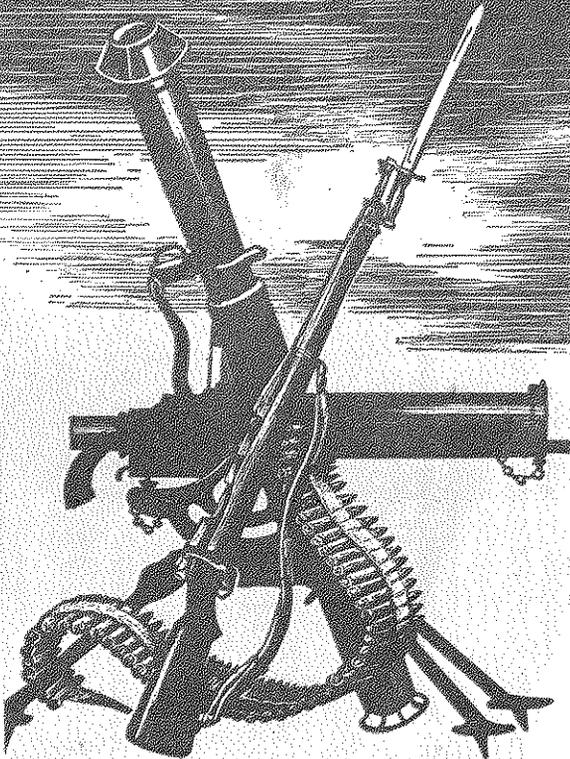


Combat Lessons



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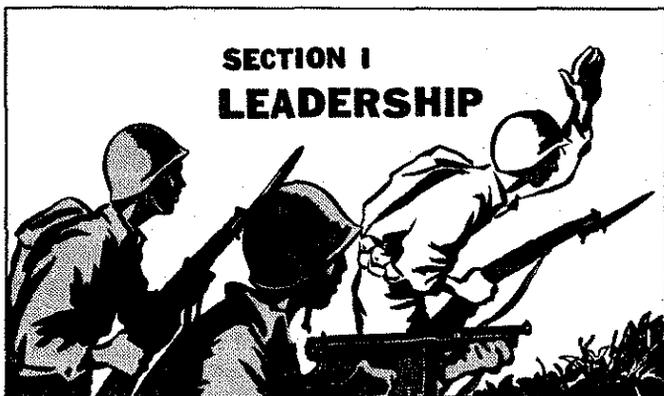
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Contributions from readers are invited either in the form of suitable material or suggestions for future issues. Correspondence should be addressed to the Combat Analysis Section, Operations Division, War Department General Staff, Washington 25, D. C. Requests for extra copies should be made through regular distribution channels.

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For explanation of symbols, see FM 21-6.



Leadership is, and will always be, one of the most important factors in influencing battle. Much has appeared in previous issues on this subject, but reports from the field still show that leadership is a subject on which too much cannot be said.

Leadership is not a quality that pertains to officers alone. In countless cases, the private soldier has jumped forward to take charge of a critical situation when his appointed leaders have become casualties. Take the case of *Private First Class John C. Squires*, an infantry platoon runner in ITALY, who was awarded the Medal of Honor and subsequently promoted to the grade of sergeant for the action described below.

Aggressive Action "On the night of his company's attack on strongly held enemy positions in and around SPACCASSI CREEK, near PADIGLIONE, ITALY, Private Squires participated in his first offensive action. As platoon runner, he braved intense artillery, mortar, and antitank gunfire in order to investigate the effects of an antitank mine explo-

sion on the leading platoon. Despite shells which burst close to him, Squires made his way 50 yards forward to the advance element, noted the situation, reconnoitered a new route of advance, and informed his platoon leader of the casualties sustained and the alternate route. Acting without orders, he rounded up stragglers, organized a group of lost men into a squad, and led them forward.

"When the platoon reached SPACCASASSI CREEK and established an outpost, Squires, knowing that almost all of the noncommissioned officers were casualties, placed eight men in position on his own volition, disregarding enemy machine-gun, machine-pistol, and grenade fire which covered the creek draw. When his platoon had been reduced to 14 men, he twice brought up reinforcements. On each trip he went through barbed wire and across an enemy minefield under intense artillery and mortar fire. Three times in the early morning the outpost was counterattacked. Each time Squires ignored withering enemy automatic fire and grenades which struck all around him and fired hundreds of rounds of rifle and BAR ammunition at the enemy, inflicting numerous casualties and materially aiding in repulsing the attacks.

"Following these fights, he moved 50 yards to the south end of the outpost and engaged 21 German soldiers in individual machine-gun duels at point-blank range, forcing all 21 enemy to surrender and capturing 13 Spandau guns. After questioning a German officer prisoner to learn how the Spandau gun functioned, he placed the captured guns in position and instructed other members of his platoon in their operation. The next night, when the Germans attacked the outpost again, he killed three Germans and wounded more with captured 'potato-masher' grenades and fire from his Spandau gun."

Determined and rational action by any individual may be the spark necessary to kindle in others the flame of resolution which turns defeat into victory.



Quick Thinking The following incident reported by *Colonel G. B. Devore* from ITALY shows how quick thinking pays dividends: "The executive officer of a tank destroyer company in position south of ROME spotted a group of enemy foot soldiers making their way under cover toward his CP, which was near the front line. He immediately organized 9 of the 11 men at the CP into a patrol to surround the enemy group, which he estimated to be about 12 men. On advancing, he soon realized that in addition to those he had detected there was a large number of Germans in a nearby gulch. Seeing that he was hopelessly outnumbered in men and fire power, he changed his plans and decided to dispose his nine men in positions around the entire group and to have them open fire simultaneously at his command. The initial volley killed two Germans, wounded several others, and created a misleading impression of strength. As a result, 138 well-armed German soldiers and three officers, confused by the flanking fire and fire on their rear, surrendered to nine men armed with only seven M1 rifles and one carbine."



Confident Tone of Voice *The Commanding Officer of the 1st Marine Division Hospital*, in a statement to *Lieutenant Colonel Arthur G. King, Medical Corps*, during the early days on GUADALCANAL stressed an important feature of effective leadership as follows: "Our officers are particularly

careful to give no orders, or to say anything, except in calm, measured, and quiet tones. It takes tremendous self-control, and we not only pride ourselves on it, but also require it. It helps the officer to control his own sense of excitement or panic in times of stress, and it gives the men confidence and keeps them calm." That this was put into effect in his organization and by himself under the most trying circumstances was observed repeatedly by Colonel King, who stated that the manner in which the officers and men of the hospital functioned under aerial bombardment and shelling by the Jap Navy's heaviest guns proved the value of this training. The effect was observed to be in marked contrast to the psychological effect on listeners of the hysterical "—— ——— it, get your head down," or "Put that fool light out," heard commonly from many younger officers, whose terrific tension was at once transmitted to all listeners by their tone of voice.



Moral Support

"Some men become very nervous in combat; I found that if the NCO circulates around and talks to his men, it brings them out of that condition."—*Technical Sergeant Armor, 29th Infantry Division, France.*



Gallantry *Staff Sergeant Jessie R. Drowley*, leader of an infantry squad on BOUGAINVILLE, whose mission during an attack was to remain under cover as a reserve for assaulting echelons, saw three members of the assault company



Infantry and Tanks Mop Up on Bougainville.

fall badly wounded. When intense hostile fire prevented aid from reaching the casualties, he fearlessly rushed forward to carry the wounded to cover. After rescuing two men, Sergeant Drowley discovered an enemy pillbox, undetected by assaulting tanks, that was inflicting heavy casualties upon the attacking force and was the chief obstacle to the success of the advance.

Delegating the rescue of the third man to an assistant, he ran across open terrain to one of the tanks. Signaling to the crew, he climbed to the turret, exchanged his weapon for a submachine gun, and voluntarily rode the deck of the tank, directing it toward the pillbox by tracer fire. The tank, constantly under heavy enemy fire, advanced to within 20 feet of the pillbox, where Sergeant Drowley received a severe bullet wound in the chest. Refusing to return for medical treatment he remained on the tank and continued to direct its progress until the enemy position was definitely located by the crew.

At this point he again was wounded by small-arms fire, losing his left eye and falling to the ground. He remained alongside the tank until the pillbox had been completely demolished and another, directly behind the first, destroyed. Sergeant Drowley, his voluntary mission successfully accomplished, returned alone for medical treatment. For this action he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



High Standards Pay Off The good leader strives to keep



himself presentable even under the most trying conditions and requires the same of his men. Sometimes it is hard to do, but in the long run it pays dividends in maintenance of equipment, health of the men, and esprit of the command.

Colonel L. S. Griffing, Field Artillery, observed of the men of the *Fifth Army* before CASSINO, ITALY: "Personal appearance of the men and officers was superior. Daily shaves, washing of the hands and face, washing of clothes, and care of weapons and equipment were emphasized. Saluting at the front was the best I've seen anywhere. I never saw a dopey-looking combat soldier. This is a lesson to us—"The alert survive'."



A tank battalion commander, 1st Armored Division, ITALY: "My officers and men were required to shave daily and to take every opportunity to bathe and wash their

clothes. The officers set the example, and the men readily followed. This habit of personal cleanliness acted as an incentive to the men to keep their equipment clean as well. The sum total was an increased pride in their outfit and, when the chips were down, greater combat efficiency."



Good Leadership Develops Discipline *A Battalion Commander of the 22nd Infantry fighting in FRANCE, giving his views on the necessity for emphasis on discipline during training, stated: "Many casualties were incurred among officers and NCO's in some of my companies, because they literally had to lead the men by the hand to insure accomplishment of their mission. However, the companies whose commanders had required a high standard of discipline suffered fewer casualties and were able to move faster in the attack than those in which discipline was lax."*

While we speak of the importance of leadership in battle we must not forget that it is also important during the training periods prior to combat. It is during these periods that the discipline which must be present on the battlefield is developed. The degree of discipline attained is in direct proportion to the leadership of the commander.



Energy and Drive *An infantry company commander in discussing a night attack of his company in FRANCE stated: "The lieutenant who commanded my left platoon, the sergeant who commanded my right platoon, and I had to expose ourselves continuously to get the new men moving.*

We had to rush one group of six or eight men to the new location, then run back to move the next group, and so on.”

Commanders of small units must keep continuously in mind that in offensive operations the advances of battalions and larger units are nothing but the sum of the coordinated advances of their squads. If the squads do not advance, the platoon, company, and battalion do not advance. Energy and drive in the leadership of small units are therefore essential to success in offensive operations. Small units must be kept moving, halting to fire only long enough to make possible a continuation of their own forward movement. Junior officers and NCO's are the ones who must start the ball and keep it rolling.



**LEADERSHIP
IN
SMALL UNITS** *Intelligent leadership by men who know their jobs and have the drive and courage to carry out missions assigned to them is the key to successful small-unit operations.*

To lead his platoon in the capture of a German pillbox was the mission assigned a technical sergeant in Company E, 109th Infantry. How he brought to his job intelligence, drive, and courage is the story told here.

“Our understrength company was held up on a hill just inside the German border by German mortar and MG fire. A German machine gun on our left flank was covering the draw in front of us. There were also Germans up the road to our front in a pillbox from which they were apparently directing mortar and artillery fire. Our acting company commander ordered my platoon of about 12 men, assisted by a tank, to take and hold this pillbox.

"I looked over the map and the terrain and saw that there was a fire trench directly behind the pillbox. I got my men together after dark and withdrew to where we were to meet the tank. The tank commander and I made our plans together, and I carefully oriented my men.

"We moved out at 1030 the next morning, following the tank down the road. The tank fired at the pillbox every once in a while until we reached the area where the tank had to stop. I told the tank commander, 'Keep firing until we get so close that you have to stop.' I then started one of my squads toward the pillbox, about 350 yards away. They ran into some barbed wire, which they started to cut; but as I figured we couldn't waste time cutting wire, I found a way around it and led the squad forward. We had been receiving only mortar fire, but now we ran into MG fire, which caused some of my men to stop following me. Sergeant Moulding got the man with the BAR and three riflemen to keep moving toward the pillbox. I yelled back to them, 'Keep coming! These Heinies can't hit us.' Another sergeant and three of his men kept coming, but we were down to nine men now.

"About the time I got to the pillbox the tank cut loose again. It threw a little dirt on me, and I prayed it would be his last round. My men were still coming up, one of them carrying 10 lbs. of TNT. While I waited for them I tossed a couple of hand grenades at the back door just to keep the Germans in until I got some help. When they arrived one sergeant and two men covered the fire trench in the rear while our demolition men placed the TNT by the door of the box, but it failed to go off. The rest of our company had advanced to within 200 yards, so I got two more 10-lb. charges from them. The second one also failed to go off. We finally got the third charge

in and at last she blew. It didn't even bother the box, but I guess it jarred the Heinies. I left two men to guard the box in case they came out and with the rest of the men pushed on to the fire trench. It was empty and so was a Heinie sleeping quarters into which we threw a couple of grenades through an open door. About that time I heard a shot from the pillbox and ran back to see what was happening. Twenty-one Germans, including a captain and two lieutenants, were marching out with their hands over their heads. One had tried to make a run for it but got himself a couple of slugs from an M1 rifle. The rest figured it was time to quit.

"After searching the prisoners, I figured we had better take a look inside the pillbox. I took one of the prisoners and made him start moving stuff in case there were any booby traps, but fortunately we found none. I sent the prisoners back with three of my men and set up a defense with the rest who had come up by this time. There were only nine of us, but it was all that could be spared until morning when they sent us some help. We held the position for several days before we withdrew to reorganize."

The sergeant knew his job. He planned his attack after careful reconnaissance and consultation with his tank commander and then arranged for the demolitions he knew he would need. He set an example by leading the attack himself. His initiative in solving the problems which confronted him as the attack progressed, and in reorganizing and setting up the defense of his position, clinched the success of the operation he had so carefully planned.