road itself to be inclusive to the southern patrol area?

Now for the OUTWARD limits of the patrol areas:

Fighting Patrol Operating From No.2 Keep:

NORTH WOOD stretches for two miles, so it is impossible to patrol the northern edge—that is, the BLOODFORD side; consequently, we have perforce to make our limit here from the RIVER BOOZE to the southern point and then along the edge of NORTH WOOD to POPPIT HOLLOW, which is big enough to hold an invading battalion without its being seen from the village, so it must be kept under continual observation.

From there POPPIT BROOK furnishes a good boundary till it strikes the UPPIT ROAD, which is the patrol's southern limit.

Fighting Patrol Operating From No.3 Keep:

This patrol is not so cramped in style and can cover more ground. From the UPPIT ROAD along LAD LANE to the INN, thence along SCRAM ROAD to the south side of PINE WOOD, along the southern edge of PINE and SOUTH WOODS, over the bridge along LASS LANE to BEATTIT ROAD. Thence covering west edge of WEST WOOD, north along hedge to ROVER BOOZE. A lovely stretch of typical English countryside.

If this patrol could be mounted on cycles they could cover their area so quickly that they would be worth two or three dismounted patrols.

Using the roads indicated on the map (at irregular times), they would be great protection to the main defenses and sudden death to any small parties of enemy paratroopers impudent enough to come down on their area.

There are other ways of making patrols mobile besides cycles and these should all be considered.

You see you will be short of men in this defense scheme (because everybody always *is* short of men in defense schemes!), and the fewer defenders you have the MORE ACTIVE THEY MUST BE.

The Men and the Weapons

We are getting on famously with our defensive arrangements now. We have sited the keeps, the backbone of our defense, and we have decided the patrol areas. Also we have fixed which particular keeps will acts as the eyes to which our fighting patrols will return, like birds of prey to their nests.

Now let us see what men we have. Only a hundred and fifty! And the arms?

80 Rifles.

- 20 Shotguns.
- 4 Browning automatics.
- 6 Tommy guns.
- 2 Mortars
- 2 Flame-throwers.

Also various grenades, Molotovs, [satchel charges], and a few larger bombs and antitank mines.

Not as many men or weapons as we would like, but we might be a lot worse off. Anyway, it is said that the moral is to the physical as three is to one, and these weapons, although comparatively few, will, if handled with DASH and DETERMINATION, be sufficient to hold the village of FENDIT for a long time and to make the invader think twice.

What is the best allocation of those men and weapons? First the men. These are of various kinds, from quite young men to veterans of the last war.

Most of the latter will hardly be active enough for the fighting patrols, but are just the men to act as garrisons for the keeps while the more active ones are used as fighting patrols or mobile reserves.

If we allocate sixty men to garrison the keeps and have two fighting patrols of twenty-five men each, that leaves forty, of whom fifteen will be required as lookouts on road blocks and twenty-five will be in reserve.

The next point is: how shall we distribute the weapons? First the BROWNINGs. Probably the best place for these will be in Keeps nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4. Of the TOMMY-GUNS let us put four in Keep No.5 and give one to each FIGHTING PATROL.

Reasons for this [distribution] are that Keep No.5 has the shortest field of fire; also, should the enemy break into to village there will be house-to-house fighting⁶ for the reserves, who will find the Tommy-guns just the tools required.

No.2 Keep is a good spot for the [mortars], as from it they can strafe vehicles on three roads.

I should put the FLAME-THROWERS at Road Block B in the cellars of two houses so that they can poop off from ground level.

Distribute the bombs, etc., amongst the keeps and roadblock guards, with some extra ones at No.4 Keep.

As you have only a few ANTI-

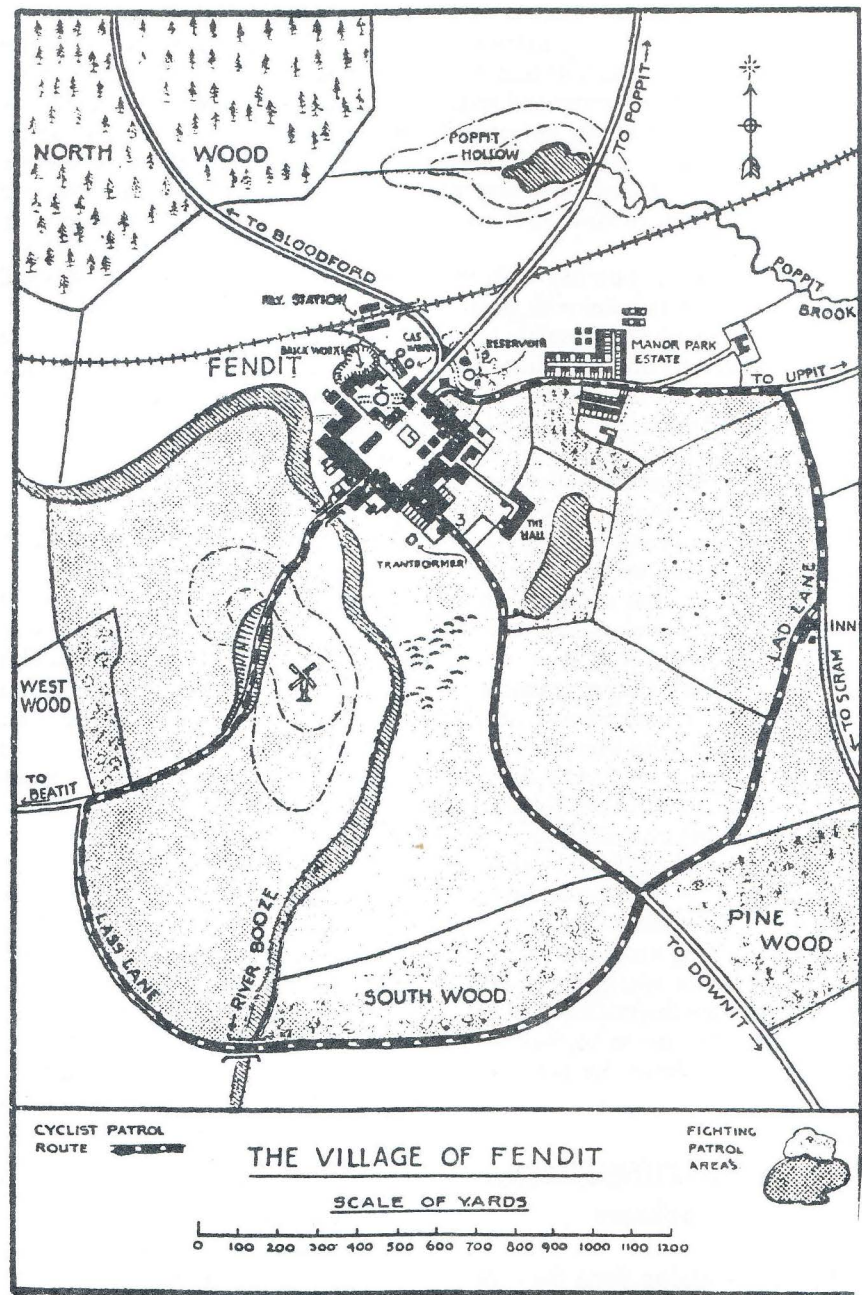


PLATE 7.—FIGHTING PATROLS

TANK MINES, they should be used to supplement the lighter Road Blocks E and F.

How Will Our Defenses Work?

There you have your defense scheme. When the long-expected Huns approach the village of FENDIT they will be wondering what sort of job you and I have made of the defense arrangements and hoping to surprise us.

The first indication of our activities will be when, without the least warning, a strong fighting patrol materializes from apparently nowhere and rushes in on them, yelling like fiends so suddenly that before they can do anything they feel the cold steel enter their vitals and realize too late that the soil they came to conquer they will remain to fertilize.

After that may come other much stronger bodies of the enemy, so strong that the fighting patrols cannot tackle them, but will have to retire to their keeps section by section,

each giving the other covering fire.

Following the retiring patrols as closely as the dare, the Germans will come suddenly under close and accurate fire from the keeps, not one of which has fired a shot at long range, but has simply lain doggo waiting for the enemy to get so close that every shot will tell.

Then there will be a lull while the Nazis study our defenses with glasses, make their plans and possibly bring up some mortars and machine guns.

The battle will then commence in real earnest and two of three of the keeps may be attacked at once while parties of Germans will push forward, trying to find a weak spot. One party may make the mistake of approaching a keep in too weak strength and find to its cost that the garrison do not wait to be attacked, but rush out and get the first smack in.

Some of the enemy may even penetrate past the road blocks into the village, only to find that reserves issue from Keep No.5 and dodging round familiar entries and side streets, bump them off from their flanks and rear; even from roofs and windows, piling up the bloodstained gray corpses all over the place.

As they sling away and the fighting patrols are emerging from the keeps to harass their withdrawal, they will know the answer to their original question about the defenses of FENDIT.

Rounding Off the Defense Scheme

Now having done the bulk of the work, let us round off our defense scheme by attending to a number of points which must not be overlooked if we are to complete a workmanlike job.

The Importance of the Time Factor

It is not generally realized how vastly important the time factor is in modern mechanized warfare, when mobile and armored units are maneuvering for position.

A check given to the head of a column proceeding across country will be magnified many times over.

Consequently, one village stubbornly denying the enemy's passage may give our units time to arrive at the tactical point and so influence a tremendous battle.

This I would impress upon you most emphatically so that you can make absolutely clear to your men that, although the situation may appear desperate and hopeless, it is still of use to FIGHT ON.

If every town and village in the country realizes this and, when the invader comes, fights and fights and FIGHTS, the result of their combined efforts will be *decisive*.

Liaise With Civil Authorities

Keep close touch with the head of the local Council, the Police, as well as the heads of the Electricity, Gas and Water Services. All these have a direct bearing on defensive measures. Remember, if your Home Guard comes into action you will be dependent on the CIVIL arrangements for the care of your wounded. Make friends with the W.V.S.:⁷ they will cook, provide comforts and do all sorts of things for your men. In war they will be an invaluable aid if you will enlist their interest and help now.

Get to know about FOOD supplies in the village. What they are, where they are, and who looks after them. Should the state of tension last some time you may be very glad of this information. Establish close touch with neighboring military and other units. Get to know their plans and coordinate your arrangements.

Acquaint yourself with the arrangements for preventing PETROL falling into the enemy's hands, and as there are some large, flat fields, see that they are obstructed with stout posts, etc., because, good though your defense scheme may be, it is no use *inviting* attack.

Barbed Wire

See about plenty of entanglements, but always keep them under cover, along hedges, in ditches, etc. The enemy will probably do FENDIT the honor of taking its photograph, and irresponsible wiring will tell him exactly where you intend to put your

men. Concertina wire should be distributed in various places ready to be rushed out on emergency. The details of engineer and other stores required, together with instructions in the building of defense works, siting of trenches, reinforcing of houses, etc., form too varied a subject to be dealt with here.

Communications

You may have very little signaling equipment, but do not worry about that. Amongst your men will be some old signalers: start them practicing at once and fix up flag and lamp communications between important points. Be sure that all ranks have plenty of practice in sending information quickly and accurately. Study means of communication between yourself and neighboring units.

Tank Traps

A few TANK TRAPS will be most useful and give everyone a great sense of security. Pits covered over, streams cunningly deepened, and all kinds of obstacles can be devised without a tremendous lot of work. [As always, all obstacles should be booby-trapped, observed at all times, and covered by fire.]

Water

Water can often be utilized for defensive purposes; for instance, it appears from the map that it would be possible to partially dam the RIVER BOOZE and WINDMILL HILL and so flood the marsh up to the lake. This would make the south side of the village very secure. Also it may be possible to use boats to patrol the river or to move reserves to surprise the enemy.

Shotguns

I have noticed a tendency amongst Home Guard to disparage shotguns in favor of rifles. This is a big mistake: a shotgun in the hands of one accustomed to using it, firing buckshot, is deadlier than a rifle a short

range, and ALL the shooting, whether by rifles or shotguns, SHOULD BE AT SHORT RANGES.

Training

Having decided on your defensive arrangements, the next thing is to train your men to carry them out efficiently. The training of fighting patrols is of endless interest and can be varied in lots of ways. House-to-house fighting is a study in itself and practice is absolutely essential if you are to avoid casualties and kill the invaders. Train your men to shoot accurately at close ranges [ambidextrously] both in daylight and DARKNESS.

Chronological Defense in Depth

And now, before we come to the end of what I feel has been a very sketchy outline of a complex subject, I should like to say a few words about something which has been on my mind lately.

We hear a lot about defense in depth and everyone agrees that it is an essential thing, but they all mean depth in the GEOGRAPHICAL sense — that is defense in terms of yards and miles.

I want to talk about depth in the CHRONOLOGICAL sense — I mean DEPTH IN TIME, in days and weeks.

Suppose that in spite of our preparations and all the valiant work of the FENDIT Home Guard, the enemy brings up more and more men, breaks down the defenses and occupies the village. Is *that* going to be the *end* of the resistance put up by the FENDIT people?

Or are some hardy spirits amongst the villagers going to carry on the war against the uninvited guests every day, and particular every night, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT?

I'll say they are!

There will be many a splash in the waters of the River Booze when sentries disappear on dark nights. There will be unexpected stabbings and shootings and fires and explosions galore till the enemy's nerves are all awry and he gets increasingly powerless to hold the place.

But, in order to do this success-

fully, preparations should be made *before* the occupation. Little stores of weapons, cloths, explosives and food should be carefully hidden here and there, safe from damp and rats. These should be known to a very few selected men and the utmost secrecy observed.

Still, that is all by the way, and if your defense is properly carried out it is unlikely to arise.

So now for my last word. In all your preparations to repel the invader put yourself into his place. Use your imagination and say, "What will he do? How will he do it?" and the answers will never fail to give you the clue to a SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE.

NOTES:

¹Bloody fool.

²Wade is raising a critical point here. It is not enough to plan for the defense of one's own home. One must have a tactical plan for the defense of one's neighborhood — as in this article represented as the defense of "villages and small towns." Individual houses are easily isolated and reduced one-by-one. Houses and other buildings must be an integral part of what is known as a "seamless web" defense.

³Typical of the squabbling one witnesses among present-day so-called militia.

⁴Small Arms Ammunition.

⁵So-called militias would do well to pay particular attention here to the number of men needed to defend a 500 yard by 500 yard isolated "neighborhood." As currently constituted, most self-appointed militias have the leadership, manpower and tactical skills sufficient to bushwhack the local postman.

⁶See: The Resister, Volume V, No.2, Spring 1999.

⁷Woman's Volunteer Service.

The legal effect of these constitutional recognitions of the rights of individuals to defend their property, liberties, and lives, against the government, is to legalize resistance to all injustices and oppression, of every name and nature whatsoever, on the part of government.

Lysander Spooner, 1852



The military value of a partisan's work is not measured in the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching.
John S. Mosby

THE DEFENSE OF TOWNS

by
Colonel G.A. Wade, M.C.

The Defense of Towns completes The Resister's series on house-to-house and street fighting. Although the material dates from the early 1940's the larger principles involved are adequately covered and, technology aside, have not materially changed since then. This four part series as been in response to "our" military continuing to expand its training in Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOU) as part of its shift in mission from defense of America to population control. As recent events in Chechnya illustrate, even relatively lightly armed insurgents, with a little forethought, can lure conventional military forces into an urban meat grinder. SMB

The defense of a densely populated area, with its closely packed buildings, its short fields of fire, and its endless covered approaches presents a problem bristling with difficulties.

And yet the practical experiences of this war demonstrates that not only can towns be defended for months on end against an enemy who has already reached them but the ramifications of built-up areas have actually favored the defending forces.

In other words, although towns appear very hard to defend they are *much more difficult to attack*.

When a town becomes the center of hostilities both attackers and defenders have:

A Whale of a Problem

We will now consider *both* sides of it because, although primarily we are discussing how we can defend a town, we shall require insight into the likely

methods of attack before we can make the best defensive dispositions.

Elsewhere I have dealt with the defense of villages and small towns, and now we are dealing with the defense of MANSCASTON, a town of considerable size.

Let us visualize the invading Germans arriving where they will get the first sight of Mancaston; and then let us try to get a clear picture of what will happen inside their Nazi minds at that moment. It will help us to understand the problem.

They will gaze at the place, weighing up its strength and weaknesses.

Then they will wonder what kind of men are defending it. Will they be the sort of brave fools who are easy meat, or will they have brains as well as guts?

They will want to know this because the force defending the town will be all that lies between them and victory.

The Nazi's Dream of Heaven

Once they are inside Mancaston they will be able to satisfy their inner craving to see boys and old men done to death in cold blood. They will be able to enjoy the savage thrill of violating clean women. They will have opportunities of deadening their inborn sense of inferiority by humiliating upright and proud English citizens.¹

Yes, they will lick their lips eagerly, because their long-cherished dreams have almost come true.

I say "almost" advisedly, because, although they have succeeded in landing on English soil, before they can put into operation their much-gloated-over plans there is going to be a FIGHT! The Germans will realize this and will begin to weigh up the prospects.

When they attack Mancaston how will they *hope* to find the defenders disposed?

As a matter of fact, the actual *hope* in the

minds of the Germans will be not so much to find the defenders in any particular defensive formation but to *find them* SOMEWHERE!

They will say to themselves: "If the British are all manning a line round the perimeter we will break in by concentration overwhelming force on one or two places, and then we can mop up the other parts of the line from the flanks and rear.

"Or, if instead of holding a line the defending troops are all in defended

In other words, although towns appear very hard to defend they are much more difficult to attack.

localities or keeps, we can lay siege to them and by mortaring, machine-gunning and smoking them reduce them one at a time.

"If only we can establish contact with them in force it will be easy. We Germans will keep the initiative. It is the style of fighting in which our men are trained, and we have just the right weapons for it"

That is what they *hope*. And they will probably assume, in their Prussian pride, that the English will be fools enough to do just what they want, and their totalitarian hearts rejoice at the prospect of operations so "according to plan."

But now, having had an intimate look into their *hopes*, let us look just as closely at their *fears*, because, at the back of their truculent minds, they have *plenty* of fears.

They FEAR a situation in which they will be lost in a maze of strange buildings, harried and hunted by an aggressive but elusive foe.

They FEAR to be sniped, bombed, bayoneted, clubbed, stabbed, strangled and burnt by enemies who never materialize in concentrated force but who cling to their advancing troops like leeches, hanging mercilessly on to flanks and rear, taking continuous toll of blood from the moment they approach the town.

They FEAR the town will be full of intangible parties who suddenly fall, in organized ferocity, upon their men, kill a few and vanish before they can strike them back.

They FEAR the continuous wastage a long-drawn-out penetration under those conditions will necessitate.

They FEAR the effect such tactics will have upon the morale of their men, and *above all* they abominate the thought of NIGHT in that town if its defenders are still at large. They know there will be not a moment's rest for their weary men, with the prospect of another hard day's fighting on the morrow. They dread finding little heaps of blood-soaked clothing where they would expect to find lone sentries, or outpost parties overwhelmed by silent ghosts, who close in with sudden, resolute rushes and fade away, leaving only dead men behind.

Yes, there are lots of things they fear, but they do not think they will

crop up, because they know the British pride themselves on being able to "stand up and fight" and seldom think of being stealthy or cunning. They will count on our playing straight into their hands by making our defense static, and so they will proceed to the attack.

To defeat that attack is our inspiring task, and it had been made all the easier by our peep into the enemy's mind.

WE WILL NOT GIVE HIM A THING HE HOPES FOR AND WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL HIS FEARS!

In other words, our object is to deny the enemy all opportunities of dealing the defense a decisive blow and to make his penetration of the town so costly that he will be compelled to give it up.

There is nothing particularly difficult in the way of achieving this object. It is all a question of exploiting to the full the great advantages built-up areas confer upon the defense.

You see, all the different kinds of support the attacking troops are relying upon to cover their advance are almost useless once they get into the streets.

It is a simple matter to defeat and destroy tanks in a town. Covering weapons, such as medium machine guns and mortars, cannot be employed at long ranges; they have to come so close that the defenders have every opportunity of destroying them. Supporting aircraft cannot see inside the houses, and not one knows where to direct artillery fire upon.

The attacking infantry have to proceed without adequate support and are at a terrible disadvantage if the defenders know every entry and passage and quick ways through buildings and across roofs.

Let us now be sure you have in your minds a clear picture of the type of defense suited to a large town.

It will be the sort of defense which never has a showdown with the Germans, but which exercise continuous, *increasing* pressure against them from the moment they get near the town to the time when they are brought to a standstill in the town itself. A cramping pressure which, when they try to extricate themselves, sinks its

teeth deeper and deeper, never relaxing till the last Hun is dead.

As the Boches advance towards the suburbs they will see very little of the defenders and will gain no idea of their dispositions or strength.

Home Guard reconnaissance patrols will keep constant touch with their advance, an occasional fighting patrol will suddenly materialize, scupper a small party and vanish. With growing frequency snipers will claim victims or a tank-hunting platoon will send up a tank on a pyre of Molotoffs; disappearing before retaliation can be made.

When the invaders have advanced to where the houses get closer together, cover for the defenders will improve and resistance will stiffen. From gardens, backyards, roofs and windows will fly death-dealing bombs and bullets hurled by melt into thin air.

After the enemy have penetrated into the streets the defending Home Guard will appear in increasing numbers on their flanks and fighting patrols will harass even their rear.

If the Boches keep together in large bodies the British riflemen and bombers will take terrible toll, but, if they spread out, small bodies of Home Guard will dash out of houses and scupper them piecemeal.

If the Germans stop, the defenders close in on them and their initiative is gone. If they do *not* stop, they will be caught in a maze of streets by active, elusive enemies buzzing round like hornets.

And suppose, in desperation, tanks are sent to support the unfortunate infantry, *nothing could suit the Home Guard better!*

A tank in the open country is a pretty tough proposition for them to tackle, but once it gets into a built-up area, why, the Home Guard have got it by the rivets!

That is, of course, assuming the tank-hunting people know their stuff, but I will talk about them later on.

The defense of the town must be deep and tenacious, obstinate and clinging, yielding ground when the attackers press hard, but only to envelop them more closely as they advance.

The enemy never has a moment in which to relax or rest and the de-

fenders elude all efforts to bring them to decisive battle.

In addition to exerting this ever-growing pressure on the advancing Boches, the defense keeps staging tiny offensives, sudden swoops by an score or so of determined Home Guard, with the object of annihilating small detachments of the enemy who have strayed from the close protection of the main body. Occasionally there are bold, even impudent, raids on their flanks and rear. These will grow in frequency and boldness as the enemy become exhausted and their strength and numbers so drained that when they reach the main defense positions their attacks are only a shadow of what they might have been, and can easily be held.

That is how we can make sure of wiping the floor with the Germans if we give adequate attention to:

1. Suitable training.
2. Right dispositions.
3. Careful preparations.
4. Quick communication.

Let us therefore consider each of these four essential points carefully.

SUITABLE TRAINING

The men should be trained to shoot accurately and quickly at short ranges, say, up to 100 yards, and, in addition, should be able to hilt a life-sized man target in total darkness, aiming by the feel of the weapon at a slight SOUND made on the target's chest.

They should be practiced in using bayonets under restricted and awkward conditions and should be taught to use the bayonet itself as a sword.

All ranks should be given frequent practice in KEEPING STILL under difficult conditions.

QUIETNESS should *always* be insisted upon and the close association of unnecessary noise and sudden death in operations should be brought home very frequently.

Practice in moving silently and confidently in the dark with instruction in choice of suitable backgrounds and avoidance of skylines is absolutely necessary for everybody, because, when you fight, you want to have your enemy under the greatest possible disadvantage. This will be when he is in a strange town AFTER DARK.

When they have been trained thoroughly in the foregoing more time can be devoted to...

Tactical Training

In the early stages of this war the whole tendency was to lay great stress upon CONCRETE, and very little on TACTICS, but bitter experience has proved this to be absolutely wrong.

From then standpoint of the Home Guard this is splendid news, because it means that the Home Guard commander is no longer dependent upon some other authority for what was thought to be a vital part of his defensive arrangements, but can work out his *own* (and other people's) salvation!

Such has been the change of attitude that most military experts would not now use much concrete, even if it were available. Mobility has taken its place. Mobility is the very essence of modern war; but *effective mobility* is, of all military characteristic, the hardest to obtain.

To make clear what I mean, TRY AN EXERCISE in which there are fifty "enemy" in one part of the town and two hundred attackers in another area about a mile away. Orders are given for the two hundred to attack the fifty - a fairly simple proposition.

But what will happen in nineteen out of twenty cases?

The attackers will move off in grand style, but it is *not* how they move off which matters - it is how they hit the enemy which counts, and, before they get to hitting distance, they will have become so dispersed and straggling that the first attack will be delivered by only a score or so, who being outnumbered, will get it straight in the neck from the fifty compact enemy.

After that will follow several more attacks, badly synchronized, and delivered by only a small fraction of the men available, the attacking troops always being outnumbered at THE

DECISIVE TIME AND PLACE, the result being heavy casualties for the attackers and the continued survival of the enemy.

The explanation of this failure to crush a foe much inferior in numbers lies in the varying degrees of mobility of the attacking forces. The younger, ardent, spirits push on and attack the enemy before the older, equally ardent, but more corpulent spirits can cover the ground.

This disparity in performance should be borne in mind all the time

in training, and it should never be forgotten that it is not the total number of men available which is the *decisive factor* - it is the NUMBER WHO ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

The ultimate objective of our tactical training should be to reach such a standard that considerable numbers of men can

be concentrated in any part of the town swiftly, silently and surely.

You will be thinking that this idea of being able to concentrate men ill accords with the previously announced determination to deny the enemy all opportunity of dealing the defense a decisive blow.

Let me explain that there is no intention of crowding the defenders into one spot; but to repel a really determined attempt to penetrate the town will probably require considerable numbers of men operating in depth over certain areas and to get these men in position *in time* will probably need swift and sure movement.

The whole fascinating subject of HOUSE-TO-HOUSE FIGHTING should be instilled into the men by lecture and exercise. As I have dealt with this fully in another lecture² I will cover only the bare outline now.

Success in street fighting can easily be bought, the price being a little study of the underlying principles and some patient practice amongst houses.

It is safe to say that in no other branch of soldiering can ignorance be

The ultimate objective of our tactical training should be to reach such a standard that considerable numbers of men can be concentrated in any part of the town swiftly, silently and surely.

so costly, or knowledge so well rewarded.

The object of the Home Guard in house-to-house fighting is to **KILL THE ENEMY WITHOUT BEING KILLED THEMSELVES**, and there is a way of this.

First, as regards the **MEN**, they must be induced to form a different habit of thought because they all have a way of looking at house which is a great handicap when fighting in built-up areas; in fact, until they get rid of it they will make very little progress. I mean their inability to grasp the fact that **EVERY HOUSE** is a **PASSAGE**.

All their lives they have been taught that other people's houses are inviolable, so that it never seems to strike them that the safest and quickest way across a town is straight through the houses, and not to wander along the street till they come to an entry and then go down that till they reach a passage and thence along another road (Plate 1).

If your look at any part of a town and picture the number of **PASSAGES** there are from one place to another you will find a bewildering number, and thereafter you will look

upon houses with a different eye, regarding every one as a part of a regular warren. That is the correct **TACTICAL** outlook which should be implanted in all the men, and particularly in all the junior leaders.

Another fault is that all ranks regard houses as bullet-proof, whereas they frequently are not so, even to a rifle bullet.

This applies particularly to **INSIDE**, where walls, ceilings and floors are merely cover from *view*!

Lots of precious lives have been wasted attacking up staircases, when a few volleys fired upward through the ceilings would have searched every room and killed the men upstairs without trouble or casualty to our own side.

Also, most people fail to realize the extreme facility with which walls can be loopholed. It takes only three minutes to loophole a fourteen-inch wall using a heavy crowbar or sledge-hammer.

When fighting house-to-house, the men should all the time be popping loopholes through in unexpected places and yet it never seems to strike them to do so.

It must be impressed on all ranks that not only can houses be readily used as passages, but their walls can be perforated with the greatest ease.

The next vital thing to do, if you would avoid casualties, is to **THINK** in **TERMS** of **COVERING FIRE**. In house-to-house fighting the covering fire makes *all the difference*.

If there is a street where the enemy are and your men enter it *without covering fire*, you may get heavy casualties; but if, before you enter it, you have the whole place dominated by well-planned, accurate **COVERING FIRE**, you will be able to proceed without loss and start playing merry hell with occupants.

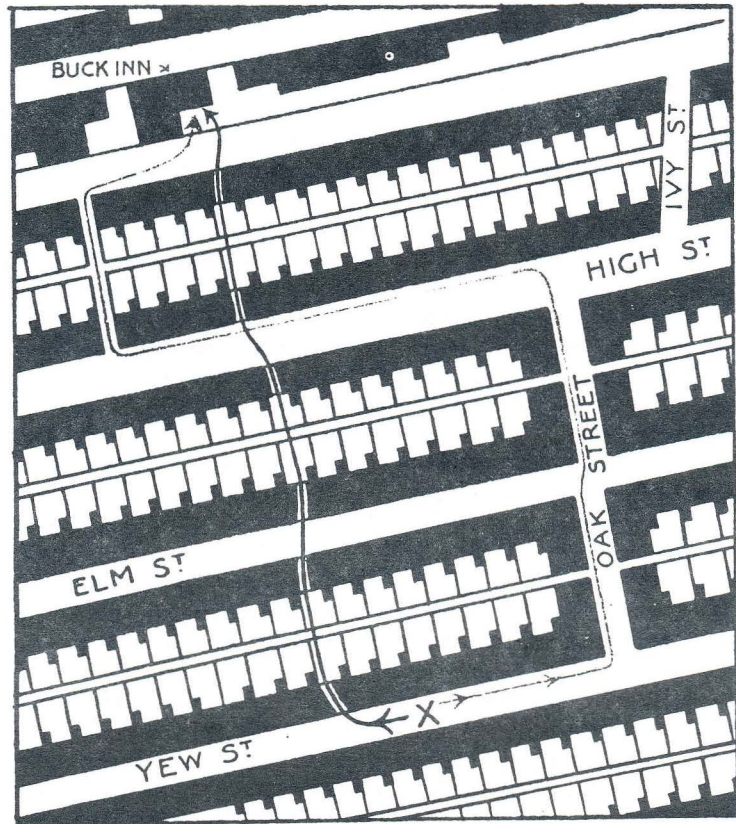
If before attacking a house, you have, by careful study of the windows, or loopholes, found out whence the enemy's fire will come, and have not only chosen the line of approach most difficult for the enemy to fire on, but plastered him good and proper with covering fire, you will find you have been able to kill quite a lot of Germans with negligible casualties.

It is not difficult to do this, but it can only be done by the employment of **RIGHT METHODS**, and now, having given you a sketch outline of

**PLATE 1
EVERY HOUSE IS A
PASSAGE**

A party of men at **X** in **YEW STREET** were ordered to proceed quickly to the **BUCK INN**. Leader took them by the route shown in **GREEN** [broken line] and prided himself that his knowledge of locality enabled him to use the passage instead of having to go round by **IVY STREET**.

If he had taken the red-line route, *i.e.*, in at the front door of the house, out at the back door, through the yard, across the entry into another yard, in at the back door and out into **ELM STREET**, and so on, he would have had about half the distance to traverse and would have been under cover part of the way. This is no small point if the enemy has very active low-flying air support. It meant going through only six houses, but such is our British reluctance to trespass that the obvious route never occurred to the leader.



the type of training required for town defense, I will pass on to the next essential point.

RIGHT DISPOSITIONS

This continuous counter-pressure sounds all right, but it must be kept up hour after hour, and, if necessary, day after day, on a really effective scale, so considerable organization will be required both before and during the actual fighting.

The first thing to do in evolving a defense scheme is to divide the area to be defended between the various battalions responsible. The battalions will then sub-divide their areas into smaller divisions, which we will call COMPANY DISTRICTS (plate 2).

It must be a POINT OF HONOR with every company that the *vital parts* in its district shall be defended to the last man. This, of course, implies a system of ALL-ROUND DEFENSE EVERYWHERE.

Every keep, every strong point, every detachment, and I would even go so far as to urge that every *isolated MAN* should be so sited that there is defense against attack from all directions. Do not be content with less.

One of the commonest tactical blunders is to assume that, because the general line of the enemy's advance is, say, *from the SOUTH*, he will, if held up be a strong point, necessarily attack it *from the SOUTH*. He is much more likely to attack it, *if he can*, from the NORTH, EAST or WEST, and as soon as he is opposed he will immediately reconnoiter the possibility of doing so, while keeping the defenders under frontal fire.

The *Company District* itself should have all-round defense. The platoon areas also should have all-round defense, and so should every detachment.

It is necessary to stress this point so emphatically because it is the very CORNERSTONE of the static parts of the defense. The WHOLE company has all-round defense and so have its components parts.

The garrisons of keeps and strong points, the roadblock guards and various other detachments whose orders are to HOLD ON, must not despair, or even worry, if the enemy sweeps past them.

They must continue to hold out secure in the knowledge that they can defend themselves just as well on rear or flanks as in front.

They have also the comforting knowledge that the Germans who have passed have guerrillas and fighting patrols hanging on to them and that the reserve will soon counter-attack them.

The defenders will require a place to muster, and to keep their supplies. A place from which they can sally forth to engage the enemy, a sanctuary in which the men who have been fighting can, after being relieved, find safety, food and rest. A place from which operations can directed and reserves kept in security till it is necessary for them to take part in operations.

This place, which I will call THE KEEP (Plate 3), must be capable of ALL-ROUND DEFENSE and be wired and strengthened.

In one locality the keep may consist of a large detached house and garden, of a block of houses; in another a series of trenches and dug-outs in a park; but, whatever kind of keep it is, do not *for one second* regard it as a place where the defenders stay inside to await the onslaught of the enemy.

No; it is the FOCAL-POINT of a fluid defense operating very actively over a considerable area. It is the

MANCASTON

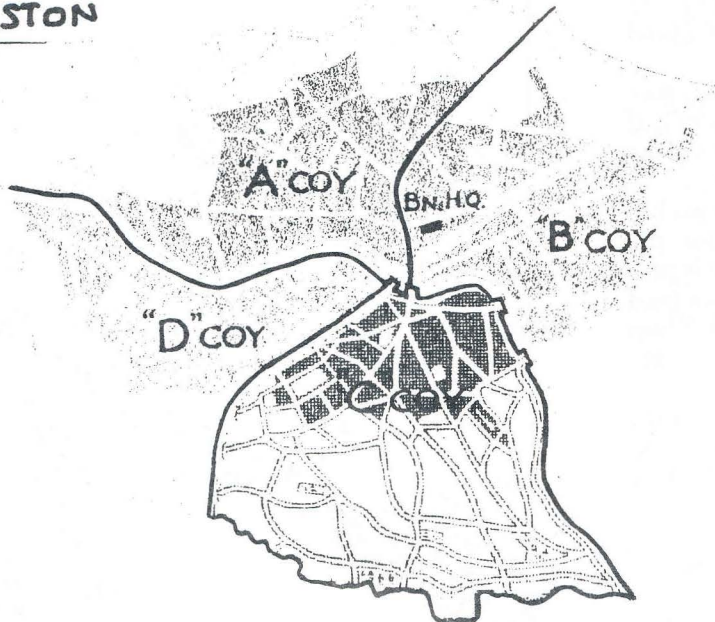


PLATE 2

Showing the Company Districts and positions of Battalion Headquarters. The boundaries between companies are features easily recognizable on the ground, such as streams, the river, or streets. It must be made very clear which Company Area includes the dividing feature.

BASE from which little expeditionary forces set out to kill Germans.

As previously explained, it is *not* a place to fight in, *but is* a CENTER FROM WHICH FIGHTING IS DONE FARTHER AFIELD. Consequently, it should be placed close to a *nodal point* in the road system — that is, a place where a number of streets converge. This is so that men and vehicles can quickly be dispatched to any part of the company's district.

The idea of wiring it and putting it in a state of all round defense is to prevent the enemy surprising the men in it and overrunning it suddenly; for instance before they are properly mustered, and, if the enemy penetrates

the active defenses the KEEP WILL BE HELD AT ALL COSTS.

It follows that these keeps must be well back in the areas to be defended to give the defenders plenty of chance to weaken the enemy before he gets anywhere near to them.

There should be dry accommodation for a good number of men, and, somewhere near, should be a PARKING PLACE for vehicles, well hidden from aerial observation.

Wherever the field of fire is short, and there is danger of the enemy rushing across, wiring should be carried out and other obstacles improvised.

But nothing should give the enemy the slightest hint that the keep

is what it is, when viewed from either the ground or the air.

Good cellars, or shelters, to hold reserve rations, wounded men, extra S.A.A.,³ etc., are desirable, and the more robust the building is the better. It may be desirable to strut up and strengthen parts of it, and to do a certain amount of sandbagging. If trenches are dug outside it is necessary to camouflage them most carefully.

In some places the keep is normally in possession of the Home Guard, who use it for headquarters, training, etc., but in others the place will have to be earmarked for requisition as soon as the balloon goes up. In the latter case, the Company Commander should have ready prepared a detailed

PLATE 3 A COMPANY KEEP

This is a Company Battle Headquarters, but, although it has been put into a state of defense, it is NOT intended as a place to fight in, except in sudden emergency.

It must be regarded as the nerve center of the defense operations over a considerable area — a sort of wasps' nest from which parties can dart out and STING!

It is a place where tired men who have been fighting can come for food and rest.

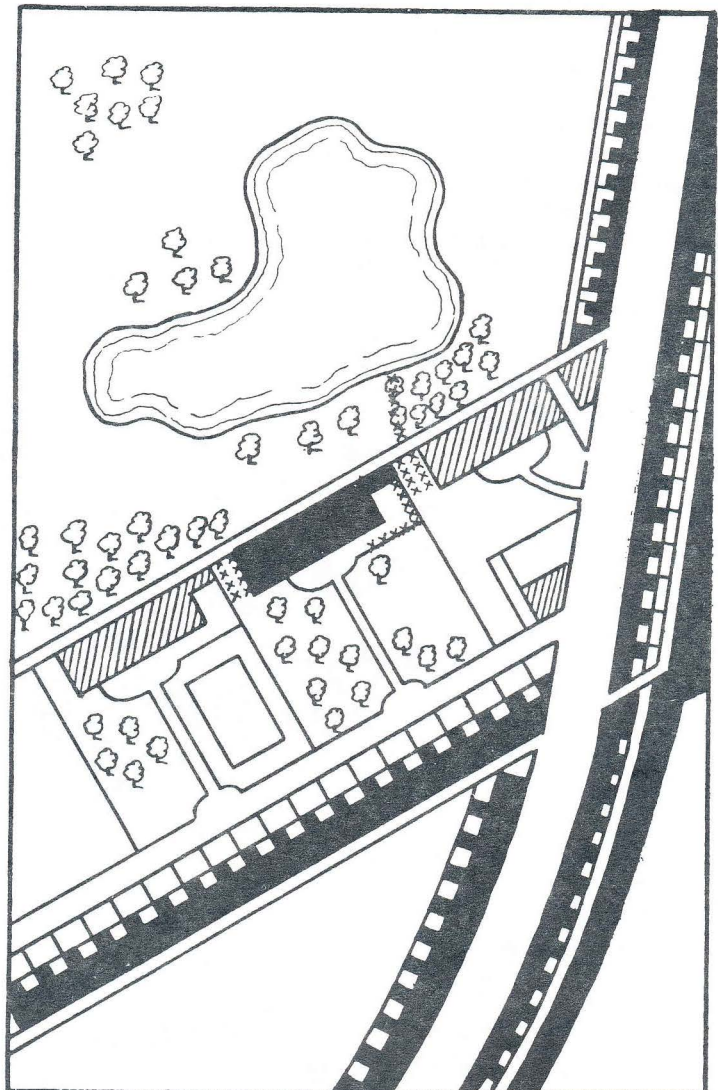
In the long run, if the enemy succeeds in penetrating so far, it will, of course, be defended desperately of the better end.

This house has been chosen because it is one of several similar ones and is inconspicuous. Its rear is protected by the lake, and there is a good field of fire both front and back. There are good cellars and the house is robust in construction.

It is close to a nodal point in the road system and the surrounding trees give good cover for the vehicles kept for use by mobile columns.

You will observe that the houses on either side give a covered line of approach; consequently, the yards have been well wired and the tree trunks laced together with barbed wire

None of this wiring will show from the air.



list of *everything* which requires doing to make the place suitable as a keep so that nothing will be overlooked in the excitement of mustering and taking the place over.

Let us now study the map of a company district (Plate 6).⁴ You will observe that it is bounded by features which are unmistakable on the ground; on the NORTH and EAST by the River CASTON, and the SOUTH by a STREAM, and on the WEST by the RAILWAY.

An enemy advancing from the SOUTH, which is the direction from which attack would be most likely, will, on crossing the stream into the company's area, have to traverse open country, with very few houses and little cover. As the invaders progress they will soon encounter rows of detached houses of recent construction. These will become closer and closer together till the actual streets are reached, with their rows of houses, shops and densely packed buildings.

After this the town is one mass of small streets, alleys, large streets, slums and factories. A cluster conglomeration of all sorts of buildings of all kinds of material, broken here and there by a park, recreation ground, school, church or cemetery.

In this company's area are two very important munition factories, one in the NORTH and one in the WEST.

The River CASTON is wide and deep enough to form a serious obstacle, but it is not much help to the defense, as it flows through the town and not round it. It does, however, give "C" Company a feeling of security in the NORTH and EAST.

So much for the characteristics of the area.

Now let us study "C" Company's dispositions and see how it is intended to defend the area when invasion comes.

It is obvious that in shaping the defensive arrangements the protection of the two important factories, "D" and "E", must be the first consideration, as they are likely to be the objectives of any attack on this part of the town

"E" factory is well back in the protected zone, behind a lot of very sticky built-up areas which the enemy must cross before reaching his objective; but "D" factory is near the edge of

the town, with only a few streets for the invader to pass before he arrives.

Consequently, special arrangements must be made for "D" factory's protection, and the company's reserves will be kept within striking distance.

"C" Company has five platoons, two of these being composed of employees of the two munition factories, and detailed for their particular defense.

They will, of course, not keep strictly within the factory precincts, but will defend the shaded areas in which the factories are situated, including manning the road blocks.

Now, as previously explained, the whole idea of the defense is to exercise continuous INCREASING

PRESSURE against the invaders from the first moment they enter the company area. In the open country and the outskirts of the town, to so harass and weaken them by sniping, guerrilla tactics and fighting-patrol actions that they will be incapable of heavily attacking the main line of defense should they reach it.

The outlying area in which this mobile, or fluid, defense will operate is shown on the map shaded GREEN.

In this green area the defending troops will be free to change their position, to go out to attack the enemy, or to withdraw under heavy pressure.

They have been specially trained for the purpose of clinging to the advancing enemy, steadily taking toll and slowly increasing resistance.

If the attack is on a moderate scale their object will be to entirely prevent it penetrating into the town.

But if the invaders are in overwhelming force their aim is to weaken them, step by step, until, when they arrive at the main line of resistance, they find themselves up against a FRESH lot of defenders who have quite a different role, who will NOT YIELD GROUND, and who have definite orders to hold out to the bitter end.

These new defending forces will be in defended localities of houses

(prepared for ALL-ROUND DEFENSE) spread across the company's area from side to side.

Owing to the large frontage each platoon has to cover, there will be no attempt to man a continuous line, but key points, road junctions, etc., will be held and the spaces in between them controlled by mobile parties of snipers, guerrillas, etc., who use the key points as a base of operations.

Should the enemy succeed in passing through this line counter-attacks will be made upon him by the reserve platoon, stationed at Company Headquarters.

You will see, therefore, that the defenders are divided into

Now, as previously explained, the whole idea of the defense is to exercise continuous INCREASING PRESSURE against the invaders from the first moment they enter the company area.

(1) LOOK-OUTS in Observation Posts or reconnaissance patrols; (2) snipers, guerrillas and fighting patrols (the function of 1 and 2 is to hang on to the enemy, harassing his front, flanks and rear. They should be daring, aggressive and elusive); (3) garrisons holding defended areas of keeps; (4) factory units defending works areas (3 and 4 have all-round defense. They do not surrender. They just fight and Fight and FIGHT to hold up the enemy while 2 and 5 take their toll); (5) mobile company reserve operating *behind* main lines of resistance (should the enemy break through main defense line these will counterattack to restore the situation).

Important roads will be blocked, preferably where several converge, and to protect them centers of resistance should be organized. These will be held at all costs.

Depth should be organized. These will be held at all costs. Depth should be given to the roadblock defense by means of A.T. mines, dannert⁵ wire and improvised obstacles of various kinds.

Sometimes to save men it is possible to maintain only lookouts on a number of road blocks with a strong patrol which rallies round immediately the alarm is given that a block is being attacked.

CAREFUL PREPARATION & COMMUNICATION

Now for a word or so about THE MEN and the WEAPONS. So many considerations inter into their dispositions that it is not possible now to more that indicate one of two of the more important ones: (1) A good general rule is first to put yourself in the enemy's position and carry out an imaginary attack before you actually allocate your men and weapons; (2) resist the temptation to place most of them where there is the best field of fire. You will need most fire power where the field of fire is WORST, as the Hun is seldom obliging enough to cross the good fields of fire. What he likes to do is to rush across where it is short and sheltered; (3) such factors as accommodation, feeding arrangements, cover from view (aerial and ground), mutual, support, reliefs, and even the positions of the men's homes should all be considered; (4) the men should be carefully graded according to their age and physique, the less fit ones being detailed for the garrisons or static jobs.

Taking of weapons, do not forget what splendid weapons A.T. mines are. They, and the personnel who understand them, should be placed handy to the spot where they may be required to protect a street or amplify a road block suddenly attacked by A.F.Vs.

When the Battle of Mancaston starts it will gather velocity quickly, for such is the nature of modern warfare. Consequently, if the Company or Battalion Commander is to influence the course of operations by use of reserves, it is absolutely essential that he should have quick and accurate information of the enemy's whereabouts, even should telephones break down altogether. In a town a very good way is to organize visual signaling across the roofs from one high building to another.

Runners, cyclists and possibly pigeons should also be laid on. You cannot have too many alternative means.

MOBILITY: Having obtained information quickly, it will be necessary to ACT quickly, and if the forces to be used are slow moving, the ad-

vantages of quick communications are lost.

For fighting in towns, CYCLISTS are invaluable. They are absolutely silent - a very important factor - and they are also very quick. They can be shouldered across fields and taken through houses. In fact, they might have been specially invented for use in fighting.

Cars, lorries, vans, Black Marias, even buses and trams may have their uses at some time of other in attack. The mobility of men of foot can be enormously increased if the slogan "Every house a passage" is remembered. A boat patrol on The river might be useful in lots of ways, particularly at night, when quietness is so important.

OBSTACLES: A careful survey of the natural obstacles should be made with idea of improving them either now or when the balloon goes up.

A small, muddy ditch may not in itself offer much resistance to an energetic invader, but a few coils of dannert wire will make it into a death-trap. All wiring should be where it cannot be detected from the air. No film star was ever photographed more lovingly than Mancaston will be before the Germans attack it, and any wire out in the open will tell them a lot about the defenses. And, talking of obstacles, do not forget to obstruct all possible landing grounds. One or two troop carriers depositing their cargoes behind some of your defenses might cause a very difficult situation.

RESERVES: The aim of the every Battalion, Company, Platoon or even Detachment commander should be to retain a proportion of his forces as a reserve. An extra punch up his sleeve. Someone to use should any unexpected contingency crop up.

The Battalion Commander should try to keep a whole company and the company Commander a platoon in reserve. The commander concerned should be very reluctant to commit his reserves until he is certain the situation warrants it. When he does commit them they should go ALL OUT to achieve the limited task given

them and should return to reserve as soon as they possibly can.

Reserves should NEVER be allotted a vague task, or sent out into the blue. In the same way, the mobile troops operating in the forward area should, if they follow an enemy inwards, take the first opportunity to getting back to the outskirts in readiness to encounter any further waves of Germans who may follow the first lot.

RELIEFS: As the Battle of Mancaston may well stretch itself out into one of endurance, the energies of the men should be conserved in all possible ways; for instance, a fighting patrol will suffice. Careful reliefs should be worked out. Soldiers under war conditions are like so many flash-lamp batteries: they will give out a tremendous lot in intermittent

flashes, but once they get overstrained and rundown by being kept at it too long at one time, they will not pick up again until they are recharged by a few days' complete rest. This cannot be managed during an attack.

Regular reliefs, regular meals, regular rest take a lot of organizing, with Hitler on the doorstep, but every commander should make this his ideal RIGHT FROM THE START - before his men begin to get worn out. (See Plate 4.)

The converse of this is that you must not give the enemy chance to rest, or relieve his men. In fact, that is the ESSENCE OF THE DEFENSE - increasing, never relaxing, pressure on the invader!

Do not forget he will be pretty weary before he gets to Mancaston, so tire him out. Reduce him to the last gasp of exhaustion and then put him out of his misery!

FIRE CONTROL - TRAPS - SURPRISE

These three are closely associated and required considerable training beforehand. Incidentally, a few traps for the enemy to walk into, such as anti-personnel mines, pit-

You will need most fire power where the field of fire is WORST... where it is short and sheltered...

falls, flame-throwers, high tension wires and barbed-wire cages, add a spice to life and keep your men interested.

Fire control is very necessary, as nothing is more disappointing than to see two or three blood-lusting totalitarians just about to get their due when some silly fellow fires a shot and warns them so that they dodge away.

I will now quickly run over a few matters affecting the defense of a town which must receive careful attention. In a state of crisis any one of these may suddenly become of considerable importance.

The MAYOR is usually a tower of strength and those responsible for the town's defense should keep him well in the picture. The POLICE, with their excellent communications and general helpfulness, should be in the closet association with the defending troops. GAS, WATER and ELECTRICITY should all be carefully guarded. Home guard

WOUNDED will be dependent upon Civil Defense arrangements for early treatment and evacuation. This will require careful advance organization and liaison.

The various voluntary committees, such as the W.V.S.,⁶ may be an enormous comfort to the hard-pressed troops in cooking, providing comforts, etc., but their consent to help must be enlisted beforehand and long before the attack they should be told in what ways they will be able to assist the defense.

The position of FOOD STOCKS and their nature might conceivably be of the greatest interest of the defending troops should operations be prolonged.

A knowledge of the FIRE-FIGHTING arrangements may be invaluable, and the Home Guard should have full knowledge of the schemes for preventing PETROL falling into enemy hands.

Close LIAISON with neighboring units and also with all A.A. bat-

teries, searchlight units, observer posts, etc., in the area is most desirable and always yield splendid results.

NOTES:

¹Remember, this was written during the Second World War and the rather crude anti-German propaganda was little more than a rehash of First World War stuff.

²See: "House to House Fighting" in The Resister, Vol.V, No.2, Spring 1999.

³Small Arms Ammunition.

⁴Plate 6 is missing from the original copy. The text describing it was retained to (i) retain the flow of the text and (ii) because it outlines the thinking process behind establishing a defense of a town. [Editor.]

⁵Concertina.

⁶Women's Volunteer Service.

PLATE 4
RELIEF IN FACE OF THE
ENEMY

Having been hard-pressed for several hours, the defenders are weary and hungry.

Their Platoon Commander is anxious to relieve them, so that they can be fed and rested in readiness for further activities after dark.

But the contending troops are so closely interlocked that is impossible to relieve the individual men in the positions in which they now are.

The fresh troops are consequently disposed in the immediate rear of the fighting and the tired men are allowed to fall back through their positions.

The job of exercising counter-pressure on the advancing enemy is then taken up by the new arrivals.

Note the position of the reserves — they are handy to deal with any unexpected penetration or emergency.



**PLATE 5
HARRASSING AN
ADVANCING ENEMY**

This shows the action of four small parties of men (three of four under an N.C.O.) detailed to take toll of the enemy advancing from the SOUTH.

To ensure success in this type of operations you must: (1) Have line of withdrawal to next position carefully planned and reconnoiter before opening fire; (2) withhold fire till EFFECT IS CERTAIN; (3) proceed to next position INSTANTLY after firing.

Taking the action of the parties in detail:

"A" Party

As the enemy enters HIGH STREET from the SOUTH, "A" Party fires on them from bedrooms at A1.

Party proceeds across the PARADE and along passage to rear of houses at A2. Entering here they occupy basements and ground-floor rooms ready for more targets to present themselves. After engaging these they will proceed along passage to A3, at junction of EAST STREET and HIGH STREET.

"B" Party

Is upstairs at B1. After they proceed OVER THE ROOFS to B2, which, being a set-back house, they can hold for some time. Afterwards, they will go to B3 via the back building and the passage.

"C" Party

Position C1 is primarily to cover the PARADE and to flatten any Germans appearing where the PARADE joins HIGH STREET.

You will note that after punishing the enemy they must get away quickly, as they have to cross a road before getting to the entry along which they can reach buildings at rear of C2.

At C2 they will keep very quiet with the idea of letting enemy pass and then shooting him in the back. Having done this, they must be out of the house and across the road before rest of enemy can recover from confusion and advance to where they

can cover EAST STREET and WEST STREET.

"D" Party

D1 has been selected, as it is a good place from which to fire NORTHWARDS, i.e., into the rear of the advancing invaders. Their route to their second position (D2) is out of the buildings at the back, across the yard, through the warehouse, across the entry into the house, through the house, along the edge of the field, through the shop, and across the road to D2. This way obviates any risk of confusion between C and D Parties and ensures that both lots will not be caught in the entry.

Notes:

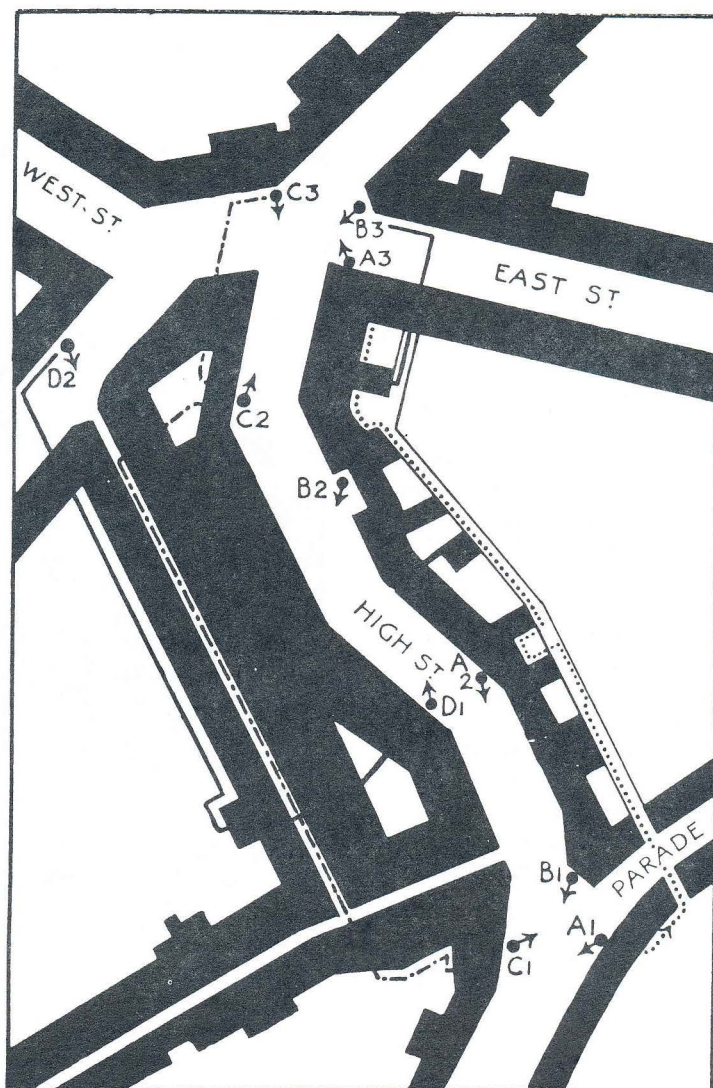
1. Other parties might be doing the same thing, but are not shown on

this map. By co-operating they will increase their effectiveness very considerably.

2. As the enemy nears the main line of resistance the individual harassing parties will hold their ground more stubbornly and move back smaller distances. Occasionally a party may see a chance to attack three of four of the enemy and will move forward before going back.

3. Do not forget what splendid opportunities afford themselves when the roofs are occupied. In some towns they are a quick and safe highway for considerable distances.

4. Visual signaling across the roofs will enable the position of the enemy to be communicated very quickly.



The legal effect of these constitutional recognitions of the rights of individuals to defend their property, liberties, and lives, against the government, is to legalize resistance to all injustices and oppression, of every name and nature whatsoever, on the part of government.

Lysander Spooner, 1852



The military value of a partisan's work is not measured in the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number he keeps watching.

John S. Mosby

ROADBLOCKS

by
Colonel G.A. Wade, M.C.

We continue our tactical series with this reprint of the Home Guard manual, *Roadblocks*. Although dated, the principles and techniques outlined in this manual are just as sound today as they were 60 years ago. If you have ever passed through a police "seat belt" or "sobriety" or "safety" checkpoint, so-called, you have encountered precisely the tactical principles outlined in this manual from the receiving end. SMB//

Importance of Roadblocks

I doubt if there can be found in the whole of soldierly activities a more interesting subject than roadblocks; and yet, by most people, they appear to be regarded merely as casual obstructions in the road, a nuisance to traffic, and a bore to defend.

The reason I find them so interesting is that, whenever I see a roadblock I say to myself, "Here is a tiny battlefield. Here men may one day encounter each other in deadly combat. Here, in miniature, all the great principles of strategy and tactics will apply just as much as when whole armies join issue," and my imagination at once begins to picture the ebb and flow of fighting for possession of the roadblock, with every little detail of the surroundings acquiring a sinister significance. A roadblock is a challenge thrown down by free men to Hitler and his hordes — a gesture of DEFIANCE which says, "Beyond this you shall not come!"

Although at the present moment the road block looks out of place in its peaceful surroundings, who knows what it will be in a few month's time? It may be all that separates freedom from armored tyranny; it may be the one obstacle which, desperately held, will affect the course of a mighty battle.

Once you get this point of view — and it is the *only* common sense way of looking at roadblocks — you will be prepared to give a great deal of time and study to their siting, construction and defense.

Roadblocks may be divided into three classifications — major roadblocks, capable of stopping tanks; minor roadblocks, which a tank could cross but not an armored car or other vehicle; and mobile obstacles, such as carts, wagons and old motor-cars which can be used quickly in emergency to form some sort of hindrance to the enemy.

Major roadblocks will be used solely to close roads through tanks obstacles, as it would obviously be absurd to place a huge, expensive roadblock on a road which has open country round it which a tank could, if it was diverted from the road, traverse easily. Incidentally, the form and arrangement of major roadblocks will vary from time to time to meet the changes in the performance of enemy armored fighting vehicles.

Site Your Roadblocks for Defense

The siting of roadblocks is bound up very closely with the general scheme of defense. If a town, village or locality is to be defended, obviously the enemy must be denied use of the roads running into the place.

How you may take it as an axiom that where you place your roadblock *there* you will have to FIGHT; so you should site it with the idea of placing an attacking enemy as much at a disadvantage as possible; in other words, put it where it is DIFFICULT TO ATTACK and EASY TO DEFEND.

It is very good tactics to site the block where the enemy will come upon it unexpectedly, causing him to hesitate on exactly the spot where you have everything prepared to take full advantage of his temporary embarrassment.

If you always assume that your roadblock will be heavily attacked from front, flanks and rear, you will someday have great cause for thankfulness and self congratulations.

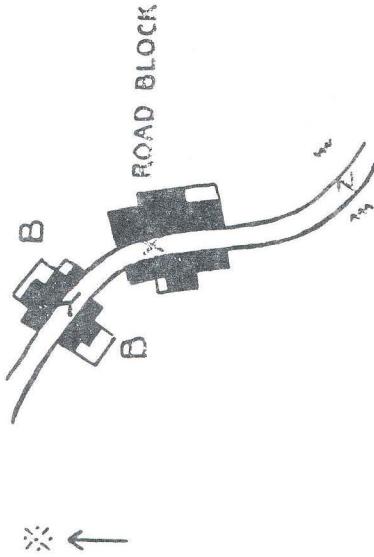
It is very good tactics to site the block where the enemy will come upon it unexpectedly, causing him to hesitate on exactly the spot where you

have everything prepared to take full advantage of his temporary embarrassment.

To effect this there are three situations in which blocks may be put: around a corner, on the reverse side of a rise in the road, such as is occasioned by a humpback bridge, or tucked away in a sudden dip in the road.

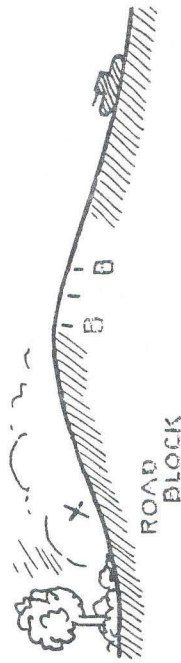
Defiles, deep ditches, thick woods and cuttings are all features helping to make roadblocks effective, so make

GOOD SITES FOR ROAD BLOCKS



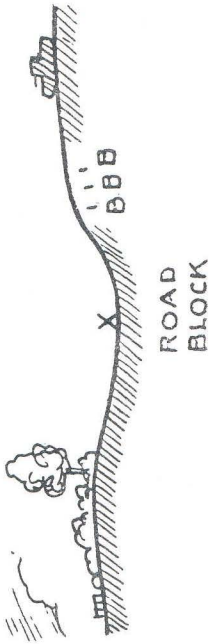
At a Bend in the Road

This block is defended in both directions. Vehicles from NORTH would first see road block and stop at Y. Bombers B are in houses on both sides ready to perform as soon as vehicle stops. From SOUTH traffic would halt about Z. No houses here, so bombers are in slit trenches.



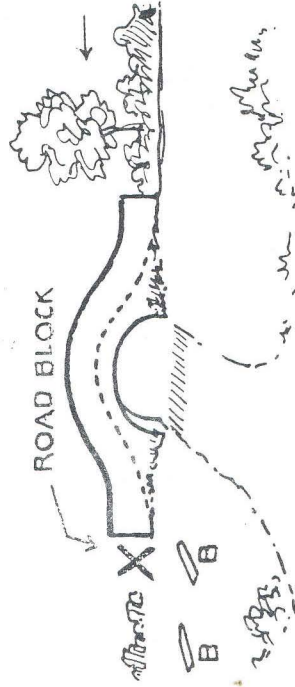
Beyond a Crest

The climbing vehicle cannot see the obstacle till the crest is reached. Molotov throwers should be stationed about BB.



In an Unexpected Dip

Sometimes there is a dip in the road and it is not noticeable, because the road carries straight on beyond it. This is a good place to surprise a fast-moving vehicle.



On a Hump-backed Bridge

Usually found over canals, these make first-rate road blocks. The block itself must be robust and fastened to bridge if possible. Bombers are in well-camouflaged slit trenches at BB.

The RESISTER

all possible use of them.

It may not be possible to take advantage of any of these surprise positions, and the roadblock, to fit in with other defensive arrangements, may have to be so placed that it is in full view of the approaching enemy for a considerable distance. If the enemy happen to be in a tank, they will at once shoot at the block to demolish it sufficiently to make it passable. To obviate this it is wise to screen it with hessian¹ or carpets, blankets, sheets, etc., taken from nearby houses. A screen of this kind will take a lot of punishment and still remain a screen.

Never forget that when the Germans invaded us their future supplies will be uncertain in the extreme, so that every round we can induce them to expend ineffectively is one less for them to fight with.

The next thing to consider in siting the roadblock is where you will place its defenders so that they have complete control of the block and the approaches to it and yet cannot be outflanked or taken in the rear.

Sometimes the alteration of the site by only a few yards will be enough to enable more weapons of various kinds to be brought to bear on it, and the road leading to it, from other positions behind or on one side.

If you are hard put to it to defend a roadblock, reinforcements may be sent to help you, and these will need positions to occupy.

In addition, every man defending the block should have several alternative positions to move to after firing.

The whole idea of the defenders should be to hold their fire till the range is so short that it will have devastating effect. Then, having delivered their blow at the enemy, to dodge away into some other concealed position to watch the place they have just left being "strafed" and to be ready with another telling burst of fire when the Germans advance again in the belief that they have effectively scuppered the British who fired before.

The action of the roadblock garrison in defense should be: LIE DOGGO² — HIT STRAIGHT AND HARD — CLEAR OUT STEALTHILY to new position — LIE DOGGO — HIT AGAIN — QUIT AGAIN — DOGGO

AGAIN.

By doing this the enemy never knows where you are and you are observing what I think is a *cardinal point* in war: having hit the enemy you do not wait where he knows you are, to see what he does about it.

But all this implies a number of positions already known and, where necessary, prepared; so you must bear this in mind when siting the roadblock (or what might better be described as the STORM CENTER).

Here is an illustration of what I mean by DOGGO — HIT — QUIT tactics (see Plate below).

Before the enemy arrived the defenders were disposed in HOUSE A and slit trenches at 1. Two German motorcyclist came along from the northeast, saw the roadblock and were about to go back when an enemy tank came round the bend at great speed and stopped at Z.

A.W. bombs and Molotovs were immediately flung on to it from 1, but unfortunately the tank reversed so quickly that it was out of range before sufficient bombs to more that warm up and alarm the crew had hit it. The tank retired to cover of WOOD at Y, and the motorcyclists opened tommy-gun fire on slit trench at 1.

This was more than the defenders at A could stand and they opened fire, killing one motorcyclist and wounding the other, who dashed off after the tank.

Defenders from 1 moved to HOUSE 2, and men from A moved to weapon pits at B.

Soon afterwards the enemy carried two trench mortars down the stream to behind the MILL, and as they opened fire on HOUSE A a machine gun from edge of PINEWOOD fired heavily on slit trenches at 1.

After two hits had been scored on the house two parties of Germans emerged from the wood, on proceeding southwest to attack the slit trenches and the other coming up the stream apparently with the idea of working round house at A.

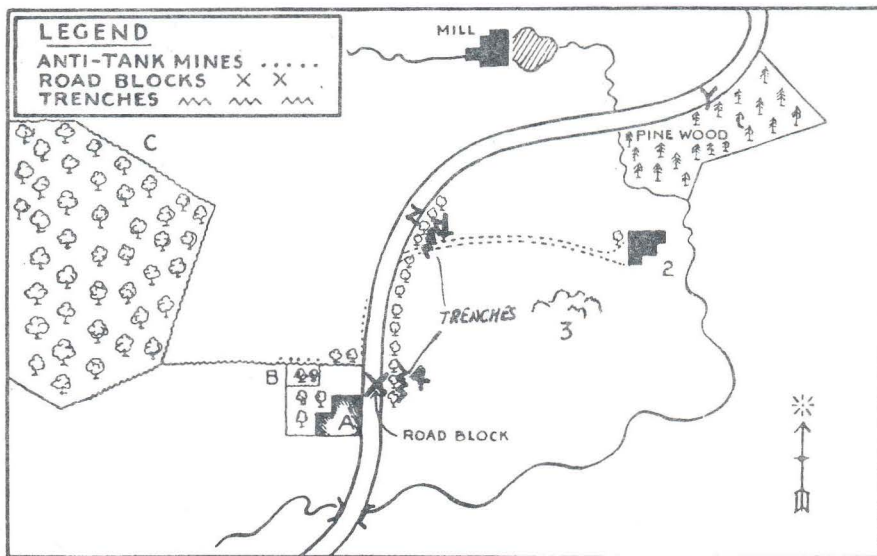
Defenders in HOUSE 2 held their fire until the last moment and then downed eight of the Germans before the remainder escaped back to the wood.

On hearing the firing the officer leading the Germans against the slit trenches wheeled them round and dashed towards HOUSE 2 obviously hoping to take the defenders there in the flank while they were engaged with the other party.

This maneuver was seen by the defenders at B, who opened fire so effectively that this party retreated after the other, leaving several gray heaps writhing on the field.

Defenders from 2 then moved back to patch of shrub at 3, and those from B crept along hedge to WOOD at C.

The mortars got busy again, one on to B and the other on to HOUSE 2. A lot of ammunition was expended before hits were obtained, but as soon as this had been done enemy came out of PINEWOOD again and advanced quickly. Unfortunately, an excitable man opened fire too soon from



3 and the Germans went back again. A few minutes later both mortars started throwing up the earth round the bushes at 3, but by this time the men from there, knowing their position had been given away, were tucked away in the slit trenches at 4, moistening the wicks of the Molotovs and getting things ready there.

Soon afterwards the enemy changed their tactics and the tank came round the bend charging up to the roadblock, firing as it came.

It almost mounted the block, then got itself bellied and swayed and twisted for a few seconds helplessly. That was long enough! First one flaming bottle and then another came hurtling from the security of the slit trenches at 4 till the tank was a roaring inferno and black clouds rose up into the sky. Soon its engines misfired and stopped. There the awe-inspiring tank was — nothing but ghastly ruin!

Seeing the fate of the tank the German infantry who had followed it hesitated and stopped, forming a splendid target for the defenders at C, who started flattening them at easy range.

This was the situation when the forward scouts of one of our fighting patrols arrived from the south to see what all the row was about.

In a few minutes the patrol had moved down the stream and was mopping up the remains of the German infantry in PINewood. What happened to the German mortar team was interesting: apparently when the defenders moved from B to C and looked out towards the Mill they could see the Huns operating the mortars in full view, but as they were doing no harm — in fact, were wasting their ammunition — the Corporal refrained from opening fire.

Soon after the tank had conked out the mortar team started to pack up and withdraw to Y. That was the time to let them have it! Only two men succeeded in crossing the space between the Mill and Pinewood, and that did not matter much, as they met our fighting patrol just coming out!

Later on, when things had quieted down, a number of Staff officers were having the fight reconstructed for them. One said, "You have captured a tank, killed seventeen Germans, wounded and captured a lot of others

— a **SPLENDID PERFORMANCE**; but what is so extraordinary is that you have not had a single casualty amongst your own men!" To which the Sergeant replied, "Well, sir, there was **NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD HAVE ANY CASUALTIES.**"

At that, silence fell on the little group. The Sergeant had uttered a **GREAT TRUTH!**

As a matter of fact, the defenders did have a casualty. The man who fired the premature shot from the bushes at 3 had lost two teeth and the skin of his nose. No one quite knew how, but the Sergeant looked acutely embarrassed when it was mentioned.

The only man who was disappointed in this smart action was the **AT** mine artist, who had put his mines on the west of the road in the hope that the tank would veer that way on seeing the block. He will probably have better luck next time.

Now you will have noted that the defenders would have had very serious casualties if they had not kept quiet till they hit with all their might and then moved **AT ONCE — what I call DOGGO — HIT — QUIT** tactics.

But they had to have their various positions and plans prepared beforehand and the roadblock had to be sited in a locality suitable for the tactics to be employed.

So much for the siting of roadblocks; now for their defense.

Active Defense of Roadblocks

Having to site your roadblock so that it conforms to the general scheme of defense imposes serious limitations upon your choice of position, but I will assume that you have, with due regard to the main defense on the one hand and the surrounding tactical features on the other, selected your spot. Then ask yourself, "Would it be better a little farther up the road or a wee bit down?"

When it is absolutely fixed you will probably be dissatisfied, because it is very, very seldom that one can get a perfectly sited roadblock, so ask yourself, "Why am I dissatisfied with this position?" (Or, being you, you will more probably say to yourself, "What's wrong with the ruddy thing?")

Your answer to this question will have a far-reaching effect upon your defensive dispositions.

You may say, "It is too close to the corner of the wood and the enemy could sneak up under cover," or, "The houses over there dominate the defenders' positions," or, "A tank can go round it," and immediately you begin thinking in terms of barbed wire, occupying houses, or placing antitank mines.

After that go down the road, out of sight of the selected position, puff yourself up with bloodlust and swank, and approach the roadblock imagining that you are a Nazi invader.

Picture how the Hun will attack. Visualize the creeping Boches looking for the defenders and planning to get to close quarters with them. After that you

will find that your defensive disposition will come easily to your mind.

Whilst on this subject of defense, do not make the fashionable blunder of considering only **STATIC** defense, but say, "You attack my roadblock and I'll attack **YOU!**"

Make up your mind that an enemy temporarily halted is **NOT** going to be allowed comfortably to reconnoiter the position, calmly study your defenses and peacefully devise a plan to land the whole lot of you into the hereafter.

Consider how you will harass and hinder his preparations and deployment; in fact, if you are half a chap you will consider how you can **GET YOUR BLOW IN FIRST!**

This attitude of mind is brought out vividly in the case of the roadblock at **CYMROS.**

Now you will have noted that the defenders would have had very serious casualties if they had not kept quiet till they hit with all their might and then moved AT ONCE — what I call DOGGO — HIT — QUIT tactics.

The Fight at Cymros

The retreating British forces, having decided to hold this town, put a roadblock at A which they intended to defend from the houses at B and C. They also threw a screen across the road at D and had two men with antitank mines on a board³ concealed in an entry at E.

Lookouts reported two tanks approaching from the northeast preceded by motorcyclists and followed by three lorry loads of infantry. The cyclists came round the corner, saw the roadblock, swerved to one side and proceeded along ALDIS ROAD.

When they had passed, the two men concealed in the entry heard the tanks approaching and pushed out the mines in front of the leading one, blowing off its tracks and completely blocking the street.

The second tank stopped, looked at the screen over the bridge, hesitated a moment, and then charged the roadblock at A; only to be greeted by showers of blazing bottles from which it was just escaping when its engine drew in flame instead of air and stopped. The crew got out and would have surrendered, but a defender with a tommy-gun apparently misunderstood their intention.

After this the Platoon Commander (who was in the house C) said, "What will those infantry do now?" The Sergeant replied, "I'll bet they'll start mortaring us like blazes and then attack for all they are worth, sir."

"Where do you think they will put the mortars Sergeant?"

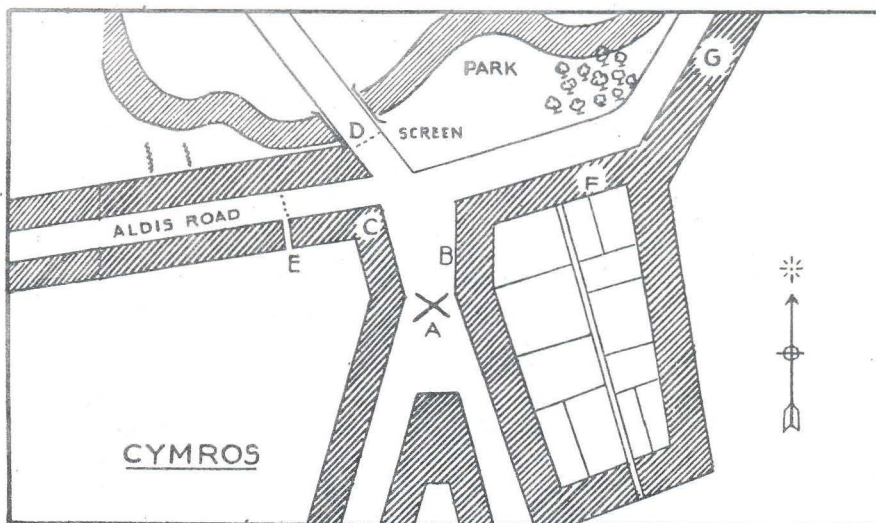
"Behind them there trees in the park, sir."

"Right," said the Platoon Commander. "Get your men out of here before they start."

"Where shall we go to, sir?" asked the Sergeant.

"Behind 'them there trees' in the park and we will bring the mortars back with us!" said the officer.

How very true is the saying "Fortune favors the brave"! Leaving a small guard on the roadblock and sending an L.M.G. team to occupy house at F, the Platoon Commander led his men through the house yards and entries to the building at G. Peeping through the window, he saw the



three lorries under the trees at the other side of the road. They were empty, but he could see the backs of the Boches moving amongst the bushes in the park, and saw a mortar bomb sail up into the air and sweep towards the building at C. All the Germans seemed very intent upon this attack.

Leaving picked marksmen at G, he took his men swiftly and silently across the road behind the lorries, scuppered three drivers and was charging the backs of the astonished Germans before they could turn round.

It was not even a fight. Those who ran north were easy meat for men at G. Those who ran south were machine-gunned from F.

The last thing in the world the enemy had expected was to be attacked suddenly from the rear. There is a lesson in that.

Here are a few general observations which you may find helpful:

Roadblocks in Depth

The ideal arrangement of road blocks is in DEPTH, so that, if an enemy vehicle succeeds in passing one, he soon bumps up against another.

Usually, to obtain depth all round a town or village so many roadblocks would be necessary that there would not be sufficient men to guard them. By using a little cunning, however, it is possible to arrange a certain depth

on the roads most likely to be used by the enemy.

Watch this point when siting your roadblocks in the first place.

Eight Mistakes in Siting Roadblocks (See Plate next Page)

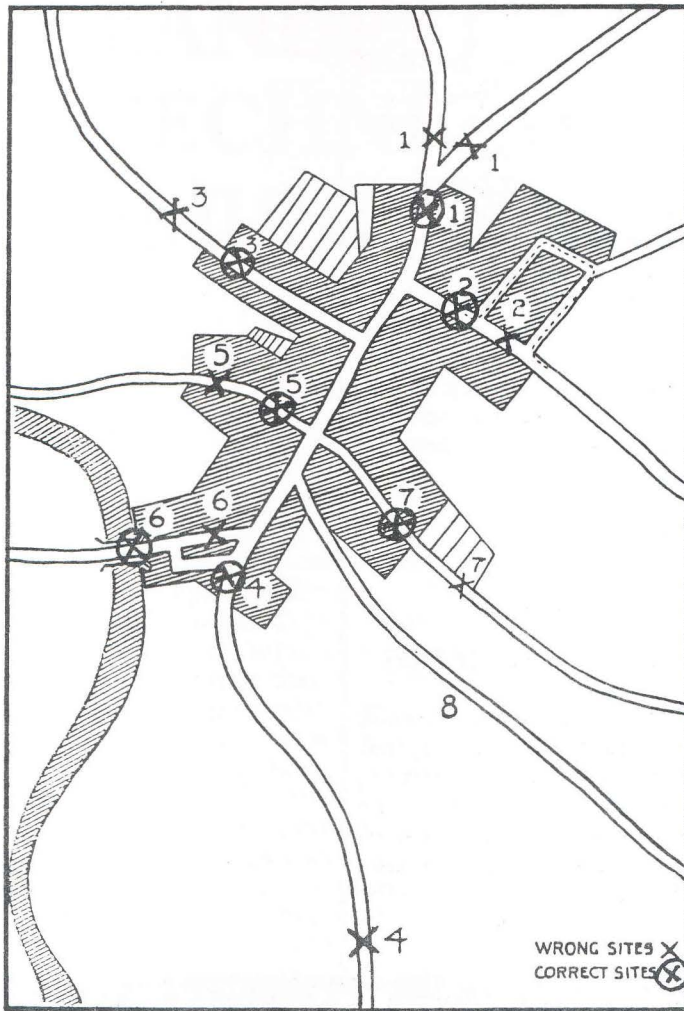
1. Using two blocks where one will do.
2. Leaving an entry, as shown by dotted line.
3. Block in indefensible position when houses are available to defend it from.
4. Block out in "the blue," forming no part of general defense scheme.
5. Block straight road; should be round the bend.
6. Block not denying the bridge to the enemy.
7. Block sited where tank can get round.
8. Road overlooked altogether.

Halting Traffic at a Distance

When an enemy may be in the vicinity it is all wrong to allow an unexamined vehicle to approach right up to the road block before it is halted.

Suppose that, suddenly, from a harmless-looking van jumped half a dozen men firing tommy-guns or automatic pistols, what chance would the guard have? Not an earthly!

The only way to obviate surprise



streets so that the enemy cannot see beyond them. If you have not time to hang them vertically just lay them on the ground with bricks under them at intervals of a yard to make suspicious-looking humps.

No tank will dare to run over these without investigating them, and if you can fix a few A/T mines under one of them so much the better. Do not forget that Jerry will be sure to send someone on foot to lift up the carpet and see what is under, so detail men who can shoot to take advantage of this. It will be one Hun less, and you can put him under the carpet to make another suspicious hump.

Screens stop tanks from destroying your roadblock by shooting at it. They puzzle and annoy the enemy and often can be used to prevent the enemy seeing you move men across the street to counterattack. If you are likely to be dive-bombed a dummy roadblock a hundred yards or more down the road may draw fire away from the defended one.

Other Weapons

Use every possible aid to defense you can scrounge up, from clothes lines to hose throwing water or even live steam. If you have an electrician amongst your men he may be able to arrange something up to date in the way of entanglements.

Should the roadblock be likely to be rushed by refugees a trailer pump might be very useful.

Fighting Patrols

Sometimes when the locality is suitable, a much stronger defense can be put up by fewer men if, instead of having guards at every block, just a few lookouts are posted and a strong fighting patrol, covering a number of roadblocks, is kept ready to go into action in their defense immediately the lookouts signal danger. This obviates what so frequently happens when the enemy chooses one out of twenty roadblocks for a determined attack which is borne by just a few of the defenders while the rest of them are struck at other roadblocks with nothing to do.

attack of this kind is to have a light obstacle out, say, 150 yards in front of the roadblock where one man examines the traffic while another covers the examinee with his rifle. Then, should shots be fired, the main body of the guard is not taken by surprise.

Trees

Large trees felled across roads make good obstacles, but are very difficult to move quickly should our own vehicles wish to use the road. Because of this, think a long time before dropping a tree across the road. Bushy trees make good hiding-places for lookouts or fire bombers.

Camouflage

Be most particular about camouflage; your life may depend on it. Do not allow tracks to

be made near your posts, and when you camouflage a place so that the Boche cannot spot it, be sure to put something he can spot. This has a double use: not only will he waste ammunition on it, but as soon as he sees it (if it is not *too* obvious) he will stop looking for the position you are trying to hide!

By the way, the old Hun does not shoot with wonderful accuracy, so put your "distraction" a safe distance away from the real post.

Bluff

In fighting the invader you should bluff like blazes. For example, suppose you have to block four streets in a desperate hurry, with visitors expected any moment. While your men are busy blocking the first street send two or three men to get carpets and clothes lines out of houses nearby and sling them across the

Traps

Anyone with an ingenious mind can devise all sorts of traps capable of doing everything from landing an approaching totalitarian on his nose to putting paid to a tank. The presence of a hidden trap gives confidence to the defense and a magnificent thrill when you see the enemy approaching it. Try your hand at this: you may have a great flair!

Routine

And now, in conclusion, I would like to point out that a lot of people have what may prove to be an entirely wrong idea about the length of time during which, if we have an alarm, roadblocks will have to be manned.

It is possible that they may, in certain parts of the country, have to be defended day and night for weeks on end, and this will call for a properly organized routine.

The best way of making this clear is to show you specimens of **ORDERS TO ROADBLOCK GUARD COMMANDER, and STANDING ORDERS FOR GUARDS ON ROADBLOCKS.**

If you study this you will at once see that the smooth running of a roadblock guard calls for hard work and a really conscientious N.C.O. in charge.

Incidentally, it is very necessary to work out fair and equal spells of duty for all the men at the roadblock and post them up so that every man can see when he will be on duty as sentry, runner, etc., during the next forty-eight hours.

Posting them up has the added advantage that each man can see how much every other man is doing, and this cuts out the feeling that everyone seems to get after a time — the certainty that *he* is being worked harder than anyone else in the guard!

I attach great importance to these routine matters because when the testing time comes, and your guard has to **FIGHT** for the roadblock, possibly after days of suspense and waiting, you do not want them to be what the old soldier, with his love of alliteration, calls "bitched, b*****d and

bewilder" by loss of rest due to inefficient organization.

Your object should be to keep them **FRESH AND FIGHTING FIT.**

You can ensure this only by strict attention to routine details.

This has necessarily been a very sketchy outline of the siting and defense of roadblocks, and there are aspects which I have, for various reasons, barely touched upon.

However, if I have succeeded in imparting to you my enthusiasm for this extraordinarily interesting subject, you will soon fill in the gaps and reason out the why and the wherefore for yourselves.

NOTES:

¹Burlap sheeting [Editor].

²Silent and motionless [Editor].

³The idea is to affix an antitank mine to a board, say, a 2 X 4, that may, with some measure of precision, be shoved out from cover at just the right time to prevent the vehicle from avoiding it, and at just the right position in the vehicle's path to cause the most destruction.

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